

## Hasina asks govt

**FROM PAGE 12** exporters improve lead time, a vital factor to attract buyers.

The government has only 14 months to work out a strategy on possible RMG export decline after expiry of the multi-fibre arrangements, the former premier said.

She alleged that the government was failing to take up development projects because of widespread corruption.

"Nepotism runs high in every sphere of the administration and it has not spared allocation of quotas for RMG exporters," she said.

She said the government failed to declare a list of commercially important persons (CIPs) which is an incentive to the businesspersons and a recognition of their contribution.

"When the government has decided to stop development programmes at Comilla, Mongla, Ishwardi and Nilphamari, how will foreign direct investment flow increase?" Hasina said.

If the AL is voted into office, it will amend the labour law allowing women to work at night and also form a cell to promptly solve the problems of businesspeople and investors.

Former finance minister SAMS Kibria said if set up with proper safeguard measures, the proposed central bonded warehouse would increase export of RMGs and

improve delivery time and cost-effectiveness.

He said frequent policy shifts by the government was hurting businesses.

"Businessmen can not draw up long-term plans because of frequent policy shifts and discontinuation of some projects of previous governments also hamper overall national development," he said.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said the government's decision to phase out cash incentives to RMG exporters would leave the highest export-earning sector in stasis.

"In stead of providing support for exporters, the government has reduced cash incentives to 15 percent from 25 percent which shows its attitude towards business promotion. Worst still, it has also decided to phase out cash incentive in three years which is suicidal," Jalil said.

Presiding over the function, BGEA President Quazi Moniruzzaman urged political parties of all hues to set aside differences to put business above politics.

"When countries are freeing markets under the WTO regime, we, in our homeland, are being confined and held hostage by political parties for their uncompromising attitude and ignorance about the contribution of trade and business to national development," he regretted.

## Paturia-Daulatdia ferry terminals again jam-packed with vehicles

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj**

Hundreds of vehicles were again stuck in fresh traffic jams at Paturia and Daulatdia ferry terminals yesterday where an emergency is in place in the wake of falling water levels in the Padma posing serious navigational hazards.

Vehicles on way to Paturia ferry terminal were stuck in a traffic jam extending some four km while the queue at Daulatdia terminal was some three-km long due to disruption of normal ferry services on the Paturia-Daulatdia route.

BIWTC (Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation) sources said two ferries got stuck in the shallows near the Daulatdia ferry terminal in last two days, and that the risk factor for navigation on the new channel opened earlier remains very high.

BIWTA yesterday shifted the terminal from Paturia to Aricha.

## England

**FROM PAGE 1** The 18-year-old was very expensive in his first Test, conceding 23 runs in the three-over spell.

Mashud's effort was the former Bangladesh captain's first half century in the 22 Test appearances. He rallied the lower order after Bangladesh were loitering at 72 for five at one stage.

In his 185-minute vigil for 51, the 27-year old hit four fours and faced 129 balls before Pakistani umpire Aleem Dar adjudged him lbw to give debutant England all-rounder Rikki Clarke his first wicket.

But the main wrecker was tall paceman Stephen Harmison who carried on his good work from day one to finish with five for 35 from 21.5 overs. It was the Durham quick's first five-wicket haul in 12 Tests.

Harmison's new ball partner Mathew Hoggard also bowled with vigour and picked up three wickets for 55 runs in 23 overs.

Resuming on 24 for two, Bangladesh's innings never took off as their two overnight batsmen Hannan Sarker and Rajin Saleh returned to the pavilion without troubling the scorers much.

Hannan was fooled by a Hoggard in-cutter, as he left the ball expecting it to be an away swinger and was bowled for 20.

Saleh was undone by a brute of a delivery from Harmison that took off from just short of the length to kiss his gloves and wicket-keeper Chris Read completed an easy catch down the leg side.

At 40 for four, Alok Kapali led a counter-attack. He scored at will against all the English bowlers and played some absolutely classy cover drives and square cuts, which forced skipper Vaughan to go for a defensive field. But once he had reached 28 off 32 balls, Kapali made an error in judging the line of the ball and paid dearly for it.

In debutant off-spinner Gareth Batt's third delivery in Test cricket, Kapali stayed glued to his crease and shouldered arm. The ball spun back and rattled the off-stump to the delight of the Englishmen.

With the chips down, Mashud found an able partner in all-rounder Mushfiqur Rahman.

The two Rajshahi men put on a painstaking 60 in 136 minutes. The stand was broken by a reverse swinging Hoggard, who had Mushfiqur lbw for his Test best 34 (125 balls).

Captain Khaled Mahmud came and went and it was left to Mohammad Rafique to bring the crowd to life. Rafique clubbed three sixes – two against Ashley Giles and the other against Batty – and a boundary to score a blazing 32 off 47 balls.

Harmison was brought back and with the new ball, he promptly wrapped up the tail including Rafique with a huge in-swing.

## Gas export

**FROM PAGE 1** "Higher authorities have asked the eight-member committee not to discuss gas export," said a member on condition of anonymity.

All the members of the body belong to the ruling alliance.

"We are not the right persons to discuss the sensitive issue. If we recommend gas export, people will take to the streets demanding the resignation of the government," said a committee member on the Jatiya Sangsad premises where the meeting was held.

The meeting instead trained its focus on future gas demand, supply situation and investment.

It asked Petrobangla and other authorities to perk up oil and gas exploration and production on an urgent basis.

Petrobangla chairman SR Osmani told the meeting that an investment of Tk 11,861 crore would be needed for exploration, production, transmission and distribution of gas until 2020.

Of the amount, Tk 4,500 crore will be needed for exploration alone.

"If initiatives are not taken to increase reserves, we will face gas crisis after 2014 as the current reserve will be exhausted by then," Osmani told the meeting.

Referring to the report of the national committees on gas reserve and use, he said it was not possible to export gas from the current reserve.

The Petrobangla depicted the present gas status to the committee in a report.

The report states, 5,093 trillion cubic feet (TCF) gas has been used since 1961 and the reserve now stands at 15.327 TCF.

## Commentary

**FROM PAGE 1** democratically elected leader but more like a believer in force, threat, intimidation and not in persuasion or dialogue. Whoever might have advised her or drafted her speech, this is one speech which will bring her no credit.

Who is a prime minister in a democracy? She is the leader of the people elected for a *certain specified period* to run the government, within *established rules, regulations and laws under the framework of the constitution*. Who elects a prime minister? The voters. Who are the voters? All citizens eligible by law to vote so. Voters chose their elected leaders and in their choice there are those who get majority of the votes and win and others lose. Even among those who win, some are part of the ruling party and go on to form the government and others form the opposition after winning from their constituencies.

At the risk of being accused of lecturing our leaders (here a consensus by both sides is likely) about the fundamentals of democracy, we felt it necessary to make the point that those who vote for the losing sides or those who oppose the winning side are not enemies of either the country or democracy. People who voted against her or those who demonstrate in the streets are entitled to being served by the government just as much as those who voted for her. Why should the demonstrating nurses be so brutalised or the schoolteachers beaten up by the police?

Now let us turn to the language used by the prime minister in her speech to address the opposition. She called them *baiman* (traitor) or *untrustworthy*, *dumtilbij* (corrupt) and *shawntrashi* (terrorists). Is this the language to address the opposition? Here I must point out that Sheikh Hasina's language is no better if not worse. So is that the logic that since other leaders speak in these terms so must this side? Is it the reason why people voted for a change? In bringing a change to our political culture, the BNP has not only completely failed but has acquired the worst of political traits.

What was so depressing about Khaleda Zia's speech was its totally backward focus. Where was the message of hope, inspiration and self-respect? Where was the roadmap for our development? Where was that positive, creative and soothing touch of a leader who knows her people are struggling so hard to make ends meet.

After two years in power, she had nothing to say except uttering vitriolic against the opposition. The tempered tone of her earlier speech over radio and television delivered on the evening of October 10 (occasion was the same) gave way to politicking at its worst and an angry prime minister sounded more defensive than one who had a good record to present.

Twenty-four months after being elected, the prime minister talked about her election campaign, how the AL thought that the coalition will not last, how they tried to rig and pre-determine the results, how they said election was good till late

evening of the election day, how they cried foul once they lost and how they tried to subvert the election results. Is this what a head of a government says two years into her five-year tenure? Yes, only if she had nothing better to say. None of what she said is new. About the last charge we said so earlier and repeat now that it is quite serious and the government should either prosecute people involved, or in the least, publish a white paper on it.

About her record of governance, all her failures were due to the opposition. She even said the AL was hiring people to commit murder so that her government looks bad. (We recall one of her ministers saying the AL was deliberately causing traffic jams to discredit the government). If the government has such proof, it should mercilessly pursue such cases and give them exemplary punishment. It is a government's duty. There is no question about giving *chhar* (concession) in such cases. On the contrary, in the name of releasing BNP workers jailed during the AL rule, numerous criminals have been released, either by mistake or, as is more likely, deliberately due to influence peddling by local, regional and even central leaders.

More to the point, people do not want to hear about the past. They want to hear about the future. We want to know how our prime minister plans to lead us out of the present mess. We want to know what plans she has to improve our productivity, investment and, of course, law and order. The prime minister keeps telling us that *shantash* (violent crime) has decreased. Will she kindly ask the people of this country? Ask the business community; ask shopkeepers, autorickshaw drivers, bus riders, rickshaw passengers or anybody who will dare to speak the truth before her. 'Truth' is the keyword. Is the truth getting through to her? It will obviously depend on who the prime minister asks. From those who surround her, the answer will be an emphatic 'yes'. But we are told by many genuine BNP supporters and sympathisers, people with some self-respect, dignity and a modicum of courage to tell the truth, that access to the prime minister is closed, save for a select few. Even senior party colleagues and cabinet ministers cannot access her, as is the practice in a cabinet form of government.

If her information is based on intelligence reports, then permit us to remind her of what happened to past governments that solely depended on such reports to know the genuine feelings of people. Where our leaders repeatedly go wrong is to close alternative channels of communication, especially those who are critical. The channels that remain open get their cues from those that have been closed and tailor the information to suit the leader. That is when sycophancy sets in and leaders begin to lose touch with reality. And that is when they start lashing out at the media. (More about that later).

## Manju asks for reform in caretaker govt system

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Anwar Hossain Manju, chairman of a faction of the Jatiya Party (JP), yesterday demanded reform of the system of the caretaker government to ensure the next general elections free and fair.

"The existing system of the interim caretaker government has failed to hold elections fairly and now it's time to bring reform to it," Manju said at a meeting of the party executive committee at a city community centre. Top leaders of different district units of the JP (Manju) attended the meeting.

The JP (Manju) chairman ruled out the possibility of fair elections without bringing reform to the system.

He criticised two major political parties of the country for their run for power. "They do so to misappropriate country's resources," Manju alleged.

Apart party Secretary General Sheikh Shahidul Islam, the meeting was also addressed by Sadeque Siddiqi, Abdur Rahim, Khandaker Mahtab Uddin Bhuiyan, Mafijul Haq and Amena Bari.

## Transport workers begin indefinite strike in Sylhet

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet**

Transport owners and workers of Sylhet district began an indefinite strike yesterday to press their 20-point demand after their 72-hour ultimatum went unheeded.

The demands include measures to prevent extortion at bus terminals and suspension of the BRTC (Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation) bus services introduced on September 10 on four routes between Sylhet Railway Station and Jaintapur, Kanaighat, Gowainghat and Tamabil.

Leaders of Sylhet Zila Parishad Sramik-Malik Oikya Parishad told a rally at Shibganj that a similar strike was called off last month following the administration's promise to meet their 'legitimate' demands, but the authorities since then did not take any necessary steps.

On the other hand, people of Jaintapur, Kanaighat and Gowainghat upazilas have boycotted private transports to and from Sylhet since October 15, protesting suspension of the BRTC services on the Sylhet-Tamabil-Jaffingon route in mid-September under pressure from private operators.

Earlier on September 29, people of the three upazilas observed a half-day hartal in protest. The services were however restored on Monday.

A rally organised by Brihattara Jaintapur Samannaya Samity at the upazila headquarters yesterday also threatened tougher action if the BRTC services are suspended on any of the four routes.

## 3 get life

**FROM PAGE 1** pay the fine, the judgement held.

Three others accused in the case, Mohammad Selim, Mohammad Ratan and Umme Kulsum Bakul, were acquitted.

Both the prosecution and defence completed their arguments on October 18.

Earlier, the court recorded statements of 27 prosecution witnesses in the case.

It was alleged that Abdul Hye, a Malaysian expatriate, was killed on June 23, 2002 soon after he landed at Zia International Airport in the early hours of that day.

The accused hired two private cars to take Hye and his luggage to his village in Noakhali. During the journey, they robbed Hye and threw him out onto the road, taking off with them all his luggage and valuables.

Hye was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, but succumbed to his injuries at midnight the same day.

The victim's brother, Abul Hashem, filed a murder case the following day.

The investigating officer of the case submitted a charge sheet against the six accused last November 19.

The trial began on August 16 this year.

## CHT

**FROM PAGE 12** The indigenous internal refugees of the CHT region returned home from refugee camps in India's Tripura after the signing of the CHT peace treaty. A large number of families are still awaiting rehabilitation and depend on rations.

According to official statistics, 3,055 families out of the 12,222 are yet to get back their homesteads. The process of their rehabilitation was stalled after the four-party coalition government took office, alleged leaders of the internal refugees.

The prime minister however directed Deputy Minister for CHT Affairs Moni Swapan Dewan to take steps for implementation of the CHT peace treaty and resolve problems of the indigenous people.

## River-link plan

**FROM PAGE 12** Nepal and displacement of people due to the RLP would also harm livelihood and ecology in India itself.

Two renowned Nepalese water experts – Dr Ananda Bahadur Thapa and Som Nath Poudel – presented a paper at the 'Nepal-India Water Resources Cooperation' meeting in Kathmandu on October 17.

The paper said "India has already built in its territory diversion structures across the Mahakali, Karnali, Babai, West Rapti and even Banganga rivers to irrigate lands. All these diversion structures are linked by a long canal that extends from the Lower Sarada Barrage built across the Mahakali river to Banganga river barrage."

It pointed out, "The landmark Mahakali Treaty is viewed by many intellectuals and politicians in Nepal as ineffective, thereby raising some sort of unwanted tensions among the riparian nations."

The two experts brought this to the notice of what has been described as a 'Track II' meeting supported by the BP Koirala Foundation.

Seven years after signing the 75-year Mahakali River Water Sharing Treaty, Nepal and India are yet to come up with a 'Detailed Project Report (DPR)', as envisaged in the treaty to derive maximum benefits

## MoU

**FROM PAGE 1** Onn stressed that before going to Malaysia, workers must go through some sort of training programme on speaking either English or Malay.

He said a working committee will be formed, comprising officials of his government and the Bangladesh embassy in Kuala Lumpur to work out recruitment formalities and the number of people to be recruited.

The MoU contains 15 terms and conditions for jobs in Malaysia.

It provides that Bangladesh workers will get the same status and financial benefits as a Malaysian worker gets for a similar job, and the tenure of a job will be three to five years. The workers must be aged from 18 to 40.

No Bangladeshi worker will be permitted to marry a Malaysian citizen. If any worker does so, he or she will lose his or her job immediately, the MoU said.

The Malaysian employer will bear all expenses for visa processing, levy and other government charges. The money will be deducted from the pay of a worker in instalments that will not be more than 50 per cent of his pay.

The MoU stipulates the employer to hire workers from Bangladesh directly or through a licensed recruiting agency, but he will abide by the Bangladesh government's policy.

Meanwhile, the Malaysian minister called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday afternoon. He told her a delegation from Malaysian universities and private colleges would visit Bangladesh soon to recruit teachers.

Welcoming the minister, Khaleda called for recruitment of more technical persons from Bangladesh. Onn said, "We are looking for greater cooperation between the two countries."

Onn conveyed the Malaysian Prime Minister's invitation to Khaleda to visit his country. She accepted the invitation, sources said.

The Malaysian minister also visited a workers' training centre in Mirpur.

Accompanied by his wife, he left Dhaka for Tashkent last night.

## 112 more structures

**FROM PAGE 1** on Sunday.

But the BIWTA could not pull down three buildings yesterday because of High Court stay orders and is facing such barriers for as many as 30 structures, official sources said.

The government will file cases against the grabbers to head off further encroachment that has clogged the lifeline of Dhaka city, the sources added.

A set of grabbers threw up makeshift structures in Shyambazar and other places under Sutrapur, Kotwali and Foutallah police stations after the BIWTA ended its work there.

The authorities on Tuesday knocked down 250 small shops at Shyambazar kitchen market off a road by the Buriganga to clear space for traffic and pedestrians in what BIWTA officials viewed as a successful effort.

But fruit and vegetable vendors set up shops by the roadside and some other encroachers were preparing yesterday to wrest back spaces.

"If we do not do anything to protect the recovered land, the encroachers will grab the land. The government should take steps to stave off further encroachment," said Syed Manowar Hossain, BIWTA director.

He told The Daily Star the BIWTA would write to the deputy commissioner (north) of the traffic department of Dhaka Metropolitan Police today, requesting him to take steps against the fresh spell of encroachment on the road.

This year's drive against 890 encroachers is a third since 2001 that came after an increasing inci-

dent from the common river.

"While finalising the DPR, riparian countries have to agree on the fully integrated management of the water resources, where interests of different sectors as well as ecosystems are taken care of and the water basin principles applied," said Thapa and Poudel in their paper.

"At present, lack of open dialogue and absence of coordinated joint efforts are hindering further development. DPR was supposed to be completed within six months of the agreement. More than six years of fruitless endeavour has frustrated us, the paper added.

BG Verghese, senior most member of the Indian government-constituted RLP Taskforce, was also a participant at the two-day meeting.

Speaking on the sidelines of the meeting, Verghese told The Daily Star, "Optimised regional water management, holistically considered, could guarantee win-win outcomes and offer opportunity to revisit older plans and concepts within a new framework of regional cooperation."

"India should therefore take the earliest opportunity to interact with all its partners in the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna region. It must make known what is about and hear from Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh about their longer term perspectives."

Verghese, also a senior fellow of the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), a Delhi-based think-tank,

said, "Many commonalities and convergence of interests are likely to emerge while differences in perception, priorities and methodology will have to be harmonised. The future need not be a prisoner of past."

## Cry for son

**FROM PAGE 12** on the bank of the Madhumoti 13 months ago," said the boy's father, Ishaq Hossain Kazi.

The incident came to light when a professor from Dhaka went to Gangtok in India to attend a conference. One of the participants from Delhi named Sivaramkrishnan told the professor that a boy was languishing in a Missionaries of Charity shelter home in Delhi and wanted to return to his parents in Magura.

Sivaramkrishnan e-mailed more information about the boy to the visiting professor as soon as he returned home. The professor then sent a man to Magura to contact Ishaq. The man, however, was unable to find Ishaq as he was away from home searching for Anwar in Barisal.

Later, Ishaq and his wife Rina Parveen Kazi came to the city and contacted the professor and Ain-O-Salish Kendro to get back their son.

"Over the last 13 months, I have been to Dhaka, Barisal, Bagerhat, Gopalganj, Faridpur, Moksdepur, Khagrachhari and Rajbari in search of my son," said Ishaq yesterday morning at The Daily Star office.

On the day he went missing, Anwar left his residence in the morning to go to a nearby village. Local people last saw him at a boat race on the bank of the Madhumoti river at Pachuria that evening.

"No one could tell us anything about Anwar after this," his father said.

Family members rushed to all the places they heard Anwar had been spotted, but all their efforts were in vain.

"I want to see my son back home and request everyone to help us rescue him," Rina said.

ence of encroachment spelled the death of the river.

At Kamalbagh in Sutrapur, the BIWTA knocked down a three-storey house and a cement warehouse built by Hafiz Kamal, one of the influential encroachers, who showed a court stay order against demolition of his structures.

A BIWTA official said Kamal occupied 11 acres for years.

"Most encroachers enjoy political leverage," the official told The Daily Star, seeking anonymity.

## JS body seeks

**FROM PAGE 12** at the non-availability of quality seeds and non-replacement of old and degenerated seeds with newer ones, which are ripping the potential to grow more foodgrains.

"The flooding of Bangladesh's market with low-quality jute seeds is a matter of concern. We've to deal it effectively," said Mannan, a ruling BNP lawmaker.

Meeting sources said except for little amount of seeds supplied by the public, private and NGO sectors, farmers in Bangladesh depend largely on 'farmer-to-farmer' exchanges for seeds and in the process, quality of seed is often compromised resulting in less-than-expected growth in food production.

The BADC could supply hardly 40,000 to 45,000 tonnes of seeds to farmers every year, which could meet just over five percent of annual seed requirements.

## Sierra Leone

**FROM PAGE 1** extended between the two countries' private sectors.

Sierra Leone sought investment in garment and textile sectors, and technical support and expertise from Bangladesh to use its 5.2 million hectares of cultivable land lying idle, according to sources.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, Agriculture Minister MK Anwar, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Reaz Rahman and Foreign Secretary Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury assisted Khaleda during the discussion.

Kabbah was aided by his Foreign and International Co-operation Minister Momodu Koroma and Agriculture and Food Security Minister SS Monde.

Briefing newsmen after the discussion, the foreign secretary said the Sierra Leone president has come to Dhaka to express his country's profound gratitude to Bangladesh for helping it restore peace by sending its troops to the UN peacekeeping mission.

"People of Sierra Leone not only welcome Bangladesh troops, but they are reluctant to let them leave as well," the president was quoted as saying.

## India offers

**FROM PAGE 12** surprise move may help address Islamabad's concerns over what it sees as Indian foot-dragging in a shaky peace process after the nuclear rivals came near war last year.

"As far as dialogue is concerned, that is not possible unless we see evidence on the ground that cross-border terrorism is being brought to an end," Sinha told reporters.

"We are hoping that as a result of these steps, Pakistan will be persuaded to give up the path of confrontation, the path of violence, the path of cross-border terrorism and come to the negotiating table."

Islamabad, which has repeatedly called for talks to resolve a 56-year-old dispute over Kashmir that has triggered two wars between the nuclear-armed neighbors, says it is doing all it can to stop the flow of militants into Kashmir.

The Indian cabinet also agreed to propose to Pakistan a bus service between the main cities of Indian and Pakistani Kashmir – Srinagar and Muzaffarabad – as well as another bus link further south and a ferry service between the two nations' financial capitals, Bombay and Karachi.

India's proposal also includes a link between the coast guards of the two countries, non-arrest of Pakistan fishermen within a certain band on sea, free treatment to another batch of 20 children of Pakistan.

Sinha said India would consider increasing the strength of its staffers at its mission in Islamabad and Pakistani staff in New Delhi.

Sinha said India would hold talks on restoration of air links and thereafter parleys would be held on resumption of train service.

He said Pakistan has already been informed about India's proposals and India was awaiting their response.

India and Pakistan started on a shaky peace path in April and restored full diplomatic relations and a sole bus route. But the process slowed amid rising violence in Kashmir and Islamabad's concerns about the pace of progress in New Delhi.

## Advani