

# Donors seek PM's help for rescue of power projects

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Donors have sought intervention of the prime minister in the widespread irregularities and political pressure in the implementation of power projects.

The Local Consultative Group (LCG), a platform of Bangladesh's development partners, in a letter to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on September 26 expressed deep concern at the irregularities and sought a meeting with her to directly share their concerns.

"These concerns are causing major delays in the development of the sector and the expansion of power supply needed for the

economy, jobs and investment. They also make it difficult for donor resources to support the power sector or the rural electrification effort," Christine Wallich, chair of the LCG, said in the letter.

The LCG, on behalf of the ambassadors, high commissioners and agency heads most active in this sector, urged the government to address the governance shortcomings in the power sector and take necessary steps to avert a potential crisis.

"Your actions would have a substantial impact on donor willingness to support projects in these fields..." the donors observed.

Copies of the letter have been

sent to the finance minister, state minister for power, secretary to the Economic Relations Division and envoys of US, UK, Germany, Japan, Norway and the Netherlands, the country director of the ADB and members of the LCG.

Governance issues are taking a toll on the rural electrification programme and the management of both the Rural Electrification Board and Palli Bidyut Samity are 'under frequent political pressure' to construct rural electric lines on political considerations, violating its own agreed economic and financial policies for expanding rural lines, the LCG alleged.

"Allegations of irregularities in

the Mymensingh III and planned Dhaka North Power Plants have raised further questions about governance within the rural power system, and within Rural Power Company.

"The LCG observes with dismay the lack of progress on the independent review of these irregularities despite the Honorable Prime Minister's consent to such an independent and comprehensive review given to German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer during his recent visit to Bangladesh," the LCG further said in the letter to the prime minister.

"By their continued delaying

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

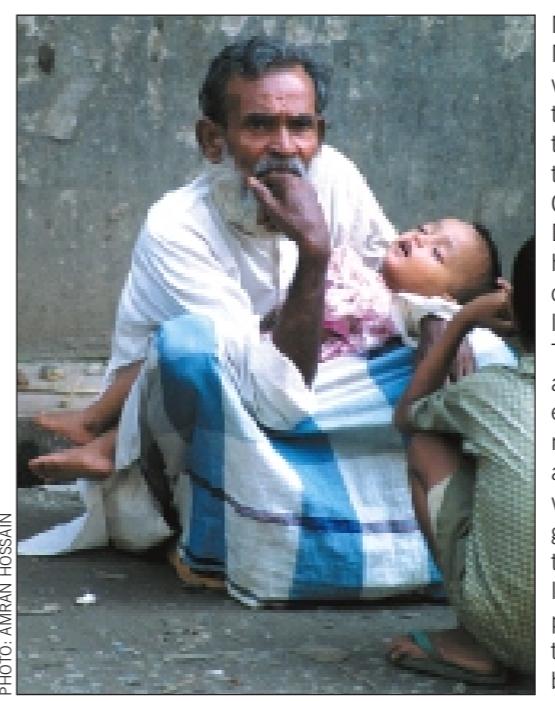


PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Muktar Mian, 60, waits near the detention ward of the CMM Court, Dhaka, with his granddaughter in lap. Thursday for a miracle to end the misery he and his wards are going through after law enforcers put his son, the lone breadwinner

## BLANKET ARRESTS

### The poor feel the pinch most

SHARIFUL ISLAM

At

60,

Muktar

Mian

still

gets

bewil-

dered

like

a

child

by

the

strange

turns

lives

sometim-

es

Despair

is also

written

all

over

his

face

as

he

ponders

over

the

nightmarish

situation

he

and

his

wards

are

going

through

after

law

enfor-

cers

put

his

son

the

lone

breadwin-

ner

suddenly

putbehindbars.

Sitting

by

a

road

near

the

deten-

tion

ward

(hajat)

of

the

Court

of

Chief

Metropoli-

tan

Magis-

trate

CMM

Court

Dhaka

, last

Thurs-

day

the

riddle

Mukter

tried

most

to

solve

was

how

to

procure

the

next

meal

for

his

grand-

sons

Redoy

, 8

and

Murad

, 5

15-

month-

old

grand-

daughter

Dipu

and

eight

months

pregnant

daughter-in-

law

Sajeda

Begum

. The

family

is

utterly

bankrupt

. Another

issue

that

defeats

him

is

how

to

keep

their

shanty

home

on

Madrasa

Goli

in

Rayerbazar

, as

the

landlord

has

been

threatening

to

oust

them

unless

they

come

up

with

the

last

month's

rent

. Sajeda

said

on

Wednesday

a

the

shanty-owner

issued

a

procure the next meal for his grandsons Redoy, 8, and Murad, 5, 15-month-old granddaughter Dipu and eight months pregnant daughter-in-law Sajeda Begum. The family is utterly bankrupt.

Another issue that defeats him is how to keep their shanty-home on Madrasa Goli in Rayerbazar, as the landlord has been threatening to oust them unless they come up with the last month's rent. Sajeda said on Wednesday the shanty-owner issued a

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

GRAND RALLY TOMORROW

## AL's last-ditch efforts for common programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amidst uncertainty over other opposition leaders' participation in Sunday's grand rally, Awami League is now putting in a last-ditch effort to bring them to a common anti-government programme, if not on a common platform, at least simultaneously.

Although the AL wanted the leaders of its allies to take part in the planned rally at Paltan Maidan, until

last night responses did not come in its way. Yet, an optimistic main opposition is hopeful of launching a common anti-government programme, "no matter if from different podiums.

However, separate rallies of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) led by Hasanul Haq Inu on the road in between Zero Point and Paltan Crossing and of Workers Party in Hadis Park in Khulna coincide with the AL rally tomorrow.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

## Criminal dies in 'crossfire' with elite forces

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An Old Dhaka-based criminal died reportedly in crossfire when a shootout broke out between his accomplices and a joint team of anti-crime elite forces Cheetah and Cobra in Sutrapur early Thursday.

Faridul Islam alias Killer Farid, 27, son of Khorshed Alam, who had earlier been arrested on Wednesday night, was the second to die in shooting involving the newly formed elite anti-crime force Cheetah.

Police said a joint team of Cheetah and Cobra led by Assistant Commissioner Dr Nazmul Karim Khan of Detective Branch (DB), after a tip-off, raided a residential hotel at BCC Road in Sutrapur and arrested Farid at around 10:45pm on Wednesday.

Farid stands accused in 12 cases including some murder cases

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## HC ORDER MODIFIED

### 584 more arrested in capital since Thursday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested 584 people from Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) areas in last 48 hours till yesterday morning on the 11th day of the crackdown.

Of them, 110 were arrested under DMP Ordinance (not under section 86), 297 in regular cases, 33 under section 54 of the Code of