

## Gas crisis looms as Sangu shuts down

SHARIEF KHAN and ZAYADUL AHSAN

The Sangu gas field was shut down yesterday for emergency maintenance, dealing a heavy blow to gas supply.

The offshore gas field that was pumping one tenth of the total gas supply was closed down in the evening as a safety valve of one of the wells was leaking, sources said.

As a result, gas supplies to one of the two 210 MW Raozan power plants, the Karnaphuli Fertiliser Factory Company (Kafco) and Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Factory Ltd. (CUFL) have remained suspended from yesterday evening. Gas supply to Chittagong was cut down by 60 per cent.

There were repeated forewarnings that the gas field might face shutdown anytime.

Experts are now assessing the type of the leakage and the time required for its repair. Sangu was supplying 158-mmcf of gas.

Despite repeated attempts, officials of Shell Oil, the operator of Sangu field, could not be contacted over telephone for comments.

Petrobranga in a press release last night said Sangu gas supply was disrupted due to technical flaws. However, it was hopeful of a resumption in supply today.

As there was no alternative, Petrobranga has instructed suspension of gas supplies to the Raozan power plant, Kafco and CUFL -- which together consume 157

mmcf.

Elsewhere gas pressure continued to fall drastically.

Petrobranga and its gas producing, distributing and transmitting affiliates went on a high alert to handle the precarious situation that might lead to the worst ever energy supply shortfall.

"We may have to ration gas on a priority basis as an emergency bailout," said a top official of Titas Gas, asking not to be named.

The gas guzzling fertiliser factories might at first be suspended if the crisis continued, said a source in Petrobranga.

Already, a move to suspend production of the Ghorashal Fertiliser Factory failed for some



### National Policy Review Forum 2003 winds up today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The closing ceremony of the three-day National Policy Review Forum 2003 organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), The Daily Star and the Prothom Alo will be held at a city hotel today.

Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan will be chief guest while General Secretary of Awami League Md Abdul Jalil will attend the closing

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

First day of working sessions of National Policy Review Forum

## A lot needs to be done in 11 crucial sectors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The working sessions of the three-day National Policy Review Forum 2003 kicked-off yesterday with experts, politicians, academicians and civil society members discussing the progresses and challenges in 11 key issues.

The overwhelming consensus of the forum was that the government has to work more to bring changes to crucial areas of governance, macroeconomy, energy, environment, administration, financial sector, information technology, gender equality, trade, privatisation and politics.

The roles of the civil society and politicians are nonetheless important for a meaningful synergy for improvement.

The Forum, co-organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue, the Prothom Alo and The Daily Star, was attended by more than 400 participants at three different venues -- CIRDAP auditorium, National Press Club and Planning Academy premises.

The policy initiative was taken prior to the national elections 2001 to provide inputs to the pre-election debate. As the present government is approaching the end of the second year of its tenure, the review

initiative was taken to assess the state of implementation of the recommendations made earlier.

**Democratic process (election and parliamentary)**

The Forum suggested framing a more rigid and meaningful code of conduct for political parties to strengthen the electoral process. Election expenses of candidates should have a ceiling but at the same time be enhanced to make those more realistic, speakers stressed.

On democratic process, they said fund raising by political parties must be regulated and a scheme of state funding of political parties

should be introduced.

All political parties participating in elections must be brought under a legal framework through registration so as to make them internally democratic and externally accountable, they felt.

Moreover, concerted efforts by political parties have seen a must to make the parliament effective and ensure proper functioning of democracy.

**Environmental policy**

The Forum suggested steps in the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



Working sessions of the National Policy Review Forum 2003, organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), The Daily Star and the Prothom Alo, in progress: (Pictures from left to right) Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, second from left, speaks as chief guest at the session on Democratic Process at the Academy for Planning and Development auditorium; Commerce Minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, second from left, addresses as chief guest the session on Trade Policy at the CIRDAP auditorium; and State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharrar Hossain, third from left, speaks as chief guest at the session on Development and Governance of Energy Sector at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

## Curb on corruption needs united fight

Administrative transparency key to good governance, National Policy Review Forum told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Change in the political leaders' attitude and will, and combined effort by the political parties, civil society and administration are required to fight corruption and improve the judiciary.

Speakers at a dialogue yesterday also felt transparency in administration and public service system is a prerequisite to ensuring good governance and a corruption-free society.

During the working sessions of three-day National Policy Review Forum 2003, organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), The Daily Star and the Prothom Alo, a cross section of experts thrashed

out a number of factors that call for immediate attention.

Prof. Rehman Sobhan, chairman of the CPD, chaired the session while former director general of the Bureau of Anti-corruption Md Badiuzzaman presented the keynote paper.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

**Notice**

Detailed stories on nine different working sessions of the National Policy Review Forum 2003, jointly organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue, Prothom Alo and The Daily Star, are on pages 6 and 7.

## Legal binding, state funding sought for political parties

'Unity of politicians a must to make JS effective'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

United efforts by political parties are a must to make the parliament effective and ensure proper functioning of democracy.

Speakers said this while discussing the draft Task Force Report on Democratic Process: Election and Parliamentary at a working session of the National Policy Review Forum 2003 in the city yesterday.

Co-organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), The Daily Star and The Prothom Alo, the session was held at the Academy for

Planning and Development.

On democratic process, the speakers said fund raising by political parties must be regulated and a scheme of state funding of political parties should be introduced.

All political parties participating in elections must be brought under a legal framework through registration so as to make them internally democratic and externally accountable, they felt.

The speakers suggested framing

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## Attack on Feni party meeting AL suspends 9 Hazari men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) yesterday suspended nine of its Feni district unit leaders for involvement in attacks on a meeting and asked them to explain why they should not be expelled from the party.

The AL also directed two of its front organisations, Bangladesh Chhatra League and Jubo League, to take similar action against another 10 leaders of the organisa-

tions for involvement in the attacks that marred Saturday's meeting in Feni in the presence of central AL leaders Abdul Jalil and Saber Hossain Chowdhury.

The decisions were taken at an AL Central Working Committee (ALCWC) meeting at the party's Dhanmondi office, with acting President Zillur Rahman in the chair.

The suspension list includes

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

## Tk 20,300cr ADP for next fiscal finalised

Foreign component increases by 9 percentage point

STAR REPORT

The government has finalised a Tk 20,300 crore Annual Development Programme (ADP) for the next fiscal that looks more towards foreign assistance than local resources.

A meeting of the National Economic Council (NEC) chaired by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia approved the ADP yesterday.

Fifty-one per cent of the projected ADP outlay will come in foreign assistance while local resources will account for the rest.

The foreign component of the programme has increased by nine percentage points while local resource component has shrunk by similar percentage points from this fiscal's revised ADP.

Out of the total Tk 10,300 crore foreign assistance, the Asian Development Bank (ADP) and the

World Bank (WB) will provide Tk 1,460 crore.

The amount of local resources has been fixed at Tk 10,000 crore.

The ADP for the next fiscal has been increased by 19 per cent or Tk 3,200 crore from the current revised ADP of Tk 17,100 crore. Local resources has been upped by Tk 46 crore or 0.45 per cent while foreign assistance by Tk 3,154 crore or 44.15 per cent.

The approved ADP includes a total of 1,167 projects. The government has added 197 new projects involving technical assistance and investment schemes.

Talking to journalists, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman said Tk 3,000 crore in loans will be available from the donors by June because of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

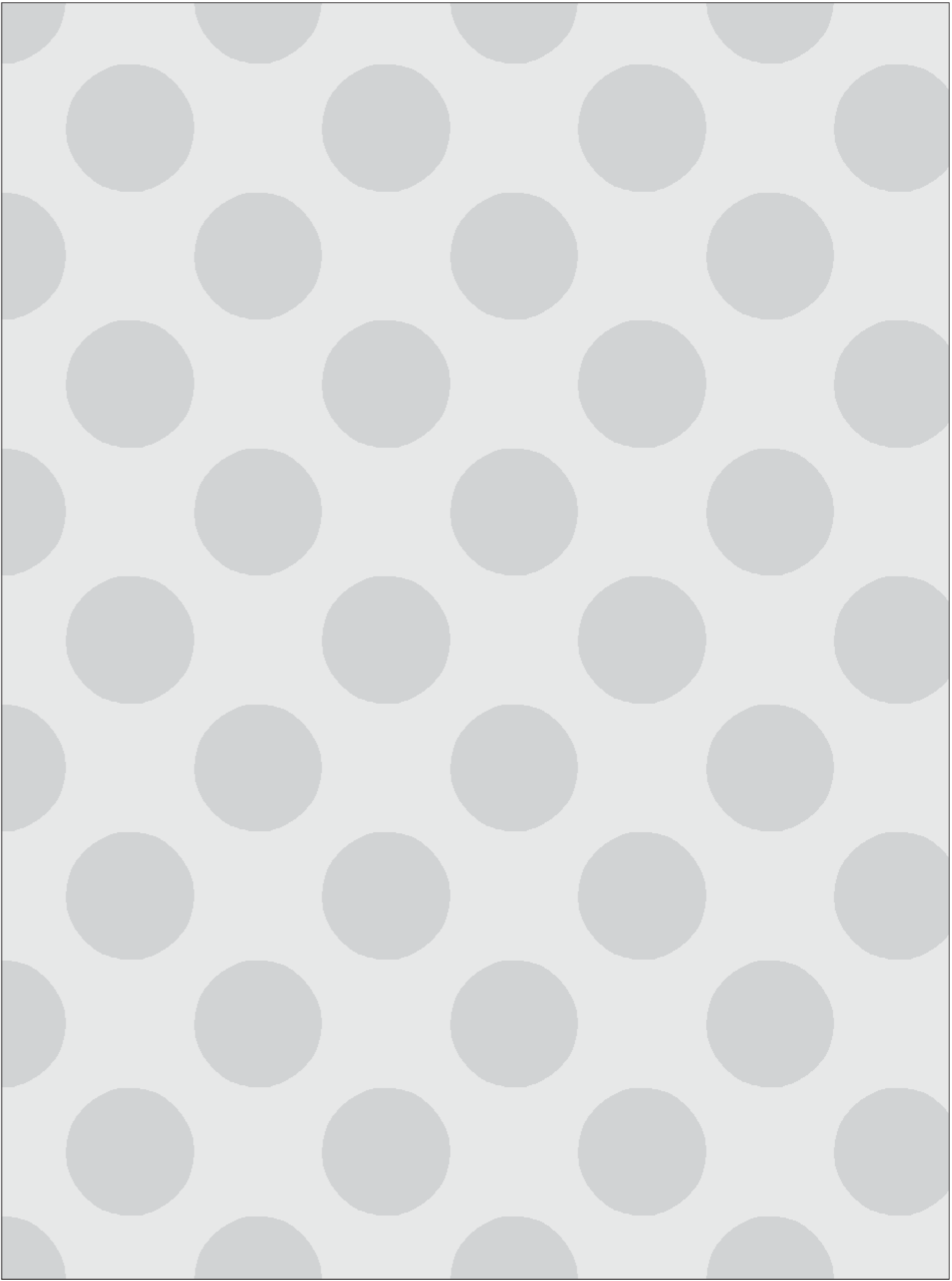


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