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## Fuel prices to go up by 30pc

**By Sharier Khan**

The government is once again going to increase prices of petroleum products, this time by at least 30 per cent, on the pretext that crude price in international market has gone up.

The decision may be announced this week, sources said.

The government had increased prices of petroleum products by about 60 per cent in 1997 showing the same reason. Justifying the planned price hike this time, Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) officials claimed that price of crude rose to 27 US dollars per barrel in the international market.

The trend may continue up to March next year and in that case, BPC will incur a loss of Tk 800 crore by that time, the sources claimed. BPC imports crude and refined petroleum products.

Further justifying the price hike, they said since 1990, Taka has been devaluated by big proportions but prices of petroleum products have not been increased significantly. Besides, tax on oil import has also been increased 4.5 times, they said.

But oil industry sources rejected the BPC's claim and termed the planned price hike a "blatant attempt for profiteering" by both the BPC and the government.

They said crude price remained at 21 US dollars per barrel in the international market in the last two weeks and it is showing a downward trend. The highest price in recent times was 23 dollars, they said.

On August 21, 1997, three ministers at a press conference announced the government decision of a massive increase in the prices of petroleum products on the pretext that the international oil price was soaring. They had said that BPC was incurring loss.

The ministers had claimed that the international oil price rose to 27 dollars per barrel from 17-18 dollars as a result BPC incurred Tk 450 crore loss.

In 1997, prices of petrol and octane were increased by 60 per cent to Tk 21 and Tk 23 per litre respectively from around Tk 13 and Tk 14. Diesel price was however increased by Tk 0.5 per litre only.

The three ministers - the then Energy Minister Noor Uddin Khan, Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed and Finance Minister SAMS Kibria - had promised at the press conference that local prices would be reduced when prices in the world market fall. But the promise was never kept.

The present prices of petroleum products are already irrationally high and these cover the so-called price hike in the international market. In 1997, they had claimed that international oil price was 25 dollars, and enhanced the price massively. Now also, they are saying that oil price is 27 dollars.

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## Bangladeshi shot dead by BSF in Jessore

**JESSORE, Oct 9:** A Bangladeshi national was shot dead and two others were injured by Indian Border Security Force on Banibitol border Friday night, reports UNB.

Official sources here said today that the incident took place on the Indian side of the border opposite Raghunathpur camp of Bangladesh Rifles in Sharsha thana at about 10 pm.

BDR sources said BSF fired on some Bangladeshi citizens when they crossed over to Banibitol of India.

Abdus Samad, 24, son of Khalilur Rahman of village Dighirpar of Sharsha thana, died on the spot.

Babar Ali, 28, of Dighirpar and Master Ali, 30, of Fultola thana of Khulna district were struck by bullets.

The BSF personnel took away the body. The injured were admitted to Bagan Hospital in India.

A flag meeting between BDR and BSF was held on the no man's land this evening. BDR Company commander Abdul Jabbar and BSF Inspector Pannah Lal led their respective sides at the talks that apparently failed to settle the matter.

"We cannot return the body without permission of the higher authorities," BSF team leader told the BDR delegation at the talks.

BDR 32 Battalion Commander Lt Col Abdul Halim Khan visited the spot.

## Afternoon hurricane flattens Bangladesh

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THE TERMINATOR'S TRADEMARK SHOT: Brian Lara executes a one-legged pull during his virtuoso hundred yesterday. — Star photo by Anisur Rahman

**By Hasan Masood**

Brian Lara scored his 13th one-day century as West Indies clinched the two-match limited-overs series 2-0 with a 100-run whipping of Bangladesh in the second match at the Bangladesh National Stadium last night.

Lara, the left-hander from Trinidad, considered one of the greatest batsmen of all times, scored a quickfire 117 runs off only 62 balls to inspire his side to a mouthful 314 for six in 50 overs after he won the toss and decided to bat.

In reply, Bangladesh were all out for 205 in the face of some controlled bowling by the Caribbean.

Lara, who began the innings along with Sherwin Campbell, gave a flying start to the West Indies innings. The southpaw massacred the Bangladesh new-ball bowlers as West Indies reached their 50 in the sixth over facing only 33 balls.

Lara reached his fifty in the eighth over playing only 26 balls that saw a dozen boundaries. He took another 19 balls to reach the three figures with another six fours and three over boundaries.

The West Indies captain's marauding maul came to an end in the 20th over when he dragged down a Habibul Bashar off-spinner on to his own stumps when he was on 117.

After adding 98 runs for the first wicket along with Campbell (28), Lara partnered hard-hitter Ricardo Powell (21) to add another 63 runs before the latter was caught by Enamul Hoque at long-on while trying to drive all-rounder Khaled Mahmud in the 16th over.

Lara then added 24 runs with Hinds before being spun out. His 45-ball century was the second quickest hundred in the history of ODI. Pakistani opener Shahid Afridi holds the world record of a 37-ball century. Besides, on his way to 117, Lara became the fourth West Indian to reach the 6000 mark in one-day cricket after Viv Richards.

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## Foundation of Rangunia EPZ to be laid today

**From Staff Correspondent**

**CHITTAGONG, Oct 9:** The ground breaking ceremony of Rangunia Export Processing Zone (REPZ) here - the first in private sector - will be held at 10 am tomorrow.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to lay the foundation stone of REPZ, official sources said.

Addressing a press conference here today, the Managing Director of Chittagong Industrial Park Ltd., which will implement the REPZ project said construction work would begin soon. REPZ would cover 171 acres of land at Rangunia.

The REPZ, to be implemented in two years at a cost of Tk 2700 crore, is expected to draw an investment of 500 million US dollars, said A Gaiyum Chowdhury MD of CIPIL.

He added that 40 per cent high tech and 60 per cent agro-based industries would be accommodated in REPZ, generating direct employment opportunities for 50,000 people and indirect employment opportunities.

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## Explosion at Khulna mosque 'Bomb was not planted from outside'

**From Staff Correspondent**

**KHULNA, Oct 9:** Police Commissioner M Anwarul Iqbal today said the bomb which went off Friday night at the Ahmadiya Muslim Jamaat Khana (Kadiani mosque) in Nirala residential area in the town was not planted by anyone from outside.

"The explosion was accidental," he told this correspondent. Details will be available after a full-scale investigation and opinion of army explosive experts is obtained, he said.

Six persons were killed and at least 40 injured when a powerful bomb went off during Jumma prayers in the mosque.

Police recovered one air gun, eight new telephone sets, five helmets, four video films, one VCP, some documents showing their (Kadianis) international link, names of some 'armed cadres' and a huge quantity of telephone cables from the huge mosque area, he said.

Two persons have been arrested for interrogation.

The Inspector General of Police is expected to arrive here tomorrow to visit the spot, the Police Commissioner said.

A temporary police camp has been set up near the area.

There are some thatched houses inside the mosque area where some devotees of the Ahmadiya community lived. They escaped soon after the incident.

The area is well-fortified with high boundary walls, he said.

The mosque which has a separate place earmarked for female devotees is still cordoned by riot police and detectives of police and army.

Police collected some human limbs from the mosque soon after the blast. The human limbs will be treated as *alamats* (evidences) in a case filed with Khulna thana this evening in connection with the blast. The case was filed by OC Abul Khair as complainant.

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## PM's directive Find out culprits of Khulna blast

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed grave concern at the bomb attack on a Mosque in Khulna on Friday in which six people were killed and many others injured, reports BSS.

The Prime Minister also directed the authorities concerned to find out the culprits who bombed a Kadiani mosque in Khulna during Jumma prayers.

The Prime Minister also directed the law enforcing agencies to be on the 'highest alert' so that such incidents do not recur.

She called upon the people of the country to build up resistance against the culprits involved in such dastardly act.

The Prime Minister directed the attending doctors to provide best possible treatment to those who were injured in the bomb explosion. She also prayed for the early recovery of the injured persons.

## Shibir enforces strike at CU

**From CU Correspondent**

**CHITTAGONG, Oct 9:** Islami Chhatra Shibir enforced a day-long strike at the Chittagong University today protesting Thursday's incident on the campus.

Classes and scheduled examinations were not held and offices at the administrative building remained closed during the strike.

In the morning, Shibir activists locked the main gate of the university and did not allow vehicles to enter the campus. They also brought out a procession and held a rally on the campus.

The speakers at the rally demanded immediate arrest of those responsible for the incident.

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) also held a rally in front of the VC's office and demanded exemplary punishment to the Shibir 'extremists'.

Meanwhile, Chittagong University authorities have formed a three-member committee headed by Professor M Sharifuddin, Provost of the Suhrawardy Hall to investigate the incident and asked the committee to submit its report within October 31.

At least 50 people were injured in the clash between Bangladesh Chhatra League and Islami Chhatra Shibir. The clash took place over control of Suhrawardy Hall of the university on Thursday.

BCL, Shibir, filed separate cases with Hathazari thana after the incident.

## Lack of funds DCC waste management project shelved

**By Staff Correspondent**

A Tk 93.4 crore ECNEC approved waste management project of the Dhaka City Corporation has remained shelved since July due to lack of funds.

Implementation of the DCC project, first of its kind, envisaging land filling of an additional 32 acres at Matuail and installation of at least two incinerators for city's clinical waste could not be started as neither the donor nor the government kept its promise, sources concerned said.

After being approved by ECNEC on July 7, the only communication received by the DCC in this regard was a letter from the Netherlands Embassy of August 17. The ambassador said in the letter that only 50 per cent of the promised Tk 48.45 crore could be made available now under the Dutch Environment and Economic Self-sufficiency Programme (MILIEV).

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Army experts examining the explosives found at Janakantha office. — Janakantha photo

## Construction work of Haripur power project suspended

**Star Report**

US power company AES suspended construction work of the 360 MW Haripur power project yesterday as project financing has become uncertain, sources concerned said.

Following the government decision to begin unsolicited negotiations with Japanese company Marubeni for the second phase of the 450 MW Meghnath power plant, the World Bank has stopped its support for AES's finances for Haripur project. AES was negotiating for a loan from WB's sister concern IFC.

As a result, the US company that began construction work of Haripur project in April with its own funds decided to suspend the activities there.

Quoting AES officials, the sources said the project's EPC contractor has suspended all its international and Bangladeshi sub-contractors and has decided to 'demobilise' staff from October 15.

WB informed AES and the government recently that it would no longer provide risk guarantee to Haripur project since by pursuing the Marubeni scheme, the government had violated the covenants agreed with the bank, on which the risk guarantee was anchored. Haripur project would not be financed by the IFC without WB's Partial Risk Guarantee (PRG), the source said.

According to a source close to AES, the company has reluctantly suspended construction work at Haripur since it is left with no other choice. "AES has already spent about 25 million US dollars on the project and without the certainty of financing AES management is unwilling to spend one more dollar on it," he said.

Suspension of the construction work would mean an indefinite delay of the project. The orders for major equipment will automatically stand cancelled if AES and its EPC contractor.

See Page 12 Col 6

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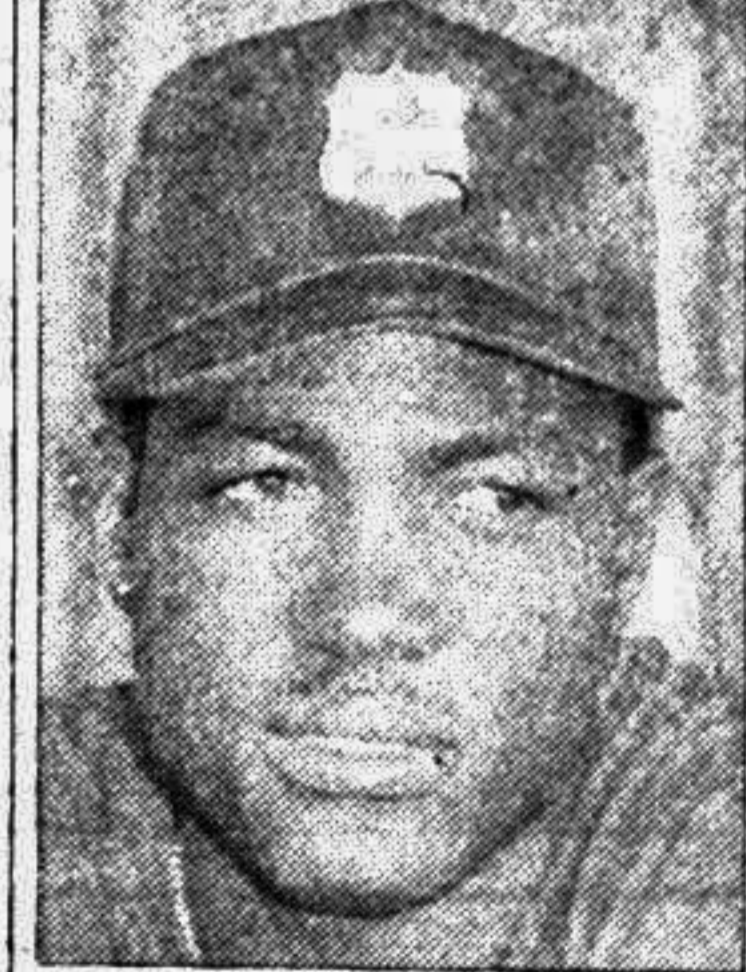
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See Page 12 Col 6

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**BRIAN LARA**  
Man-of-the-match

## Azad, Albright talk bilateral issues

Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and US Secretary of State Madeleine K Albright have emphasised on strengthening the existing friendly relations and cooperation between the two countries, reports UNB.

During the meeting at the State Department in Washington, they also discussed the entire gamut of bilateral relations.

The meeting, which lasted more than half an hour, was held in an atmosphere of amity and friendship, according to a message received here yesterday.

Azad was warmly received by senior State Department officials on his arrival for the meeting, the first between a Bangladesh Foreign Minister and the US Secretary of State.

Albright was assisted by Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Karl F Inderfurth, State Department spokesman James P Rubin and Director Jeffrey Landstead while Azad.

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## Explosives identified as high-capacity grenade, anti-tank mine

**Star Report**

Explosives recovered from the Masjidul Ferdous at Mirpur and Janakantha office on Friday were identified respectively as a "high capacity grenade" and an "anti-tank mine", both having the potential for immense destruction, the defence ministry said yesterday.

Both were "removed and demolished" at the army firing range at Mirpur in the city yesterday, it said.

The anti-tank mine found in a briefcase yesterday at the Janakantha Bhaban was fitted with a digital watch and combination lock, the Inter-services Public Relations (ISPR) said last night in a press statement.

"If exploded, the mine could have been very fatal for the building and the men around."

"Its explosions could have caused serious damages to the building. According to an expert, the debris of the building would have spread upto one hundred metres around, if timely action for detection and disposal was not taken," it said.

On the other hand, the high capacity grenade found at the Mirpur mosque was also of grave nature. It was also fitted with a digital watch. It contained splinters and its damages could have been more fatal than that had been done by the explosion in a mosque at Khulna on Friday, in which six people were killed and 40 others wounded.

Although two separate cases were filed in connection with the recovery of the explosives in Mirpur and Ramna thanas none had been arrested till filing of this report late last night.

Police and different intelligence agencies of the government were yet to ascertain who passed on the box of sweets, one of which contained the grenade at the Mirpur mosque before the Jumma prayers for distribution among devotees.

The anti-tank mine was kept in a briefcase, which was left at the reception of the daily Janakantha on Friday afternoon by an unidentified man, who told the reception desk of the newspaper that he would return after having his lunch at around noon. When he did not return police was informed of the briefcase in the evening, police said.

The bomb experts were not available for comment on the origin of the grenade and the mine.

Until the defence ministry

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## 3 hurt as bomb thrown inside house in Keraniganj

**By Staff Correspondent**

A woman and her two children received bomb injuries when an unidentified gang threw bomb inside their residence at Jinjira under Keraniganj thana yesterday morning.

Hospital sources identified the injured as Samsunnahar, 30, wife of Mujibur Rahman, her one-year-old daughter Sumi and three-year-old son Jummon.

The injured were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the condition of Samsunnahar was stated to be critical.

Hospital sources said the incident took place when the woman along with her two children were watching television at their residence at Mandai Dhal in Jinjira at about 11 am.

The gang hurled a bomb through the window of the roadside room. Both the children received bomb injuries in their faces while Samsunnahar received injuries in her back and hands.

When contacted, Keraniganj police said that they were not aware of the incidents.

## Khaleda condemns bomb blast at mosque in Khulna

**By Staff Correspondent**

BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia in a statement yesterday demanded exemplary punishment to those involved in the bomb blast at an Ahmadiya Jamaat mosque in Khulna on Friday.

The recovery of bombs from a mosque at Mirpur and the Daily Janakantha office in the city the same day also came under severe criticism in the statement of the Leader of the Opposition.

Expressing her shock at the deaths of six persons in Khulna, Khaleda Zia condemned the government for its failure in maintaining law and order across the country.

Different political parties

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## Shikdar confesses killing 7 people

**From Staff Correspondent**

**KHULNA, Oct 9:** Ershad Shikdar has confessed his involvement in the murders of seven people.

He disclosed names of five out of six alleged 'smugglers' of Jessore who were murdered for 'not paying his share of over Tk one crore'. Their bodies were later dumped into the river Bhairab.

DC South Mazharul Haq told this correspondent today that Shikdar confessed his direct involvement in two more murders in addition to those in Jessore. But he refused to disclose names of the victims for the sake of investigation. The names will be kept secret till Shikdar makes judicial confession, he said.

Ershad has also admitted that he was in possession of two Indian revolvers, four pigeons and one SBL gun that he had left to his accomplices before being arrested on August 11 this year, said a KMP official.

Ten groups formed with 25 senior officials are interrogating Shikdar by turn round-the-clock. He was taken on 32-day police remand on October 6.

Meanwhile, Liaquat Laskar, 50, one of the armed cadres of Ershad Shikdar has been taken on police remand for eight days in connection with the murder cases of Shajahan and Akimul.

The team started interrogating him from this evening at Daulatpur thana.

Liaquat Laskar was 'chief advisor of Shikdar. He was arrested from the house of Naib Subedar Habibul Rahman of the Army posted at the Chittagong Cantonment.

Subedar Habib is a cousin of Liaquat Laskar.

Police said Laskar has agreed to confess his guilts.

Noor-e-Alam, the bodyguard of Shikdar, was again interrogated by the members of a high-level probe committee at noon today at the KMP headquarters. He is yet to face his mentor Ershad to confirm all the murders committed in his (Noor-e-Alam) presence, police said.

## Dhaka to ratify CTBT, says FS

The government has decided to ratify the comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), Foreign Secretary Shafi Sami said here yesterday.

Talking to BSS, the foreign Secretary said the decision followed the deliberations at the just concluded CTBT conference held in Vienna, responding to a strong appeal for ratification of the CTBT.

"Bangladesh is among the 44 signatories, whose ratification is necessary to bring the treaty into force," Shafi Sami said.

**Prayer Timings**

**October 10**

Fajr	Azan	Jamaat
4:30	4:30	5:00
Zohr	12:45	1:20
Asr	4:15	4:30
Maghrib	5:50	5:55
Esha	7:45	8:15

Source: Islamic Foundation