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Fresh blowout at Tengratila, flames leap up to 150 ft

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

A huge fire broke out in a relief well drilled under the supervision of Canadian company Niko Resources (Bangladesh) Ltd at the ill-fated Tengratila gas field in Doarabazar upazila of Sunamganj again early yesterday, only five months after a severe blowout had almost destroyed the gas field on January 7.

It occurred at around 3:00am when drilling of the relief well at the Chhatak gas field was going on. The drilling began on June 1 to kill the main Chhatak Well No. 2 with mud and seal it off with cement.

For the drilling of the relief well, Niko engaged Bob Grace of GSM Enterprises, Inc from Texas, USA, as the lead advisor and project in-charge. It hoped to finish drilling up to 466 metres in 6-8 weeks. Yesterday's explosion took place at a depth of 435 metres, sources informed.

The Canadian company in a press release yesterday attributed the cause of the disaster to "a sudden uncontrolled mud loss in the relief well" causing "gas with very high flow rate" coming up through the well to the surface.

Signed by Niko President Qasim Sharif, the press release said, "We

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PHOTO: STAR

A huge blowout blazes the Tengratila gas field yesterday, only five months after January's disastrous fire there.

Hartal June 30 if govt rejects 13 suggestions on budget: AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) will enforce a countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal on June 30 if the government does not accept the party's 13 suggestions on the proposed budget for FY05-06.

The budget is scheduled to be passed in the Jatiya Sangsad on June 29.

AL will stage demonstrations across the country tomorrow protesting the proposed budget. It will also form human walls in Dhaka and all district headquarters on June 27 to register yet again no confidence in the alliance government. AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil told a press conference at party's Dhanmondi office yesterday.

After an emergency meeting of AL Central Working Committee (ALCWC), Jalil quoting meeting decisions said the party would hold rallies in eight parliamentary constituencies across Dhaka city on July 29.

The AL proposals regarding the proposed budget include withdrawal of tax increase by 19 percent on everyday essentials including salt, milk powder, diesel and kerosene, withdrawal of tax on software export, SIM cards, and other equipment, and increasing the allocation for agriculture.

Asked why the suggestions were not placed before the parliament, Jalil said, "We have boycotted the

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Recovered live bomb, left, and an Ahmadiyya mosque after an arson attack damaged it.

PHOTO: STAR



Ahmadiyya area in B'baria bombed, mosque torched

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Zealots yesterday exploded about two dozen bombs in Ahmadiyya-inhabited area in Brahmanbaria town and set fire to an Ahmadiyya mosque in the area.

Police and locals said another Ahmadiyya mosque in the area was also bombed at the same time.

Local Ahmadiyyas said police recovered three time bombs and

about 25 home made bombs, but police said they recovered only three home made bombs.

Two members of Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat--Bashir Ahmed Mithu, 25, and Ayesha Begum, 40--sustained injuries while they were running for cover. They were treated at Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital.

Police failed to arrest anyone involved in the yesterday's attacks. A series of attacks on Ahmadiyyas

took place across the country, aiming at forcing the government to brand the minority Muslim sect as non-Muslim.

About 10-15 bombs went off at East Kandipara in Brahmanbaria town at around 3:00am, minutes after the zealots set the mosque afire.

According to Ahmadiyyas, they saw fire burning one of the fences of their prayer house, rushed there and

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Drug peddler killed in Rab 'crossfire'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged drug peddler, arrested by Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) from Sutrapur in the capital Thursday afternoon, died in Rab action early yesterday.

Tipped off, a team of Rab-3 arrested Ali Ashraf alias Yasin, 30, accused in two cases with Sutrapur Police Station under Narcotics Control Act, from a house in Sutrapur area on Thursday evening and recovered 150 bottles phensidyle.

Quizzed in the Rab custody, Yasin said a huge cache of drugs would

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Jubo Dal leader murdered, law enforcers kill assailant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Assassins yesterday gunned down Sagir Ahmed, Dhaka city (south) general secretary of ruling BNP's youth front Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal, near his old Dhaka residence while patrolling law enforcement teams shot dead one of the assailants after the criminals shot and wounded a policehavilder.

Police said the assailant could only tell his name--Shaon, 24, before dying. They could not give any details about him immediately. Witnesses said a gang of five to six

assailants sprayed bullets on Sagir, 38, soon after he along with his six-year-old son Tousif came out of Sonamiah Alfalah Jame Masjid, about 60 yards off his Nasir Uddin Sarder Lane residence in Sutrapur, after Juma prayers.

"The criminals pushed Tousif down on the road and shot 10-12 bullets on Sagir point blank at about 1:30pm," said an employee of a nearby salon who witnessed the incident. Sagir came out of the mosque a little earlier in order to look after the activities going on in

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Sagir Ahmed

Qatar minister arrives

UNB, Dhaka

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Qatar Ahmad bin Abdullah Al-Mahmoud, arrived in Dhaka yesterday on an official visit.

Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin received the minister at Zia International Airport.

Al-Mahmoud is leading a 17-member delegation comprising senior officials of Qatar government. He will call on Foreign Minister M. Morshed Khan today. It will be followed by official talks between the two countries.

During the talks, the two sides are expected to focus on areas already identified for mutually beneficial cooperation, particularly in the fields of manpower and civil aviation.

DU teacher killed in US road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Sitara Parvin, professor of mass communication and journalism department at Dhaka University and daughter of former president Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, died in a tragic accident in the US yesterday. She was 52.

She was travelling to Kansas City from Chicago in a private car with her sister Shahana Parveen, who was in the driving seat, and brother-in-law.

The accident occurred when a

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Dr Sitara Parvin

Munna demands fresh election, resignation of 'partisan' CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The defeated independent candidate in the Narsingdi-1 by-polls yesterday rejected the result and demanded re-election and resignation of the chief election commissioner (CEC) for his 'partisan role'.

Shahadat Hossain Munna told reporters at a press briefing at Dhaka Reporters Unity he would go to the court, if need be, to challenge the result.

He said, "I wrote several times to the CEC to take steps for a free, fair

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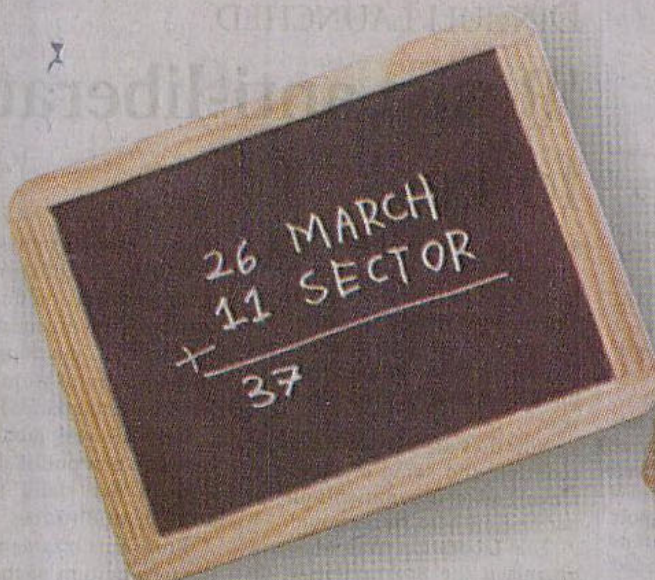
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