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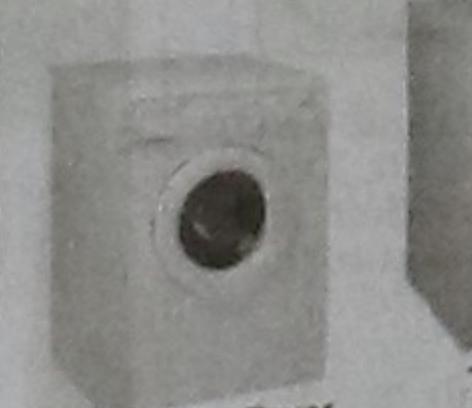
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Experts allay fear of land subsidence**Ground water in many city areas contaminated by toxic waste**

By Staff Correspondent

Ground water in many city areas has become contaminated with a number of toxic chemicals discharged by different industries, experts said at a seminar in the city yesterday.

Besides, a large number of pumps of Dhaka WASA may become inoperative by 2010 due to huge extraction of ground water.

Top officials of WASA, experts from BUET and representatives from different professions took part in the seminar on "Updating the Existing Groundwater and Land Subsidence Model", organised by Dhaka WASA.

A team of BUET experts which recently conducted a study on 'Updating the Existing Groundwater and Land Subsidence Model Project' yesterday

rejected the earlier assumption that land subsidence may occur in Dhaka city due to rapid fall of ground water level.

WASA Managing Director Khandaker Azharul Haq expressed deep concern over contamination of ground water by toxic minerals.

Statistics presented by the BUET experts showed that ratios of toxic minerals like lead, cadmium, phosphate, ammonia and chromium are much higher than acceptable levels in ground water in Hazaribagh and Armanitola areas of the city, the experts said.

The BUET team led by Dr Mozammel Haq disclosed that the maximum subsidence of 2.73 cm in Dhaka city occurred near the New Airport during the period between 1990 and 1999. This is 'negligible', it said.

The maximum land subsidence occurred at such a place where the level of ground water is higher than in other parts of the city, the experts said.

If land subsidence in the capital had any relation with the fall of ground water level, then the maximum land subsidence would have occurred in Gulshan or Motijheel where the level has gone down more than in any other area of the city, they said.

Besides, the sub-soil structure of city does not permit land subsidence due to extraction of ground water, a member of the BUET team added.

During an open discussion session at the seminar, the WASA MD said there is no problem of arsenic contamination of ground water in Dhaka city and there is no possibility such problem in next five to ten years.

Draft law to abolish Dramatic Performance Act 1876 okayed

The cabinet yesterday approved draft law for abolishing The Dramatic Performances Act 1876" that had long curbed freedom of cultural activity in the country, reports UNB.

During the weekly meeting at PM's Office with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair, the cabinet also approved amendment to the Law Commission Act 1996, an official announcement said.

Repeal of the timeworn drama law was a longstanding demand of the cultural activists as it "imposed various restriction on staging drama, opera or other genres of performing art."

"The act is the violation of fundamental rights of the cultural activists," said Nasiruddin Yusuf Bacchu, a prominent leader in the campaign against the colonial British law.

He said the taboos were on antigovernment comment, remarks on religious sentiments and minority groups.

Capt (Retd) Kismat's nephew to die for killing engineer

NARAYANGANJ, Sept 18: A nephew of Capt (retd) Kismat Hashem, a fugitive from death sentence in the Bangabandhu Murder Case, was today sentenced to death for killing an engineer, reports UNB.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Shah-e-Alam Chowdhury gave the verdict against Mahbub Hashem Jewel, 24, for killing PDB Sub-Assistant Engineer Abdul Bari in 1997.

According to prosecution, Jewel stabbed Bari indiscriminately as the victim tried to resist Jewel from snatching valuables from him in Kalirbar area of the town on April 17, 1997.

His minor daughter, Khabirunnahar, who was accompanying him, cried out for help seeing the cruelty on her father. People chased and caught Jewel.

Bari died after being rushed to hospital.

Gunman Azad brought to Dhaka

Abul Kalam Azad, the gunman who held hostage 14 officials at Khagrachari DC's office on September 11, was brought to Dhaka yesterday for joint interrogation by the intelligence agencies, reports UNB.

Heavily escorted by police he was drove straight to Rajarbagh Police Lines.

Another arrested in Boral murder

BAGERHAT, Sept 18: Another youth was arrested today in connection with the murder of Awami League leader Advocate Kalidas Boral, reports UNB.

Police said they arrested Khairuzzaman Nixon, 25, of Harikhal in the town. Six people were arrested in this connection so far.

Nixon was produced before the Magistrate's Court, which granted police to take him on a five-day remand.

Police also arrested one Shaylen Mondol, 45, today on charge of attack on the house of Shova Bortal, sister of Kalidas Boral, from Barabagh area in Chittagong upazila.

Dacoits kill housewife, her son in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Sept 18: A housewife and her 14-year-old son were killed by some masked young men during a dacoity at their house at Haji Ismail Road under Sonandanga thana on Sunday night.

The victims are Afzina Begum, 38 and Milon, wife and the youngest son of Abdus Samad, an official of the Forest Department, posted in Chittagong. Milon was a student of class eight at Khulna Lions High School.

According to police, a group of six masked young men entered the house at about 10 pm

Mystery shrouds death of tribal prisoner

COX'S BAZAR, Sept 18: Mystery shrouded the death of young tribal prisoner at a local hospital here today, reports UNB.

Billah Rakha, 30, a leader of Rakha community and resident of Machbazar of the town, died at Sadar Hospital after he was sent there this morning.

The dacoits broke open the steel almirah and escaped with money and all gold ornaments.

Neighbours advocate Robindra Nath Mondol, Advocate Subrata Kumar and retired police officer Abdur Razak reportedly saw the dacoits escaping with the looted goods.

But his relatives and people of Rakha community blamed

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Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Dr A K Azad Chowdhury showing Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina the design of Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall yesterday. The hall will be built at DU.

- Star photo

I don't want to hear any more gunshots on campuses: PM

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon teachers and students to put in their best efforts to free the campus from terrorism and bring back congenial academic atmosphere.

She was speaking at the inauguration ceremony of a 10-story residential tower on the Dhaka University campus.

The tower with some 36 flats has been constructed at the cost of Tk 12 crore and will provide housing for senior DU teachers.

"I don't want to hear any

more gunshots in the educational institutions where students want to study in a peaceful atmosphere," she said while addressing the students and faculty members.

Hasina said rattles of guns were once common phenomena on the DU campus but such incidents are no longer there during tenure of the present government. She, however, said that many things still needed to be done for making the campus terrorism-free.

She also said the existing computer and IT facility on the campus will be expanded and

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23 killed in Indo-Pak border clashes**US recognises Kashmir as bilateral dispute**

NEW DELHI, Sept 18: The United States remains concerned about tension in South Asia but recognises the Kashmir dispute must be resolved bilaterally between India and Pakistan, US Assistant Secretary of State Karl Inderfurth said in an interview broadcast today, reports UNB.

Police also arrested one Shaylen Mondol, 45, today on charge of attack on the house of Shova Bortal, sister of Kalidas Boral, from Barabagh area in Chittagong upazila.

"We cannot be a mediator and we cannot impose our own views about how it should be dealt with by the parties," in-

derfurth told New Delhi Television, a private station, in a Sunday interview. The United States recognises that this is an issue that must be resolved bilaterally.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee left Washington today after a state visit described as marking a new warmth in relations between the United States and India. His visit reciprocated one by President Bill Clinton to India in March.

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**Alleged mugger beaten to death in city**

By Staff Correspondent

An alleged mugger was beaten to death and another severely injured by mob as they were fleeing after looting gold ornaments and Tk 70,000 in cash from a jewellery shop at Goalnagar of Kotwali thana in the city yesterday morning.

The dead was identified as Mohammad Alam, 30, and the injured as Mohammad Kamal 30.

The incident took place when a gang of four armed muggers entered Katrik Jewellery at 47 Goalnagar in guise of customers. Suddenly they pulled out their guns and ordered the employees to hand

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Sunday's murders Bodies of two young men identified

By Staff Correspondent

Bodies of two young men killed in separate incidents in the city on Sunday were identified yesterday, police and hospital sources said.

The body of a young man which was recovered from a disposal system at South Mugda was identified his relatives as Mohammad Hossain, 35, an auto-rickshaw driver. He was the son of Abdul Hashem of Khulkhel.

The other young man, who succumbed at DMCH to injuries sustained during a mob beating at Danik Bangla on Sunday was identified as Jewel Sheikha, 22.

The body of Hossain, son of was recovered from disposal system at Road number 63 at South Mugda, police said.

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Humayun Zahir murder

Defence seeks acquittal of Babu, Tonmoy

By Court Correspondent

The hearing of argument in the Humayun Zahir Murder Case continued for the 10th day yesterday in the 8th Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka.

Judge Mir Mohammad Abd Hossain adjourned the proceedings of the case till September 24.

Lawyers for the accused submitted many important points derived from deposition of the prosecution witnesses and sought acquittal of accused Akhteruzzaman Babu and Tonmoy.

Humayun Zahir, a leading businessman, was shot dead by a group of assailants on the premises of his Dhamondi residence on April 8, 1993.

By Sharier Khan

The Energy Ministry is modifying the vital Habiganj-Ashuganj gas pipeline contract signed only a month ago, as the contractor has been unable to fulfil certain criteria set by Petrobangla.

A decision would be taken in this regard today, sources said.

The 54 km long 30 inch diameter Habiganj-Ashuganj gas pipeline project is so vital in the present context of poor gas supply network that the government is modifying the agreement so that the contractor can overcome its shortcomings and make the pipeline available for use by June," said a source at Petrobangla.

Failure to complete installation of the first phase of the pipeline project would mean that Petrobangla would not be able to provide in time gas to new power plant projects in-

20 per cent, but the joint venture finally agreed on 12 per cent.

The joint venture was assigned to complete the first phase of the pipeline at a cost of 23 million US dollars by June next year. The government is also considering cutting the project cost by 0.4 million dollar in the present context.

Within one week of the signing of the contract, the Chinese company expressed its inability to fulfill certain criteria of the project within the deadline. These include installation of a cement coating plant and supplying the gas pipe segments as per the agreed length.

The installation of cement coating plant, which would ensure safety coating of the gas pipeline after installation of the

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CID takes up double murder case**Both boys were murdered inside Rifle Club**

By Staff Correspondent

The two teenaged boys were tortured to death inside Ganderia Rifle Club on Friday before they were slashed into six pieces each, according to police sources close to the investigation.

Besides, the three officers of the Sutrapur police station, who have been suspended for negligence in duty, were aware of the fact that the two boys were tortured to death, said some other sources. The said the officers did not take any action though they were aware of the incident.

Mohsin 18, and Saem 19, residents of SK Das Lane in old part of the city, were picked up from their residences by a gang allegedly led by Rabid Hasan Sumon at about 7:00 a.m. on Friday. The gang demanded Tk 50,000 in ransom for their release. However, the teenagers

were tortured and eventually killed inside the club.

The beheaded bodies were cut into pieces before being dumped into manhole.

Meanwhile, the case was transferred to the Detective Branch of Police yesterday, sources said. The main accused in the case, Rabid Hasan Sumon who is the son of DCC ward commissioner Nasimon Ahmed is still at large.

Sumon's mother, Nasimon, denied yesterday that her son was involved in the murder. "Sumon has been implicated in the case since he was planning to contest the next elections for the post of ward commissioner of the area," she said.

Nasimon, commissioner for DCC ward number 75, 76, 80, 81 and 82, also denied the charge brought by Mohsin.

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Draft information memo**Citibank consultants, Biman begin talks**

By Special Correspondent

Consultants from the Citibank of New York began talks with Bangladesh Biman officials in the city yesterday to finalise the 'draft information memorandum' to invite bids for offloading of shares of the national airline under a two million dollar World Bank assisted project, sources concerned said.

The talks would continue till September 21.</