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Army man dies, at least 2 hurt in mine blast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An army man died and at least two others were critically wounded yesterday in a mine explosion in Jessore Cantonment.

Ammunition Technician Khorshed Alam and his four associates were handling mines at the ordnance depot in the cantonment at 11:30am yesterday when a mine went off accidentally, killing Khorshed Alam on the spot and injuring two others, according to army sources.

Condition of the two, who were civilian employees, is also stated to be critical, the sources said, adding they were being treated at the intensive care unit of the Jessore Combined Military Hospital (CMH).

Police, however, put the number of the injured at four.

"They were putting the mines, dates of which had expired, in a packet when one of them exploded," Duty Officer Mohammed Hashem

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Home help dies in five-storey fall

Locals protest alleging rape and killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teenage home help died in a five-storey fall from a Dhanmondi house yesterday in mysterious circumstances, triggering an angry protest in front of the house by local residents who claimed she was killed after rape.

But it was hazy whether 15-year-old Rozina Akter, domestic help at the house of Murad Hossain, manager of Mercantile Bank's Banani

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WB threatens to withdraw funds for 450MW power plant

Slates govt decision to re-tender after procurement process

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank (WB) has warned the government of stopping financing the 450-megawatt Sirajganj power project for its decision to re-tender the project.

"(The decision to re-tender the project) would have serious implications for us because going for re-tender after a procurement process which IDA has deemed valid would be considered 'misprocurement' and means that IDA cannot finance the same project under a new procurement," an August 4 letter of the WB to the prime minister said.

IDA (International Development Agency) is WB's soft-lending window and is a key financier of the project alongside International Finance Corporation (IFC), the commercial credit wing of the WB. Sirajganj power project will be run by a public-private partnership.

The Power Development Board (PDB) floated tender for the project three times and secured a bid from Summit Group with a power tariff so low that it beats the price of the 450-megawatt AES Meghnaghat Project. Summit also received \$116 million credit from the WB and the ADB.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in July, however, ordered re-tender of the project, although it was

almost at the final stage, apparently due to an anti-Awami League attitude, as Summit Group chief Aziz Khan is the brother of Awami League lawmaker Faruk Khan, according to sources.

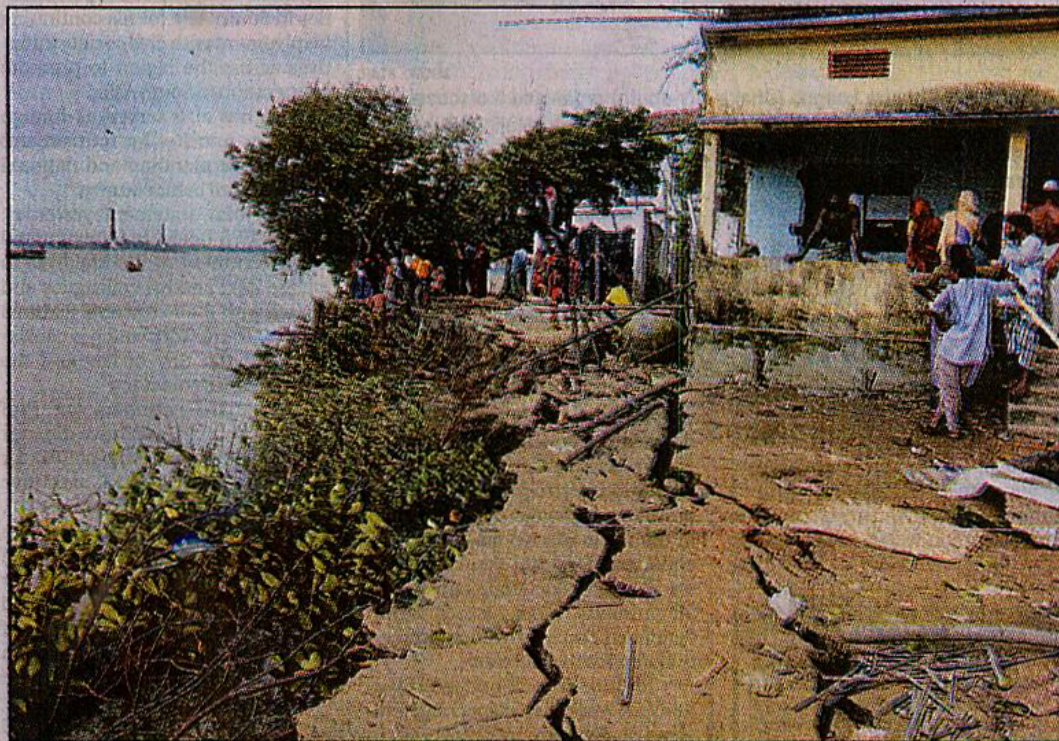
"Even more seriously, cancellation of a bidding process which was generally perceived as transparent would have negative consequences in terms of a loss of confidence of potential sponsors and financiers of other much needed power generation projects," warned the letter signed by Praful Patel, regional vice-president, South Asia, of the World Bank and Assaad J Jabre, vice-president, Operations, IFC.

"In absence of any other project that could take the place of Sirajganj in the short run, further delay in its implementation is likely to lead to increased load shedding and the hardship that entails," the letter observed.

"Questions were raised within the World Bank Group (IDA and IFC) about the procurement process, and it was subjected to careful review by our most senior procurement experts before it was finally approved for Bank finance," the letter continued.

Copies of the letter were sent to State Minister for Power

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Another house stands on the brink of disappearance into the Buriganga at Basila, Mohammadpur, where unchecked river erosion has devoured at least 14 buildings in the last three days.

PHOTO: STAR

Akbar orders removal of brick kilns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shipping minister Akbar Hossain yesterday ordered immediate removal of the illegal brick kilns obstructing normal flow of the Turag river at Basila point and dredging of the river to save the village from severe erosion.

He gave the order at an emergency meeting at the ministry following a report from a team of experts of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) on the situation at Basila.

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Panic grips Basila as river erosion goes on

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The fierce-flowing diverted channel of the Buriganga river continued to erode its banks threatening more land and houses yesterday, throwing about 15,000 people of Basila in Mohammadpur in mounting panic.

Having changed its course because of three massive encroachments, the Buriganga has devoured at least 11 houses including a four-

storey building on the island since Friday.

Officials of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) were seen trying to save Basila launch terminal from being washed away by strong current. The huge pillars supporting the pontoon tilted dangerously with gushing waters hammering them.

A deputy director of the BIWTA monitoring the salvage work said

the pillars were nailed 40 feet into the riverbed but the soil was away by strong current. "We tried to measure the depth of the water but could not stretch the measurement cable beyond 50 feet," he said.

Only two feet from the shore of Basila, locals also tried to measure the depth of the water using around 40-foot-long bamboo poles but the riverbed could not be reached.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

DUTA deposits fund for bringing back Azad's body

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) yesterday handed over euro 3,000 to the German charge d'affaires to bring back the body of Professor Humayun Azad from Munich, while the DU authorities told the foreign secretary they would bear all the expenses for doing this.

The DUTA raised the sum in collaboration with the deceased's family after PEN International had informed the family Tuesday that

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Govt borrowing up 30pc on earning-spending mismatch

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government borrowing from banks rose 30 percent in the first month of the ongoing fiscal year and stood at Tk 1,047 crore between July 1 and July 29.

The figure was Tk 845 crore in the same period of the last fiscal year.

Finance ministry officials blamed the increased borrowing on the mismatch between the government's earning and spending. They

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Nepal rebels cut off routes to capital

AFP, Kathmandu

Maoist rebels cut off routes yesterday to Nepal's capital Kathmandu in their first blockade of the city since they launched their insurgency to overthrow the constitutional monarchy eight years ago.

Normally congested roads into the ancient temple-studded city of around 1.5 million people were

mostly empty. But the capital's airport was functioning normally and residents and tourists were moving around the city.

"No vehicle owners are prepared to put their vehicles into service because of fears of being attacked by the Maoists," Hira Udas, chief of the Nepal Transport Entrepreneurs Federation, told AFP.

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Jamalpur

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LOTTERY OF IPO

The Management of Export Import Bank of Bangladesh Limited announces with pleasure that the Lottery for allotment of Shares against IPO will be held on today the 19th August, 2004 at 10 A.M. at Plenary Hall of Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre at Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Agargaon, Dhaka. The valued investors are cordially invited to attend the ceremony.

Manager to the Issue

AAA Consultants & Financial Advisers

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Hoogenband shatters Thorpe's dream

Venus sent packing

AFP, Athens

Pieter van den Hoogenband of the Netherlands won his second straight men's Olympic 100m freestyle crown here yesterday destroying Ian Thorpe's hopes of becoming the first man to complete a 100m, 200m, 400m freestyle treble at the Games.

Kosuke Kitajima of Japan completed a sweep breaststroke gold, capturing the 200m title in a Games record ahead of Hungarian teenager Daniel Gyurta.

Polish world record-holder Otylia Jedrzejczak out-duelled Australian Petria Thomas to claim the women's 200m butterfly title.

The United States won the women's 4x200m freestyle relay gold in a new world record of 7min 53.42sec. China took silver and Germany the bronze.

Title-holder Venus Williams of the United States crashed out of the Olympic women's singles tennis

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