

TO
People's Right to Know

www.thedailystar.net

'Graft grips every ministry'

Saifur finds NBR most affected, tells JS if he initiates actions against corrupt tax officials, revenue division will become empty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday told parliament that corruption had gripped every ministry of the government and it was regrettable that the National Board of Revenue (NBR) was the worst graft-infested department.

"There is no angel in any ministry... corruption, more or less, is everywhere," he said during the question-answer session.

Describing corruption as a disease, Saifur said, "I can name the ministries one by one, from education ministry to communications, where corruption pervades."

He was replying to a supplementary question of Jatiya Party (Ershad)

lawmaker Hafizuddin Ahmed.

Saifur, however, defended his ministry by saying that the NBR is suffering from scarcity of efficient tax officials as appointments to the department have been halted for the last few years.

"If I initiate actions against the corrupt (tax) officials the entire revenue division will become empty," he said. "I can't do this as I have to run the office."

"I have requested the establishment ministry to arrange special recruitment of tax officials immediately through the Public Service Commission," the minister informed the House.

As recruitment is on the hold for years, even peons have become tax

officers, Saifur mentioned.

He however informed the House that various measures were taken to increase tax and VAT collection.

Replying to another question, Saifur told the House that Bangladesh received foreign loans and grants of \$28,364 million since independence.

He said the loans were received with a nominal interest rate or service charge (only one percent or below) from development partners including the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, Japan, USA, UK, Saudi Arabia and other countries.

Saifur strongly supported consultancy by development partners in foreign-aided projects and said, "We get quality work through their

consultancy."

The finance minister made the comment when a lawmaker demanded cancellation of foreign consultancy in projects on the ground that consultants are gobbling up a good chunk of aid.

But the minister differed from this view and said, "Of the \$28,364 million in foreign loans and grants so far received, only 2 percent has been spent on consultancy."

Referring to efficiency of the World Bank consultants in the recently completed Dhaka-Sylhet highway, Saifur said, "We have got a quality road as the World Bank consultants were involved in it. If the locals did this, the road would have

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

JOURNO BEL KILLING 'Mastermind' Jamaat leader arrested

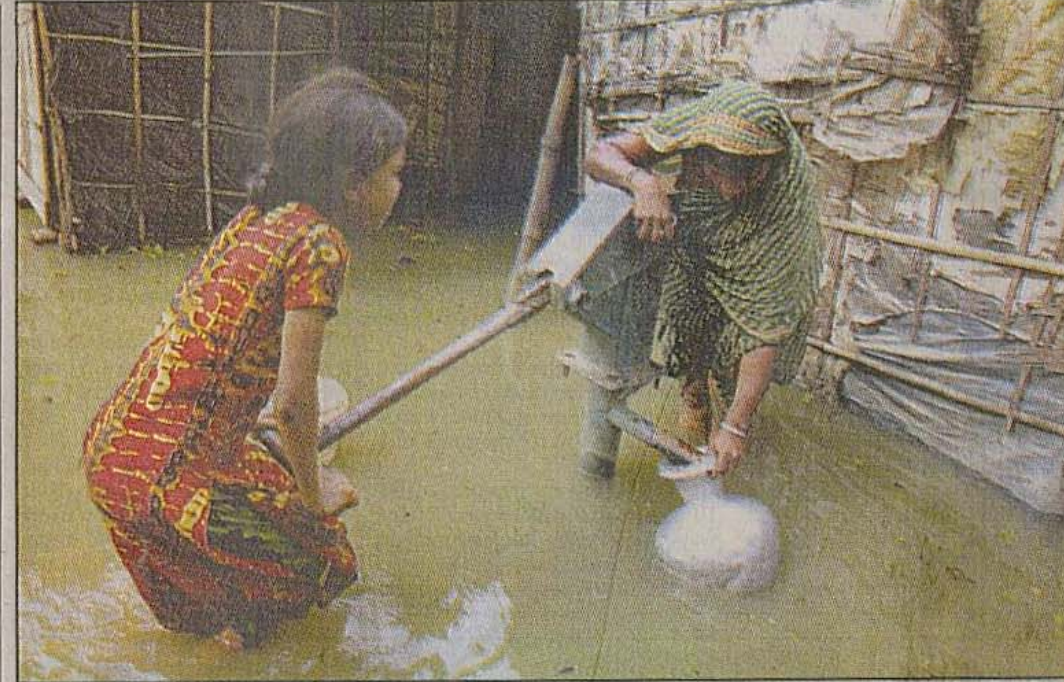
STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna.

Sahabuddin Laskar alias Dhira, a Jamaat-e-Islami leader and suspected mastermind behind the killing of journalist Sheikh Belaluddin in Khulna, was arrested at Malibagh in the capital yesterday.

The arrestee is also a suspect in the August 21 grenade attack on an Awami League (AL) rally on Bangabandhu Avenue, police said.

The Jamaat leader has close links to Mufti Abdul Hannan, prime accused in the case filed for planting a bomb weighing 76 kg near the meeting venue of the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina at Kotallipara of Gopalganj district, intelligence sources said.

Mufti Hannan stayed at the SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



A woman and a girl collect drinking water yesterday from a tubewell in knee-deep water at a Rayerbazar slum in the capital following last few days' downpour.

TRI-NATION PIPELINE

Dhaka skips Delhi talks over delay in invitation

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh is not joining India and Myanmar in the talks on the proposed gas pipeline in New Delhi today, as it said the invitation came only a day ahead of the meeting.

Myanmar Energy Minister Lun Thi goes to New Delhi to explore an alternative route in case Bangladesh does not join the \$1 billion project.

"We have informed Bangladesh about the proposed talks between India and Myanmar on Wednesday,

and through the Bangladesh high commissioner forwarded an invitation to send an envoy to the talks," Indian Petroleum Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar told reporters at a teleconference from Romania on Monday.

In case the Bangladesh envoy arrives, "We will change the schedule into a trilateral talks or we will have bilateral talks with Myanmar," said Aiyar.

Advisor to the energy ministry Mahmudur Rahman told reporters

that Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri met him yesterday and inquired about Bangladesh's participation in the meeting.

Rahman told Sikri, "Time is too short for attending tomorrow's meeting in New Delhi." Asked if Bangladesh is excluded from the tri-nation gas pipeline, he said, "If they can do without Bangladesh, let them do."

He said if India and Myanmar can find a better route for the gas SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Tax ombudsman bill tabled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A bill was placed yesterday in parliament proposing appointment of a tax ombudsman with judicial power in probing taxpayers' complaints in the process of tax payment.

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman piloted the bill, which is likely to be passed on Thursday as the minister has asked the parliamentary standing committee on the finance ministry to submit a report today after scrutinising the bill.

The parliamentary body at an emergency meeting last night okayed the bill. It will submit its report today, meeting sources said.

The finance minister yesterday told reporters after a meeting at the secretariat that the ombudsman will SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Initial govt nod to buy 4 planes

Saifur asks Biman to overhaul itself

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday gave the initial go-ahead to the civil aviation ministry to buy four aircraft to strengthen the depleted and ageing fleet of Biman Bangladesh Airlines.

The ministry yesterday proposed purchase of 10 aircraft but the finance minister shot down the proposal, saying Biman needs to be overhauled first. He asked the ministry to submit a "cost-effective plan"

outlining how excess manpower can be trimmed and an efficient management be put in place.

Besides, he said it would require hundreds of crores of taka to buy 10 aircraft at a time which the government cannot afford and advised the ministry to buy them in phases.

The civil aviation ministry proposed purchase of six Airbuses and four 777 Boeings to the finance ministry.

Saifur suggested that the ministry SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Tata accepts land for steel plant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

India's business conglomerate Tata Group has primarily accepted the government proposed alternative land in Bheramara upazila under Kushtia district for its 4.20 lakh tonne capacity steel plant.

A seven-member team led by Tata Steel executive Indronil Sengupta visited the site on Monday and expressed their willingness to establish the giant steel plant there.

But before finalising the steel plant site, Tata wants to be clear about 11 queries regarding the land and they need some more time for a feasibility study, Tata negotiation

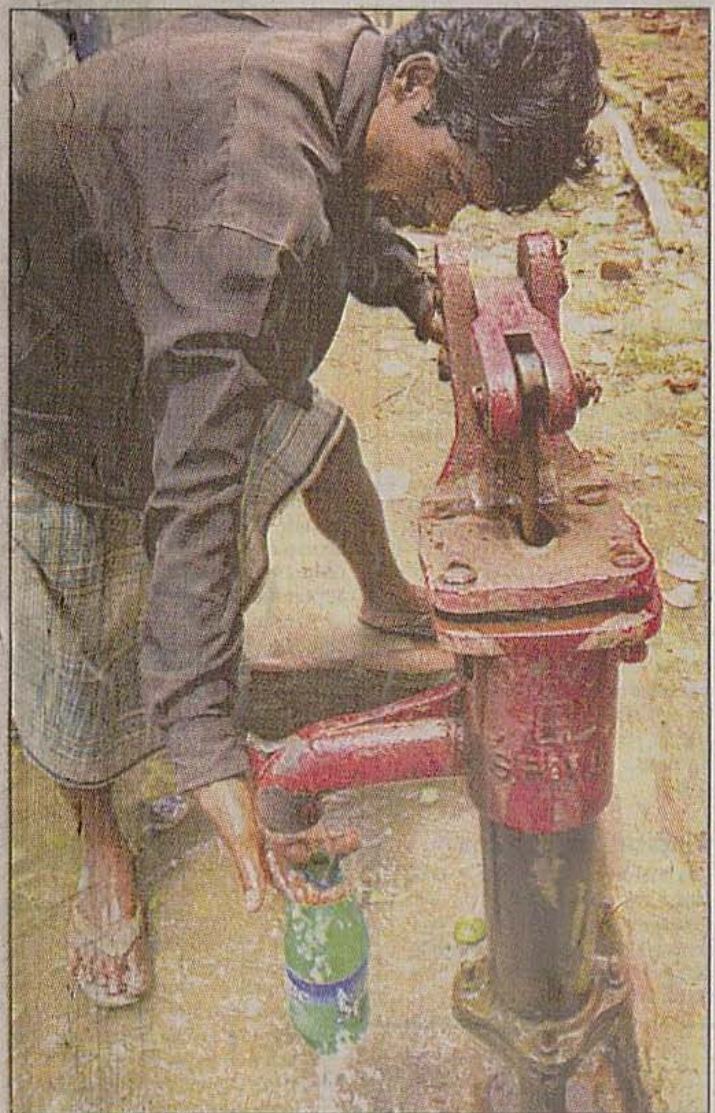
team in yesterday's meeting with the sub-committee on the land ministry said.

The land secretary chaired the meeting.

The group wants 3,000 acres of land for their three proposed steel, power and fertiliser projects, a meeting insider said.

Tata earlier wanted 2,000 acres of land for its steel plant at Muladuli in Ishwardi, 600 acres of land for power plant near Barapukuria coal mine and 400 acres for a fertiliser plant at Banskhalhi in Chittagong.

"Most of the land at the Bheramara site is owned by SEE PAGE 15 COL 5



Crisis of drinking water in Tengratila area after the June 24 gas field blowout forces many locals to use the tubewells marked for arsenic contamination.

Niko busy with gas distribution works

Fire comes down to 100 feet

RAFIQ HASAN From Tengratila and IQBAL SIDDIQUEE From Sylhet

The blaze at Tengratila gas field started to subside on Monday night, shrinking to less than 100 feet by yesterday afternoon, amid continued demonstrations against the Canadian energy company, Niko.

But as the height of the flame reduced the emission of black smoke increased, polluting the entire environment, with hot sand, dust and ashes carried by the blow-out turning the once green villages into grey. A dense black cloud hung low in the sky.

"The fire situation remains unchanged, because the flame rises and drops time to time," remarked Doara Bazar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Mohibuzzaman.

Despite the raging fire in the relief well, Niko continues with its gas field operations. It asked Dipon Gas, a local contractor, to keep working for setting up a distribution plant at Paribagh in Chhatak some 10 kilometres off Tengratila, Dipon Gas officials told The Daily Star.

A 16km pipeline was also being laid to bring gas from Tengratila to the plant, Niko officials told Dipon Gas staff they will not suspend exploration, because, according to their assessment, the 20-square-km area has a huge gas reserve.

Niko is also developing a new field at Barabond, around 8km from Tengratila, digging a well there and constructing a link road from Tengratila to Barabond.

Some locals in Chhatak yesterday SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

3rd-party to vet Niko relief well plan

UNB, Dhaka

The government yesterday decided to have a third party vetting of the work plan and design submitted by Niko for drilling a fresh relief well to plug Tengratila well, as recurrent

blowouts in the gas field eroded credibility of the foreign company.

Officials concerned said the decision for prior examination of the plan was taken to remove all sorts of uncertainty regarding a SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

DMP CLEAN-UP DRIVE 10 more Sgts transferred for criminal links

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) yesterday transferred 10 more sergeants for alleged links with extortion, mugging, drug peddling and other criminal activities.

A fresh accusation was brought yesterday against a traffic sergeant of forcing a businessman to bribe him Tk2,500.

With yesterday's transfers, 30 sergeants have been sent out of the capital for their alleged involvement in criminal activities since the DMP launched the clean-up drive on Monday.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

ACC to visit Ctg port on anti-graft mission next week

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) will go on a special drive in Chittagong seaport and customs next week to contain the alarming rise in corruption including 'monstrous bribery' and harassment of the traders.

In an unprecedented move, Prof Moniruzzaman Mian, one of the ACC Commissioners, will visit the port and customs with a team to assess at first hand the state of corruption in the country's lone seaport and find out ways to scale down

them.

Since the constitution of the anti-graft commission, the ACC chairman has often talked about corruption in different land and seaports, and customs, and expressed his resolve to combat the corruption. But eight months into its formation, the much-vaunted ACC has yet to do anything to that end.

Sources said a Transparency International (TI) Bangladesh report on July 3 on corruption in Chittagong port and customs woke up the ACC to seriousness of the SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Graft, lax law enforcement hurdles to investment

German envoy says

STAR REPORT

High corruption and unreliability of law enforcement are the main barriers to luring German investment in Bangladesh, German Ambassador Dietrich Andreas said yesterday.

"Bangladesh's main problem is its image outside. If there is an allegation about corruption, it should be investigated," he told a press briefing at the National Press Club.

The ambassador observed that enforcement of laws, rules and regulations is crucial for attracting SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

We have now capacity of Producing 250 Metric Ton/day of polyester filament yarn in our 4 manufacturing units.

Product Type :: Draw textured Yarn (DTY)
Draw Twisted (DT) Yarn
Fully Drawn Yarn (FDY)
(Intermingled/non-intermingled)

Denier Range :: 30 ~ 600

Filament :: 24/36/48/72/96/144/192/288

Luster :: Semi dull / Semi bright
Bright / Super bright

Yarn Profile :: Round / Trilobal
Pentalobal / W Shaped

All Export Oriented Knit/Woven Fabric, Polar Fleece, Tricot, Single Jersey, Single Pique Taffeta, Georgette, Mesh Fabric Producers, Buying House and Garments Accessories producers of Lace, Label, Zipper, Embroidery Thread, Sewing Thread, Draw String may contact at the following address for their requirements:

KADER SYNTHETIC FIBRES LIMITED

AA Synthetic Fibres Ltd.

SR Synthetic Fibres Ltd.

RAS Synthetic Fibres Ltd.

Contact Address:
Room No.603-604, Sena Kalyan Bhaban (6th Floor)
195 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000
Tel: 7165739, 7166065, 9564826, 0173 010137
Fax: 880-2-7166192
E-mail: kmsaa@bdonline.com
kadersf@bdonline.com