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Today's issue
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VOL. VIII NO. 149 REGD. NO. DA 781 INTERNET: <http://www.dailystarnews.com> ASHAR 9, 1405 BS DHAKA TUESDAY JUNE 23, 1998 SAFAR 27, 1419 HIJRI 24 PAGES: PRICE TAKA 6.00

Four Occidental officials sacked

From Iqbal Siddiquee
SYLHET, June 22: US company Occidental has sacked four of its officials including a drilling engineer and drilling manager for their 'inefficiency and mishandling' of the project work, government officials said today.

When contacted Occidental officials here neither confirmed nor denied that the four officials were sacked, saying "it is an internal matter." They, however, acknowledged that the company is required to inform the government about such changes.

The sacked drilling manager and drilling engineer were posted at the Lakkatura gasfield where a gas leakage occurred on April 28, sources said.

Occidental was doing a 'work over' at the Lakkatura well with Deutag, a German company, as the drilling sub-contractor when the incident occurred.

An inquiry into the gas leakage incident conducted by the government revealed that "the incident occurred as the operating company did not properly take care of the well."

Grand opening of Bangabandhu Jamuna Bridge today

By Staff Correspondent

The dream of the nation will come true today with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina opening the Bangabandhu Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge.

The bridge will be opened at 10 am.

More than 2,000 guests including ministers of some SAARC countries, representatives of Japanese and South Korean governments and donor agencies, ministers, members of parliament, diplomats, local public representatives and journalists will converge on the bank of Jamuna to witness opening of the 4.8 kilometre long and 18.50 metre wide bridge.

Bangladesh Television will telecast live the opening ceremony. BBC, CNN and Zee TV will also cover the programme. Some 30 journalists coming from different parts of the world will also cover the event.

The bridge will establish direct road link between the eastern and western parts of the country, separated by the mighty Jamuna for centuries.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed in a message yesterday said inauguration of the bridge will fulfil a long cherished desire of the people to connect the north-western part of the country with the eastern part.

The people across the country actively participated in implementation of the project by contributing Jamuna surcharge and all the governments were involved in the construction plan, arrangement of funds and implementation process of the bridge," the President observed.

Four ministers from four SAARC countries and one deputy minister from South Korea arrived in the city yesterday to attend the inaugural ceremony.

They are Pakistan Railway Minister Sardar Yaqub Khan Nasir, Indian Minister for Law, Justice, Communications and Transport Dr. M Thambi Durai, Sri Lankan Minister for Transport and Highway A H M Fowzee, Nepalese Minister for Works and Transport Vijaya Kumar Gachhadar and South Korean Deputy Minister Kang Yeon Mo.

The bridge cost 13 lives.

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Gas pipeline not before early next year

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

Not until early next year will people in the western part of the country get access to natural gas through pipeline.

Their dream came close to reality when work to build the necessary infrastructure began after the prime minister's commitment that pipeline gas would be made available to the people on other side of the Jamuna from the day the Bangabandhu Bridge would be open to traffic.

The collapse of the 30-inch pipeline attached to the bridge on June 11 killed even the

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Sheikh Hasina's two years in office 'I will not cling to power. We are ready to face people any time'

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said her government will resign 'when the time comes' and hand over power to a neutral caretaker government to hold the next election.

"She (Begum Zia) does not have to raise any demand. I will resign when the time comes. I won't wait for her demand," a confident Hasina told United News of Bangladesh (UNB) Sunday.

The agency interviewed the Prime Minister marking the completion of her second year in office.

The Prime Minister said: "We've all set up a system that election will be held under a neutral non-party caretaker government and whoever is in power will have to resign before the election. And we will do the same."

She asked the Leader of the Opposition not to create any 'unstable situation' in the country. "Repose trust on people. People will give their verdict through election."

When her attention was drawn to Begum Khaleda Zia's demand for mid-term polls after the June 18 hartal, a confident Hasina said: "I have no objection."

She said: "We've confidence in people. We are ready to face people at any time."

"Like her (Begum Zia), I don't want to cling to power," Hasina said. "I am working for the people and have no fascination for the chair."

During the interview, Hasina replied to questions on pressing issues in politics, economy and foreign affairs of the country.

The Prime Minister, who assumed power on June 23 two years ago, said: "We want peace, we want stability. People of this country are very poor, they also want peace, work and their economic development."

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Supplement

Today's 24-page issue of The Daily Star contains three special supplements: Two years of Awami League government on Pages 17-20, Bangabandhu Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge on Pages 21-24 and BNP on Jamuna Bridge on Page 11

Preciado rekindles Colombia's hope

MONTPELLIER, France, June 22: Substitute Leader Preciado fired the winner seven minutes from the end as Colombia, who limped home in dismay from World Cup 1994, stayed in contention for the second round of France '98 with a nervous 1-0 victory over Tunisia, reports AP.

Preciado took a pass from veteran Carlos Valderrama, shook off challenges from Sami Trabelsi and Clayton, and prodded the ball home from 12 meters (yards).

It was a goal that sent the Colombian players and bench into wild celebrations while the Tunisians, also beaten 2-0 by England, looked almost certain to drop out of the championship.

They were certain to go off if Romania and England tied later Monday.

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Colombian captain Carlos Valderrama (R) is challenged by Tunisian players Tarek Thabet (C) and Skander Souayah during their World Cup Group G match yesterday. —AFP

Govt to consider reduction of BJMB toll

By Staff Correspondent

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed in a statement said the government would consider a 'realistic step' to be taken regarding reduction of the toll rate for vehicles crossing the Bangabandhu Bridge over the Jamuna.

He also said that transport strike in the northern region of the country was withdrawn following successful talks over the issue of toll.

Earlier, taking the floor on a point of order, Jatiya Party Whip Fazole Rabbi spoke about the transport strike and urged the government to reduce the toll.

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Quit power, announce fresh polls: Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia has demanded resignation of the government of Sheikh Hasina and immediate announcement of mid-term elections.

"We've seen you (in power) for two years... Enough has been done. Now quit power and announce a fresh election," Begum Zia, also chairperson of BNP, said yesterday without naming Sheikh Hasina.

She was addressing a huge public meeting at the city's Paltan Maidan.

"If you don't quit, we'll go for such a tough agitation that will leave no way for you to escape. Even those across the border won't shelter you people," she warned those in power, blaming them for a total failure in the past two years.

Begum Zia also asked the government to resolve the crisis of power, gas and water and improve the law and order without further delay or to face a tough agitation.

She announced a programme for 'mass procession' on July 1 to force the government to withdraw fresh taxes in the proposed budget, its order to close shops and other business establishments by 7 pm and keep mills and factories closed during 5 pm-11 pm. A greater agitation will be announced on July 1, she said. "If necessary, there will be non-stop hartal to oust the government."

In her 41-minute speech, the former prime minister branded the AL government as "liar, fascist, tyrant, corrupt and betrayer" and said: "There is no single instance of success in any sector in its two years of rule."

But the main thrust in her speech was on shortage of power, gas and water and deterioration of law and order that hit the people directly.

The CHT peace accord, the Bangabandhu Jamuna Bridge, the Jatiya Sangsad and prices of essentials were some other major issues she spoke about.

Alleging political oppression, she said: "We are ready to face people any time."

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Highlights of AL govt

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina steps into the third year of her rule today, reports UNB.

Her Awami League had emerged victorious in the June 12, 1996 general elections and she took oath of office of the Prime Minister on June 23.

Signing of the 30-year Ganges Water Sharing Treaty with India on December 12, 1996 and the CHT peace accord with the tribal insurgents on December 2, 1998 capped the success of her 2-year-old regime.

Another feather to the Hasina government is the completion of the long cherished Bangabandhu Jamuna Bridge to connect the country to part with the eastern region.

Other highlights of the Awami League government include:

- 1) Registration of proposals for foreign investment worth over 3405 million US dollars in industrial project with BOI. Investments were proposed in sectors like power generation, telecommunication, textile, ceramic, chemical, engineering, software and data processing.
- 2) Realistic policy brought huge investment in the oil and gas sector.
- 3) Solution to the GSP crisis, created during the previous government regarding export of readymade garments (RMG) in

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স্বপ্নের সফল বাস্তবায়ন

"বঙ্গবন্ধু সেতু"

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সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের প্রতি
আমাদের অভিনন্দন

অস্বাদনী ব্যাংক
দেশ ও জাতির সেবায় প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ

CMC student abducted at gunpoint

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 22: Tension flared up in the port city today following alleged abduction of a student of Chittagong Medical College by armed terrorists for ransom.

Police said Mahub Rahman, a fourth year student, was abducted at gunpoint by four armed terrorists in a microbus from Chandgao area at about 5 pm yesterday while he was returning home from college in a rickshaw.

The abductors demanded a ransom of Tk ten lakh for his release, police said adding that search operation was on to rescue the victim.

Students of Chittagong Medical College today started an indefinite boycott of classes and put up a road barricade in front of the college demanding rescue of the abducted student.

Meanwhile, the Chittagong chapter of Bangladesh Medical Association today brought out a silent procession and held a rally in the city protesting attack on their chambers and laboratories and illegal toll collection from them by terrorists and the alleged abduction of the medical student.

At the rally, held in front of the Chittagong Press Club, the BMA demanded rescue of the student within 24 hours. Otherwise, the BMA will launch a movement against terrorism, the speakers said.

UNB adds: The Chittagong Medical College Students Union (CMCSU) blamed a certain group, which ransacked three clinics nearby the college and assaulted three physicians demanding tolls five days before Mahub was kidnapped.

A CMCSU source said the student was kidnapped when Chittagong Medical College Teachers Association (CMCTA) called a protest programme for the incident.

A case was filed in this connection.

Alleged bus dacoit beaten to death

By Staff Correspondent

An alleged dacoit, who was caught red-handed along with his two accomplices while trying to rob passengers of a bus, was beaten to death by a mob of the city's Sayedabad terminal yesterday afternoon.

Police could not identify the dead man, aged about 25, immediately. His two accomplices who were also beaten up by the mob were identified as Monir and Nuruddin.

The two injured were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). Meanwhile, Siddhirganj police said last night that Monir and Nuruddin are accused in a case filed on Wednesday in connection with an attempt to rob passengers of a bus at Shimrail area.

According to police, a gang of about five dacoits in guise of passengers boarded a Poruram-bound passenger bus which left the terminal at about 11:30 am. When the bus reached the Shonir Akhra area, two of the dacoits attacked the driver.

Soon, the staff of the bus along with some passengers caught the three while two others of the gang managed to escape jumping out of the vehicle.

The bus came back to Sayedabad with the alleged dacoits where the mob beat them up the three mercilessly, police added.

Police rescued the three from the mob in a critically wounded condition, arrested them and took them to the DMCH where the on-duty doctors declared the

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বঙ্গবন্ধু সেতুর
স্তম্ভ উদ্বোধনে আমাদের
আজরিক অভিনন্দন

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