



JS body questions 4,000MW solar power target

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliamentary standing committee on the power, energy, and mineral resources ministry yesterday raised questions over the progress of the government's renewable energy programme.

At its first meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, the committee asked the ministry to provide detailed data on how much electricity rooftop solar systems are supplying to the national grid.

Committee seeks details on rooftop solar system, capacity payments, fuel stockpiles, LPG prices, domestic gas exploration, and the costs of proposed energy projects

The ministry was asked to present the figures at its next meeting, along with written answers to lawmakers' questions.

It also sought details on capacity payments, fuel stockpiles, LPG prices, domestic gas exploration and the costs of proposed energy projects.

Committee member Nazibur Rahman said ministry officials could not provide specific data on progress under the rooftop solar incentive programme. They said around 2MW of solar power was being added to the grid daily, but gave no supporting details.

The government aims to add 4,000MW of solar power

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Police personnel stand guard near a mural of Rabindranath Tagore outside Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy in the capital's Segunbagicha after a group attempted to deface the poet's portrait with black paint yesterday. Law enforcers intervened and detained four people, including a woman. The paint was later cleaned off and security personnel deployed at the site. The mural is among portraits of 10 celebrated cultural figures, including Kazi Nazrul Islam, Lalon Shah, Satyajit Ray and Zainul Abedin, commissioned by Dhaka South City Corporation after it cleared the adjoining footpath of encroachments on October 5. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Outcry as Trump agrees to buy Russian diesel

Zelensky, EU blast deal after Russian strikes kill 15 in Ukraine

AGENCIES

Donald Trump is on a fresh collision course with Volodymyr Zelensky and European allies after his stunning agreement to buy Russian diesel upended years of US and Western pressure on the Kremlin to end its war against Ukraine.

Zelensky reacted furiously to Trump's announcement of the deal with Vladimir Putin on Friday, calling it "absolutely terrible" and "not fair and not honest".

The Ukrainian president said "back room deals" with the Russian leader would give Putin more chances on the battlefield. Yesterday morning, Ukrainian officials reported that a Russian attack had killed 12 people in the south-east, including three children, and Moscow claimed its troops were advancing in the east.

In a move likely to create a fresh crisis with Washington's Nato allies, Trump announced the deal with Putin on his Truth Social network, saying it was essential to reduce fuel prices in the US, which have soared as a result of his decision to go to war against Iran.

"I have just concluded a highly successful discussion with President Vladimir Putin of Russia," he said, to deliver millions of tonnes of diesel fuel over the next few months.

He added: "Diesel prices for Americans and, indeed, the world, will be COMING DOWN, IN RECORD NUMBERS, AND FAST! Lower prices for Americans, especially our Great Farmers, Ranchers, and Truckers, are my greatest priority."

Fuel prices have soared since Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz, a strategically sensitive choke point that was the passageway for 20%



Rescuers work at a damaged building by a Russian air strike in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

of global oil supplies before the war. While costs have risen for motorists -- a gallon of regular fuel in the US is about $4.20 (£3.17) -- it is the price of diesel, which last month hit a record high of $6.52, that has inflicted the

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PM likely to visit Japan on Oct 26

Says Humaiun Kobir



UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's upcoming visit to Japan will focus on strengthening bilateral relations, deepening economic partnerships and increasing investment, said Humaiun Kobir, state minister-1 for foreign affairs.

Tarique is likely to go on a four-day visit on October 26 after Japan invited him, reaffirming Tokyo's commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations with Dhaka.

During the visit, Bangladesh would prioritise trade, investment, and development partnerships across various sectors, in line with its approach to engagement with other countries, Humaiun told reporters yesterday after attending a seminar titled "From workforce to strategic

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GOVT OFFICIALS' PERFORMANCE

AI-driven review in the works

Public admin ministry drafts proposal; policymakers say it'll promote 'meritocracy'

BAHARAM KHAN

The government plans to replace the manual evaluation method used for civil servants' annual confidential reports (ACRs) with an artificial intelligence (AI)-driven review mechanism aimed at assessing them on merit, integrity and job performance.

"The prime minister wants to place the administration's best officers in responsible positions. At present, it is difficult to select qualified candidates in the absence of a sound method. That is why work is underway to devise a new system," Abdul Bari, state minister for public administration, told The Daily Star.

His ministry has drafted a proposal for introducing a digital peer review mechanism involving up to 45 superiors and subordinates to evaluate each officer, replacing the current method in which only two supervisors carry out the evaluation.

Under the existing manual ACR system, an officer scoring between 85 and 100 is rated "excellent", while one receiving 71 to 84 is graded "good", and one scoring 50 to 70 is considered "average". The scores are based entirely on assessments by the officer's two immediate superiors.

The ACR, a confidential assessment of an officer's performance, integrity, conduct and leadership, serves as the main basis for promotions, key postings and selection for advanced training.

There have been allegations that the current method fails to reflect true performance as personal preferences or dislikes of two superior officers often affect a subordinate's ACR score.

Seeking anonymity, several former and current officials in the ministry's Confidential Report Branch said more than 80 percent of officers get above 90

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KEY FEATURES OF SYSTEM

- Officers to be assessed on 5 key criteria
- 30-45 colleagues, including superiors and subordinates, to take part in evaluation
- Algorithm to identify unusually positive, negative evaluations
- Feedback to be drawn from past, current workplaces
- Evaluators to remain anonymous



Vendors set up makeshift stalls dangerously close to the railway tracks in the capital's Jurain Railway Gate area as a train passes through. The longstanding practice of operating shops along the tracks poses a serious risk of accidents, endangering vendors, shoppers and train passengers alike. The photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

IN FOCUS

CNG driver confesses to rape, murder of schoolgirl

Suspect arrested in Ctg day after the teen's body was found

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Cumilla*

A CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver has confessed to raping and killing a 15-year-old schoolgirl in Cumilla early Thursday, police said.

Additional Superintendent of Police Pankaj Barua disclosed this at a press conference at the superintendent of police's office today, following the driver's arrest.

The suspect, Sumon Mia, was arrested at his brother's house in Chattogram on Friday, police said.

Pankaj said Sumon allegedly strangled Tazmin with a gamchha before raping her and then pressed

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Youth beaten to death over theft allegation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bogura*

A Santal youth working at a brick kiln was allegedly beaten to death following an accusation of theft in Bogura Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Ripon Murmu, 27, of Belowa Bamanpara in Dinajpur's Ghoraghat upazila.

According to his family, Ripon had worked at a brick kiln owned by Akter Rahman Duke in Bogura Sadar's Chanpara area for the past eight to 10 years.

Ripon's father, Mosej Murmu, told The Daily Star, "My son was beaten yesterday morning during an arbitration over the alleged theft of a welding machine. Later that night, his body was sent home in an ambulance."

Robiul Islam, a member of Palsha Union Parishad in Ghoraghat, said he

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