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**ECNEC okays 11 projects involving Tk 1320cr**

The Executive Committee of National Economic Council yesterday approved 11 projects involving an estimated cost of Tk 1320 crore, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presided over the meeting at the PM office that decided to implement Western Zone Gas Project at a cost of Tk 217.07 crore for expanding the gas lines to Alenga, Tangail, Baghabari and Siraganj.

Under the project, a six-kilometre 30-inch-diameter gas line will be constructed through the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge, a 30-km line from Alenga to eastern part of JMB, a 5-km line from west point of the bridge to Siraganj and 20-km one from Nakla to Baghabari.

Under another scheme, the government is buying 200 double-deckers for BRTC at a cost of Tk 77.22 crore. The buses will run in the capital city.

The ECNEC approved another project — Rehabilitation of Power Plants (Amended) — costing Tk 635.95 crore for increasing their capacity and longevity.

Ashuganj Thermal Power Plant, Karnaphuli Hydroelectric Centre, Chittagong Barge Mounted Plant, Shikhabaha Thermal Power Plant, Shahjee Bazar Gas Turbine Power Plant, Khulna Barge Mounted Plant and Bheramara Gas Turbine will be rehabilitated under the project.

For the massive rehabilitation programme for the power plants, the meeting approved an additional 438.50 megawatt electricity will be generated to minimise the power shortfall.

The ECNEC meeting also endorsed a project for collecting modern hydraulic composting garbage truck for disposal of rubbish from the city.

It seeks to collect 75 garbage trucks with three-ton capacity and spare parts at an estimated cost of Tk 23.80 crore.

Another project approved by the ECNEC is the Bangladesh Poverty Alleviation Training Complex to be implemented at a cost of Tk 16.19 crore.

The five-year project to be implemented by the Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) will be completed in June 2002. Poor people, including women, will be trained under the project for raising their professional skill, earning and improving standard of living.

Other projects okayed by the ECNEC are: Participatory Livestock Development Project with the financial assistance of Asian Development Bank, Flood Protection Embankment Project styled Polder-71, Rural Development Project-14 (Tangail District Infrastructure Development Phase-II), Interim Period Project-3 for improving water supply situation, Construction of Union Health and Family Welfare Centres and Construction of Crude Oil Storage Tank.

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**Panel backed by VC sweeps JU polls**

**By JU Correspondent**

The panel backed by Vice-Chancellor Prof Amirul Islam Chowdhury swept the elections for teachers' representatives in the Syndicate and the Academic Council of Jahangirnagar University held yesterday.

The panel got three out of five seats in the Syndicate and five out of six seats in the Academic Council.

The three Syndicate members from the panel are Prof Tajul Islam, Associate Professor Abdul Mannan Chowdhury and Assistant Professor Ahmed Reza.

The two other seats went to Prof Khondakar Mustahidur Rahman and Lecturer Naimul Islam of the panel backed by Prof Khandaker Mustahidur Rahman, former president of the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers Association.

Ahmed Reza got the highest vote of 135.

Associate Professor Firoza Hossain, Associate Professor Mohammad Rafiquzzaman, Assistant Professor M A Mamun, Assistant Professor, Ruhul Amin Selim and Lecturer Mostafa Jamal Monsur were elected members of the Academic Council from the VC-backed panel. Associate Professor Qamrul Hossain of the Mustahid-backed panel got the rest one seat in the Academic Council.

Prof Rabul Islam was elected Finance Committee member from the Mustahid-backed panel.

JU Registrar Mohammad Ali conducted the polls held at the Teachers' Club from 9 am to 1 pm.



Nuns of the Missionaries of Charity Order gather around the tombstone of Mother Teresa's grave yesterday a day after she was buried. The grave is located inside a room in the Mother House of the order which Mother Teresa founded. — AFP/UNB photo

**Link road at Motijheel still remains occupied**

**By Staff Correspondent**

Despite ministerial intervention, link road behind Sonali Bank head office at Motijheel in the city still remains under the occupation of roadside shopkeepers who claimed that they had occupied the part of the road for too long to quit.

State Minister for Land Rashed Mosharrar intervened following reports that the Land Reforms Board had leased out the road for one year. The Board claimed that 18 kathas of land there belonged to the family of Nawab Sir Salimullah, of which was the custodian.

The State Minister asked the relevant officials to start the procedure to cancel the lease and take necessary steps to clear the road immediately. He also said legal action will be taken against those involved in leasing out a public road.

At the site yesterday, this correspondent saw that the lease-holders had earlier built several makeshift shops.

**Feni dist admin admits its failure to contain terrorism**

FENI, Sept 14: Top officials of the district admitted their inability to tackle law and order situation in Feni, reports UNB.

Deputy Commissioner Noor Mohammad at a meeting before the district administration and local journalists said they could not come to grips with the situation and sought cooperation from the newsmen in containing terrorism.

Police Superintendent Kazi Anwar Hossain said police shelter was the main cause of violence. DC presided over the meeting.

"Violence can be stopped if the terrorists sheltered by political parties surrender their arms," the district police chief said.

The journalists suggested the authorities to declare the district as 'terrorism-stricken zone' and take effective measures to check the violence.



**UK Secy of State for Int'l Dev arrives today**

The British Secretary of State for International Development, Clare Short MP, arrives in the city today on a four-day visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

This will be her first official visit to a developing country and also the first even high-level visit to Bangladesh by a British minister since the new Labour government assumed office on May 1.

During her stay here, short, who is a cabinet minister, will call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, said a high commission press release.

Short will leave Dhaka for Hong Kong on Friday for a four-day visit to Hong Kong and a two-day visit to Japan.

**They now want to get rid of a difficult char life**

**From Shehab Ahmed**

RULIPARA (Tangail) Sept 14: All the eight students of class X of the Jangipura Rulipara Junior High School have one thing in common. They all want to leave this remote char of Jamuna when they complete their school final.

None wants to follow their parents, who struggled to eke out a living since they settled down here 17 years ago. The struggle is still on. The students study at a school which is yet to get a berth in the education ministry's financial mooring.

Apart from the Jangipara School there are two more to cater to the children of this crowded settlement, whose populations climbed to seven thousand with the arrival of others from nearby chars.

These chars disappeared when engineers began training the mighty Jamuna for the bridge nearby. The river had been 12 kilometres wide. But it is only 4.8-km now. As engineers trimmed here a large part of neighbouring Kawakola union disappeared, scattering its inhabitants.

Some found refuge in Gabsara union where Jangipura is located. Others scattered around, some left for the cities. Others found a virgin char at Chandani, trying to start life again.

There is no doctor for the seven thousand people. The nearest place for a doctor is available is Gobindpur ferry ghat. Emergency cases are taken to the Bhuapur thana health centre, Wajed Mia, a villager said.

But it takes two hours by boat to reach the hospital during flood season. When Jamuna becomes thin in winter people have to walk on the dry beds of its channels for five to six hours to reach a doctor.

The chars belong to one of the least developed areas of Bangladesh. The constant shifting of channels, floods and droughts make life on chars very difficult. Despite all problems some two million people live on the chars of Jamuna. When one char is washed away they migrate to the other. They hang on their documents of ownership, tax receipts etc, hoping someday when the chars reemerge they would be able to claim their lost lands, a researcher studying their lives say.

To help them stay on the chars and make a living, an NGO, the Jamuna Char Integrated Development Project (JCIDP), is working in the area for sometime. Professor Shankarchandra Das, Chairman of JCIDP said.

His project which received some help from the German government last month decided to help the erosion-affected people stay back instead of crowding the cities. The project has three components: to install tubewells, latrines, distribution of bamboo pillars for housing, planting of Katkin grass locally known as Kaisha which help accelerate accretion of new chars for settlement and cultivation, also providing income from their sale and producing molasses. Besides the JCIDP is supporting the Rulipara school since 1995, paying salaries to the teachers with donations from the villagers.

**9 children, 3 women rescued from traffickers**

**From Our Correspondent RAJSHAHI, Sept 14:** Law enforcing agency personnel rescued three women and nine children when they were being trafficked to India through Hilli border in Dinajpur last night.

They were handed over to Hakimpur thana police, sources in the office of DIG police said here today.

The rescued persons are Jobeda, 40, Rashida, 32, Sayeda, 27, Fatema, 10, Sadara, 7, Setara, 8, Hamida, 4, Ambia, 8, Parvin, 10, Sanowara, 8, Monowara, 7, and Anwara 12. They were brought from Chittagong and were being taken to India, the rescued persons said.

Abdul Quddus, driver of the auto tempo (Dinajpur No-613/0001) in which was carrying them to the border was also arrested.

**Park: DCC officials**

**From Page 1**

of hawkers prepared by the DCC. The list was prepared just after the last Eid holidays when genuine hawkers in the area were out on holidays," he said.

On the pavements of Bangabandhu Avenue, hundreds of hawkers were doing business as usual. Many showed their anger at the occupation of the park by other hawkers. "Most of those people are hawkers from other parts of the city or non-hawkers installed by political parties," said Latif, a vendor of ready-made shirts. "If later the DCC comes to evict us from the pavement we will fight back," he said.

At the Osmany Uddyan, few dozen hawkers were already doing business with their merchandise in large baskets. Others played cards and kept vigil on the sites they had occupied.

At the Estate Office in Nagar Bhaban, groups of men approached the Estate Officer with their written demands in hand to claim plots in the Osmany Uddyan. They represented a range of known and unknown organisations from the vicinity and said they deserved plots because they were genuine hawkers.

An DCC official denied miking on Thursday and blamed *mastans* in the area for taking over Osmany Uddyan. He said the DCC had already prepared a list to rehabilitate hawkers from Bangabandhu Avenue and Gulistan area which bore the names of 4,000 hawkers.

"We were processing the list and were about to put up fences to demarcate the shops when on Thursday the matter went out of control," said the official who admitted that DCC officials were on the site to open up the gates.

Another DCC official said the Mayor had asked the Estate Department to complete the rehabilitation of the hawkers by Friday. "This prompted the Estate Department to act in an extreme hurry and apparently without any plan whatsoever," said the DCC official requesting anonymity.

Meanwhile, a PDW official said Osmany Uddyan belonged to his department and the DCC did not seek any permission before designating it for holding of public meetings or hawkers' rehabilitation.

When questioned, a top DCC official admitted the fact that he had acted on the recommendations made by the Prime Minister's Office.

Mayor Mohammad Hanif could not be reached for his comments despite several attempts.

**India expels 2 Pak HC staff**

ISLAMABAD, Sept 14: India has expelled two Pakistan High Commission staff in New Delhi ahead of new talks between the rivals due to start tomorrow, officials here today, reports AFP.

The two staff, who were not diplomats, were accused of spying, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said. No other details about the case were given.

**Indo-Pak talks**

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The discussion will focus on operationalising the mechanism agreed upon at the second session held here in June," he said.

He said the joint statement on June 23 called for "substantive negotiations on an eight point agenda which puts Jammu and Kashmir and peace and security issues on the top of the list."

The New Delhi talks resume after weeks of uncertainty triggered by recent border clashes in Kashmir and 'conflicting statements' from India.

Pakistan said it decided to dispatch Ahmed after receiving partially satisfactory clarifications from India.

They have very positive attitude towards the talks and despite provocation Pakistan refused to be pushed into negative areas, the spokesman said.

**BCL factions clash at IU**

**From Our Correspondent ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY, Kushtia, Sept 14:** A tense situation is prevailing at the Islamic University and its adjoining areas following chases and counter-chase between rival groups of Chhatra League, led by its president Shamsul Islam Joha and general secretary Harun-ur-Rashid respectively on the campus today.

Several bombs were exploded and at least 20 gunshots fired during the chase and counter-chase which spilled over to Anandanagar, Tribeni and Pododmi villages near the university. None was injured.

It all began when Harun's group chased the Joha group activists who were holding a rally on the campus.

Today's incident was sequel to Thursday's incident in which an activist of Harun group, Bodiuzzaman, was beaten on the campus, sources said.

**JCCI wants JP demonstration Sept 21**

**From Page 1**

The Finance Minister told them that the government had created Law Reform Commission to update existing laws to have a suitable investment environment. Administrative Reform Commission has been established to increase efficiency of administration to remove bottlenecks.

He gave a brief on investment scope as well as incentives being provided for foreign investors in the country and called for greater Japanese investment in Bangladesh.

The delegation has come to Bangladesh to explore investment opportunities here following the recent visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Japan, which created immense interest of Japanese businessmen about Bangladesh, said an official release.

**Teenage maid**

**From Page 1**

Dhanmondi police said they filed an unnatural death case and sent the body to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy.

Piru's mother, Aleya Begum, was reported to have claimed that her daughter died of torturing.

On Thursday, Piru was admitted to a clinic on Indira Road but she was shifted to BMCH on Friday as her condition was deteriorating.

**Maid dies**

**From Page 1**

working as maid in the house of Amir's daughter, Khaleda, at Habiganj. DMCH sources said doctors found evidence of rape on the body of the dead girl.

Amir, who lives in London, said he found the injured maid lying at the door of his daughter's flat at about midnight Saturday. Amir could not give any details about where and how the girl was violated and stabbed. The body was sent to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

**Hearing of Lipi rape case begins in Barisal**

**From Staff Correspondent BARISAL, Sept 14:** Hearing of the sensational Lipi Rani Shil rape case started here today in the court of Md Araesh Uddin, Judge of the special court under Woman and Child Repression Control Act, 1995.

The case was transferred from the court of thana magistrate earlier.

The judge received the charge sheet today and issued warrant of arrest against four absconding accused, under articles 9(c) and 14 of the Act.

Lipi Rani was forcibly taken to a college hostel here and allegedly violated on July 8.

The absconding accused are: Sohel, Saurav, Suman and Rana.

**Peasants barricade roads in dists**

A three-hour road barricade programme was partially observed across the country yesterday, demanding fixation of minimum jute price at Tk 500 per maund, reports UNB.

Krishak O Khetmajur Sangram Parishad, a conglomerate of 14 peasants and land workers' organisations, enforced the road barricade. Their demands also included distribution of *khas* land among the landless.

Sources here said the barricade programme was observed in Goaldana, Madhukhali, Jessore, Joydevpur, Gaibandha, Natore, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dinajpur and Muktagachha areas.

Addressing a gathering at Muktagachha in Mymensingh, Workers Party General Secretary Rashed Khan Menon said Sheikh Hasina had committed to ensure jute price at Tk 500 per maund.

"She assumed power with this commitment, but her government has failed to keep the word," he told the spontaneous gathering at Trimohini.

**Khaleda**

**From Page 1**

alleged that local industries are on the verge of ruin as the government had opened the border to create market for another country.

She said local mills and factories are being closed by creating artificial loadshedding across the country, particularly in Chittagong and Khulna regions.

Begum Zia urged the government again, not to give corridor to India in the name of transit and said that the people would resist the move at any cost.

She said the government has pushed the economy into crisis and forced the common people to bear extra burden of increased fuel prices.

In this situation, people of all walks of life and all professions have become aggrieved. "They want movement to get rid of this situation," she added.

Former Finance Minister Saifur Rahman, Sirajul Hossain Khan, Amanullah Aman MP, Zakaria Khan Chowdhury, Khaleda Rabbani and local leaders of the party spoke on the occasion.

Later, Begum Zia exchanged views with local journalists at Habiganj Circuit House in the evening. She left here for Dhaka tonight.

**Explosions in refinery**

**From Page 1**

Vishakhapatnam, police said. Rescue workers recovered 12 bodies from the security office of the sprawling complex. Eight of the 12 persons hospitalised with 100 per cent burns died later, police said. Doctors say that persons with such extensive burns rarely survive.

Details of the victims were not immediately known, but police said all of them likely were workers of the plant.

Doctors treated 100 persons, many of them security personnel, who suffered minor burns, police said.

Each tanker normally has a crew of five workers, but police said they are not sure how many were actually on duty at the time of the explosion.

Police said one tanker contained liquefied petroleum gas, while the other three had diesel, kerosene and petroleum. It was not clear how much fuel was in each tank at the time of the explosion.

Huge flames shot up in the air, preventing fire fighters from reaching the source of the blaze. Fifty fire engines were called to assist authorities at the refinery, police said.

Residents ran out of their houses on hearing a deafening explosion at 7 am local time (01:30 GMT). Huge flames and acrid smoke belched from the refinery, they said in telephone interviews.

The explosion could be heard in a radius of 10 kilometres and it shattered windows panes of many houses in the area.

Balaji Rao, a government official living in a village 11 kilometres from the refinery, said he could see orange flames in the sky from his house.

Local officials have evacuated people living near the refinery and have lodged them in temporary shelters in a local sports stadium and in a school. All pipelines that carried gas out of the refinery have been shut down as a precaution.

Vishakhapatnam port authorities were planning to shift ships from the fertilizer and oil refinery berths to anchorage, according to a report of the Lloyds of London Press Ltd.

The refinery, which processes 4.5 million metric tons of crude oil every year, had reopened yesterday after a month long shut down for repairs.

Company officials said the explosion was an accident, but local authorities said they would investigate the cause of the fire.

**Talks on draft CHT accord**

**From Page 1**

Highly placed sources described yesterday's meeting as 'exploratory in nature'. Both sides traded further notes on the draft of a proposed agreement prepared earlier during their five-day meeting in the city which ended on July 19.

Talks bogged down again yesterday on the key issues of delegation of power to a 'regional council', headed by a tribal person, with wide authority to oversee local administration, law and order up to a certain level and levy taxes as well as administer lands.

Besides, the vexed issue of expulsion of settlers from the CHT, withdrawal of the security forces remained unresolved.

During the yesterday meeting, the NCCHT made it clear that land rights of the tribals would be guaranteed under the existing law. The government would constitute a Land Commission headed by a High Court Judge and conduct survey after the peace agreement.

The NCCHT also ruled out PCJSS demands for placing of the state-owned lands which include the Kaptai hydro-electricity project, Betunia ground satellite station and other strategic lands under the authority of the Regional Council.

The NCCHT also stressed early resumption of repatriation of the refugees from this winter. But the PCJSS leaders said it all depends on the Refugee Welfare Association, based in Tripura, according to meeting sources last night.

Earlier despite the disagreements at the fifth meeting both sides, had reported 'satisfactory progress' towards an accord.

Hopes for a breakthrough in the current meeting mounted when a key tribal leader, Upendra Lal Chakma, who leads the tribal refugees in Tripura camps, made a secret visit to Dhaka from Agartala on Friday. He had an unannounced meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office.

Details were not known about the meeting. But officials hoped that it would have a bearing on the current negotiations with the PCJSS which had earlier insisted on repatriation of the refugees, some 40 thousand, from Tripura to their homes, to help the peace negotiations.

Earlier, a military helicopter ferried the six-member PCJSS delegation, which included the personal physician of Shantu Larma, to Dhaka at 12:30 pm from their temporary headquarters at Dudukchhara. It is a remote hamlet in Khagrachhari district, near the border with Tripura, where the PCJSS high command arrived on Saturday.

NCCHT members Kalparanjan Chakma MP, Dipankar Talukdar MP, Engineer Mosharrar Hossain MP, Awami League leader Ataur Rahman Khan Kaisar, former divisional commissioner of Chittagong Ali Haider Khan and retired additional secretary S S Chakma were present on the government side.

Rupayan Dewan, Goutam Kumar Chakma, Sudhanshu Khisha and Raktopal Tripura are in the PCJSS team.

Secretary of the Special Affairs Division Kazi Golem Rahman, Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong Sakhawat Hossain and Khagrachhari Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Ismail were also present.

**Protest day**

**From Page 1**

and arrest and harassment of BNP workers.

BNP's demands include making the parliament effective, ensuring fair price of agricultural crops, reducing prices of fertilizer and other agricultural inputs, repealing the 'undemocratic' village council act, reopening the close mills and factories, ensuring congenial academic atmosphere, full implementation of pay commission, declaration of wage commission, introduction of voters' identity card, reshuffling of the Election Commission, release of all arrested BNP leaders and workers and withdrawal of false cases filed against them.

**DCC denies**

**From Page 1**

protest rally at the venue as per the time announced earlier. BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia is scheduled to address the rally.

Official sources said Kazi Abul Bashar, joint convener of city BNP, applied to the DCC on Thursday seeking permission for holding the rally on the street in front of party's central office.

DCC's chief estate officer sent a letter to him yesterday, saying seven meeting venues have already been decided to avoid traffic jam and public sufferings.

He regretted that after this decision of the government there is no scope to allow any rally on city streets and requested the BNP to hold the rally at any of the seven venues.