



## Draft Gas Act ready for Cabinet approval

By Sharier Khan

After a break of more than a year, the government has come up with the final draft of Bangladesh Gas Act 2000 to help expedite long term development of gas sector in a competitive environment, fostering private sector investment, protecting consumer interest, preventing misuse of monopoly power and without affecting environment, sources concerned said.

The Act would also help setting up of a powerful Gas Regulatory Commission which would provide gas operators licence, ensure public safety and punish violators of the Act.

It suggests that none should export or import gas without a licence granted as per provisions of the Act.

It addresses policy and institutional framework, use of gas and technical and safety stan-

dard etc. It seeks to amend and consolidate the existing law relating to processing, transmission, distribution and supply of gas.

The Draft Act would be placed before the Cabinet shortly for approval, the sources said.

The draft was prepared by the National Economic Research Associates (NERA), UK and Dr Kamal Hossain and Associates, Bangladesh, under an Asian Development Bank Technical Assistance Project on "Gas Regulatory Authority for Bangladesh".

The Act would reinforce the government's powers and functions in the gas sector in order to maintain a sound gas reserve management system, the government would monitor that annual gas extraction does not exceed 7.5 per cent of the proven

reserve.

The government may issue regulations prohibiting the use of gas in specified circumstances or by specified consumers, and allocating gas for use by specified end consumers.

The Act recommends that Bangladesh Gas Regulatory Commission would be formed comprising a Chairman and four members. The office bearers would require experience of at least 15 years in the fields of administration, law, industry, commerce, engineering etc.

The Commission will be independent in the exercise of its powers to develop gas sector to meet the needs of different regions of the country.

The Act seeks rigorous imprisonment for up to five years or fine or both for theft of gas including getting illegal gas connection, use of gas without

metres, making a hole or other changes in a metre or gas pipeline and for wasting gas.

The Commission would be the authority for providing gas transmission, processing, distribution and supply licences to persons or companies. While it would authorise gas transmission and processing tariff, licencees would have to make public all rates, charges and other terms and conditions relating to tariff.

The Draft Act says all licencees should ensure that except to the extent permitted by the Commission, there would be no cross-subsidy among separately licensed activities or between customers or classes of customers.

Licencees would also have to ensure that the prices they charge for transmission, pro-



Relatives of Ali Hossain (inset) wailing in front of DMCH morgue. Ali, a police informer, was gunned down allegedly by miscreants hired by phensidyl traders at Agargaon slum in the city yesterday.

## JS goes into session tomorrow

The 19th session of the seventh Jatiya Sangsad begins tomorrow, reports BSS.

Opposition BNP, JP (Ershad) and Jamaat-e-Islami - which have been abstaining from the Sangsad proceedings for over a year, will continue to boycott the session, opposition sources said.

The coming session of the Jatiya Sangsad is expected to run for two weeks. The 18th session of the Sangsad was prorogued on July 9 after transacting business for 25 working days including passage of the budget for the current fiscal.

Opposition parties joined the 18th session briefly to abide by the constitutional obligation for retaining membership.

## Rab murder case transferred to CID: 2 more held

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Sept 4: Two more suspects in SMA Rab Murder Case were arrested today from a residential hotel at Cox's Bazar Sadar thana.

The arrested were identified as Javed, 28, of Basupara under Sonadanga thana and Mushtaq Hossain Billah alias Shentu of Rajapur under Rupsha thana.

Inspector Shibli Noman of detective branch of KMP arrested the two professional killers. Both of them were involved in the murder of AL Mayoral candidate SMA Rab on August 11, said a KMP source.

The source said Javed and Shentu are members of a killing squad led by terror Golam Mowla Shanu.

Shanu is one of the most wanted criminals in Khulna city and a chargesheeted accused in Liton Murder Case.

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## Dengue: 21 more hospitalised, one dies in Khulna

By Staff Correspondent

Twenty-one more people with dengue fever were admitted to different city hospitals and private clinics yesterday.

The central control room at the Health Directorate said Dhaka Medical College Hospital reported admitting seven while Mitford Hospital two.

BIRDEM reported admitting one fresh case. Bangladesh Medical College and Monwara hospitals one each. Central Hospital at Green Road and Samarita Hospital two and one patients respectively. Al-Razi Hospital one, Red Crescent Holy Family Hospital four, and the Sina clinic reported admitting two patients.

Meanwhile, the control also reported death of a ten year old girl Shefali Khatun at Khulna Medical College Hospital yesterday. Besides, six more people were admitted to Khulna Sadar Hospital yesterday with the dengue fever.

## Boral murder: Another arrested

BAGERHAT, Sept 4: Police arrested another suspect in Advocate Kalidas Boral killing from Harin Khal area in the town today, reports UNB.

Police began interrogation and said they might get important clues of the killing from the arrested Hasan Siddiqui Sagor, 24.

Meanwhile, agitated villagers today set fire to the residence of another suspect Shayamol Mondal of Garibpur village in Chitalmari upazila.

Shyamol was arrested recently in connection with the killing of Advocate Boral.

## Hasina arrives in NY

NEW YORK, Sept 4: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina arrived here today (Monday) to attend the UN Millennium Summit beginning September 6, reports UNB.

The Bangladesh Biman aircraft carrying Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her entourage landed at the John F Kennedy Airport at 12 noon local time.

Scores of Awami League leaders and workers gathered at the JFK Airport to welcome the party chief and Prime Minister of Bangladesh, who will address the summit on the opening day in Bangla.

Bangladesh Ambassador in the US KM Shehabuddin Ahmed, Permanent Representative to the UN Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, Awami League leaders Nurul Islam Anu, Abidus Salam and Sharafat Ali were also present at the airport.

## BNP labour front threatens to paralyse Ctg port

CHITTAGONG, Sept 4: An opposition-backed trade union threatened to paralyse the seaport if the date for the postponed CBA elections was not announced by September 19, reports UNB.

It was announced at a rally of the port unit of Jatiyatabadi Samik Dal, the labour front of BNP.

General Secretary of the unit Nurulla Bahar issued the warnings from the gathering in front

## Loadshedding level exceeds 500 MW Power supply situation worsens again

Star Report

Power supply situation in the country has once again deteriorated as three out of six large power plants at Ghorashal remained closed for the last one week for technical faults, PDB sources said.

Loadshedding level has exceeded 500 MW, which is roughly more than one sixth of the peak demand for power daily.

In the city, all areas were now experiencing unusually frequent loadshedding.

"The situation was tolerable a few days back," commented an official of PDB. "There were days a few weeks ago when there was no power generation shortfall and for the last couple of months, loadshedding level remained below 200 MW."

However, when two major power transmission lines tripped last week, some power plants were also affected. Now against a peak demand of 2700 to 2800 MW of power, PDB is

able to supply up to 2350 MW.

The situation is likely to improve from September 10 as two out of the three Russian made Ghorashal units are expected to resume operation by then.

The three plants are 210 MW units 3, 4 and 6. Of these, unit 6 started operation on January 31 this year.

"Since unit 6 was commissioned, it had to be closed four times due to technical fault," said the official. "This time, it had to be closed due to leakage of hydrogen in the plant. Unit 4 also developed the same problem."

Some sources said power crisis in general would continue. A number of power plants including Razoan 1 and Ghorashal 4 need rehabilitation immediately. Ghorashal units 1 and 2 would be rehabilitated soon. "Experts from Russia are already here to repair the plants," one source said.

## US to help extract, process & market mineral resources

By Staff Correspondent

US Deputy Secretary for Energy Kelvin Humphrey has said the United States will help Bangladesh extract, process and market its mineral resources.

He was addressing as chief guest at the 14th Bangladesh Council of FOBANA at the historic Madison Square Garden in New York, according to a message received here yesterday.

In his written speech, Humphrey praised Bangladesh for nurturing democracy and for its various development activities. "Clinton-Gore administration has taken up liberal policy for the overall development of Bangladesh," he added.

Praising role of expatriate Bangladeshis, he called upon them to be united to work for the development of the country.

He said President Clinton and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will meet at the White House during the UN Millennium Summit, which he said will further develop the existing relationship between the two countries.

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## Journalist murder Court orders arrest of 5, or attachment of their property

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Sept 4: A court of Jessor 'B' circle on Sunday ordered arrest of Hirok, Pagla Selim, Russel and Khachhar Selim or attachment of their movable property.

They are accused in the Journalist Shamsur Rahman Murder Case. The court has issued warrants of arrest against them.

Inspector Shajahan of CID on August 31 prayed to the court for P&A order as IO of the case.

Jessor Kotwali thana received the P&A order on Sunday. The portion of P&A order against Hirok was sent to KMP headquarters the same day. KMP received it today, said a source.

Meanwhile, the fourth court of Additional District and Sessions Judge Rabul Hasan granted more time to top terror Asaduzzaman Litu to appear before the court on October 1. Litu was supposed to appear on Sunday in connection with BNP leader Bablu Murder Case. He is also one of the accused in Journalist Shamsur Rahman Murder Case.

## JP (M-M) extended meeting on Friday, Saturday

By Staff Correspondent

As part of preparation for the next general election, the Jatiya Party (M-M) will hold a two-day extended meeting of its central committee in the city on Friday-Saturday.

Party sources said the meeting has been called to take opinion of the leaders of central and district committees and front organisations about parliamentary polls.

They said the party is still thinking of contesting the election alone and fielding candidates in all the constituencies.

"We will finalise the strategy regarding the election after taking opinion of the leaders at the extended meeting," said an influential leader of the party.

It is expected that possible candidates for the election would be selected during the meeting after the meeting

## Nude paintings withdrawn from Indian nat'l gallery

NEW DELHI, Sept 4: Indian artists have withdrawn their works from an exhibition in Delhi's National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) after the government ordered the removal of a painting - a Nude Icarus atop the Ashoka pillar - a national symbol, reports AFP.

The move by the Cultural Ministry sent shock waves through the Indian artistic community which accused the state today of stifling artistic freedom.

"I cannot understand how my painting of the Ashoka Pillar with the Greek mythological character Icarus standing on top of it can be constituted as a slight to a national symbol. I am in shock," said Surendran Nair, who was ordered to remove his canvas from the exhibition.

India's Cultural Secretary RV Vaidyanatha Ayyar pulled Nair's work on Saturday, prompting all 25 artists taking

## Water crisis Protesters lay siege to Ctg WASA bldg

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Sept 4: Residents of three areas of the city today laid a siege to the WASA building protesting water crisis and demanding regular water supply to their areas.

About 100 people from Kodomtoli, Motiarpolo and Dhanialapara areas brought out a procession at about 11 am carrying pitchers and laid a siege to WASA Bhaban at Dampara. They stayed there for an hour and chanted slogans against the authority.

They also held a rally and broke several hundred of pitchers protesting the water crisis.

Presided by Sirazul Haq, president of Bangladesh Gausia Committee, Chittagong the rally was also addressed by Alhaj Dostogir Chowdhury, Hajj Zafar Ahmed, Alhaj Shawkot Ali, Monjurul Alam Monju and Hashem Sharif Sardar.

## Strike at garment factories Sept 11

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Garments Sramik Oikya Parishad, a combine of 10 organisations of garment workers has called a day-long strike in all garment units across the country on September 11 demanding implementation of their various demands.

The demands include implementation of five-point agreement signed with the BGMEA, declaration of minimum national wage, enhancement of salary of garment workers, Tk two lakh compensation for the family of each victim of fire incident at Globe Knitting, investigation into the fire incident and removal of officials at the Department of Factory Inspection.

Addressing a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) office yesterday, the leaders of the Parishad said that the BGMEA had signed an agreement with the Parishad accepting four out of the five point

demands in 1997, but it did not implement those.

The four-point demand accepted by the BGMEA through an agreement are issuance of appointment letters, identity card, service book and wage slip to all workers, implementation of wage board award, payment of salary within seven days of the following month and ensuring weekly holidays, and trade union right of all garment workers.

The Parishad would hold a grand rally at Muktangan on September 8 and bring out processions in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Chittagong and Tongi on September 9 and 10 in support of the strike programme.

Chairman of the Parishad advocate Delwar Hossain Khan, Secretary general Towhidur Rahman and presidium members Khurshid Alam, and Salahuddin Shwapna address

## FM of host Nepal says SAARC summit unlikely for Indo-Pak tension

KATHMANDU, Sept 4: Tensions between India and Pakistan make it unlikely the long-deferred summit of seven South Asian nations will be held any time soon, Nepal Foreign Minister Chakra Prasad Bastola said, reports Reuters.

The 11th summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was to have been held in Nepal last November, but was postponed indefinitely at India's request after a military coup in Pakistan ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

"We still don't see the chances," Bastola told the news agency.

He also said that in view of poor relations between New Delhi and Islamabad there was no prospect of the meeting of the region's foreign ministers on the sidelines of the UN

General Assembly beginning next week in New York.

"When these things are not happening it is extremely difficult to say when the SAARC summit will take place," said Bastola, who is leaving today for an official visit to Norway and Sweden en route to New York for the UN meeting.

Under the SAARC charter adopted 15 years ago, the summit cannot be held without the presence of all seven members.

Launched in 1985 to promote the economic development of the region, SAARC groups Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Bastola said small and impoverished Nepal, which is not a member of any other regional forum, had much at stake in SAARC.

SAARC plans to establish a

## Land grabbers feast on dying Katakhal in Sirajganj

By Morshed Ali Khan and Shaikh Nazrul Islam, back from Sirajganj

Once the lifeline of Sirajganj, Katakhal canal passing through the district town, is now dying with encroachers stretching their grip while its custodian, the district administration, looking the other way.

Elderly people in the town said that only few years ago, large cargo vessels and country boats plied in the canal, contributing to economic activities. Due to indifference of the local administration and lack of foresightedness of the engineers concerned, the canal is now on the verge of extinction, they alleged.

Katakhal's fate was sealed as soon as the town protection embankment was built years ago without a sluice gate," said Gajendranath Mondal, an elderly homoeopath in the town.

Mondal said that when the embankment was built, the authorities concerned did not even think of keeping the canal alive. And there has never been any initiative to protect the canal which linked the town with the Jamuna river on the South and the Hurasagar river on the North.

Some others pointed out that Katakhal could have helped local people in their trade and other economic activities. But the local administration failed to realise that transportation of goods by water vessels is much less expensive than by any other mode of transport, they said.

Since the canal's outlets

were sealed, various goods including jute, fish, vegetable, pulses and textiles are transported by road, which is much costlier.

Meanwhile, the eight km stretch of the canal inside the town has already fallen in the hands of at least 50 land grabbers. They have not only extended their possession in the canal but have also constructed concrete structures. At many places, the canal has been narrowed beyond recognition and fish cultivators have raised dykes. Sirajganj Pourasabha earns several lakh taka a year by leasing parts of the canal to fish cultivators.

Besides, domestic, industrial and various other waste from the town with about 1.5 lakh

inhabitants are dumped in the canal.

When contacted, the Deputy Commissioner of Sirajganj admitted the importance of Katakhal canal but said that due to "population pressure", it was being encroached upon. Steps would be taken to remove encroachments and revive the canal, he said.

Chairman of the Pourasabha Golam Kibria said he had written to the ministry concerned for funds to re-excavate the canal. He hoped that funds would be available soon.

"If we get support from the local administration, we shall be able to free Katakhal of encroachments and bring back its lost glory," Kibria said.

## Inside Today Article

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## Business

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Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Sept 5 4:30	6:12 pm
Sept 6 5:42 am	

## Prayer Timings

September 5		
Fajr	Azan	Jamaat
	4:30	5:05
Zohr	12:45	1:30
Asr	4:45	5:00
Maghrib	6:20	6:25
Esha	8:00	8:30

Source: Islamic Foundation