

## Blowout scapegoats

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couple of days before the fresh blowout and the other was prepared to visit the spot from Sylhet but Niko, which arranges the visit, had not taken him, the sources mentioned.

"They were not responsible for any negligence," said a source in Petrobangla's affiliates. "If the government must punish anyone, it should be people who are responsible for forcibly making Bapex sign the faulty joint venture agreement with an incompetent and disqualified company like Niko."

Found disqualified in technical and financial aspects during the evaluation of the second round block bidding in 1997, Niko's negligent operation led to the first blowout at this unexplored gas field in January this year.

The adviser yesterday held his first meeting with officials of the energy ministry and top officials of Petrobangla and nine of its affiliates, including Bapex.

Meeting sources said Mahmud was very annoyed with Petrobangla and Bapex, and he also reprimanded energy ministry officials for not taking up the Tengratila issue with top priority.

He mentioned that no senior officials of the energy ministry, Petrobangla or Bapex went to Tengratila till 10 am Friday. Even none of them informed him about the blowout, he said at the meeting.

He also conveyed the displeasure of the prime minister on the issue.

The adviser stressed that Petrobangla and Bapex should have been alert all the time in the wake of the first Tengratila blowout.

He blasted the gas companies, including Titas Gas, for theft of gas and system loss.

Mahmud said told the meeting that the government is planning to hold the third round block bidding on oil and gas exploration in December.

Discussing Indian giant Tata's investment, he said Tata will set up a coal-fired power plant in northern region of the country.

**Probe Body**  
The seven-member probe committee headed by Dr Anwarul Azim has a mandate to submit its report within 15 days.

The committee lacking any drilling expert and dominated by chemical engineers has been asked to find out to what extent both Niko and Bapex had been negligent in handling the relief well.

The committee will also assess how much property loss has been caused by Friday's blowout at Tengratila.

The committee consists of Joint Secretary of the energy ministry Sheikh Abdul Rashid as its member-secretary. Its members are Prof Nurul Islam, Kazi Shahid, Rahman Morshed, Moinul Haq and Fazle Elahi. Of them, four are chemical engineer and one is a geologist.

"This is not a case of chemical disaster. This is a drilling disaster. Although some of these members are very competent, this committee will not serve the purpose," noted an energy expert.

Sources said the second blowout at Tengratila took place because there was a cave in of the gas layer when Niko was drilling the relief well. "Experts believe that they (Niko) once again failed to properly design the casing for the relief well," one expert pointed out.

**Niko's agreement**  
Yesterday's meeting did not however discuss the flawed agreement of Niko that makes the small company unaccountable to Petrobangla, which supervises and coordinates deals with other oil companies like Cairn or Chevron Texaco (previously Unocal), sources said.

Niko is the only foreign oil company to operate in Bangladesh

## 11 submit

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of Krishak Samik Mukti Andolan, Ittefak Alam Limon of Jatiya Party (Monju), M Ataur Rahman of Janata Party and four independent candidates/former secretary M A Mannan, M Nazrul Islam, Dewan Ferdousur Rahman and Nurul Islam Dulu.

The parliamentary seat fell vacant following the death of Awami League presidium member Abdus Samad Azad.

## Iran hardliner

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veteran political heavyweight Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who was supported by pro-former parties and wealthy Iranians fearful of a headline monopoly on power in the Islamic state.

"The figures show that Ahmadinejad is the winner," Interior Ministry spokesman Jahanbakhsh Khanjani told reporters.

He will be Iran's first non-cleric president for 24 years when he takes office in August.

An official at the Guardian Council, which must approve the election results, said that out of 24.8 million votes counted, Ahmadinejad had 61.7 percent, defying forecasts of a tight race.

Officials said turnout was about 26 million, or 56 percent, down from the 63 percent of Iran's 46.7 million eligible voters who cast ballots in an inconclusive first round on June 17.

without any PSC. Desperate to bag business in Bangladesh, it is operating through a unique joint venture agreement (JVA) with Bapex. Bapex is a partner without any equity.

The JVA was signed in the name of developing three 'marginal' or previously used gas fields. However, one of these three -- Tengratila field (originally known as Chhatka field) -- is an unexplored gas field. Under the government policy, an unexplored gas field should be developed through PSC, if awarded to a foreign oil company.

This agreement was resisted by Petrobangla as it is full of loopholes, but the Bapex signed it under heavy pressure from the then state minister for energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain and lobbyists close to the 'alternative source of power' in the government.

As per the JVA, the government through the Bapex, not Petrobangla, would supervise the technical aspect of Niko's operation. But being a partner, Bapex cannot supervise Niko's activities. The JVA also did not lay down any organised procedure for such supervision. The JVA at no point involves Petrobangla in the operation.

In contrast, the PSCs are designed with a clearly defined monitoring and supervision task for Petrobangla. This is why Petrobangla had repeatedly resisted the JVA till it was signed.

Sources pointed out that Bapex's monitoring of the Tengratila operation could not have helped anything. Neither Bapex nor Niko has the knowledge or skill to handle a blow-out situation.

"There are a few companies in the world that can handle gas field blowout issues. One of them is Canadian company GSM. Niko has hired a GSM expert to oversee the relief well construction. The blowout took place in his presence," said one source.

Tengratila gas field was originally known as Chhatka field that was developed in the late fifties by the then petroleum authorities. The field produced gas till 1989 and then it was sealed off considering the existing reserve was commercially non-viable for extraction with the technology available back then.

**Niko's Statement**  
Meanwhile, in a press statement, Niko Resources Bangladesh President Qasim Sharif said, "We are actively formulating our future action plans and we would like to present these options to Bapex, Petrobangla and the government within seven days. Upon receipt of necessary government approval, we will implement our action plan and initiate operation within 15 days. We have already sourced a drilling rig for this purpose."

Chief Operating Officer of Niko Canada William T Hamady reached Dhaka yesterday to lead these efforts.

Qasim pointed out that the deputy commissioner of Sunamganj in a report yesterday said Niko should pay compensation of Tk 1.13 crore to people of Tengratila. "We have agreed to provide this money," he said.

"The first part of this amount is being forwarded to the government at this time. In addition, and not included with the above amount, we are forwarding Tk 6,60,000 as our contribution for the mosques and other places of worship in the Tengratila area."

## Boy carries

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other due to lack of space in the mother's uterus.

Generally, a mother in such cases gives birth to twin or conjoined babies. But in this case the mother gave birth to a normal boy, the doctors said.

"When Abu Raihan was six months old, a sound of gurgling liquid could be heard when he turned from one side to the other. However, with his growing older the sound slightly abated but the boy started to feel pain in his abdomen," family sources of Abu Raihan told The Daily Star.

Day by day, the lump got bigger and started causing pain. The local doctors suspected it as a tumour.

At the age of two, Abu Raihan was taken to Barisal Medical College where also doctors suspected it as a tumour. They prescribed for an operation when the boy grows up.

Abu Raihan, son of Ahmadullah and a student of Kawmi Madrassa in Bhola, was admitted into the medicine ward of the BSMMU a month ago for the operation and two weeks ago he was taken to MA Majid.

"It is called 'macerated baby' in medical science that grows by taking nutrition through its brother's placenta circulation. Abu Raihan was going with an extra-uterine pregnancy," doctors at the BSMMU said, adding that the lump was first diagnosed as a pseudopancratic cyst and retroperitoneal mass.

But the possibility of a monozygotic twin was suspected after X-ray, CT Scan and ultrasonograph examinations and the operation proved it true, they said.

Hundreds of people from different places gathered at the BSMMU hearing the news that a boy has come out from another teenage boy.

## Spin tames Tigers

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for staying out late in the Welsh capital on Friday.

It was only the third time Australia had won a one-day international by 10 wickets after beating West Indies at Adelaide in 2001 and England in Sydney in 2003 by the same margin.

And it was only the 26th ten-wicket win in the 2,254 game history of one-day internationals.

Bangladesh were bowled out for just 139 with more than 14 overs of their innings remaining. Mohammad Ashraf (58) and Shahriar Nafees (47), who put on 90 in 92 balls, were the only Tigrs batsmen to make double figures in an innings featuring four ducks.

Australia's left-handed openers Adam Gilchrist and Matthew Hayden, who both finished on 66 not out, knocked off the winning runs in just 19 overs.

Defeat left Bangladesh needing to beat England in Sunday's match at Headingley to have a chance of qualifying for the July 2 Lord's final.

This loss saw the wheel turn full circle for Bangladesh and was their second reverse in four days following their 168-run defeat against England in Nottingham on Tuesday.

Bangladesh's last eight wickets fell for 26 runs, the final five going for two runs in 18 balls.

Left-arm wrist spinner Brad Hogg chipped in with three for 39 as Symonds finished with an analysis of 7.2-1-18-5.

## 40 Indian

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from the Indian government for collecting freshwater crocodiles.

Shamsur Rahman, conservator of wildlife management and nature conservation department, chaired the ceremony.

Conservator of Forests of Chittagong Region Abdul Motalab, Safari Park Project Director Dr Tapan Kumar Dey and Divisional Forest Officer of Cox's Bazar Oboni Bhushan Thakur, among others, addressed on the occasion.

## Bidisha

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on June 22 and directed the attorney general's office to present relevant information and documents regarding the money laundering before it.

Additional Attorney General Abdur Rezaq Khan told the court during yesterday's hearing that Bidisha deposited Tk 26,73,71, 746 in seven accounts of five foreign and one local banks.

He submitted that Bidisha deposited £1,610,353 equivalent to Tk 19,32,42,360 in account no 6391168 of Council Tax Bank in London, \$8,000 worth Tk 4,80,000 in account no DDOC284859M of HSBC Bank in New York, £4,99,913.73 amounting to Tk 5,99,89,560 in account no 98363867 of Natwest Diamond Bank in UK, \$51,000 worth Tk 15,30,000 in account no 91372823 of HSBC Bank in London, Tk 28,23, 406.30 in account no 003-005402-001 of HSBC Bank in Gulshan, \$5,107.67 equalling Tk 3,06,420 in account no 003-005402-151 of the same bank and Singapore \$3,00,000 worth Tk 90,00,000 in account no 553-5-026446 of OSBC Bank in Singapore.

Khan noted that Bidisha faces serious allegations of laundering money abroad and the state gets into trouble if money is laundered.

The court, however, observed that having money in different bank accounts does not mean money is laundered. It added that the government has extended the opportunity for whitening black money for another year and so, if Bidisha's money is black, she may still avail herself of this opportunity.

Bidisha had earlier been granted ad interim bail in three cases including one on charges of cheating.

The money laundering case was filed against Bidisha with Gulshan Police Station under Section 13 of Money Laundering Act on June 16. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Abdur Rauf Khan on June 18 rejected her bail prayer.

The additional attorney general was assisted by Deputy Attorney General Hetaluddin Mollah, while Dr Kamal Hossain, who moved for Bidisha, was assisted by Barrister Sarah Hossain, Barrister Tanjib-Ul Alam, Advocate Zahurul Islam and Advocate Shafiuddin Bhuiyan.

## Recruitment

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they had taken the decision to postpone the selection of lecturers after discussion with the teachers who went to his office.

The selection committee would, however, sit to recruit two assistant professors today, he said.

"We will take necessary steps by taking departmental Coordination and Development Committee's recommendation regarding lecturers' appointment after the university opens," the VC added.

Some 40 teachers, mostly leaders of the opposition Awami League backed Blue Panel and left leaning Pink Panel including Dean of Science Faculty Prof RIM Aminur Rashid, Dhaka University Teachers' Association President Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique and General Secretary Prof Akhteruzzaman went to the VC office and

warned that they would not cooperate with the VC if he continues recruiting teachers on political considerations rather than merit.

Earlier on Friday, Dean of the Social Science Faculty Prof Harun-or-Rashid at a press conference protested.

"The university authorities' unfair move" to appoint six teachers at the department.

"If the authorities had taken the decision earlier, this situation would not have appeared. I want transparency and consideration of academic performance in recruitment of teachers," said Prof Harun, who is also a professor of the political science department.

## US under secy

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members of civil society.

This is Burns' first visit to Bangladesh since he was appointed under secretary on March 17 this year to oversee US policy in each region of the world.

Bilateral relations with the US have greatly improved in recent years and the regular visits of important US officials, including Nicholas Burns, is a clear reflection of strengthening of ties between Bangladesh and the US, said Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan.

Talking to reporters at his office yesterday, Khan said, "We will review the entire range of bilateral issues during the meeting with the US under secretary."

On a question about the attack on the Ahmadiyya area at Brahmanbaria ahead of the visit of a US under secretary, he said despite some destabilising factors, the government will not deviate from its avowed policy of maintaining religious harmony in Bangladesh.

"There is no majority or minority concept in terms of religion in Bangladesh. We believe all people of this country--irrespective of their beliefs--are equal," he added.

The foreign ministry sources said Burns will arrive at the Zia International Airport from Kolkata at 11:50am. Additional Foreign Secretary Major (Retd) Khairuz-zaman will receive him at the airport.

During the near-20-hour visit, Burns will meet with the foreign minister and pay courtesy call on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the afternoon.

He is also due to meet with leaders of political parties and members of the civil society in Dhaka. In absence of Leader of the Opposition and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, Burns will meet with her Political Secretary

## BNP top brass mourn

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General of BNP Tarique Rahman and the PM's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury, were present at the time.

A top police official seeking anonymity said the way influential ministers, including even the prime minister, are treating Sagir even after his death, the law enforcers think twice in future to arrest any notorious criminal holding important posts in the ruling party and its front organisations.

"It is an open secret that Sagir had links with several infamous groups in Dhaka and we were looking for them. But from now on, will anybody dare to arrest such criminals?" said a top police official requesting anonymity repeatedly.

An accused in the sensational doctor Milon and police sergeant Farhad murder cases, Sagir was gunned down by assailants near his Nasir Uddin Sarder Lane residence on Friday. The law enforcers intercepted the killers while they were fleeing and shot dead one of the assailants named Shaon after the gang had shot and wounded one police havidler.

LGRD and Co-operatives Minister Mannan Bhuiyan, Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas, Dhaka City Mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka, and State Minister for Labour and Manpower Amanullah Aman rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where Sagir's body was taken.

Dhaka city (south) unit general secretary of ruling BNP's youth front Jatityatabadi Jubo Dal Sagir was buried at Kolta Bazar graveyard in Sutrapur after his namaj-e-janaza in front of the party office yesterday.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Tarique Rahman, cabinet ministers, party lawmakers and many party leaders and activ-

## Writ petition

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The petitioner said the NBR's SRO fixed the tariff value for SIM/RUIM cards and new cellphone connections at Tk 2,172 by calculating 35 percent supplementary duty and 15 percent VAT proportionate to Tk 1,200 in total disregard for the original price of these cards, which is arbitrary, illegal and capricious.

According to the Customs Act 1969, the government is supposed to impose duty on the actual price. But in fixing the tariff value for SIM cards, the NBR followed an arbitrary principle to realise Tk 1,200 and nothing else, the petitioner noted.

"It is like asking people to grow their feet bigger to fit the size of the shoes," petitioner's lawyer Advocate Asaduzzaman told the court.

The government cannot fix a tariff value without having any contemporaneous documents to show that the international market price of a particular item of import or export has either gone up or come down.

He also argued that only the BTRC has the right to fix the tariff value on telephone connections under Section 31(2)(e) of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Act (BTA) 2001. The NBR's fixation of tariff value is contrary to the provisions of sections 49 (a)(b)(d) and 29 of BTA 2001, which is why it is illegal.

The NBR, under the VAT Act, is authorised to fix a tariff value in public interest by publishing an official gazette notification; instead, through

Saber Hossain Chowdhury. He will depart tomorrow morning.

The US embassy in Dhaka, however, remained silent about Burns' meetings with the political leaders and members of the civil society.

The under secretary, who is now on this short tour, first flew to London on June 21 and met his counterparts from the UN Security Council permanent member states and others to discuss UN reforms.

He also met with his counterparts from Japan and Australia as part of the US-Japan-Australia strategic dialogue. On June 23, Burns accompanied Secretary Condoleezza Rice at the G-8 foreign ministers' meetings.

Burns then travelled to New Delhi where he met with senior government officials and political leaders and discussed developments in the US-Indian strategic partnership prior to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's Washington visit.

As an under secretary, Nicholas Burns is responsible for integrating political, economic, global, and security issues into the United States' bilateral relationships. There are six geographically defined bureaus and one functional bureau that report to the under secretary--bureaus for Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Eurasia, the Near East, South Asia, the Western Hemisphere and International Organisations.

Prior to his current assignment, Burns was US permanent representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) where he headed the combined State-Defense Department US Mission to Nato during the Alliance's new missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

ists attended the janaza. They also wore black badges to mourn Sagir's death.

Sources said Sagir used to lead a criminal group in Old Dhaka that included dangerous criminals such as Hamid, Aga Shamim, Nirmal and Kajol, the last one being the prime accused in the killing of Old Dhaka businessman Shamsul Islam, his son Russel and their driver. The bodies of the father and the son were found sliced in over 200 pieces.

Earlier, following the arrest of two Jatityatabadi Chhatra Dal leaders of Dhaka College unit for mugging Tk 12 lakh from a jewellery shop at Paltan on June 19, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan on June 21 told the Parliament, "The government is determined to take tough action against hijackers, robbers and killers, no matter whatever party they belong to."

Meanwhile, the police could not arrest anyone in connection with the killing of Sagir despite taking measures in the city and the adjacent areas of Keraniganj, the place police are suspecting that members of the "killing squad" were from.

Keraniganj police said they could not find out the address of Shaon in the area until last evening.

Family members of Sagir did not file any case until last evening. The Old Dhaka residents, particularly businessmen of Sutrapur area, expressed mixed reaction over the death of Sagir.

Some businessmen wishing anonymity said the death of Sagir will lessen extortion in the area, but also feared that if police do not arrest Sagir's associates, such offences might increase in future. However, some businessmen expressed shock at the killing of Sagir.

## Lawyers

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Court Bar Association (SCBA) auditorium.

The government is appointing disputed persons as judges, ignoring honest, efficient and neutral ones, they alleged.

They demanded recruitment of judges through constitutional commission and judicial service commission, if need be, by amending the constitution.

The Parishad demanded formation of a constitutional commission with authority to "suspend politically partisan judges".

Influence of the government should be removed from the Bangladesh Bar Council, it said.

The leaders slammed the extra-judicial killing by the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and demanded probe into it and punishment of persons responsible.

"Rule of law and the judiciary become vulnerable if legal rights of the lawyers are violated. Freedom of judiciary is not possible without the freedom of lawyers' profession," said Convenor of the Parishad Barrister M Aminul Islam while reading out a resolution.

The Parishad has announced to form a human chain on June 29 in the city, observe Justice Day on July 6 and hold a grand rally on July 29.

Former law minister Abdul Matin Khasru, SCBA President Mahbubul Alam and SCBA Secretary Enayetur Rahim, among others, were present.

## HC upholds

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Litigation (PIL) with an assistant judge's court, Rajshahi, seeking injunction on the appointment of 546 employees and providing their salaries.

The judge of the court passed an injunction order on June 23, 2004.

The university authorities had filed an appeal against the order with the Additional Judge's Court, Rajshahi. The additional judge vacated the injunction order on July 14, 2004.

Abu Aslam filed a civil revision case with the High Court against the order of the Additional Judge's Court.

On January 2, 2005, The High Court imposed an ad-interim injunction for six months on the order and issued a rule upon the additional judge to show cause why the order should not be declared illegal.

Later, the university authorities filed a petition with the Supreme Court, seeking stay on the High Court order. The Appellate Division stayed the order and fixed the date for hearing the petition in the High Court.

After hearing for a long, the High Court yesterday passed the order upholding the order of the assistant judge's court.

## Blaze rages

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close to the gas field site have also been shut.

A team of experts yesterday flew to Tengratila to see for themselves the situation and decide on remedial measures.

Bapex Managing Director Jamaluddin, quoting Niko officials, claimed there is no possibility of spread of gas this time, unlike in the January 7 explosion at the gas field.

The rig tower fell down after it melted due to excess heat of the flame.

He also claimed that the extent of damage this time would be much less than that in the January incident. But he declined give details until a survey is made.

A Niko official told The Daily Star yesterday it will take at least two to three days to ascertain the position of the relief well where the explosion took place.

Requesting anonymity, he said gas has not spread that much to the surface and it is coming out with heavy pressure only through the drilling pipe. "We will have to arrange drilling another relief well for sealing the first relief well that suffered a blowout on Friday. But we will have to wait for a few days for laming of the fire," he added.

The company also plans to engage a fresh drilling company, replacing the US firm Parker, for the job as subcontractor, the official said.

Local lawmaker Kolim Uddin Milon said people of the area are too agitated as they are yet to get compensation for the previous explosion. Different affected institutions have also not received compensation.

Quoting advisor for energy Mahmudur Rahman, he however said compensation for the educational and other institutions would be given tomorrow.

The advisor will visit Tengratila gas field on the day.

## 200 killed

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assaulted 1662 people in this time throughout the country, the BIHR report observed.

Besides, various crimes have increased in the country.

One hundred and twelve leaders, workers and supporters of different political parties were killed during the period.

Three journalists were also killed during this period.

Meanwhile, BIHR will today observe International Day for the Oppressed declared by the United Nations.

BIHR Chairman Justice KM Sobhan has expressed deep concern over the present human rights situation in Bangladesh.

## More areas

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC).

It said the Surma, Teesta, Kushiara, Sarigowam, Balla, Dalia and Khowai marked sharp rise due to heavy rainfall in northeastern part of the country for the last two days.

## 6 new police stations

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Sis and 50 constables have already been recruited besides OCs and second officers, said sources.

Of the recruits, some were taken from the existing PSs, some from reserve police forces, and some others from outside the DMP.

Forces of two of the six new PSs will have to face acute accommodation problem, as there is no housing arranged yet for them in the buildings of Shah Ali and Adabar police stations. Staff of the Khilkhet and Turag PSs too will have to face the crisis, as the arrangements are not adequate to house the full staff.

The DMP South zone presently has Kotwali, Lalbagh, Ramna, Dhanmondi, Hazariabagh, and Kamrangirchar police stations. Besides the addition of New Market PS, it will have four more stations, Bangshal, Chawkbazar, Shahbagh and Kalabagan, said a DMP source.

In addition to the Paltan PS, the DMP East