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'Four regional countries should cooperate in gas, power sectors'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The newly formed sub-regional body on energy yesterday began its journey in the city with a shared view that Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan should cooperate with each other in gas and power sectors and in other natural resources sectors for poverty alleviation.

Secretaries and experts of ministries concerned of the four countries stressed the need for undertaking necessary policy reforms, developing mutual trust and exchanging expertise.

They also advocated taking joint initiatives for exploring resources of the region because the countries lag behind in economic development due to failure in proper utilisation of the resources.

They were speaking at the inaugural session of the two-day "Inception Meeting of the Energy Working Group", organised by Asian Development Bank (ADB) under its South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC).

At the technical session, Bangladesh's representatives proposed purchase of power from in Meghalaya in India. They said if cheap hydro power is available, Bangladesh could reduce its use of gas by over 50 per cent.

Besides, Bangladesh's participation in setting up gas-based industries in Nepal and Bhutan was also discussed in the session.

Indian Power Secretary AK Basu said his government is very keen on increasing the level of cooperation in energy sector. "The large consumption centres at the south of south East Asia can bring in significant investment in the power sector in India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal".

The per capita consumption of energy in these countries is less though they are blessed with manpower and natural resources, he said.

Indian representatives further suggested Bangladesh to look for regional gas market. They noted that since Bangladesh had to pay International Oil Companies (IOCs) for purchase of its own gas under Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs), the country should analyse utilities of alternative use of

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Taliban offer to surrender Kunduz, impose curfew on Kandahar

AP, Taloqan

The Taliban yesterday offered to surrender their northern stronghold city of Kunduz to the opposition alliance, an opposition commander said.

The commander, Mahidullah, said the offer was made during negotiations by radio with the Taliban in Kunduz, the last city in the north held by the Taliban.

Mahidullah said Hajji Omar, brother of a top Taliban commander in Kunduz, relayed the offer.

Under the offer, the Taliban would surrender if the opposition alliance guaranteed the safety of non-Afghans fighting with the Taliban and if the surrender were witnessed by United Nations representatives.

There are an estimated 3,000 non-Afghans fighting with the Taliban in Kunduz, including Arabs believed to be affiliated with Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terrorist network as well as Pakistanis.

Earlier several hundred soldiers of the Northern Alliance took position early yesterday on the Khanabad frontline, some 20 kilometres east of the city of Kunduz, witnesses said.

Two tanks were also seen in the area around 6:00 am local time. Thousands of Taliban troops are manning a radius of 20 kilometres around Kunduz, the last bastion of the Islamic militia in northern Afghanistan, witnesses said.

AFP from London says, al-Qaida guards have slaughtered Taliban troops to prevent them surrendering to the Northern Alliance army besieging Kunduz, a British daily reported yesterday.

Civilians escaping the city told the Daily Telegraph that a foreign al-Qaida commander had ordered the massacre of 150 Afghan Taliban who wanted to defect.

Another report says, the siege of Kunduz has descended into a blood-bath with headline Taliban choosing death over defeat, fearsome Arabs loyal to Osama bin Laden turning their guns on the frightened militia and US jets raining death from the skies.

When some frightened Afghan Taliban tried to yield, they were killed by the fearsome Arabs, Pakistanis, Chechens and other foreign fighters associated with bin Laden's al Qaida network, the foreign ministry spokesman said from Taloqan.

"We have heard that a group of

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British & US forces surround Laden?

AFP, London

British and US special forces have surrounded terror suspect Osama bin Laden in an area of 80 square kilometres in southeastern Afghanistan, a British newspaper reported yesterday.

SAS and US commandos have been dropped by helicopter across the southern approach to the area, near the Taliban stronghold of Kandahar, to prevent bin Laden from escaping into Pakistan, according to defence sources, the Sunday Times said.

"The plan has always been to deny bin Laden space," British Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon was quoted as saying.

"The space he has to operate in is now very limited indeed," he added.

Hoon told the Sunday Telegraph: "My view is that either we will come across information that allows us to track him down or, more likely, given the state of collapse in the south (of Afghanistan), someone will give him away, perhaps a local leader who learns of his position."

"Either way we will go on going after him."

A British defence intelligence source told The Sunday Times that bin Laden was believed to be "static" somewhere to the south-east of Kandahar.

"For a variety of reasons we can be confident that he has not been able to move far," the source said.

A defence official told The Sunday Telegraph that "some very hot" intelligence had been gathered that could lead to bin Laden's



Osama bin Laden

capture "within days".

A senior official of the Northern Alliance on Sunday said bin Laden was hiding 130 kilometers east of Kandahar.

Younis Qanooni, who is acting interior minister of the victorious Northern Alliance coalition, dismissed Taliban claims that bin Laden was no longer in areas under their control.

"The Taliban are trying to cheat the international community so that they will stop the aerial bombardments," Qanooni told AFP.

"According to my information, bin Laden is still in Kandahar province in Maruf, some 130 kilometers east of Kandahar city. He has training camps there and strong under

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More changes in admin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has brought about more changes in the administration over the last two days.

According to a PID handout yesterday, Additional Secretary of the Education Ministry AMM Reza-e-Rabbi was transferred to the Prime Minister's Office while acting Chairman of Land Appeal Board SUM Zahirul Islam to BCS Administration Academy as Director General.

Director of the Bureau of Anti-corruption Nurul Alam Khan was made Officer on Special Duty (OSD) under the Establishment Ministry.

Joint Secretary of the Home Ministry Golam Kibria M Nurul Amin was appointed Director of BFIDC while Joint Secretary of the Power Division Kazi Nasirul Islam Director of the Directorate of Land Record and Survey.

PDB Member (Finance) Enayet Hossain Mia was appointed

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Bailout package

IMF, Dhaka assessing need for aid and 'possible programme'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) bailout package for Bangladesh to support its fragile balance of payment situation will now depend on the outcome of the country's need assessment and formulation of a 'possible programme' for getting financial assistance.

"The mission and the Bangladesh government have been assessing the country's need for financial assistance and a possible programme under which Bangladesh could have access to IMF financial support," head of the visiting IMF mission Luis Valdivieso told a press briefing in the city yesterday rounding up a 10-day visit here.

He however said, "Much technical works remain to be done and an agreement was reached on how to proceed to finalise this preparatory work as soon as possible. In particular, there is a need to accelerate and broaden on-going efforts by the government to improve its economic information system."

The mission came here on November 8 to conclude the Article IV consultation initiated in February this year. It made an assessment of recent eco

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Pressure on BNP to make Monzur a minister

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP), a component of the four-party alliance government, is putting pressure on the BNP to make its chairman Nazir Rahman Monzur a minister as soon as possible.

The party also wants nomination for its secretary-general Kazi Firaz Rashid as an alliance candidate for the Narail-1 by-election, a BJP source said.

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina has retained Gopalganj-3 of the three constituencies she won in the October 1 general election, leaving Narail-1 and Barguna-3 for by-polls.

Before the parliamentary polls, it was decided that Nazir would be made a minister, a senior BJP leader told The Daily Star.

However, due to legal complications Nazir could not be made a

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Standard Chartered Bank

Rejoinder & our reply

Spectra Solutions Ltd. has said the report, titled "Shady telecom business robs country of crores a month" and published in The Daily Star on November 7, is not based on facts and, therefore, not true because:

"We have been providing Internet services after receiving the necessary ISP licence. We have been awarded this licence and telephone lines by the BTTB and the MOPT after duly completing all necessary administrative and official formalities. We fail to understand how the concerned reporter justifiably claims former post and telecommunications minister himself had lobbied for giving telephone connections to our company, which in our case is only 250 as compared to others who have 400 to 600 lines.

In the report it is mentioned that on the 22nd March 2000 a divisional

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Toxicity in Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara Lake

Thousands exposed to health hazards



Liquid waste streams down a surface drain into the Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara Lake. While indiscriminate dumping of toxic waste is polluting its water beyond redemption, unplanned plot allocation by Rajuk along the lake and lakeside open space (inset) is smothering the lake.

STAR REPORT

With the government delaying a development project, the Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara Lake faces an environmental disaster that threatens public health in the area.

In absence of a proper drainage system in the area or adjacent Progoti Sarani, thousands of households and illegal industrial units pour huge volumes of untreated waste into the lake.

Toxicity of the lake water has already resulted in death of schools of fishes. People living on the lakeside are also exposed to various health hazards.

Over the years, the Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) has installed a vast network of sewer lines, keeping the lake as the only discharge point for "several hundreds drain outlets".

Moreover, indiscriminate plot allocation by the Rajuk along the lake and lakeside open space has further endangered the water body.

Experts believe that in no way can the government afford the costly relocation of hundreds of sewer lines flowing into the lake; therefore, the concept of building a solar aquatic treatment plant within

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Murder of college principal in Ctg Police identify killers, launch manhunt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

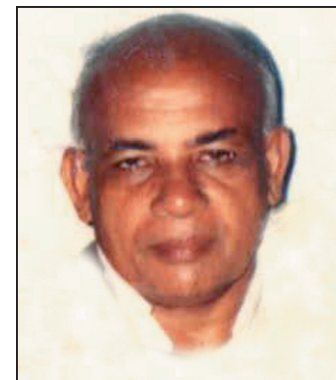
The "mercenary group" which gunned down principal Gopal Chandra Muhuri has been identified and five special police teams have launched a massive manhunt for their arrest, according to police sources.

Chittagong Metropolitan Police authority formed a joint interrogation cell yesterday for questioning the two teachers of Nazirhat College arrested in connection with the murder.

The two arrested teachers -- Idris Meah Chowdhury and Tofazzal Ahmed -- were taken on a four-day remand yesterday. They are among the four FIR-named accused in the case filed with Kotwali thana.

Gopal Krishna Muhuri, principal of Nazirhat College and a former freedom fighter, was shot dead by four unidentified gunmen at his residence at Jamal Khan in the city on Friday morning.

CMP sources said the cell headed by Assistant Commissioner of Detective Branch Munirul Islam comprise officials from CID, Special Branch and the OC of Kotwali thana who is the IO of the case.



Gopal Chandra Muhuri

A BSS report quoted Munirul Islam as saying, "Killers of the principal have been identified and we have collected their photographs".

Police arrested the two teachers in a pre-dawn raid at their houses on Saturday. Another FIR-named accused, Zahurul Huq, a teacher of the college, is hiding since the murder, police said.

The other accused Elahi Box, father of alleged terrorist and top Shibir cadre Nasir, is under house arrest as he is sick, police said.

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Couple gunned down, daughter shot in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An unidentified gang gunned down a couple and shot their daughter at Khiljee Road at Mohammadpur in the city last night.

The incident took place when Mohammad Kamal, 48 and his wife Sultani Begum, 38, were going to their Adabar residence via Khiljee Road at about 8:45 p.m. Their daughter Afšana was with them.

Sources said they were returning home after seeing their ailing relative at Suharwardi Hospital. As soon as they entered the road, an unidentified armed gang shot them.

Details about the incident and the reason behind it could not be known.

The couple was sent to a nearby hospital where doctors declared them dead. The bodies were sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Mohammadpur police confirmed the incident but could not say whether the couple died.

In another incident, two groups of people traded gunshots and exploded crackers during a clash between the Shaymoli Cinema Hall at Mohammadpur last night.

JCD confines 250 students in IU women's hall for 8 hours

IU CORRESPONDENT, Kusthia

JCD activists besieged about 250 students of Begum Fazilatunnessa Hall of the Islamic University inside for eight hours from 6 am yesterday.

They locked the main entrance to the hall and staged demonstration demanding expulsion of two BCL activists, Shohag and Mona, whom JCD blamed for the clash with their female activists in the hall on Saturday night.

Following the clash, JCD activists from different dormitories gathered in front of the hall and surrounded it.

The clash erupted following an altercation between JCD activist Lucky and BCL activist Mona at about 10 pm leaving at least 10 students were injured in the clash.

Police reached the hall and dispersed the agitating JCD activists and unlocked the main gate.

Most of the students vacated the hall in the afternoon fearing fresh attacks by JCD.

Additional police force has been deployed in the hall to avert further clash.

Meanwhile, the Provost Council at an emergency meeting yesterday temporarily expelled BCL activists Shohag and Mona as JCD put pressure on the authorities.

Eco-friendly power plant loses way in bureaucratic web

SHARIER KHAN

A private power plant project, which would use all the waste of Dhaka to generate at least 60MW power and help the authorities keep the city clean, has been delayed due to bureaucratic bottleneck.

The environment friendly project would generate 20MW power per thousand metric tonnes of waste, to be provided by the Dhaka City Corporation. Dhaka generates

around 3000 metric tonnes of solid waste everyday.

The cost of per unit power would be around 4.5 cents. This rate is much lower than oil-based barge-mount power plants but much higher than the two gas-based large-scale AES power projects.

If implemented, waste sorting for feeding the power plant would also help create recycling industry for plastic, aluminium, steel and glass.

Considering the positive nature of the project, the Power Cell at the

Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources floated a tender in February 1998.

In June 15 that year - on the closing date of the tender - six companies submitted their proposals. They were American Business Corporation (USA), Seghers Better Technology (Belgium), AARCEE Holdings (Singapore), Jaya Vegetables (Bangladesh), Merchant

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Mamun-ur-Rashid reinstated and made OSD

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Secretary of the government, Mamun-ur-Rashid, was reinstated yesterday as an Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in the Ministry of Establishment, said a notification.

Official sources said Mamun-ur-Rashid was removed from his job early this year by the previous Awami League government on various charges including distortion of his actual date of birth.

Later, he filed a writ petition challenging the government decision following which the High Court ordered the government to reinstate him in service. During the hearing of the petition, the office of the attorney general allegedly refrained from defending the government.

BNP sources said Mamun-ur-Rashid had met BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia immediately after his removal. A section of BNP stalwarts supported him in his bid to get reinstated although retired bureaucrats based at BNP's Hawa Bhaban opposed him.

Mamun-ur-Rashid however

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Javed digs deep to save hosts

HASAN MASOOD, From Chittagong

Hosts Bangladesh yesterday carried the second Test of the Coca-Cola Series against Zimbabwe into the fifth day thanks mainly to a solid unbeaten half-century by Javed Omar and a characteristically aggressive knock from first-innings centurion Habibul Bashar.

Opener Javed scored an unbeaten 80 and Bashar followed up his career best 108 with 76 as Bangladesh finished the fourth day on Sunday on 227 for four at the MA Aziz Stadium. They featured in a record 122-run second wicket stand.

The home side, who resumed on 15 for no loss, were still 64 runs adrift of making the tourists bat again. Zimbabwe declared their first innings at 542 for seven while Bangladesh responded with 251.

If Bangladesh are to save the match all hopes will rest on Javed and talented teenager Mohammed Ashraf batting on one.

Javed, who scored only eight in the first innings, thwarted the six-man Zimbabwe attack minus a lethal Heath Streak. The right-hander with sheer patience helped Bangladesh cross 200-mark at the end of the day.

Javed, who has earned the distinction of being only the third batsman in Test cricket history to have carried his bat, shared 73 runs for the first wicket

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INSIDE TODAY

Article 4

Fall of Kabul: A crucial new phase
Column: Perspectives
M Abdul Hafiz

Business 6-8

No govt plan to impose addl duties on any item soon

IME urges leading nations to cut interest rates further
DSE, CSE price quotations

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Nov 19		5-11 pm
Nov 20	6-17 am	

Prayer Timings

Nov 19		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-53	4-59
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-55	4-10
Maghrib	5-15	5-20
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation



Sehri, Iftar timing

Ramadan	Nov	Sehri	Iftar
3	19	-	5-15
4	20	4-54	5-15
5	21	4-54	5-15

City Cell

17 new OCs of DMP

SEVENTEEN Police Inspectors were posted as Officer-in-Charge of different thanas in the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) yesterday.

Earlier, fifteen of them were transferred to the DMP as officer-in-charge on November 5.

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Pepsi Match report