

## OPEN TENDERING IN PROCUREMENT

# Armed Forces seek compliance waiver

**SHAKHAWAT LITON**  
The Armed Forces have sought an exemption from having to comply with the Public Procurement Regulation 2003 (PPR) concerning all purchases that it considers directly or indirectly to be related to national security.

The PPR, which is intended to create greater transparency in government purchases and prevent corruption, had been praised by donor agencies and other international bodies alike.

The Armed Forces might face difficulties in operating procurement process if the Public Procurement Regulation 2003 is applicable in defence purchase. So a process is under way to formulate a separate comprehensive policy as the matter is related to national security," says a confidential report

to the parliamentary standing committee on defence ministry seen exclusively by The Daily Star. The committee is expected to discuss the report today.

The report says the new policy will not be in conflict with the PPR and existing commercial rules and will take into account international practice.

"If the government wants, it can give a waiver to the Armed Forces from the public procurement regulation. But to do so it has to enact a separate regulation which would have to be approved by the cabinet," said a senior official of the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division under the planning ministry yesterday.

Currently, the Director General of Defence Purchase completes procurement for the Armed Forces in line with the PPR and other existing purchase rules.

Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman, a former army chief and the chairman of the standing committee, told The Daily Star that the government supports the PPR but recognises that there may be a need to have a separate regulation which would have to be approved by the cabinet.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

## Mahathir flies back home, meets Hasina, Ershad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad left Dhaka yesterday after wrapping up his three-day visit with private meetings with Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina and former president HM Ershad.

# Ministry seeks ways to offset BPC losses

## Options include petroleum price hike and import duty cut

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The energy ministry has sought the finance ministry's assistance to find a solution to the financial losses incurred by the state-owned Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) in importing oil at a very high price.

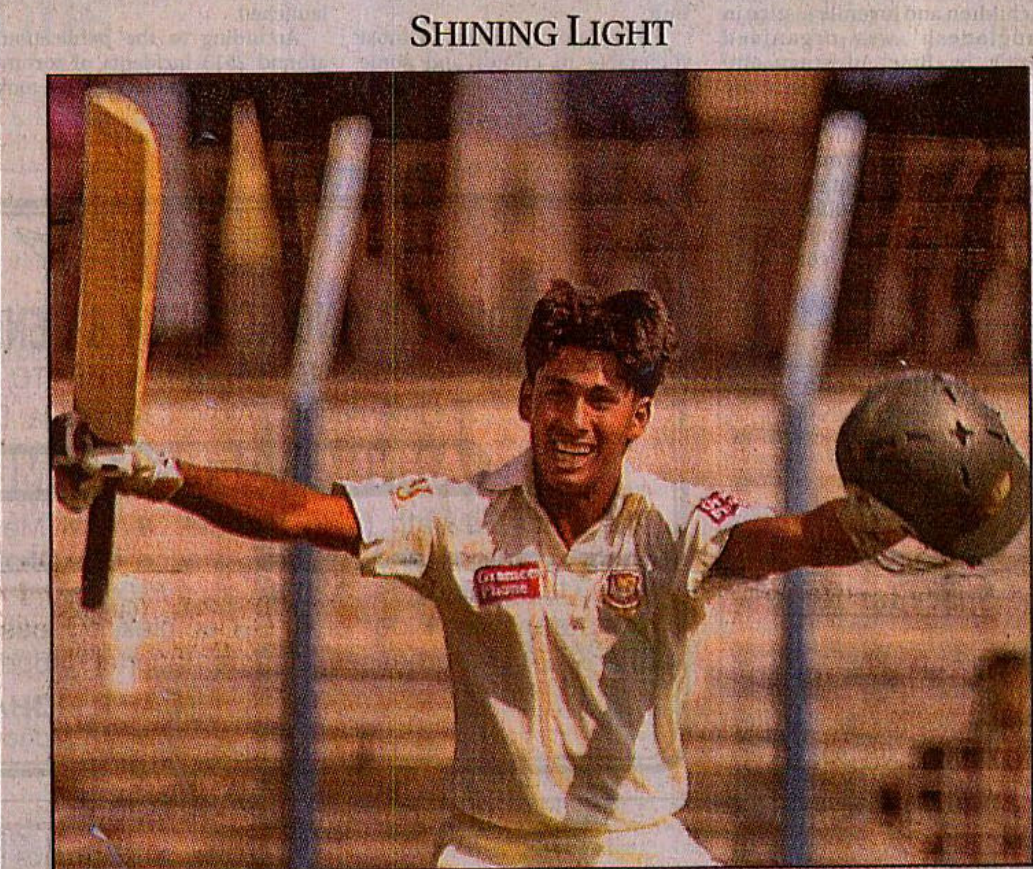
The energy ministry has thought of two options: hiking petroleum prices, or reducing the duty on petroleum imports without hiking its price.

If the government does not choose either of these measures, the BPC will incur an estimated loss of Tk 2,200 crore during the present fiscal year. The corporation incurred a loss of Tk 1,131 crore in 2003-04.

## PM pledges 25 more technical centres

BSS, Chapainawabganj

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said the government will set up 25 more Technical Training Centres (TTC) in the country that will provide training facilities to 24,000 people every year.



Mohammad Ashraf raises his bat and helmet to acknowledge applause after cracking a fighting century against India yesterday, the third day of the second Test at MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong.

## SHINING LIGHT

## Correction

The headline of the report run in The Daily Star yesterday inadvertently stated that Dhaka will send 1,542 troops to the trouble-torn region of Darfur.

# Transparency in river-link plan demanded

Veena Sikri says it is still at conceptual stage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The three-day international conference on transboundary rivers concluded yesterday with a call for complete transparency to dispel mistrust and concerns arising out of the proposed Indian River Linking Project (IRLP).

The conference adopted a set of nine recommendations including greater regional co-operation concerning the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GMB) river systems, adherence to the principles of equity and no harm to any country, the sharing of data and information between the co-riparian countries and management of transboundary rivers from the 'mountain top to the sea.'

However, addressing the concluding session of the conference, Veena Sikri said it is still at conceptual stage.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## CPB won't join rallies before human wall

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) has decided not to join the combined rallies of the opposition parties to be held at Mongla and Sunamganj ahead of the December 30 human wall although it had joined similar rallies before the Teknaf to Tentulia demonstration.

# Car bombings kill 62 in Najaf, Karbala

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Suicide car bombers yesterday struck Iraq's two main Shia holy cities of Najaf and Karbala, killing at least 62 people and wounding nearly 130, six weeks before a historic election.

Both bombs, which went off about two hours apart, exploded near crowded bus stations in a seemingly coordinated attempt to cause as much bloodshed as possible among Shias, a long-oppressed majority expected to dominate the January 30 vote.

Earlier in Baghdad, gunmen killed three Electoral Commission employees after hauling them from a car on a busy street.

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## HEADMISTRESS MURDER Investigators under pressure

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The investigators are under pressure in probing Thursday's gruesome double murder at Baridhara, although they stick to the suspicion that the teacher and her daughter were killed due to a dispute over the school managing committee.

## Joy may join politics if people want

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said that whether her son Sajib Wajed Joy joins politics depends on the wishes of the people.

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