

The Daily Star

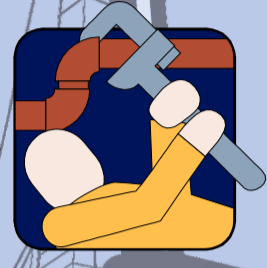
COMMITTED TO
People's Right to Know

REGD. No. DA 781 VOL. XII No. 223 DHAKA MONDAY NOVEMBER 11, 2002 BHADRA 18, 1409 BS ZAMADUIS SANI 23, 1423 HUIRI 16 PAGES PRICE: Tk 7.00

Planning Commission sits on crucial gas projects

Gas projects need urgent attention

- Pipeline schemes**
 - Ashuganj to Dhanua 30-inch 70-km pipeline
 - Rashidpur to Habiganj 30-inch 28-km pipeline
 - Bakhrabad to Meghnaghat 30-inch 60-km pipeline
- Gas field development and exploration schemes**
 - Fenchuganj gas field development
 - Haripur Oil Well work-over for gas



SHARIER KHAN and SHAHRIAR KARIM

Nearly 20 gas sector projects, some of which require urgent implementation to avoid impending energy crisis, remains shelved at the Planning Commission for nearly two years.

Sources in Petrobangla claims the commission is sitting on these projects, approved in the Annual Development Project (ADP) for the 2002-03 fiscal, and not releasing funds on the pretext of scrutinising the project concept papers (PCPs).

"A PCP is the summary of a project that helps the commission decide its usefulness and need. The commission has begun approving projects on the basis of a PCP since 1990. The details of the project, outlined in a project proposal (PP), is dealt by the ministry concerned," said a top Petrobangla official.

"Unfortunately, the commission is dealing with the PCP in a way a PP should be dealt with."

A PP is typically a detailed technical document that may contain 60 to 80 pages of information. The commission used to take at least six to seven months to scrutinise such elaborate documents. That is why, to speed up the project approval process, the government introduced the PCP system in 1990.

On the other hand, Planning Commission sources claim it has done its end of the deal, having most of these projects approved by the Executive

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4



Army men patrol the Sadarghat Launch Terminal in the city yesterday to make sure passengers are not heckled. After the launch of the Operation Clean Heart, racketeers and hawkers left the terminal.

Saifur likens army drive to allopathic treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday said the government opted for the ongoing army crackdown on crime as 'normal ways' in the past one year failed to improve the situation.

While addressing a group of businessmen in the city, he said, "We have chosen allopathic treatment as homeopathy did not work."

He observed that law and order has improved following the drive and people 'are now by and large happy with the present conditions'.

Stressing the need for an 'anxiety free environment' for running businesses properly, Saifur said, "During the last one year we have tried to improve the situation. But all efforts were in vain."

Saifur was speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural session of a workshop on "Attaining interests of entrepreneurs to take Equity and Entrepreneurship Fund (EEF) assis-

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

HC summoned, Advani's remarks protested Dhaka urges Delhi to deport criminals

UNB, Dhaka

The Indian High Commissioner ML Tripathy was yesterday summoned to the Foreign Ministry and handed a rebuttal to Indian Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani's comments about Pakistani military intelligence outfit ISI and al-Qaida networks in Bangladesh.

Foreign Secretary Shamser Mobin Chowdhury handed Tripathy an aide-memoire venting concern over such remarks.

The diplomatic note said Bangladesh never expected such aspersions made by a responsible leader of the Indian government. Bangladesh rejects such comment as "baseless and incorrect, if not motivated," it said.

In a 'note verbal' Dhaka also urged Delhi to arrest and deport the criminals who have crossed over to the neighbouring country in the wake of the anticrime operation.

Chowdhury requested assistance of the Indian government for increased vigilance at the border against such trespass.

The high commissioner assured the foreign secretary that India would fully cooperate with Bangladesh in rounding up Bangladeshi "criminals so that they can be brought to justice".

Tripathy requested the names and particulars of the suspected offenders who have reportedly crossed the border recently so that appropriate actions can be taken to apprehend and return them to Bangladesh.

Tripathy also recalled that earlier a list of 14 such criminals had been received from the foreign ministry. But more details about them, including photographs, were yet to be received from Dhaka, he said.

Last Thursday, LK Advani reportedly told PTI that "after the change of government in Bangladesh, there has been an increase in the activities of the al-Qaida and Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) there".

Advani also said Dhaka is providing "cover" support and refuge to separatist rebel groups operating in the northeastern states of India.

The foreign secretary categorically said Bangladesh does not allow its territory to be used for the purpose of support, shelter or training of insurgents against any of its neighbours, including India.

He also noted that all allegations of insurgency and intelligence activities allegedly carried out against India from Bangladesh territory had been thoroughly investigated and found to be without any basis.

"Bangladesh rejects any accusation that al-Qaida elements are

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7



Foreign Minister Morshed Khan seeing off ROK Prime Minister Kim Suk-soo at ZIA yesterday.

ROK PM leaves

BSS, Dhaka

South Korean Prime Minister Kim Suk-Soo and his wife Kim Yoon-eum left Dhaka in the early hours of yesterday ending their three-day visit to Bangladesh.

Foreign Minister Morshed Khan and Begum Morshed Khan saw them off at the Zia International Airport. Also present at the airport were the State Minister for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Major [ret] Qamrul Islam and the State Minister for Civil Aviation Mir Nasiruddin, South Korean Ambassador Kyu-hyung Lee.

4,450 bullets recovered from Nikunja area

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The army hauled up 248 people and recovered 25 firearms across the country during the last 24 hours ending 8:00am yesterday.

Among the arrested are 22 listed criminals. The seizure list includes six pistols, three revolvers, eight shotguns and four pipe guns.

The joint forces seized 4,450 rounds of bullets from Nikunja-2 area in the city yesterday. They also seized 1,117 bottles of Phensidyl from a truck at Panthapath yesterday. The bottles were kept hidden under piles of coconuts.

Our Chittagong correspondent reports that three persons including an Awami League-backed dock worker leader and a Jatiya Party leader were arrested by the army yesterday.

Troops picked up Jahangir Alam alias Dock Jahangir, a labour leader and former ward commissioner, and his associate Shafiqur Rahman, president of the Seamen's Welfare Association, from the international lounge of the Chittagong Airport at around 12.30pm yesterday.

Sources said, both Jahangir and Shafiqur were about to fly to Singapore to attend a seminar.

Dock Jahangir, is a listed criminal and accused in various criminal cases including those for murders. He had been absconding since the army crackdown, sources said.

Army also nabbed Didarul Kabir Didar, a Jatiya Party leader in Sitakunda, at the Chittagong Court Building at around 1:00pm yesterday. He came there to attend the hearing of a case against him.

Our Khulna correspondent reported that army arrested a senior BNP leader, Abdur Rashid Sardar, in Skidghat area yesterday.

An army team raided the office of Sardar, also a senior vice-president of Ward No. 21 unit of the city BNP and general secretary of Khulna Bazaar fish wholesalers' association, and picked him up. He was taken to the local army camp and till 6:00pm, he was not handed over to police.

The arrested leader allegedly used to collect illegal tolls from businessmen with the help of his organised gang. Police said Rashid was also involved in drug trafficking and smuggling.

Our Magura correspondent reports that the army arrested an alleged criminal along with a pipe gun from Dhalfa-Bogura village in Sadar thana of Magura district in the early hours of yesterday.

Our Bogra correspondent reports that the army arrested six people including a BNP leader yesterday. Later, army released all except the BNP leader.

Our Madaripur correspondent reports that joint forces arrested five listed criminals from different parts of the district.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8



A cargo vessel cruises through the pitch-black water of the Narai river now contaminated with untreated waste from the capital that flows down from the Rampura bridge (right), exposing some 250,000 people at Trimohoni to serious health hazards.

Mucky flows the river

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About two decades ago, villagers around the Trimohoni area used to collect water from the Narai river for household use. Today, the river still flows by the villages, only they do not dare to touch its pitch-black water, poisoned by pollution.

More than 2.5 lakh people of 12 villages in Trimohoni area, hardly five kilometres from the city's zero point, are today victims of the burgeoning 'development' of the Dhaka city. Solid wastes from the 12 million population strong capital flow freely into the river, then fall into the Balu river and finally, pollute the Shitalakhya river. And no one bothers.

The Trimohoni people have protested the massive pollution to the WASA and staged numerous demonstrations against the negligence of the authorities without result.

At around noon on Thursday, the high towers of the city were visible in the horizon from Trimohini village.

In fact, three canals called Norai,

Trimohoni villagers at the waste-end of Dhaka toilets

Abdul Halim, a former member of the Trimohini Union Parishad, pointed his finger at the towers and said, "Those city dwellers are pumping out our ground water and giving us back contaminated liquid waste."

"The WASA has set up a deep tubewell in our locality for the people of Madertek and Nandipara. It is pumping out our ground water, leaving our tubewells dry."

The authorities have on occasions promised to resolve the problems of these villages, but nothing has so far been done. And so, the water full of sludge continues to flow.

Meantime, as water crisis has peaked, the villagers now plan to take to the streets again.

Debdholai and Dolai flow through the 12 villages known as Barogram, flushing out extremely toxic wastes from the Dhaka city.

Liquid and solid wastes from Malibagh, Basabo, Madertek, Kamalapur and Motijheel flow through Debdholai and Norai canals. Untreated sewage from the Tejgaon industrial area, Gulshan, Banani, Rampura, Karwanbazar, Dhanmondi finds way to the canals and the Balu river before falling into the Buriganga.

Wastes from the Syedabad area pour into the canals round the clock. Air in the 12 villages smells mucky.

With the onslaught of pollution, vanished many of the traditional livelihoods of the villagers. Just 15 years ago, many eked out a living by fishing in the canals. Moqbul

them because of polluted water. And mosquitoes buzz around even during the day.

Abdul Halim of Laionhati and Shamim of Nasirabad run a fishery. They invested around Tk 10 lakh in the venture. But a couple of months ago, all the fishes died as polluted water from the river entered their ponds. Today, they are totally ruined.

And the lands have lost fertility. Farmers used to get as much as 40 maunds of paddy from an acre of land during the boro season. But today, they get only about 10 to 15 maunds.

And the women are also suffering. They can no longer wash clothes or utensils in the river.

"Our husbands bring water from Nandipara in large drums for our household chores," one of the ladies said.

President of the Barogram Unnayan Sangstha Mohammed Ali Jinnah is a veterinary surgeon.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Free access of goods to Australia from July

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Goods from Bangladesh would get duty- and quota-free access to the Australian market from July next year.

According to a message received by the Ministry of Commerce, the Australian government has decided to provide duty- and quota-free access of goods from 49 least developed countries (LDCs) including Bangladesh.

The former prime minister Sheikh Hasina had written a letter to the heads of government of Canada, Australia, Japan and USA requesting duty- and quota-free access of Bangladeshi goods to those countries.

Canada has already declared that it would allow duty- and quota-free access of Bangladeshi goods from January next year while Japan and USA are yet to take any decision in this regard.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

AL sit-in at Sangsad Bhaban Speaker to take up MP arrest with Prime Minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Main opposition Awami League (AL) yesterday staged a two-hour sit-in in front of the Speaker's chamber inside the Sangsad Bhaban demanding release of the MPs arrested during the ongoing anticrime clampdown before the parliament goes into session on November 14.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar later told newsmen that as guardian of the parliament he would try to protect the privileges of the legislators as per law and convey the AL's demand to the prime minister and the home minister.

Sircar, however, declined to comment on the treatment the lawmakers received after their arrest and also on a lawmaker's being detained with his hands tied from behind and eyes blindfolded at a city army camp.

Earlier, in a memorandum submitted to the Speaker, the AL demanded that the winter session run for at least 20 working days, and 'false cases' against all MPs be withdrawn, they are released before the session begins and their participation in the upcoming session ensured.

The memo also demanded a detailed discussion in the parliament so that the army-led crackdown against the criminals runs neutrally, and that the MPs not arrested without any specific charges and warrant, and that the Speaker publicly take a firm stand against the trend of implicating the arrested MPs in different cases.

It further asked for holding a discussion on the government position regarding the price hike of essentials during Ramadan.

The AL memorandum also expressed deep concern at the death of 22 people in custody since the start of the Operation Clean Heart. It termed 'killing' of Kala Faruq a staged-drama. The AL also deplored photographing lawmakers w

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Sehri, Iftar timing			
Ramadan	Nov	Sehri	Iftar
5	11		5-18
6	12	4-49	5-17
7	13	4-50	5-17

Sun Rises Sun Sets		
Nov 11		5-14 pm
Nov 12	6-11 am	

Prayer Timings		
Nov 11		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-48	4-56
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-18	5-28
Esha	7-30	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation