

THE DAILY Star ON FRIDAY

TODAY'S ISSUE 20 PAGES

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XIV NO. 264

DHAKA FRIDAY OCTOBER 15, 2004

People's Right to Know

www.thedailystar.net

ASHWIN 30, 1411 BS

SHABAN 29, 1425 HURI

20 PAGES PLUS MAGAZINE PRICE: Tk 12.00

TATA'S INVESTMENT PLANS

Uninterrupted gas supply promised

Indian giant makes fresh proposal for coal-based power plants, holiday resort

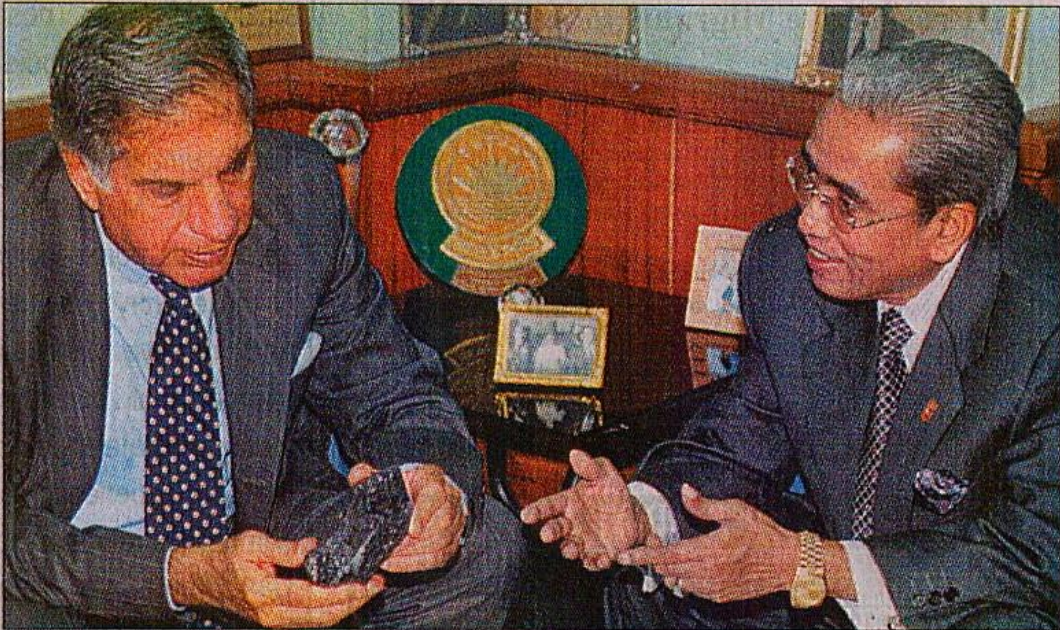
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday pledged the Tata Group uninterrupted gas supply to its proposed plants, while the Indian conglomerate has freshly proposed to set up coal-based power plants alongside gas-run ones to produce 2000 megawatt electricity.

The Indian industrial giant has also expressed interest in building a holiday resort in Cox's Bazar and set up an export-oriented pharmaceutical factory.

"We have told them that there would be no problem in gas supply to their plants in the next 25 years."

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State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharraf Hossain briefs Tata Group Chairman Ratan N Tata about mineral resources in Bangladesh as the latter checks out a piece of coal at Secretariat yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Moudud, his deputy talk differently over judicial separation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The state minister for law yesterday claimed that people and legal experts are still unclear about what separation of the judiciary means, when the law minister is optimistic about the separation from the executive by year end.

"The process of separation of the judiciary is very complex as many things are involved with it," Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed told a roundtable yesterday.

"We have to settle many things including the jobs of 600 magistrates who are now working under the executive," he said. "Still, we hope it will be done by the end of this year."

Shahjahan Omar, the state minister for law, told the roundtable that he had talked to many legal experts abroad who are "totally unfamiliar with the term (separation of the judiciary)."

"I'm quite sure people who often give Paltan-style speeches demanding the separation also don't know what judiciary's separation means... And I too don't understand the term," said the state minister, also a barrister.

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Grabbers gobble up two-thirds vested property

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Grabbers gobbled up more than two thirds of vested property, as the government lost control over the lands as the custodian and its long-time dithering blocked anti-encroachment efforts.

According to a report the land ministry submitted to a parliamentary standing committee yesterday, 4,45,726 acres of vested property out of 6,43,140 acres ended up in encroachment across the country.

The Awami League government

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Kerry wins third debate

Instant polls show Democrat candidate won 52pc votes, Bush 39pc

AFP, Washington

Democrat John Kerry won the third presidential debate yesterday over Republican President George W. Bush, according to instant polls taken by US television networks.

Fifty-two percent of those polled

by CNN said Kerry won the debate in Tempe, Arizona, while 39 percent said Bush won. The poll had a five percentage-point margin of error.

A poll by ABC showed 42 percent saying Kerry won, versus 41 percent who gave the victory to Bush.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Low may bring more rains

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The well-marked low formed over the Bay off the Myanmar coast has been prevailing on the northeastern Bay and causing rain in the capital and coastal areas.

The met office has advised maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla to hoist local cautionary signal No. 3 and southern riverports No. 2. All fishing boats and trawlers have been asked to stay close to the coast and proceed with caution.

"The low remains in a stationary position over the northeastern Bay"

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Ramadan from tomorrow if moon sighted today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

If the moon of Ramadan is sighted today, the month of fasting will begin from tomorrow.

A meeting of the National Moon Sighting Committee will be held at Islamic Foundation at 6:00pm today to review information regarding the moon sighting.

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Altaf asks home ministry to check extortion on road

Says essentials prices have reached 'worrying level'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Choudhury yesterday said he has asked the home ministry to take measures against illegal toll collection for smooth transportation of essential items as their prices have reached a worrying level.

"Prices of all essential items including rice, lentil, flour and onion are on a continuous rise, which is absolutely undesirable. But the most worrying aspect of the market situation is how to bring down rice price," he told a press briefing at the commerce ministry.

Warning of harsh actions against the hoarders, the commerce minister said the Rapid Action Battalion

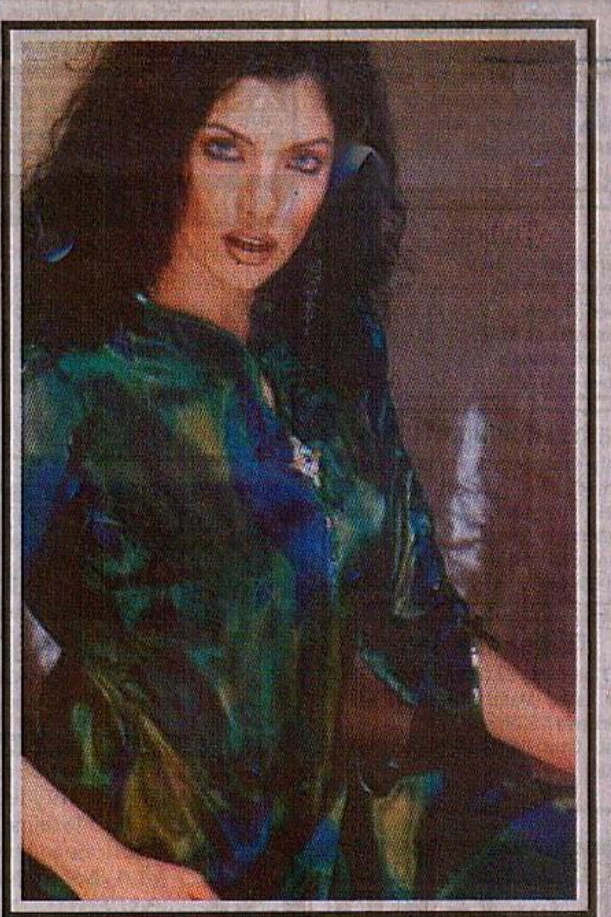
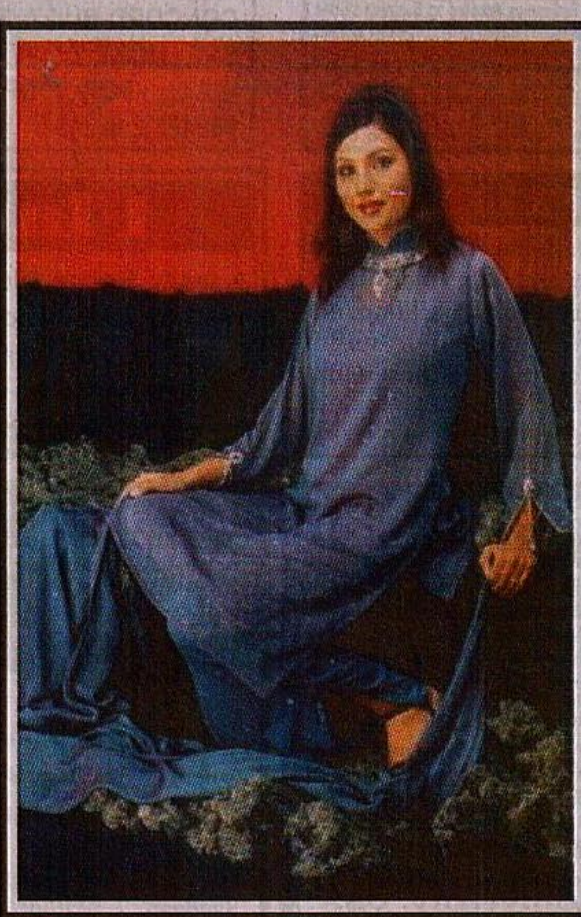
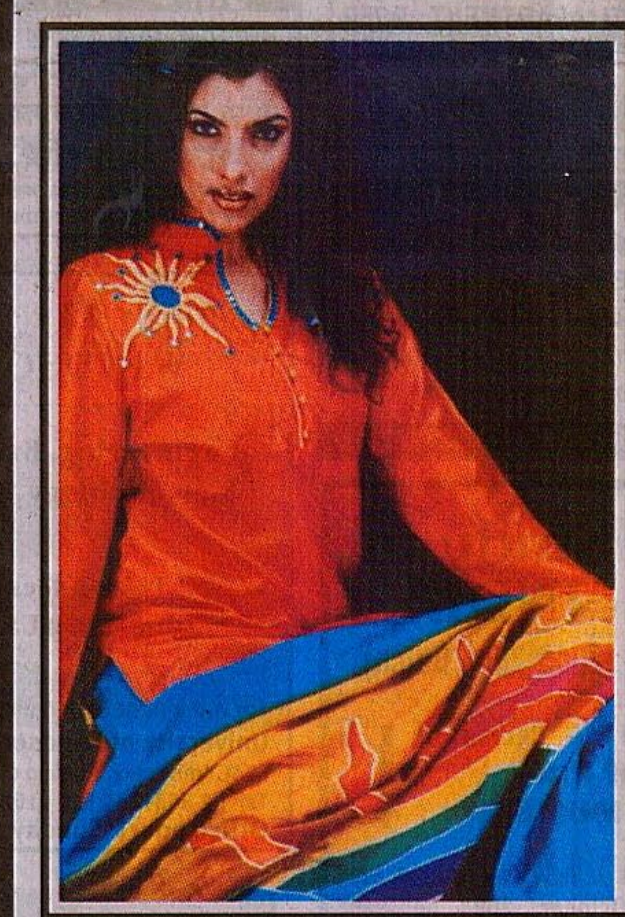
(RAB), mobile courts and police will be activated to stop hoarding and creating artificial crisis.

"The country experienced a record rainfall in 50 years that created temporary disruption in supply. We never came across such a crisis before," he added.

The government has already decided to start 'open market sale' of rice, the commerce minister said. "We have already talked to the millers, traders and chamber leaders at the district level and they have assured us of having sufficient stock. If the sun shines for three consecutive days, it will have a positive impact on rice price."

On prices of other essentials

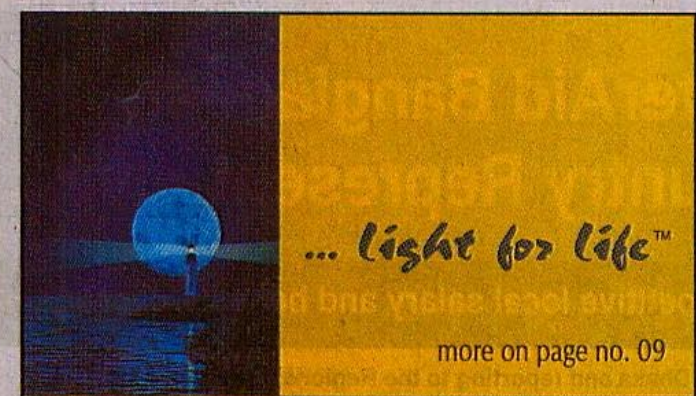
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