

Hasina warns against gas export

UNB, Dhaka

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday said that if the BNP-Jamaat alliance government decided to export gas, people would launch a movement to topple it.

"Not only Awami League, people across the country will resist the decision to export gas... instead of meeting the country's demand," she said and directed her party leaders to take preparation for the movement.

Hasina was talking to journalists at Zia International Airport in the morning prior to her departure for Toronto, Canada, where she will attend a programme of American Psychological Association. Her daughter, Saima Wazed Putul, will submit a thesis at the conference.

Replying to a query, the Awami League president said Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, while in opposition, had pledged that she would sacrifice blood, but never allow export of gas. "I want to remind her of her own speech... she has forgotten her speech after assuming power."

Quoting newspaper reports, she said the country now has a gas reserve that might meet the domestic demand for not more than 12 years.

The former prime minister said that during the previous Awami League government, gas was supplied to the north Bengal and

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Biman pilots threaten go-slow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Airline Pilots' Association (BAPA) has threatened to put brakes on its work from Monday if the two pilots it suspended were not removed from their Biman posts.

Leaders of BAPA, an association of all the 140 pilots of the national flag carriers, met Managing Director (MD) of Biman Lutfur Rahman Wednesday and asked him to remove the two by Sunday.

BAPA reminded the MD that half of the Biman flights would stay grounded if the pilots started to go slow from Monday. Biman operates about eight international and five domestic flights daily.

BAPA executive committee on July 1 suspended the membership of Captain Selim and Captain Joarder till its next annual general meeting in January next year after they failed to reply to a show-cause notice on their alleged involvement in activities detrimental to the interest of the pilots.

BAPA claimed that Selim, chief of safety of Biman, and Joarder, chief of training, used their offices to harass pilots in renewing licence.

Biman has an agreement with BAPA on recruitment of pilots. As

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FAKE NOTES

Central bank seeks home ministry probe, files case against sorting firm

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) has asked the home ministry to launch an investigation into the fake notes found in its vault.

It also suspended two more officials -- Deputy Manager Foyzal Hossain and Assistant Manager Md Shirajul Haq -- in connection with the find of Tk 50,000 in Tk 500 fake

ills.

The central bank also filed a case accusing seven persons of Masscom Private Limited, which is in charge of sorting and checking notes deposited with vault No. 8.

A three-member BB inquiry committee led by a joint manager is also probing the matter. It will submit its report by August 14.

Finance and Planning Minister M

Saifur Rahman yesterday exonerated himself from any responsibility in the fake note scam.

"There is nothing I can do about this," he said. "The Bangladesh Bank is responsible for printing notes. So I will also have to ask them how the fake notes got in there."

BB Governor Dr Fakhruddin Ahmad yesterday visited the vault

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Indian water diversion plan to spell disaster, experts warn

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the wake of India's unilateral decision to divert waters of international rivers flowing through India and Bangladesh, water experts have warned that this would spell disaster far greater than that caused by Farakka Barrage.

Diversion of water of the major

rivers common to the two countries by building link-canal would do no good to Bangladesh, the experts observed at the publication ceremony of National Documentation on the Problems of Arsenic and Farakka at a city hotel yesterday.

They underscored the need for political consensus and creating public awareness to address the

country's water crisis.

"Both Farakka barrage and arsenic are greatly responsible for our people's suffering," said Prof. Amjad Hossain, a Bangladeshi water resources expert working with the International Farakka Committee Inc. (NY).

Documentation editorial board

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Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday inaugurates the Shahid Shipahi Mohammad Mostafa stadium at Kamalapur.



Firefighters rescue people trapped inside a building on Topkhana Road in Paltan yesterday. The fire killed two people and injured four others.

Govt to give autonomy to BPI

STAR REPORT

The government has decided to give full autonomy to the Bangladesh Petroleum Institute (BPI) to strengthen research and training in the oil and gas sector.

The cabinet recently approved a draft law, Bangladesh Petroleum Institute Law, 2003, that plans to empower the BPI to create its own fund.

The BPI will retain its own earnings, government grants, finances for research from Petrobangla's

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Indigenous people raise 10 demands for govt to meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENCE

Leaders of the indigenous people raised a 10-point demand at a press conference in the city yesterday on the eve of the International Day of the World's Indigenous People.

The demands include autonomy and constitutional recognition, immediate implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts peace agreement, traditional land use rights of the indigenous people, formation of a separate ministry for the plain land

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Three girls of a family drown in pond in Hathazari

UNB, Chittagong

Three minor girls of a family drowned in a pond at village Sandipara in Hathazari Upazila yesterday.

Taslima Akhter, 7, Rosy Akhter, 8, and Nurunnahar, 10, were taking bath in the pond at noon. They slipped into the deep water and drowned when other members of the family were busy with a pre-marriage function of Nurunnahar's sister.

Their bodies were found floating in the pond later in the evening.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Aug 08		6-37 pm
Aug 09	5-30 am	

Prayer Timings		
August 8		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	5-00
Juma	12-15	1-20
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-45	6-50
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Dhaka-Agartala bus service likely this month

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Secretary Shamsur Mobin Chowdhury yesterday said the Dhaka-Agartala bus service is likely to start this month.

"Infrastructure work including road repairing, if necessary, would be done and we're confident that the bus service would start this month," he told reporters.

He said the communications ministers of India and Bangladesh will take steps for commissioning of the bus service already approved by the cabinet.

Asked if Dhaka would lodge any protest against India's reported plan to link rivers in the upstream to supply water to dry Indian regions, the foreign secretary said the government is gathering all informa

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Two killed as Topkhana offices catch fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fire killed two employees of two private companies and injured four at Topkhana Road in Paltan yesterday.

Fire fighters and help-line of police rescued Jahangir Hossain Khalifa, a peon of American Life Insurance Company Limited branch, and Mainul Huda, store-keeper of Toshiba equipment showroom, from the second floor of Manikganj House.

Severely burnt, they were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the doctors declared them dead. While fighting the blaze, three fire fighters were also injured.

Hashem Hawlader, leader of the team, and Sanaulah Sarder, station officer, were admitted to the DMCH while Selim Newaz was admitted to a city clinic.

Rabiul Islam, a peon of a nearby office, was also injured in the incident.

The fire originated from a short circuit in the warehouse of Toshiba showroom at 12:40pm, fire brigade sources said.

Nine units of fire brigade from the headquarters and Goran station rushed to the spot and doused the fire after one and half hours.

The cost of damage could not be ascertained immediately.

Crisis over as BTTB union backs out

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The stalemate at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar exchange appeared over yesterday when the CBA leaders assured the top BTTB management of not pressing for the removal of the general manager, northern region.

The assurance came at a joint meeting of the Bangladesh Civil Service (Telecom) Samity and Bangladesh Telegogajog Sramik Karmachari Union (BTSKU) and the

collective bargaining agent (CBA) of Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB).

The crisis crept in when the employees' union demanded removal of General Manager Mohammad Obaidullah for taking punitive steps against six regular and part-time employees following an official investigation that revealed their corruption. He was barred from entering his office.

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