

Local experts favour gas pipeline in pvt capital

SHARIER KHAN

Local energy experts favour the idea of opening up the gas pipeline infrastructure to private investment as an alternative to finances by international donors like the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The support for the private investment came after the donors imposed conditions that are hard for the country to swallow.

The ADB is rigid to make Bangladesh commit to exporting gas to India in exchange for a loan of US\$700 million for the fourth natural gas development project (NGDP).

ADB President Tadao Chino who will arrive in Dhaka tomorrow on a five-day visit is expected to discuss the NGDP and other gas sector projects with Petrobangla Wednesday.

Besides the Unocal pressure for gas export, the ADB clearly told Petrobangla that it would not finance unless the government exports a minimum volume of 250 million cubic feet a day (mmcf) gas.

According to local gas sector experts and most of the nine members of the

national gas utilisation committee, there is not much scope for gas export in near future.

At present, Bangladesh consumes a maximum of 1,240mmcf gas and it is projected to go up by seven per cent.

If the gas pipeline infrastructure is not expanded immediately, the country will face an acutely short supply of gas in a few years, forecast a well-placed source in the Gas Transmission Company Limited (GTCL).

In addition, the other ADB funded scheme -- the Dhaka Clean Fuel project -- will be uncertain, although the project got the green signal from both the government and the ADB.

The fourth NGDP seeks to set up a series of pipelines -- mostly in the western part of the country. These are Nolka to Baniara 55-km 30-inch pipeline, Baniara to Iswardi 25-km 30-inch pipeline, Iswardi to Kushiia 25-km 30-inch pipeline, Kushiia to Jessore 70-km 30-inch, Nolka to Bogra 60-km 24-inch pipeline, Ashuganj to Dhanua 55-km 30-inch pipeline, Dhanua to Nolka 87-km 30-inch pipeline, Koilastila to Rashidpur 94-km 30-inch pipeline.

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Sk Selim gets one month's detention

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Awami League lawmaker Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim was sent on a one-month detention in the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday.

Selim was accused in a case filed with the Keraniganj Police Station in connection with the attack on the motorcade of the then opposition leader Khaleda Zia on June 17 last year.

The detention was handed down under the Special Powers Act, 1974.

Also chairman of the Awami Jubo League, Selim was produced before the First Class Magistrate's Court, Dhaka at about 3:30pm on completion of a one-day remand.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) submitted a

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Revoke ordinance: AL 'It's a black law violating Constitution'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition Awami League has demanded immediate revocation of the 'Special Tribunal for Speedy Trial Ordinance', terming it a 'black' law violating the Constitution.

Its provisions are also contrary to the spirit of democracy and rule of law, AL leaders said at a press conference here yesterday.

The party would consider challenging the ordinance, promulgated by bypassing the parliament, they said replying to a question. It has been promulgated at a time when the parliament is set to go into session soon, they said.

Acting president of AL Abdus Samad Azad read out a written statement at the press conference, held at the party's central office in

the city. AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman and other senior leaders including Suranjit Sengupta, Abdul Jalil, Matia Chowdhury, Abdul Matin Khasru and Mohammad Nasim were also present.

Samad Azad said the ordinance was promulgated by bypassing the parliament with an "ill motive" to persecute opposition political leaders and activists. Trial of the criminal offences, for which it has been promulgated, can be done speedily under the existing laws, he maintained.

"It will give the government scope to deny justice to opposition leaders and workers by appointing retired judges to the special tribunals."

The new law is also discriminatory and contrary to Articles 6 and 27

of the Constitution that guarantees uniformity in application of law, he said.

Suranjit Sengupta said the ordinance was promulgated with a "malafide intention to eliminate Awami League".

Under the ordinance, the government would list cases to be sent to the proposed tribunals for trial within 135 days.

This is discriminatory and contrary to constitutional provisions that guarantee equal treatment for all, former law minister Abdul Matin Khasru said.

He explained that the government's authority to list cases would give it ample scope for persecuting political opponents by referring their cases to special tribunals while

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4m children have asthma in country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Almost four million children or 7.4 per cent of the child population of the country suffer from asthma, a seminar in the city was told yesterday.

According to a recent survey of Bangladesh Asthma Association, seven million people in the country suffer from the disease which is 5.2 per cent of the total population. Majority of such patients has mild asthma, the speakers noted at the seminar organised by Bangladesh Institute of Child Health (BICH).

Prof. Ruhul Amin of the BICH mentioned the triggers of asthma in his keynote presentation. He noted outdoor elements like pollen from grass, flowers, trees or moulds of fungi trigger asthma while indoor causes like house dust mite, flakes

from skin, hairs of the pets, moulds harboured in vacuum cleaners also do so.

However, most asthma patients are found genetically prone to it, said Dr Amin. "If single parent is an asthma patient then the offspring have 25 per cent chances to suffer from the disease while in case of both parents the risk is almost 50 per cent," he observed.

The speakers emphasised creating awareness among parents to prevent asthma. If not treated properly, asthma can lead to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, they added.

The parents should ensure that the children take medication correctly. They should be made to understand the difference between quick relief and long term medication.

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PHOTO: STAR

Customs officials at the Zia International Airport seized from an incoming passenger two kilograms of heroin (wrapped in black polythene) worth over Tk 2 crore Saturday.

Heroin worth Tk 2cr recovered at ZIA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs official at Zia International Airport yesterday recovered two kilograms of heroin, worth more than two crore taka.

Tipped off, the officials stopped a passenger who had arrived on a Bangladesh Biman flight from Karachi at around 7:30pm yesterday as he tried to pass through the green channel.

When asked to put his luggage through the scanner, Abdur Rashid Uddin Ahmed of Aial Bunia village of Sharankhola in Bagerhat claimed he had no contraband on him.

He also said he had some clothes for the children of Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, a senior mechanic of Bangladesh Biman who came to receive him.

Not convinced, the customs team ordered Inspector Shahjahan Sikder to check his baggage properly.

As he went through Ahmed's luggage, Sikder found two packs of heroin wrapped in black polythene and scotch tape.

Assistant Director of the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) AAM Hafizur Rahman said upon primary investigation that the heroin could be worth two crore taka.

Ahmed and Mizanur Rahman were arrested and later handed over to the Airport Police Station.

The contraband items were kept at the airport warehouse for valuable goods and a departmental case was initiated in this regard. A case was also filed with the Airport police.

Graft case Bail petition of Saber Chy rejected

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, yesterday rejected the bail petition of Awami League leader Saber Hossain Chowdhury, an accused in a graft case.

Magistrate Shamim-Ara-Khatun passed the order following a bail petition submitted by the defence lawyers on behalf of the accused.

The Bureau of Anti-corruption (BAC) filed the case with Ramna thana accusing Saber, former deputy minister for Shipping on October 24 for attempting to embezzle Tk 92.43 crore through an agreement with a foreign company for construction of a five-star hotel on a 2.32 acre land in the city.

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Schoolgirl abducted in Feni

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Feni

A schoolgirl was kidnapped by miscreants from Kazirhat in Sonagazi upazila of Feni district yesterday morning.

According to police and local people, a gang of miscreants abducted Ferdousi, 14, a student of class ten of Kazirhat High School at about 9:30 am and took her away in a microbus.

Daughter of Nur Ahmed of village Kazirhat, Ferdousi was going to her school to sit for examination.

A case was filed with Sonagazi police station at noon.

ISPR on incident near Sangsad Bhaban

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Inter-Service Public Relation (ISPR) directorate yesterday gave an explanatory statement regarding the incident at the South Plaza of the Sangshad Bhaban on October 24.

The ISPR claimed that news about the incident, published in various national dailies on October 25, was not based on facts.

According to the ISPR, the fact was when three miscreants snatched a watch and Tk 1500 from a youth named Alauddin Jiban of Ibrahimpur, he informed the matter

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Three to die for rape in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

A special tribunal for prevention of women and children repression yesterday sentenced three persons to death and another one to life in prison in a sensational rape and murder case.

The three persons sentenced to death are Haroon, Bullet and Jewel while the fourth convict Munki Begum was sent to life in prison. Of the four convicts, Jewel has been absconding.

Judge AMM Sayeed of the special tribunal said the

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Oct 28		5-22 pm
Oct 29	6-02 am	

Prayer Timings		
Oct 29		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-00	5-25
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-29	5-35
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation