



## Tk 2,600cr gas set to go up in smokes

### Experts fear whole gas structure may crumble due to second blowout

SYED ASHFAQUL HAQUE

second in six months.

The multi-million-dollar Chhatak gas field is all set to turn into a vast wasteland as experts fear all four layers of the upturned natural gas structure at Tengratila might have crumbled following the blowout,

With the blowout passing into the fifth day and the raging blaze blowing away gas worth millions of dollars a day, Niko Resources, the Canadian operator of the joint venture, did literally nothing to tame

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



PHOTO: STAR

A few youths check gas bubbling from water in a bog near Tengratila gas field yesterday.

## Wasteland jolting

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

half a kilometre area around the gas field continued and spread to more area.

Ferocity of the Tengratila gas field fire showed little change yesterday as the flames still leapt over 250 feet while leakage of burning gas through innumerable points within

Panicked locals said the entire area jolted repeatedly for the fourth day yesterday.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## JS demands energy minister's statement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Both the ruling and opposition party lawmakers yesterday while discussing the proposed budget in parliament expressed concern over the blowout in Tengratila gas field and demanded a statement from the energy and mineral resources minister about the damage caused by the accident.

The main opposition Awami League (AL) meanwhile decided to send its parliamentary delegation to Tengratila on July 3 to probe the incident and assess the damage of natural resources.

Acting Chief Whip of the Opposition Farukh Khan told reporters that the team will submit a detail inquiry report to the parliamentary party. "We will make the report public soon after the investigation," he added.

"The government is not taking any action by inquiring into the incident as the prime minister and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## 'Conspiracy, foreign help' won't take AL to power

### Prime minister tells House

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia told the main opposition Awami League (AL) in parliament yesterday that it would not be able to grab state power through "conspiracy and assistance of foreigners".

Khaleda, also the leader of the House, said a conspiracy is going on at home and abroad to split the four-party alliance, as the AL knows it can come back to office if the alliance stays intact.

"But, it will not be possible to weaken the alliance through conspiracy, instead it will further strengthen the alliance," she said while discussing the proposed budget for the coming fiscal year.

"Anticipating this reality, they (AL) have rushed to the foreigners'

door and are tarnishing the country's image through baseless propaganda against the country as they lost people's support and failed to engage them in anti-government movement," she alleged.

Khaleda, also the chairperson of the ruling BNP, said people's support is needed to come to power, which the coalition government has earned through welfare of the people.

"We hope people will trust us more in future and extend their support as they believe only the BNP-led coalition government can lead the country towards progress," she added.

In her one-hour speech she described in detail the successes in different sectors including social, economic, education, communica-

tions, health, and law and order during the last three and a half years of the coalition rule.

"People believe that the country would be able to achieve more development under the coalition rule."

The prime minister sought co-operation from all quarters to implement the proposed budget and hoped that the country would see further development once the "pro-people budget" is implemented.

The prime minister also came down hard on the main opposition for its 13-point proposal for amendment to the proposed budget and the threat to enforce hartal if its demands go unmet.

"It is sad and also unprecedented

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

## Cops seek court order to probe allegation against Ershad

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The investigation officer (IO) in a general diary (GD) filed against Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad yesterday sought permission from a court to probe the matter.

Trisha Rahman, sister of Ershad's estranged wife Bidisha, on Tuesday filed the GD with Uttara Police Station accusing the JP chief of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## Money whitening stays, SIM tax reduced

### JS passes finance bill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman has finally reduced tax on cellphone SIM cards from Tk 1200 to Tk 900 in the wake of a lot of criticism.

He did not however budge from his stance on the widely criticised provision facilitating whitening of black money at 7.5 percent tax. But

he declared that this is the last such opportunity.

The proposal for imposition of 10 percent tax on income from computer software business has been withdrawn.

The finance minister announced these amendments in parliament yesterday in his wrap-up speech on the budget he had proposed earlier

this month for FY 2005-06.

The Jatiya Sangsad also passed the finance bill last night.

"I myself faced the dilemma of whether or not to go for [the money whitening] provision. I could not even sleep at night after making the proposal in the budget speech. But when one has to govern the country

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## NOAB-BSP demands cut in import duty on newsprint

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newspapers Owners Association of Bangladesh (NOAB) and Bangladesh Sangbadpatra Parishad (BSP) yesterday demanded reduction of import duty on newsprint to 5 percent from 25 percent as proposed in the budget for FY 2005-06.

The associations in a joint statement also demanded withdrawal of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## Police sergeant held for robbing Tk 14.47 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective police yesterday arrested a police sergeant eight hours after he had robbed Tk 14.47 lakh from a businessman in Bijoy Nagar area in the capital.

A primary police investigation found Sergeant Zulfikar Ali of the traffic department guilty of the robbery, but failed to recover the looted money until 8:00pm yesterday.

The arrested police sergeant said the money is with one of his sources who has been missing since taking the money.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



Robber cop..Zulfikar Ali

## Garment factory gutted in Savar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A devastating fire badly damaged valuables and products of six-storey Biswas Textile and Garment Factory near Rajfulbaria bus stand in Savar early yesterday.

However, there were not any reports of casualties.

Around 25 labourers were working in the iron section of the factory when they saw a spark in a machine at 3:00am. The fire then spread in the tin-roofed building and soon spread to all the six floors of its adjacent building, witnesses said.

The garments factory had six different units for textile, knitting, sweater and other businesses.

The textile unit on the ground

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

**"City Centre"**  
Bangladesh's Landmark

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