

BARAPUKURIA

Part of coal mine may go to Tata

SHARIER KHAN

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) decided in principle last week to award a part of Barapukuria Coal Mine to Indian giant Tata on a build, own and operate (BOO) basis, sources close to the cabinet said.

Tata wants to go for open pit mining at Barapukuria while China has developed the mine using shaft method. Open mining is up to 20 percent cheaper than shaft mining

but it causes high degree of air and environmental pollution, and destroys arable land.

The mine, developed at a cost of \$ 192 million by Chinese company CMEC, will be handed over to Petrobangla's Barapukuria Coal Mine Company this month. The government already signed a development, production and maintenance contract with another Chinese company CMC. Upon taking over the mine from CMEC,

the government will deploy CMC on a 72-month contract for operation till 2011.

But as Tata is interested to utilise the high quality Barapukuria coal resources, the government is considering creating scopes for Tata, the sources said.

Tata seeks exploration rights over a prospective coal deposit area north of Barapukuria and another point in between Barapukuria and

FOOD ADULTERATION
Govt to meet for action plan
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will soon convene an inter-ministerial meeting to stamp out food adulteration and use of chemicals in it, Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, food and disaster management minister, said yesterday.

"We shall hold a meeting with the agriculture, food, environment, and home ministries in presence of the media to take appropriate decisions," the minister told journalists at a dialogue while inaugurating the Computer Network Project of the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management at the ministry's conference room.

Terming the food adulteration situation as "alarming", Chowdhury



PHOTO: STAR

Patients, suffering mostly from headache and sore ear after the gas field blowout, come for treatment at a temporary healthcare centre in Tengrartila.

Kaptai power generation drops to new low as water level falls

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The generation of electricity at the Kaptai hydroelectric power station has dropped down to 60MW a day due to a fall in water level at the dam point.

Plant officials said the generation is the lowest since its inception in the 1960s. They blamed it on the drought-like situation, which continues despite arrival of the monsoon a few days ago.

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DU shut as BCL strike begins

DU CORRESPONDENT

No class was held at Dhaka University (DU) yesterday on the first day of the two-day strike enforced by seven opposition-backed student organisations led by pro-Awami League Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL).

The students combine has enforced the strike to press home its five-point demand including expulsion, arrest and punishment of the

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PHOTO: STAR

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina shows the certificate of doctorate degree she recently obtained from a Russian university at a press conference in Dhaka yesterday.

Budget pushed up prices of essentials

Says Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday accused the BNP-Jamaat coalition government of pushing up the prices of essential commodities through passing the new budget which she termed "anti-people and ambitious."

She criticised the ruling alliance for not paying heed to the 13-point proposals of Awami League (AL) for amendments to the budget.

"The government says it is a development-oriented budget. But

prices of the essentials have shot up after the passage of the budget," said the AL chief speaking at a press briefing on her return after a 13-day trip to Europe.

Brushing aside the finance minister's claim of high foreign currency reserve, she said there has been an acute crisis of foreign currency in the country. Importers cannot open letters of credits and dollar price has soared all time high, she said.

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Alliance success scares opposition

PM tells rally

BDNEWS, Jamalpur

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said the opposition is raising the issue of caretaker government system reforms and election boycott sensing its sure defeat in the next general elections.

She said the parliamentary elections will be held as per schedule according to the constitution. "In the 2007 election the people of this country will cast their votes for BNP and its alliance," the prime minister said while addressing a public meeting at the Melandoho High

School ground in Jamalpur yesterday afternoon.

Khaleda said the opposition is frightened noticing the development activities by the ruling alliance and that is why they have resorted to hartal and strikes.

"One party is engaged in terrorism inside the country, tarnishing the image of the country abroad. Their falsehood and propaganda are creating trouble for the expatriate Bangladeshis," she said pointing o

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Spiralling prices dent commoners' purse

Inter-ministerial meet today on post-budget market trend

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An inter-ministerial meeting on the latest market situation will be held at the commerce ministry today against the backdrop of spiralling prices of essentials.

The prices began to rise immediately after the proposed budget for FY06 was tabled in parliament, and the passage of budget on Thursday only added to the miseries of the consumers in low income bracket, said a trader in the city's Karwan

Bazar kitchen market.

"Imposing VAT on the imports may have accounted for the price hike," he observed.

Prices of essential items, mostly vegetables shot up by around Tk 5 a kg on average, according to traders in Karwan Bazar and Mirpur-6 kitchen markets.

The price of green chilli rose by an astonishing 300 percent in ten days. It sold at Tk 50 yesterday, up from Tk 12 a kg.

"I would buy one palla (five kgs)

of green chilli for Tk 50 only ten days back. But I had to buy one palla for Tk 210 today," said Ruhul Quddus, a trader at the Karwan Bazar kitchen market yesterday.

Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury will chair today's meeting convened to discuss the possible government intervention in the post-budget market situation, news agency UNB quoted a [commerce] ministry official as saying.

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Prayer Timing		
July 3		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-10	4-45
Zuma	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-57	7-00
Esha	8-17	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Bangla Bhai cadre held for attacking newsmen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The Special Branch (SB) of police yesterday arrested Bangla Bhai follower Moshir Rahman Peter, accused of attacking a journalist on June 28.

Acting on a tip off, plainclothes SB raided Peter's house in Bagmara. The Bangla Bhai man brawled with SB constable Afsar and hurt him, but could not escape arrest.

Additional force from Bagmara Police Station rushed to the scene and took Peter in their custody.

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KARNAPHULI BRIDGE
Deal signed with Kuwait for \$51.5m

UNB, Dhaka

Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) will give Bangladesh a loan of \$ 51.5 million for construction of the third Karnaphuli Bridge in Chittagong.

To this effect, an agreement was signed in Dhaka yesterday between the government of Bangladesh and the KFAED.

AZM Shafiqul Alam, joint secretary, Economic Relations Division, and Hamad Sulaiman MAI-Omer Al-

Derbas, deputy director-general, KFAED, signed the deal on behalf of their respective sides.

The third Karnaphuli Bridge will be built over the river Karnaphuli in the Bakolia-Shikalbaha area in Chittagong district.

An official release said the proposed bridge, when constructed, will establish direct road link of capital Dhaka and port city Chittagong with Cox's Bazar and the planned Asian highway.

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DU VIOLENCE
Probe body members reluctant to work

DU CORRESPONDENT

The six-member probe body formed to investigate the violence on Dhaka University campus following the death of a female student on May 28 is in a predicament as most of the committee members seem reluctant to pursue the task.

Headed by Dhaka University (DU) Treasurer Prof Syed Rashidul Hasan, the probe body was originally a nine-member committee but

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JCD man, outlaw killed in 'crossfire'

STAR REPORT

A cadre of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and an outlaw were killed in 'crossfire' between Rab and the victims' accomplices in Sylhet and Rajshahi in the early hours yesterday.

Habibur Rahman Mosharraf, 28, former general secretary of Madan Mohan College unit JCD, is the first to meet 'crossfire' death in Sylhet, reports our staff correspondent from Sylhet.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) nabbed Mosharraf from Kuarpur in the city on Thursday midnight, sources said.

Rab sources said the elite force took Mosharraf to Kanishail in the city to seize his firearms.

His accomplices opened fire on the Rab team, which countered the attack, said the sources, adding that Mosharraf was killed during the gunfight at 2:40am.

The Rab seized one 9mm pistol, three bullets and a few sharp weapons, the sources claimed.

Mosharraf hailed from Barisal and belonged to the JCD Upashahar faction, sources said. He was accused of 10 criminal c h a r g e s

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