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## Energy sector on Clinton's agenda

By Staff Correspondent  
Economic co-operation in South Asia, especially in the energy sector, will be on United States President Bill Clinton's agenda when he visits the sub-continent this month, said a U.S. official yesterday.

T.J. Glauthier, deputy secretary and chief operating officer in the U.S. Department of Energy, said during a televised event from Washington that USAID will organise a meeting so representatives from Bangladesh, India and Nepal could discuss areas of mutual co-operation in South Asia's emerging energy markets.

Journalists from Nepal and the USIS office in Dhaka participated in the event. Gordon Weyand, deputy director of USAID's Global Energy Office, accompanied Glauthier.

Glauthier said the United States was concentrating on regional co-operation in the South Asian energy sector, since all countries in the region would benefit.

He said Bangladesh should look at its energy sector from many different perspectives, since gas and power could be

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## Clinton's visit US pre-advance team arrives today

A pre-advance team from Washington, led by Dan Rosenthal, arrives here today (Wednesday) to do the groundwork for President Clinton's visit to Bangladesh.

US embassy sources told UNB that the team would include 30 media crew and communications experts who will set up a media centre at Hotel Sonargaon for American journalists to cover the presidential tour.

Some 200 to 250 American journalists representing US electronic and print media will arrive in Dhaka by a special chartered plane to cover Clinton's visit. Besides, journalists of White House Press Pool will accompany the US president.

Other members of the team will talk to foreign ministry officials and survey sites that would be visited by Clinton on March 20.

Foreign ministry officials however kept mum about detail of the US president's maiden visit to Dhaka.

American diplomatic sources had earlier said the pre-advance team would be followed by the president's advance team coming on March 8 or March 9 to examine and complete all the preparations.

## Our new numbers

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### Prayer Timings

March 1		
Fajr	Azan	Jamaat
5:00	5:30	
Zohr	12:45	1:20
Asr	4:30	4:45
Maghrib	6:00	6:05
Esha	7:30	8:00

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Biggest-ever Indian defence budget

*We shall not shirk, more will be provided when needed, Parliament told*

NEW DELHI, Feb 29: India raised defence spending today by 28.2 per cent for the year starting April 1, the biggest-ever increase for the world's fourth-largest military, report Reuters, AP.

Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha allocated \$85.87 billion rupees (\$13.62 billion) in the budget for 2000-2001 (April-March), up from last year's 456.94 billion rupees.

This represents the largest-ever increase in defence budget in a single year, Sinha said in his budget speech.

He announced a \$3 billion increase in defence spending in the \$77.8 billion budget but told Parliament that this year's fiscal deficit will be worse than expected.

"We shall not shirk. More will be provided when needed," Sinha said, outlining the government's commitment to modernising its forces before

proposing what he called a "Fiscal Responsibility Act" to control spending.

The Sensitive Index on Bombay's stock market dropped 2.4 per cent after Sinha announced another increase in individual income tax, raising the top category to 34.5 per cent. Sinha said the cigarette tax would be raised 5 per cent.

"If you're looking for a leaner, harder government, it's not there," said economist T N Ninan, editor of the Business Standard newspaper. "You don't see much stimulus to industry."

He and other observers noted that Sinha had announced no programme to tackle the national debt, whose interest payments are the single biggest item in the deficit, and consume 48 per cent of tax revenues.

Sinha said the deficit in the fiscal year ending March 31 will soar to 5.6 per cent of gross domestic product, while the

government had been aiming at 4 per cent.

Sinha reported a \$1.5 billion shortfall in tax revenues and said the government had only received \$597 million in revenue from privatisation of state enterprises, when it had expected \$2.29 billion.

He said the government would encourage development of knowledge-based industries by making it easier for Indian companies to spend capital on foreign businesses and technology and allow more foreign investment in Indian firms. Sinha also slashed the customs duty on computers and parts from 25 per cent to 15 per cent and on mobile phones from 25 per cent to 5 per cent.

The defence spending increase follows on a near war last summer between India and Pakistan in the disputed region of Kashmir. In the past few

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## 60 vigilance teams for SSC exams

By Asad-uz Zaman

Special vigilance teams will be stationed in examination centres to curb cheating during the Secondary School Certificate and 'Dakhil' examinations beginning tomorrow and March 4 respectively.

"We have formed about 60 vigilance teams comprising teachers of both public school and college. This is the first time that the college teachers are included in the vigilance teams," said Dr A T M Sharifullah, chairman of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board, Dhaka.

"This will help us hold fair examinations," said Sharifullah. All concerned have been notified in this regard, he added.

There will be four members in each vigilance team—two from school and two from college.

Rajshahi Board authorities also have formed about 65 teams to check cheating, board sources said, adding Comilla, Jessore and Chittagong boards have taken similar measures.

Sharifullah said preparations have been taken for holding the examinations smoothly. All the materials needed for examinations have already been sent to the examination centres.

He said stringent measures will be taken against examination centres if there were allegations of irregularities. Last year, three centres under Dhaka Board were barred from holding examinations on charges of irregularities.

The examination would be completed within the shortest possible time taking into consideration the country's turbulence.

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## President asks police not to misuse power

President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday said it is not possible to maintain law and order by merely framing new laws and asked the police to perform their duties rising above corruption and misuse of power, reports UNB.

"Various laws are enacted to deal with various crimes but it is not possible to control law and order by only enacting laws... Gain people's confidence and be their friends," he told a police delegation at Bangabhaban yesterday morning. The delegation called on the President on the occasion of Police Week.

The delegation was led by Inspector General of Police A M Siddique. Home Minister Mohammad Nasim was also present during the meeting.

"Service is your motto. Keep in mind that people go to you to seek your help," the President

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## Beijing won't rule out using force to win back Taiwan

Blunt warning to US military

BEIJING, Feb 29: China issued a blunt warning to the US military today that it would never rule out using force to win back Taiwan, and said Sino-US differences over the island needed "urgent handling", reports AFP.

"China will never commit not to use force," Defence Minister General Chi Hoatian told the visiting commander of US forces in the Pacific Admiral Dennis Blair, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

Chi said last week's policy White Paper on Taiwan, which warned the island it would face an invasion if it rebuffed attempts to reunify through dialogue, reflected Beijing's determination on the issue.

He said Beijing wanted to follow the peaceful path, but if it was foiled it would have to keep all options open.

"The reunification cause of China is irreversible," he told

Blair, who arrived late Sunday for three days of talks with Chinese military leaders and visits to military installations in Beijing and Nanjing.

Blair's visit is the latest in a flurry of military exchanges since the two sides renewed military dialogue in January after an eight-month freeze caused by NATO's bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade on May 8.

Chi also called on the United States to stop all arms sales to Taiwan, considered by Beijing to be a rebel province, and to "do things that genuinely promote the peaceful reunification of China."

The invasion threat last week provoked an outcry from US lawmakers who threatened to scupper November's landmark Sino-US trade deal, while the White House also called on Beijing to stop the sabre-rattling.

However Blair received more stern words in a separate meeting today with the chief of the general staff of the People's Liberation Army, General Fu Quanyou.

And Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao made it a triple blast with a warning to Washington to keep out of Taiwanese affairs.

Fu said Sino-US relations were at a cross-roads.

"Sino-US relations are right now at an important period which faces both opportunities for improvement and development, and problems calling for urgent handling, and the Taiwan issue is a key one," said Fu.

He warned that "the US government should not let the Sino-US relations and bilateral military ties which have shown a trend of resumption and improvement suffer setbacks once again," said the agency.



Reduced to a canal in places like Kamrangirchar, the Buriganga still manages to flow quietly despite the encroachers who live along its banks.  
— Star photo by Amran Hossain

## Guard against wastage of people's money, negligence

PM tells IEB convention in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Feb 29: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has asked the engineers to be more careful about wastage and negligence in development programmes.

"It is our moral duty to properly preserve and utilise the hard-earned money of our people," she said while addressing the 44th convention of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) at Sylhet today.

"You are the architects of the country. A large portion of the Annual Development Programme is spent through you. You are directly related with the implementation of various development programmes including the infrastructures and superstructures. But I feel sorry

when I see negligence, lack of seriousness and wastage, it should be stopped."

Presided over by the President of the IEB MA Hannan, the convention was also addressed among others by the honorary secretary-general of IEB, ANH Akhtar Hossain, chairman and honorary secretary-general of its Sylhet chapter, Mozammel Haque and Mohammad Abdul-

hakhan. The prime minister also handed over medals and awards among some senior and talented members of the institution.

The three-day convention held for the first time in this northeastern city is also being attended by delegates from Japan, India, UK, Pakistan, Ka-

akhstan and Sri Lanka. About 1200 engineers from across the country are attending the convention. Leader of the Opposition in parliament Khaleda Zia is scheduled to attend the concluding function on March 2 as the chief guest.

Referring to the demand for 'Charter Engineers Act' with a view to fixing the responsibilities of engineers for their accountability and transparency, Hasina said the government is actively considering such a law for raising the standard of profession, development and establishment of accountability and responsibility.

"Since assuming office, we have constituted the Adminis-

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## Shikdar indicted in five more murder cases

From Staff Correspondent  
KHULNA, Feb 29: Ershad Shikdar was indicted in five more murder cases in the special court today.

Charges were framed against him for murdering smuggler Shajahan, Advocate Fatik and drug traffickers Insaf, Kamal and Khaleque.

Shikdar and other accused allegedly killed them at the Skid Ghat and later dumped the bodies into the River Bhairab along fish landing ghat. Facts about the murders came to light after Noor-e-Alam gave his ju-

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## PSA: SC okays appointment of 6 judges

By Staff Correspondent

The Supreme Court yesterday approved posting of six district judges to six Special Tribunals being set up at the six divisional headquarters under the Public Safety Act 2000, official sources said.

The judges are likely to be posted soon.

Sanction of the new posts and allocation of funds for the tribunals have already been approved by the Prime Minister, the sources added.

Meanwhile, an official handout yesterday said the District and Sessions Judges in all districts will also act as judges of the Special Tribunals in addition to their present responsibilities.

Asked how district judges at divisional headquarters will function, a source in the law ministry said, a decision in this regard will be taken soon after judges are posted at divisional headquarters.

## Body to probe pilferage of rotten rice

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 29: Chittagong port authority constituted a two-member committee to probe the pilferage of 10,000 tons of rotten rice from a foreign vessel at the outer anchorage, port sources said.

The probe committee headed by the dock master of Chittagong port captain Nazrul Alam, included assistant traffic manager of the port Md Naim, sources added.

The committee is expected to submit its report within one week.

Sources said the rotten rice pilfered from the detained ship were brought to the shore by mechanised boats and sold in the local rice markets by some organised gangs.

Meanwhile, police conducted raids in the city markets recently and seized huge quantities of rotten rice.

The unscrupulous businessmen and organised gangs were yet to be nabbed though police

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## Intrusion, looting alleged Complaint case against Demra OC, 3 cops

By Staff Correspondent

A Ward Commissioner of

Dhaka City Corporation has filed a complaint case with the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Dhaka against the OC of Demra thana and three other policemen for intruding into his house at dead of night, molesting women and taking away cash and valuables worth over Tk 200,000.

The court has ordered a judicial inquiry into the matter.

The complaint case was filed with the court on Monday since Sutrapur police refused to register it, the ward commissioner said in his complaint.

M Alimullah Alim, Commissioner of Ward No 76 in his complaint said Inspector Abdul Halim along with SI Bazlu, SI Shafik and SI Sharafat broke into his house at about 1:30 am on Saturday.

Without producing any court order, they started searching the house located under Sutra-

pur police station, the complainant said.

The intruders wearing civilian clothes and carrying wire-less sets identified themselves as police officials and said they came on a tip-off to recover illegal arms from the house.

The intruders took away Tk 160,000 and valuables worth about Tk 50,000 and molested some of the women present at the house, the complainant

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## Rajuk to demarcate Gulshan lake, publish map

By Staff Correspondent

Rajuk will demarcate the city's Gulshan lake and inform members of the public through press notifications, sources concerned said.

The decision was taken at a monthly coordination meeting at the Ministry of Housing and Public Works recently.

Rajuk Chairman M Azizul Haque said they would publish a map and mention cadastral (relating to ownership, boundary etc of land) survey numbers of Gulshan lake area for public information. This will help identify the lake area and also prevent people from buying or selling portions of the water body.

A Rajuk source said that over the last 15 years, influential people used a legal loophole to grab portions of the lake. They traced the original owners of the lake area with the claim that Rajuk has failed to develop the acquired lands within 25 years and as per law,

these should now go back to the original owners. These people then bought the lands from the original owners and settled there.

Many of them, claiming to be owners of 'freehold property', obtained permission from Rajuk to build high-rise structures in the residential area where building height is restricted to six stories on Rajuk's land.

Sources mentioned that Rajuk steps to recover its land in the area from 100 encroachers and several illegal occupiers have come to a halt due to court injunctions.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Director of Rajuk's land department, who authorised a real estate company to develop about 12 acres of land in Gulshan lake, has been served with a show-cause notice by the authorities.



Bookellers pack up as Ekushey Book Fair on Bangla Academy premises concluded yesterday.  
— Star photo

BIGGER & BETTER  
Star Search

The last date for submitting complete entry forms for Star Search has been extended to 14th March 2000.

Entry forms available at:

DHAKA : G Mart, Pick & Pay, Super Fresh, Candyloss, Dhaka Billiard Centres, Sausly's, Don Giovanni's Sizzler, Arlequin, Big Bite, American Fresh Chicken, Hot Hut, Golpea Burger, Arabian Fast Food, Bhelpur, Bluepla.net Cyber Cafe, Level 3 by Cats Eye, Soundscape, Rainbow (Recording Centre)  
KHULNA : Grill House, Fun Fair, Dhara Music Centre, Hallmark, Archies Gallery SYLHET : Yan Jing, Chowking, Nanking Park RAJSHAHI : Chillis BOGRA : Burger Plus CHITTAGONG : Fantasy, Kentucky, Sweetmax, Meridian, PnS Center, Hallmark Cards & Gifts

Applicants must be 18 years of age or above.

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