

## Law for energy regulatory body soon

BSS, Dhaka

The government will enact a law soon for setting up an energy regulatory commission to provide legal framework for restructuring the power sector.

"The draft legislation for this purpose has been approved by the Cabinet and it is expected to be placed in parliament soon," State Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmood said this yesterday at a luncheon here hosted by American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM) in Bangladesh.

With a pledge, he said, to make electricity available for all by 2020, the government has undertaken a number of reform measures for generation, distribution and transmission of power. The government is also working on a set of further reforms to be implemented in the sector, he added.

Iqbal Mahmood said the power sector reforms began with the creation of Rural Electrification Board (REB) in 1977 breaking the monopoly of Power Development Board (PDB).

Later, in continuation of the policy, Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) was established to take over power distribution system from the PDB. In 1992, the sector was made open for private sector participation through amendments to the Industrial Policy.

The state minister said the National Energy Policy framed in

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## AL restates demand for CEC's resignation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) has demanded resignation of Chief Election Commissioner MA Syed for the "farical" election to the Sandwip municipality.

"The voters were held hostage by armed cadres of the ruling party and were not allowed to vote," Abdus Samad Azad, the acting AL president, told newsmen after the party's central working committee meeting yesterday.

The Election Commission (EC) has already cancelled the July 20 elections, which was marked by zero-turnout in the face of threats and intimidation unleashed reportedly by ruling party activists.

The commission has also asked officials concerned to probe into the unprecedented incident, identify the people responsible and punish them.

The AL has blamed the CEC for engineering the heaviest defeat in the party's history in the October 1 general election and demanded his resignation.

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PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka University students (left) flee the teargassed area on the campus yesterday; vandalised motorcars (middle); and agitated students set fire to a university bus (right). The demonstration against the police's overnight raid on the Shamsunnahar Hall triggered a series of violent incidents on the campus.

## Govt apathy chills EC's UZ law reform bid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government's reluctance to come up with a decision on the upazila system has chilled the interest of the Election Commission (EC) in discussing the related law reforms.

"Since the issue is still being debated by the government hierarchy, it is meaningless to discuss the upazila-related law reforms," an election commissioner was quoted as saying at an EC meeting yesterday.

Chief Election Commissioner MA Syed chaired the meeting that set agenda for the electoral law reforms in the local government bodies.

Keeping the agenda of Upazila Parishad aside, the four-member constitutional body discussed some proposals for the electoral law reforms of other local government bodies like the Union Parishad, the municipality and

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## Govt clarifies Janakantha claims

BSS, Dhaka

The government yesterday urged the conscious people to be vocal against motivated propaganda.

The government, in a clarification on the report titled "Government wants to suppress the voice of the Janakantha" said the controversy over some news items published in the Dainik Janakantha should be brought to the public notice.

A four-page handout issued by the Press Information Department (PID) said the government, in a letter on July 8, had requested the Janakantha management to send documentary evidences of a report published in the daily of the same

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## Unocal's new condition for more investment

IOC wants Magurchhara claim withdrawn

UNB, Dhaka

Unocal has set some conditions, mainly financial, to supply gas to Petrobangla from the Moulvibazar field and hinted that its further investment depends on the Magurchhara compensation claim that the international oil company considers resolved.

The Unocal's reaction came after Petrobangla wanted to get gas supplies from its Moulvibazar field.

"Another issue which will adversely affect our management's willingness to invest further capital is Petrobangla's most recent

request for \$685 million in compensation for gas consumed during the MB1 blowout of 1997 because we have indicated that we consider the matter resolved and the issue closed," Unocal said in a letter.

However, sources in Petrobangla said, the US oil giant expressed its willingness to sit anytime to discuss the matter.

Unocal in the letter said that in assessing the commercial viability and any additional capital in the Moulvibazar field, it must also be satisfied that its entitlement to cost recovery will be properly and promptly agreed upon and discharged and that there should

absolutely be no default in this respect.

"The OBL (Occidental of Bangladesh taken over by Unocal) is again concerned that the experience to date indicates only extremely poor prospects for this. This view will not, we anticipate, change unless, at least the associated cost recovery pool date is agreed upon by OBL and Petrobangla."

The OBL and Petrobangla also need to agree upon the associated work programme and budget, the letter added.

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## Viewers still miss popular pay channels

JULHAS RIPON

Cable operators are refusing to air many of the popular pay-per-view channels, depriving thousands of viewers in the city, even though officials have declared the strikes to be withdrawn.

Sources said, the operators belonging to the Cable Operators Association of Bangladesh (COAB) and the Bangladesh Satellite Cable Network Owners' Association (SCNOA) are depriving subscribers from enjoying channels like HBO, AXN, STAR PLUS, STAR MOVIES,

ZEE TV, ESPN, STAR WORLD, STAR SPORTS and a few other popular channels.

They are also depriving the children from watching the CARTOON NETWORK, sources added.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, a large number of residents in different parts of the city expressed their disgrace as they are being deprived from watching their favourite channels due to the 'unscrupulous motives' of the cable operators.

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## Life threat to channel distributor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manager of Nationwide Communications Limited, a distributor of satellite channels, filed a general diary with Gulshan police on Tuesday, asking for security of life of the company's chairman Abul Khair Litu and his younger brother Ashfer Khair Mithu.

Biplob Kumar Saha, the manager, alleged that president of the Cable Operators Association of Bangladesh (COAB) SM Anwar Parvez and his associates have been threatening cable operators who are airing 'pay channels' legally.

Litu and Mithu have been threatened over telephone, he alleged.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
July 25		6-45 pm
July 26	5-25 am	

Prayer Timings		
July 25		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Dengue strikes back

Seven die since July 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least five more dengue patients were admitted to different city hospitals and clinics yesterday.

According to the Directorate of Health, at least seven people died of dengue in different city hospitals since July 1. Of them, six died at the BIRDEM hospital and one at the Dhaka Medial College Hospital (DMCH).

According to government estimates, a total of 193 dengue patients were admitted to different hospitals and clinics across the country during the last 24 days. Of them, only three patients were admitted to hospitals outside Dhaka.

Doctors said the number of dengue patients has suddenly surged since June. They also expressed concern as a large percentage of the patients have been contracted with haemorrhagic dengue fever (HDF).

According to unofficial estimates, the number of dengue patients admitted to different hospitals and clinics since July 1 through out the country is more than 200.

The control room of the health directorate said last night that a total of 26 dengue patients were being treated at different city hospitals and clinics till last evening.

A total of 75 patients have been admitted to the DMCH since July 1.



PHOTO: STAR

A nurse attends to a teenage dengue patient from Chandpur at the BIRDEM in the city yesterday.

## Second-in-command of PBCP held in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khalilur Rahman Kajol, 38, alias Shagor, second-in-command of the political wing of Khulna-Bagerhat based unit of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party, was arrested from Natun Bazar under Khulna Police station at 10 pm on Tuesday.

Police arrested him while talking to one of his party's armed cadres at the Bazar.

Kajol's associate, however, managed to escape from the place. Police did not disclose his name for the sake of investigation.

The PBCP ringleader was put in Khulna Thana custody with highest

security till 11:30 am and then taken to Bagerhat Sadar thana.

Soon after his arrest, security personnel in Bagerhat district and in Rupsha and Terokhedra upazilas of Khulna district have been put on alert.

According to Bagerhat Police Super Jashim Mondol, PBCP ringleader Kajol has already confessed his involvement in the killings of SI Altaf Hossain, shrimp exporter Farhad Hossain, Awami League leader Haroon Sarder, BNP leader M A Awal, UP member Babul of Moubhog, Awami League leader Kalidas Boral, police constable Quddus and BNP activist Tushar.

Police said Kajol was involved in

at least ten murders in Bagerhat and Khulna districts. He also led the PBCP activists who snatched away Abdur Rashid Malitha alias Tapan from police custody on February 20 last year.

All the murders were planned in party's hideouts in Khulna city in consultation with Tapan and some political godfathers of Khulna and Bagerhat districts over Mobile Phone, Kajol told during interrogation.

He was also involved in the murder of Abdur Razzak Sarder, Treasurer of Khulna University, said Ishaque Ali Dukhu, OC of Bagerhat Sadar thana who played active role

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## Informant shot dead in Fatullah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

A police informer was gunned down by BNP cadres at Kaimpur in Fatullah police station on Tuesday night.

He was identified as Abul Kalam Azad, 42, a DB police informer.

According to sources, a group of BNP cadres led by Rahmatullah went to Bhai Bhai re-rolling mill in Kaimpur area at about 11 pm and demanded illegal toll from Mofizul Islam, owner of the mill.

As Mofizul refused to give in to their demand, the BNP cadres beat

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## Muggers stab 2 security men at Ctg Port

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Muggers stabbed two security personnel of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) inside the protected zone of the port yesterday.

The injured were identified as Abu Taher and Md. Aminul Islam. Abu Taher was admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) in a critical condition, sources said.

However, security men caught three muggers from the spot immediately after the incident. They are Faruk, Bashir and Majibur. Port security men handed them over to the Bandar thana police.

Sources said, the incident occurred at a place between Jetty No. 5 and 6 at around 12.30 pm.

Meanwhile, a special joint drive by army, BDR, police and port securitymen has been continuing for the last three days inside the restricted areas of Chittagong Port to check pilferage and theft.

## Surge in rivers spurs flood

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One person named Mahbubur Rahman, 30, of Joydev Village in Rangpur, drowned in floodwater Tuesday, when he was recovering some bundles of jute from the Manosh River.

Floods have taken on an alarming edge, as major rivers across the country are continuously surging.

Our Sylhet Correspondent said the water level in almost all rivers in the district crossed the danger mark. The Surma flows 119cm at Kanaighat Upazila and 56cm at the Sunamganj town above the danger mark.

The onrush of waters coupled with rains has spurred floods in at least six upazilas.

The Kushiara was flowing 117cm above the danger level at Amolshid in Zakiganj Upazila yesterday.

The floods in Kurigram took a menacing turn due to continuous swelling of the Dharla and the Brahmaputra.

Vast areas in Chilmari, Roumari, Rajibpur and Kurigram Sadar went under water.

The Ghaghot in Gaibandha flowing much above the danger level has inundated new areas in Fulchhari, Shaghata, Sundarganj and Gaibandha Sadar.

In Jessore, the flood situation deteriorated following heavy rainfalls over the last two days. Rising waters of the Kapatkha left about seven lakh people marooned.

The district administration distributed only 20 metric tons of rice and Tk 10,000 among flood victims.

Our Rangamati Correspondent said the water level in the Kaptai Lake rose further, as waters are rolling down from the hilltops round the clock.

In Khagrachhari, torrential rains accompanied by the onrush of water from upstream submerged the lowlands in the district, leaving thousands of people marooned.

Merung Hazachhara in Dighinala Upazila has been inundated, leaving about 100 families confined to the camps for flood victims. Downpour and rising waters of the Chengi triggered erosion.

Our Habiganj Correspondent reported that the overall flood situation in the district was improving as the water level in the Khowai climbed down. The river is flowing 40cm below the danger mark.