

IOCs cannot demand

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However, he said funds are the major problem facing the energy sector. Referring to a ministerial projection, Mosharrar said only the gas sector needs an investment of about US\$1.4 billion until 2020.

The speakers expressed divergent views on the gas export concept.

The AL leader Abdul Jalil said their party would oppose the gas export concept, as the present gas reserve is not enough to meet even the national demand.

The state minister posed a counter-argument here, asking "if the AL opposes gas export, then why did they award more PSCs to IOCs?"

A former BNP lawmaker Major (ret) Akhtaruzzaman thinks that if the government does not decide to export gas, it will be unsent from office. "This is a reality that the gas exports is a major issue strong enough to bring a political party to power and overthrow another," he noted.

Three members of the utilisation committee said the suggestion they gave in their report for limited gas export from incremental discoveries is the second best option.

"Had we have resources to explore on our own, we wouldn't have suggested even limited export," said SR Osmani, a Petrobangla director and member secretary of the utilisation committee.

By contrast, Dr Ejaj Hossain of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) said that there was no point in making delay to reach a decision in favour of gas export.

In this context, Dr Bhattacharya pointed to arrangement of funds for Petrobangla and Bapex, the state-owned exploration company, for development of the energy sector.

"If the government wants to give gas to people, it has to allocate funds for development of this sector," Dr Bhattacharya added.

If the government decides to export gas, the IOCs should positively exploit it and go for further exploration, Dr Bhattacharya said.

But Dr Ejaj said there is no point in depending on Petrobangla and Bapex. "Please don't tell me to believe Petrobangla and Bapex will be able to explore all gas resources."

SR Osmani said that from the early 1990s there was a move by the World Bank to cripple Bapex.

"Even once the World Bank suggested that the government dismantle Bapex, saying whatever

SEC regulations on portfolio investment

BSS, Dhaka

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has imposed regulations on portfolio investment in the country with a view to protecting the interests of local investors.

As per the SEC order issued yesterday, the foreign investors operating in the country's capital market, from now on, should make transactions of their securities through registered merchant bankers by opening their accounts there.

The SEC Regulation Merchant Banker and Portfolio Manager Ordinance 1996 -- in this regard, would be applicable for foreign investment in the country, the SEC said.

The decision came at a meeting of the SEC, the watchdog of the capital market at the SEC office yesterday, according to SEC source.

The new rule, however, would not be applicable on sale of securities bought earlier.

Besides, the SEC decided that like local sponsors, the shares of any issuer company purchased by foreign sponsors would be locked in for three years. The SEC also imposed a one-year lock-in system on foreign share investors in case of private placement.

Temple

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ing from work at about midnight.

At about 5:30 in the following morning, he went for a walk and found all the images and the mandap damaged, he said. The miscreants broke heads and hands of the deities.

A source seeking anonymity said, the total area of the Shivkarnamoyee Laxminarayana Jau estate is about 72 decimals. Some local influential people led by Shah Alam, Alamgir, Nasir Mollah and Master Mia encroached 42 decimals and raised multistoried structures.

The temple committee lodged a case. After 7 years, the High Court on October 5 gave a verdict in favour of the temple committee.

After the verdict, the group backed by local Juba Dal (ruling BNP's youth front) leader Sentu started threatening the temple committee to sell the encroached land to the encroachers.

The source claimed that the group might be behind the incident. Fatullah thana police arrested the temple's security guard Shah Alam.

Secretary of the temple committee Swapan Kumar Mondol filed a case with Fatullah thana. In the case, he accused none but mentioned the land dispute with the group led by Shah Alam.

When contacted, OC of Fatullah thana Sharif Shamsul Huq said they are interrogating the arrested security guard.

Dewan protests reports on his alleged corruption

UNB, Dhaka

Deputy Minister for CHT Affairs Moni Swapan Dewan has termed the allegation of corruption against him "baseless and motivated" as published in national dailies yesterday.

Contradicting UNB report, Dewan said, "Wheat and money were sanctioned against various projects in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The ministry has formed two teams for investigation if the projects sanctioned during the last fiscal have been properly implemented. The teams have submitted their reports."

He further said, "Those projects are usually implemented through the Hill District Parishad and the deputy commissioner. Therefore, the report published about corruption is a tissue of lies, fabricated and motivated."

Dewan said it was part of a game of a vested quarter to foil the measures taken by the government for development of the CHT, success of which under the present government attracted the foreign donors.

The deputy minister, however, did not contradict the information incorporated in the UNB report that he has been unofficially removed from his post, and that all activities of the CHT Affairs Ministry are now carried out on directive from the prime minister.

DESA introduces payment system thru' debit card

UNB, Dhaka

In an effort to make the electricity bill payment system easier, Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) has introduced a programme for payment of bills through ready cash.

State Minister for Power Iqbal Hassan Mahmud formally inaugurated the programme at a city hotel yesterday.

Earlier, an agreement to this effect was signed between DESA and American International Bangladesh in presence of the state minister.

DESA secretary Abdul Khaleque and corporate secretary of the company ME Islam signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organisations.

From now on, the ready cash cardholders will be able to pay their electricity bills on any day of the week at the ready cash payment stations and selected department stores.

With the introduction of the system, the consumers are expected to be more eager to pay their bills in time raising DESA's revenue earning.

Speaking on the occasion, the state minister said the government is committed to developing the power sector and improving customer service.

He said all electricity consumers would be brought under a computerised billing system and directed the officials concerned to send bills to the customers in time, according to PID handout.

Housing scheme

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accused. She also suggested application of lasting local technologies keeping in mind the country's real situation and future needs of the people.

About the capital's skyline, the PM said, "If we look at the Dhaka City, we can see high-rise buildings, but for a lack of appropriate plans those buildings have turned the city into a congested one instead of increasing its beauty."

She noted that during emergencies, ambulances and fire service vehicles cannot access many areas of the city.

Many historic landmark establishments are on the verge of collapse for lack of proper care, she said, adding that earthquake factor should be kept in mind during construction of high-rise houses.

Referring to unplanned expansion of the capital, the prime minister lamented the fact that there is no exclusive residential area in Dhaka City now.

Elaborating on the ongoing development of housing schemes, Khalede said construction works for 1100 flats were going on for sale to government officials and low-income group on hire-purchase basis.

Process of readying 37,215 plots and construction of nearly 1.2 lakh flats are also underway in Uttara Model Town, Purbachal New City and Jhilmil project near Dhaka-Mawa road, she told the function.

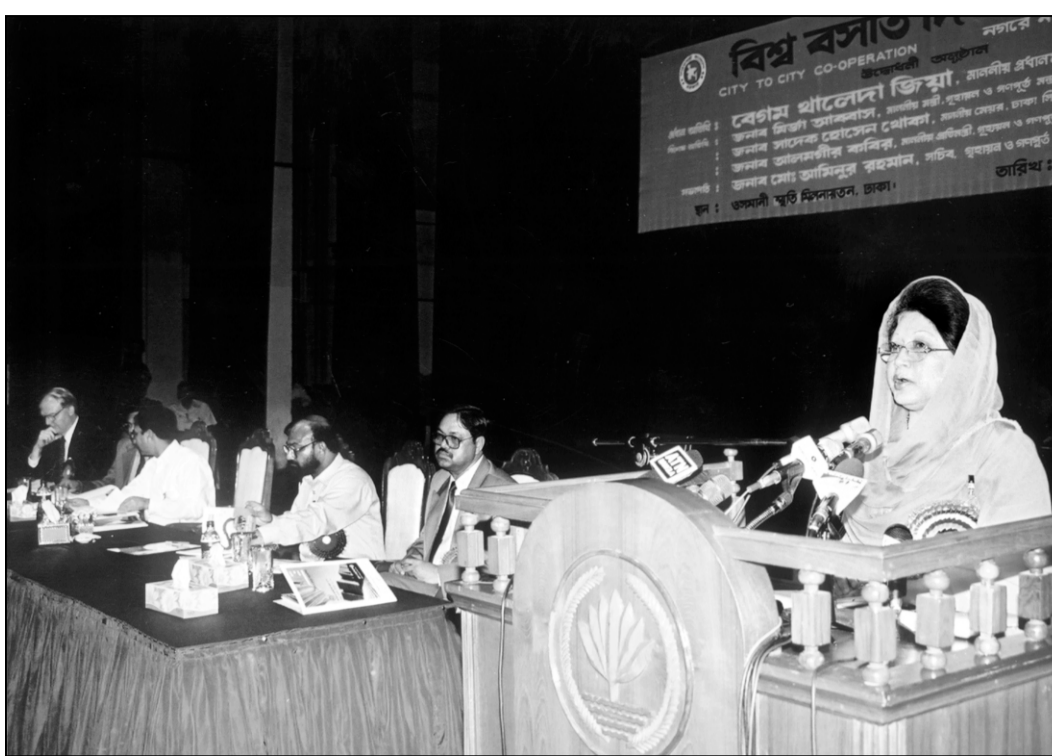
Khalede further said 648 flats of various sizes were being built in Dhaka for expatriate Bangladeshi wage earners.

Gaza raid

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ern Lebanese water project, as engineers prepared Monday to test the pumps.

Meanwhile the EU's Solana was trying to calm tensions in talks with leaders on both sides.

He was due to meet Sharon and Arafat, although Israeli Defence Minister Binyamin Ben Eliezer asked him Sunday not to meet the Palestinian leader, who the Jewish state has been trying to isolate.



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia speaks as chief guest at a World Habitat Day programme at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city yesterday (Story on page 12).

Nobel for medicine

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In the early 1960s, Brenner, who on his website says he likes "travelling, stirring up the scientific world and good wine," selected the Caenorhabditis elegans as a model for study because it is small, multicelled and plentiful.

Brenner, 75, is now at the Molecular Sciences Institute in California.

His research group, which at the time was at Cambridge University in England, was joined in 1969 by Sulston, who was studying how the worm grows from a single egg to the complex cells of an adult animal, and then moved on to map the worm's chromosomes.

Horvitz, 55, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, continued Brenner's and Sulston's work on C elegans in the 1970s, shedding further light on what drives cells to die or protects them from dying.

C elegans one of the first lab animals to have its genetic code unravelled. Others are yeast, the mouse and a commonly-found weed called thale cress.

Sulston, 60, will also go down in history as one of the leading figures in the race to decipher the human genome, which culminated in a death in 2001 between a public-sector consortium and a US biotech giant, Celera Genomics.

He demanded that genomic data be placed in the public domain, to be a spur for research, rather than be a copyrighted asset of private corporations.

Programmed cell death, also called apoptosis, is the process by which key monitoring genes instruct a cell to kill itself rather than let it replicate if it has flaws.

Every day, billions of cells reproduce, dividing into clones thanks to complex molecular machinery, to sustain the body's organs and functions.

If the guardian genes themselves have flaws, there is a risk that they let damaged cells replicate and further divide.

That creates malfunctioning or malignant cells that proliferate without control, becoming tumours.

The process can also work in reverse. There are diseases, such as AIDS, where for some reason programmed cell death occurs mas-

sively, wrecking the body's tissue or immune defences.

Last year's Medicine Prize also honoured cancer research, going to Leland Hartwell of the United States and Timothy Hunt and Paul Nurse, both of Britain, for research on how cells reproduce.

This year's laureates will share the prize of 10 million kroner (1.10 million euros, 1.07 million dollars).

They will receive their prize, along with the other Nobel laureates, from the hands of Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf at the official ceremony in Stockholm on December 10, the anniversary of the death in 1896 of the prizes' creator, Swedish scholar and inventor Alfred Nobel.

Monday's Medicine Prize was the first of this year's Nobel prizes to be announced. On Tuesday, the prize for physics will be announced, followed by the prizes for both economics and chemistry on Wednesday.

The exact date of the Literature Prize is only announced two days in advance, but it is traditionally awarded on a Thursday.

The Nobel week will conclude Friday with the prestigious Peace Prize.

Petrol pump

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from toll collectors and meet our other demands, we may have to go for the strike in future," Md. Nazmul Huq, convener of the Petroleum Dealers and Petrol Pump Owners Action Committee, told The Daily Star yesterday.

At the meeting held at his office, the state minister also told the association leaders that the government would discuss the matter with the relevant authorities to issue arms license to the petrol pump owners for their security.

The minister also agreed to increase the commission of the petroleum dealers and petrol pump owners as well as the tank lorry fare.

Other issues that include arrangement of security for the petrol pumps would be discussed later. The minister told the association leaders that he needed to discuss the matter with the home ministry before could say anything about it.

Poor HR record

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According to Ain-o-Shalish Kendra, an organisation of human rights and legal aid, 173 journalists were tortured and three killed across the country in the first nine months of this year. In most cases, criminals with ruling-party links were responsible.

Two journalists, meanwhile, are in prison in the name of safe custody. Police sent them to jail on a court order although they did not appeal for safe custody.

Arrest of Shahriar Kabir on November 22 last year for trying to make a documentary on repression on the Hindu community triggered widespread condemnation. The government later filed a seditious case against the noted novelist and journalist. He spent 59 days in prison before the High Court ordered his release on January 20. The case, meanwhile, remains pending.

Many leaders of the main opposition Awami League and its front organisations have also gone through similar predicament. They were arrested first and then filed cases against. Besides, in recent times, there has been sudden spurt of police raids on opposition leaders and activists. Media reports have it that AL leaders at the district and union levels stay away from home in fear of police harassment.

Former state minister Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, ex-assistant political secretary to the prime minister Bahauddin Nasim and three top leaders of the AL-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League were all arrested without specific charges. Later, the govern-

ment filed several cases against each of them. On several occasions, fresh cases were lodged after they had been granted bail and were about to be released. Eventually, the High Court intervened and ordered their release.

The Special Powers Act, 1974 and Section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) remain very much in play to harass political opponents. Repeal of the SPA and amendment of Section 54 of CrPC both featured in the four-party alliance's election manifesto. However, the Law Commission recommendations in this regard seem to have lost way in bureaucratic wilderness.

While many opposition leaders and activists were arrested under Section 54 and imprisoned under the SPA when the government could not bring any specific charges, cases against some 40,000 people, including many listed criminals, were quashed on the pretext that those were filed with political motivation during the previous regime.

Repeal of the SPA and amendment of the CrPC apart, the government has made little or no progress in establishment of an independent human rights commission and an anti-corruption commission, appointment of an ombudsman and separation of judiciary from the executive - also part of its election manifesto.

The law ministry has drafted a bill for the human rights commission and placed it before the cabinet. However, the cabinet committee on human rights has so far finalised 18 of the 32 sections of the draft bill after six meetings. A draft law on

Blast victim

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son of Mohammad Mokarram Hossain and a student of class nine at Labsha High School in Sathkira, died at the DMCH on October 4. Mukto and his mother Mamtaz Begum were injured in the bomb blast.

The first bomb exploded inside the Roxy Cinema Hall at about 7:30pm, leaving at least 90 people wounded. Five minutes later, a second bomb went off at the Sathkira Stadium where a circus was going on. Over 35 people were injured in this blast.

The local administration suspects involvement of Islami Shashantantra Andolan (ISA) in the attacks.

Meanwhile, the Detective Branch (DB) of Police took over the investigation of the bomb blasts on October 3.

Banga Babu

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crime cartel in the Mirpur area before Babu killed him following a feud two years ago.

The feud between Babu and Nantu began after police arrested Babu, who had thought Nantu had him arrested.

After Nantu's killing, Mamun and Khairul joined teamed up with Babu. Recently, Mamun managed to establish a rapport with an influential official in the home ministry, which increased his importance in the group. He was arrested a few days before he was murdered, but the official had him released. However, Babu did not take it kindly, the sources said.

The night before the incident, Mamun, Khairul and another accomplice, Babul, stayed at Mamun's residence at Mirpur. Babul took the two to Segunbagicha on Saturday where they were shot dead.

Meanwhile, police are yet to arrest any of the gangsters involved in the killings despite a nightlong manhunt in different places of Mirpur area on Saturday. Police also failed to get a lead on the killing.

Hashem Mia, father of Mamun, filed a murder case with the Ramna Police Station late Saturday night, accusing Banga Babu and his accomplices of the killing.

Meanwhile, the bodies were handed over to their relatives after autopsy at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday.

Gram Sarkar

FROM PAGE 1
he said it would greatly help to infuse dynamism in the development activities in rural areas and integrate local people in various socio-cultural and development activities.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia presided over the meeting held at her office last night, which was attended by ministers, state ministers in-charge and secretaries concerned.

Sources said a bill regarding Gram Sarkar would be placed in the next Jatiya Sangsad session for passage. The JS will need to cancel the Gram Parishad law enacted by the AL government.

They said formation of Gram Sarkar in 40,392 villages would start immediately after completion of election in some 4,448 Union Parishad (UP) likely to take place in January-February.

The Gram Sarkar will have a five-year tenure. Each ward of the Union Parishad would be a unit of Gram Sarkar, but it would not be an administrative unit of the government as per the Article 59 of the Constitution.

The Gram Sarkar would be an auxiliary of Union Parishad and its elected members would be chief of Gram Sarkar, while one elected UP woman member would be the advisor of three Gram Sarkar units.

The 13-member body will have Gram Sarkar Prodhana (chief), three women representatives (one must be a member of trained Village Defence Party), two farmer representatives, one male VDP representative, one worker representative, two farmer-

16 hurt as JCD, Jubo Dal clash in Barisal

A CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

At least 16 people were injured in a clash between activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Jubo Dal, student and youth wings respectively of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), at Gauranadi Upazila in the district Sunday night.

Sources said an armed group of JCD activists led by Gauranadi unit Vice-president Mintu attacked Gauranadi Jubo Dal Joint-convenor Golam Mostafa at Barthibazar in the upazila at 11.00 Sunday night.

The JCD activists chopped Mostafa and his two assistants, leaving them critically injured. They also fired gunshots and exploded crackers at the time.

Being informed, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Meanwhile, as the news of attack on Golam Mostafa spread, his supporters ransacked the houses of Mintu and his supporters in Barthi area at 11.00 the same night.

Ten persons including Mintu's sister Shaheda Begum, 30, and one Masuda, 25, were injured during the incident.

Angry supporters of Mostafa ransacked eight houses and looted goods during the attack that continued till midnight, sources said.

Mostafa was admitted to the Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital. Police arrested Mintu yesterday following a case filed by Mostafa's father.

Jubo Dal staged a demonstration yesterday morning on the Dhaka-Barisal Highway in protest at the incident.

Meanwhile, the JCD in a press release yesterday said it has expelled Mintu.

7 kathas of CPA land recovered in Chittagong

BSS, City

About seven kathas land of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) at Banglabazar area adjacent to Strand Road was recovered yesterday in a four-hour drive carried out under the supervision of a magistrate, a port press release said.

As a result of the drive, about two dozen makeshift shops built there under the aegis of local influential people were demolished. The authority of the port was established on the recovered land by erecting barbed wire fence surrounding the entire area.

Besides recovery of the land, some other unauthorised constructions at Port East Colony and near Nimtala along Maheshkhali bank were also demolished.

The drive along the three kilometre area of the port began at 9:30 am and ended at 1:30 pm.

Besides demolition, the frame and structure of the unauthorised construction were also seized. The drive conducted under the supervision of Magistrate Mohammad Munir Chowdhury, was assisted by Double Mooring Thana and CMP police. About 30 workers of different departments of the port were engaged in the drive, the press release said.

The authorities also fined Taka 25 thousand to an organisation for causing pollution of the port water area.

worker representatives, one freedom fighter representative, one teacher representative and one business representative.

Besides, officials from various departments of the government, financial institutions, co-operatives societies, Ansar and NGOs will be in the body as representative members, but they cannot vote.

The Gram Sarkar would assist the Union Parishad by implementing various development and social activities. These include growing more food, reducing illiteracy and expanding education, arranging sports and cultural functions, facilitating family planning and ensuring supply of safe drinking water, sanitation and sanitary latrines.

Besides, it will ensure primary health care, gathering birth, death, marriage and divorce related information and assist Union Parishad in tree plantation, preservation of environment and cleanliness, formation of cooperatives and augment pisciculture, poultry farming and so on.

It will also assist Union Parishad to maintain law and order and supervise VGF and VGD activities. The Union Parishad will provide a part of its income to Gram Sarkar to carry out its activities.

Alleged mugger beaten to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mob beat a mugger to death in the city's Teigaona area yesterday. The dead identified as Jamsed Ali, 45, was caught red-handed while trying to mug a pedestrian near the Teigaona truck stand at about 6:00pm. He was beaten up and handed over the police.

Later, Ali died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Angry students damage vehicles in Magura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

At least 20 vehicles were damaged on the Dhaka-Magura highway by angry students after a fellow student of Gopalpur College was critically injured when he was hit by a bus on the Magura-Jhenidah highway about 15 kilometres from Magura district town yesterday.

The agitating students also put up a barricade on the Dhaka-Magura highway disrupting traffic for about two hours and engaged in a chase and counter-chase with the police, witnesses said.

Police said Ratan Kumar, an HSC second-year student of Gopalpur College, was critically injured when a Magura-bound speeding bus from Kushtia knocked him down while he was crossing the road on a bicycle at around 10:00am.

Following the accident, the agitating students of the college halted the movement of vehicles on the highway and damaged at least 20 vehicles.

When police from the local camp intervened to bring the situation under control, the mob also hurled bricks at them, resulting in a chase and counter-chase.

Judgement in Mahima cases on Wednesday

BSS, Rajshahi

The judgement in the sensational Mohima rape and suicide cases at Kathalbaria village of Puthiya upazila of the district will be delivered Wednesday.

Judge Abu Hanif of the Woman and Child Repression Control Special Court told BSS that depositions of 21 prosecution witnesses (PWs) in the cases had been recorded and the arguments had ended on September 26.

According to the cases, four persons forcibly took teenaged Mohima from her house at Kathalbaria village to a nearby sugarcane field, gangraped her and photographed her without clothes in the evening on February 15 this year.

After the incident, Mohima committed suicide on February 19.

Abdul Hannan, father of the victim, lodged two cases with Puthiya Thana against the four persons. Police arrested one of them, Ujjal, while three others -- Selim, Faruque and Farid -- have been absconding since the incident.

Sub-inspector of police Sanaulah of the Puthiya Police Station submitted the chargesheet to the court on March 4.

Matir Moina

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gious sentiment of one section of the society".

But it later cleared the film for screening, subject to some amendments.

Tareque said the film would be screened in Bangladesh "very soon" after "minor re-editing as per the direction of the censor board."

The movie kicked off the directors' fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival in May and won the Critics Award.