India to push on with Iranian pipeline plan

REUTERS, *Tehran*

Energy-hungry India said yesterday it would push on with plans to build a $7 billion gas pipeline from Iran, undaunted by the increasing threat of United Nations sanctions against Tehran.

The International Atomic Energy Agency on Friday said questions remained about Tehran's atomic activities and confirmed Iran had resumed its nuclear fuel work, setting the scene for a possible referral to the UN Security Council.

When asked what effect such political pressures could have on the pipeline project, Indian Foreign Ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna told reporters: "We have an interest in taking it forward, India needs gas."

Sarna was speaking during a visit by Indian Foreign Minister Natwar Singh to Tehran.

India has to tread a tightrope in pipeline talks, trying to satisfy it ravenous appetite for hydrocarbons while not upsetting Iran's arch-foe Washington.

The United States accuses Iran, the world's second-biggest holder of natural gas, of seeking nuclear arms, funding anti-Israeli militia and stirring militant attacks against US forces in Iraq. India faces a natural gas deficit of 200 million cubic metres a day in 20 years.

Huge sums drawn

FROM PAGE 1

activists had procured a large quantity of powdered explosives from Chittagong and sent those to Dhaka in several phases in between May and August, the investigator said, requesting anonymity.

Packed in cartons, the explosives were channelled to Dhaka through passenger buses and courier services. Later, the explosives were dispatched to other areas across the country in similar fashion, the investigator added.

Investigators are trying to gather whether the same man has accounts with any other banks and there was any shady transaction involving him.

The investigator said those vital clues had been extracted from some of the people held recently by Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP).

The arrestees are Abdus Sattar Mollah, Jahangir Alam, Arshadul Alam, Ahmad alias Abul Kalam Azad, Azizul Haq Farazi, and Sadrul.

They said not Galib, rather JMB chief Abdur Rahman and Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) operations commander Siddiqul Islam alias Bangla Bhai are responsible for the August 17 explosions.

Quoting the arrestees, an intelligence official of Chittagong said Bangla Bhai had visited Chittagong around four years ago. He also went to the house of Sadrul Alam, Chittagong unit chief of Ahab, and threatened that he [Sadrul] would face dire consequences if he discloses to police anything about the armed militants.

The official also said Sattar Mollah detonated the bombs on the road connecting the city with port with the help of an unidentified man from Dhaka following direction from Mohammad.

He said Arshadul Alam, another arrestee, might be an important leader of JMB and on charge of blasting bombs in Comilla.

Following statements of the arrestees, law enforcers have made a list of around a dozen people suspected to have links to the blasts.

Our Satkhira correspondent reports: police and intelligence agencies arrested a suspected top leader of the Jama'atul Mudar'resin (group of teachers) Bangladesh at village Tengra-Bhabanipur of sadar upazila on Friday night.

A team of police lead by Delwar Hossain Saidee, assistant superintendent of police (Satkhira Sadar circle), arrested Riazul Islam Riaz, 35, after he was linked to August 17 blasts by detained JMB activists Nasir Uddin and Maniruzzaman Munna.

Police sources said a field-level worker of Shandhani Life Insurance Company, Reaz got involved with Ahle Hadith in 1987 while he was in Kuwait. He attended a meeting held at Kushkhali Moralbari Mosque on August 11 and took part in planning the blasts in the district for August 17.

Police yesterday produced him before the Court of First Class Magistrate to petition for him to be placed on a 10-day remand. But the hearing on the remand prayer was not held. It is expected to be held today.

Meanwhile, Criminal Investigation Department (CID) officials tasked with probing the blasts in Satkhira brought back to the district Mahbubur Rahman Liton, Alamgir Hossain, and Mamunur Rashid after completion of eight days' remand in the custody of JIC in Dhaka. The three are JMB cadres arrested in connection with the explosions.

Of the three, Liton was taken on an eight-day remand while the other two were sent to jail. The CID officials produced Liton before a court, seeking afresh a 10-day remand for him.

Our correspondent from Khulna adds: Detective police in Khulna arrested a top leader of Ahab and a suspected trainer of Islamist militants at a house in Zia Nagar upazila of Pirozpur around midnight Friday.

Of the arrestees, Abdur Rahim Salafi alias Bagerhati, 50, is the ameer of Bagerhat district unit Ahle Hadith Jubo Andolon.

Police quoting Salafi said JMB chief Abdur Rahman visited Khulna twice in 2001 and 2003 to recruit militants.

Salafi has been placed on a three-day remand by a court in an August 17 blasts case.

In another development, police arrested four suspected operatives of Ahab in a village of Mongla upazila of Bagerhat on Friday. Police made the arrests while four were holding a secret meeting.

The arrestees, Jubair Dhali, Asadullah Dhali, Yusuf Dhali and Milla Mohsin, were sent to JIC in the capital yesterday.

LEAFLET CIRCULATED

Police arrested Ahsan Habib in Patgudam area of Mymensingh with books and leaflets of Harkatul Jihad, a banned Islamist militant outfit, on September 1. He was later taken on a five-day remand, reports UNB.

Habib, who hails from Pakundia upazila of Kishoreganj, is the son of Habibur Rahman, former assistant registrar of Bangladesh Agriculture University.

UNB from Chapainawabganj reports: JMB militants distributed leaflets by post to government and private institutions, Bank, courts, newspaper offices, press club and police stations, causing intense panic among the people.

Our Nilphamari correspondent reports: Leaflets lauding the activities of JMB were found in Saidpur Press Club on Friday.

An organisation named 'Islam Raksha Parishad' (Organisation to save Islam) published the leaflets in its name. Printed in offset paper and packed in the government postal envelopes, the leaflets were dropped in the letterbox of the press club on Thursday.

Two more BDR battalions

FROM PAGE 1

posted in 18 border observation posts can only cover 112km, according to army statistics of Bandarban region.

State Minister for Environment and Forest Zafrul Islam, who is also in charge of the district, said, "This step does not come all on a sudden."

Emerging from a meeting held at the deputy commissioner's (DC) office yesterday, the minister said, "The government is already informed about beefing up border security and has already agreed in principle."

The meeting was convened following recent recovery of 20 AK47 rifles and 7,716 rounds of ammunition in raids by Rab and BDR. Government and civil high-ups, politicians, civil society members and BDR representatives, Chairman of Bandarban hill district council Mya Mya Ching, DC Sheikh Alauddin and Superintendent of Police Iqbal Bahar were present at the meeting.

According to Bandarban security agencies, BDR men at Naikkhanchhari, Alikadam and Thanchi border were kept on alert since July after the arrest of foreigners at the borders. Huge number of firearms including 47 AK47 assault rifles and 22,000 rounds of ammunition were recovered during raids in this period.

"The firearms seized earlier were old, recently seized firearms include German made 16 new 9mm pistols and as many Walther pistols," said Adjutant Lieutenant of Bandarban zone Lutfur Rahman. "There were some Pakistan-made heavy machineguns and British-made LMGs (light machineguns)," he added.

Security sources said Bangladesh's land border with Myanmar is with Bandarban district only. Although there are two BDR battalions at Naikkhanchhari and Thanchi, it is not possible for them to keep the 288km border free from infiltration of criminals and arms dealers, the sources added.

Experts said deployment of the new BDR battalions would enable the establishment of control over the entire bordering area.

Fuel prices

FROM PAGE 1

fuel prices have been hiked since the alliance government came to power in 2001.

Meantime, hearing the news of the latest price hike of petroleum, many of the fuel stations in the city stopped their sales since yesterday afternoon. Consumers said the stations would resume sales after the government announces the increased prices.

Restriction on visitors at Secretariat

BDNEWS, *Dhaka*

The home ministry in an official order on Saturday asked the officials concerned not to issue passes to the visitors of secretariat without official reasons.

The home ministry order said it feared untoward incidents might happen within the secretariat including disruption of security.

The officials have been instructed to issue passes only to those coming to their respective offices on emergency government work.

Sources said the criminals failed to explode bombs inside the secretariat during the countrywide simultaneous bomb blasts on August 17.

Several officials of intelligence agencies fear the bomb attacks similar to that of August 17 might happen at the secretariat at any time.

PBCP leader arrested in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

A regional commander of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) was arrested on Friday night at Tersi bazaar in Tala upazila of the district.

Acting on a tip-off, police nabbed Abu Bakkar, 45, while he was going to a nearby village at about 8:00pm.

He was wanted in 12 cases filed with Tala, Dumuria and Paikgacha police stations.

Police produced Bakkar before a magistrate's court at Satkhira yesterday, seeking a ten-day remand in connection with the cases. But the hearing on the remand prayer was not held as the documents of the cases are pending with the District Judge's Court for trial.

When contacted, officer-in-charge (OC) of Tala Police Station said the PBCP leader was involved in the murder of freedom fighters Alauddin and Nuru Master and Salam of Tala upazila.

Govt to weigh

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calendar with specific dates within which different stages of formulating a budget will have to be completed. According to the manual, the budget will have to be revised during the second half of the financial year on the basis of performance and requirement.

The manual has set April as the deadline for revising the current ADP and prepare the next ADP.

Providing a guideline for the ministries on how they will prepare their budgets, the manual suggests not to allow the ministries to spend more than their budgetary allocations.

The PEMM has also come up with detailed guidelines about medium term budget framework, procedure of ADP formulation, release of ADP and non-ADP fund etc.

A finance ministry source said the government as part of reforming the formulation of the national budget allowed four ministries to prepare their respective budgets in the last fiscal year. Some more ministries will also formulate their budgets this year while all ministries will have to prepare their budgets from the next year.

Noting that besides planned corruption, mismanagement also results in wastage of huge public money while implementing the budget, the manual is expected to root out these perennial problems by checking and counter-checking the different stages of project approval and implementation process.

M Hafizuddin Khan, former chairman of the PERC that had earlier suggested setting up a framework, like the PEMM, told The Daily Star that improvement can be achieved if the manual is followed.

'Criminal, outlaw'

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Later a Rab team took him to the village to retrieve the firearms. As they reached the village around 3:30am, the PBCP cadres opened fire on them. Rab retaliated resulting in a half an hour-long gunfight. Meraj, caught in the crossfire, died on the spot when he tried to escape.

Rab retrieved a shotgun and five bullets from the scene of the shooting.

According to police, Meraj was accused in three murder cases.

6 'robbers'

FROM PAGE 1

The injured robber, Mohammad Hossain, 22, is receiving treatment at Patiya Health Complex under police custody, sources said.

As many as 18 alleged criminals were lynched in the Chittagong metropolitan city and its adjoining upazilas in the last seven months.

Twenty 'criminals' were lynched last year including 10 in a single incident in Harual Chhari union in Fatikchhari on February 17.

Tengratila, Feni gas

FROM PAGE 1

Niko was signed after approval from which level and who signed-in, giving the approval, basis of approval; and 3) Whether finalisation of the joint venture agreement (JVA) was as per rules.

M Shah Alam, director general-2 at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), led the committee while Bapex Managing Director M Jamaluddin was the member-secretary and Energy Ministry's joint Secretary (admin) Sheikh Abdur Rashid was the member.

The committee was asked to submit its report by August 31.

When his attention was drawn, Mahmudur Rahman told the news agency that the process of declaring the Feni, Kamta and Chhatak gas fields abandoned in 1999 was faulty. The policy framed in 2001 to justify the process was also obscure, he said.

Quoting the report, Rahman said, "There were two clauses in the FOU that later compelled the government to sign the JVA between Niko and Bapex."

A senior official, wishing not to be named, said a study was conducted in Chhatak and Feni under the FOU. But there was a condition that if the study found explorable gas, a JVA must be signed between Niko and Bapex. Former state minister for energy Prof Rafiqul Islam gave the final approval of this FOU."

Asked if the government is going to take action against the person responsible, Rahman said, "So far, three probe reports were received and we are waiting for another one. After getting that report, we will take opinion from the law experts and take steps."

The three non-producing gas fields were declared abandoned during the Awami League rule in late 2000 after the Canadian company came up with an "unsolicited" proposal for developing abandoned or marginal gas fields of Bangladesh on April 27, 1997.

The joint venture agreement between Niko and Bapex, a subsidiary of state-run oil, gas and mineral corporation, Petrobangla, was signed on October 16, 2003 under the BNP-led coalition government.

Before that a FoU was signed with Niko as Petrobangla on June 30, 1999 suggested such a study agreement for carrying out a study on the development and production of hydrocarbons from the non-producing marginal gas fields of Chhatak, Feni and Kamta.

Official sources said before signing the JVA, the production sharing contract (PSC) committee had asked for resolving two issues -- the area of Chhatak gas field to include only Chhatak west and include the provision of Swiss Challenge in the JVA.

The last development on the matter took place during the Awami League rule when the energy ministry on July 3, 2001 wrote to Petrobangla, asking to know about the status of negotiations on Chhatak, Feni and Kamta, and specific explanations on the issues, which had not been agreed upon.

Since then, the negotiations came to a halt, he said.

But, the officials said it revived after the BNP-led coalition government came to power and the Petrobangla chairman on January 21, 2002 wrote to the energy secretary outlining two unresolved issues --definition and area of Chhatak field, and share of BGFCL and SGFL in the project with Niko.

After negotiations, Bapex on October 16, 2003 signed the JVA under which Niko is now producing gas from Feni and met two accidents, first in January and second in June this year, while exploring gas in Tengratila.

Moudud against ban

FROM PAGE 1

Solidarity Day yesterday.

Moudud termed France's ban on the use of *hijab* a sad incident and said, "We had a very good idea about France for its democracy and liberalism, but now I am surprised that such a discriminatory law has been passed in the country."

"Wearing decent clothes strengthen women's empowerment," the law minister said, adding that any resistance to *hijab* is also a violation of fundamental and human rights although it is related to religion.

Justice Abdur Rouf said, "France only considered the social implications [of *hijab*] and ignored its scientific aspect." France has violated the fundamental rights given in a charter of the United Nations, he added.

Dr Syeda Sultana Razia of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) presented a keynote paper in which she said France's effort to bring its Muslim women into the mainstream through banning hijab in fact made the country more insecure.

"Any ban on *hijab* should be resisted to protect the Muslim women worldwide from any racial, sexual and religious discrimination," she said in the paper. She noted that some other European countries like Germany and Belgium and Australia are also trying to ban *hijab* in an effort to present the Muslim women as repressed.

Former Secretary Shah Abdul Hannan said, "There is no clash between secularism and *hijab,* but the president of France considered *hijab* as a political symbol, which is an assault on Islam."

Editor of the daily Naya Diganta Alamgir Mohiuddin described the ban on *hijab* in France as a "well-thought political attack on Muslims".

Barrister Fatema Anwar of Bangladesh Supreme Court, Elahi Newaz Khan of Dhaka Journalists' Union also took part in the discussion.

Women MPs furnish

FROM PAGE 1

found that some candidates claim they do not have any movable property like hard cash or gold while some of them said they do not have any immovable property. Two or three of the candidates have even claimed to have no source of income at all.

Ruling BNP Vice-president Rabeya Chowdhury does not have any source of income and any movable property. She said she is a housewife and she owns a house in Comilla town. However, the lawmaker in her deposition to the RO did not mention the value of the house.

Each of the 30 ruling BNP candidates had to donate Tk 3 lakh to the party coffers on getting selected for the party ticket and spend Tk 30, 000 in seeking nomination.

None of the candidates have provided the RO with information on the properties of their dependants. Except two candidates of Jamaat-e-Islami, everyone claimed that none of their dependants has any loan.

Sarwari Rahman, vice-president of BNP, said she does not have any movable property, but has two houses, one in Gulshan and the other on Circuit House Road. She however did not mention the value of the houses. She said she is a housewife and her income comes from family business.

Describing her movable property, BNP candidate Khaleda Rabbani said she has gold ornaments worth about Tk 5 lakh. Advocate Rina Parvin, another ruling party candidate, said she has furniture, 50 tolas of gold, and Tk 2 lakh in cash. Hosne Ara Gias said she has a car and gold worth of Tk 70 lakh.

BNP candidate Yasmin Ara Haque described the 20 bighas of land that she owns in her village home as 'movable property'. Principal Noor Afroze Jyoti too has described her lands [worth of Tk 2 lakh] as 'movable property' while a house in Dhaka [worth of Tk 37 lakh] as 'immovable property'.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs Selima Rahman described politics and business as her profession and said a boutique shop is her source of income. She has 25 bighas of land worth about Tk 1.5 lakh at her village home. She said she has 103 tolas of gold and Tk 18 lakh deposited in bank. She however did not mention how much her boutique shop is worth.

BNP Women Affairs Secretary Begum Shamsunnahar Khaja Ahsanullah said she does not possess any immovable property. Her source of income is her ancestral property. She said she has movable property like cash money and gold, but did not mention the quantity or worth of those, according to the deposition she submitted to the RO.

Of the 36 candidates, only one candidate, Ferdous Akhtar Wahida, had a criminal case filed against her. The caretaker government withdrew the case, which was filed under public safety act by the previous Awami League government, Wahida said in her statement.

The High Court on May 24 directed the EC to collect personal information on the contenders in any parliamentary elections and disseminate those among the voters. The court asked the commission to gather information on the candidates' moveable and immovable property or assets and liabilities along with the details on their educational qualifications, professions, sources of income, etc.

Of the 45 reserved seats, 30 were allotted to BNP, nine to Awami League (AL), three to Jamaat-e-Islami, two to Jatiya Party (Ershad) and one to Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP) and Islami Oikya Jote. As AL had refused to take the seats and boycotted the election, BNP should get those as the majority party.

The MPs-elect on BNP ticket are Begum Shamsunnahar Khaja Ahsanullah, Selima Rahman, Khaleda Rabbani, Sarwari Rahman, Rabeya Chowdhury, Syed Nargis Ali, Khaleda Panna, Bilkis Akhtar Jahan Shirin, Ferdous Akhtar Wahida, Yasmin Ara Haque, Helen Zerin Khan, Rehena Akhtar Ranu, Rosy Kabir, Abeda Chowdhury, Nuri Ara Safa, Khandakar Nurjahan Yasmin Bulbul, Rawshan Ara Farid, Rina Parvin, Shahana Rahman, Noor Afroze Jyoti, Rokeya Ahmed Lucky, Hosne Ara Gias, Chaman Ara, Raihan Akhtar Banu, Kazi Sahera Akthar Shammi Sher, Sultana Ahmed, Tasmin Rana, Bilkis Islam, Shahria Akhtar Hossain and Jahan Panna.

Merina Rahman and Razia Fayez were elected from JP (Ershad), Amena Begum, Shahanara Sultana, and Sultana Razia from Jamaat-e-Islami, and Nabila Chowdhury from BJP and Islami Oikya Jote.

Tigers play

FROM PAGE 1

Sports.

Though the third game is of academic interest, both teams might be forced to make some tactical changes especially as the Sri Lankan capital has been experiencing inclement weather for the past few days.

The Tigers, however, will go with their best team, informed Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar said after Saturday's long team meeting.

"It's like any other match and we don't have a different plan. It's the last match of the series and we just want to improve in all departments."

"We are going to play with our best team and our approach will be normal. We have not planned anything extra to accelerate our batting. It will be adjusted time to time during the match. Also, the players have been instructed to be flexible about batting order," said Bashar, who himself batted down the order in the second match.

The players skipped training and only used the hotel pool for swimming in the morning.

Bangladesh will make one change from the previous team with Khaled Mahmud regaining his position in place of Nazmul Hossain.

"Mahmud will be our supersub tomorrow but if conditions change in the morning, we may change the decision," added Bashar, who would prefer to bat first.

Meanwhile, the hosts also had optional practice on the eve of the match. It was expected that they would experiment with the squad.

Both Muttiah Muralitharan and Chaminda Vaas would sit out Sunday's game. But veteran Sanath Jayasuriya was expected to play.

PM stresses

FROM PAGE 16

establish more picking plants at Dhaka, Khulna and Chittagong Hill Tracts.

She said the money invested in the sector should be realised to reinvest for generation of more electricity for the betterment of the people.

"The whole world considers electricity as a commercial commodity. But, we could not realise the full revenue despite providing electricity at a lower price," she lamented.

The prime minister also urged the officials concerned to work sincerely to realise the revenue and reduce system loss.

She said the government has taken steps to produce an additional 600-MW electricity and transfer 200-MW to the national grid within a year while an additional 360-MW electricity, including 250-MW from Barapukuria coal-based power plant, would be provided to the national gird by February next.

She said the government has drawn up short and long term plans to provide electricity for all by the year 2020.

State minister for Power Iqbal Hossain Mahmood blamed the destructive activities of the main opposition Awami League and floods for delaying implementation of the project by six months.

Describing various government steps to overcome problems prevailing in the power sector, he said the system loss in the sector has now come down to 24 percent.

He said that trial production in Barapukuria coal field will begin in November this year.

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Chai Xi also spoke on the occasion.

Woman brutally

FROM PAGE 16

She later shouted at Shahnaj for disturbing her sound sleep, and the two ladies quarreled for some time. At one stage, Zubayer's mother-in-law assaulted Shahnaj.

Learning of the incident, Zubayer rushed from his house at Nirala to his father-in-law's house at Alambagh. He caught Shahnaj by her neck and tied her up to an electricity pole. He then beat her mercilessly, before shaving her hair and painting her face with black ink.

Leaving the scene on a motorcycle, Zubayer threatened the woman against informing the police. She is now undergoing medical treatment in the house of a close relative at Mujgunni under Khalishpur thana, where her condition is still critical.

As of 5:30pm yesterday, no one from the Khulna Metropolitan Police visited the victim or the scene of incident. The OC of Sonadanga Police Station, Abbasuddin, declined to comment on the incident and expressed his inability to accept a FIR in this connection without permission from higher authorities.

When contacted, Zubayer, who is also a shrimp trader, termed the allegations against him a design to disgrace his father, Shah Ruhul Quddus, a Member of Parliament from Khulna-6 constituency.

"The woman, Shahnaj, is being used politically with mala fide intent. I was not at all involved in any such incident on Thursday," Zubayer said, branding Shahnaj a thief.

When contacted, Chhatra Dal leader Shariful Islam Milon told this correspondent that the OC of Sonadanga Police Station also threatened him not to file any case accusing Zubayer and his mother-in-law.

Meanwhile, a three-member committee has been formed by the Khulna chapter of Human Rights Implementation Committee to probe the incident.

Thus spake 2 BNP MPs!

FROM PAGE 1

district that was arranged to observe the 27th founding anniversary of BNP on Thursday, our Barisal correspondent reports.

The lawmaker from Baufal called the journalists "son of bitch", "swine" and "bloody", and said he never bothers the newspaper reports and so justified his assaults on the journalists before the state minister for home affairs also.

Earlier, the lawmaker beat up local journalist Manzur Morshed following publishing of a report on looting hilsha fry at Baufal by the BNP cadres on August 9, 2005.

The ruling party lawmaker said he justified before the state minister for home the act of beating Manzur Morshed, who wrote "against BNP".

I beat him and no minister or BNP leader minds it, the lawmaker said.

Number of his votes would decrease if any Alem (religious person) is assaulted, but it will increase if any journalist is assaulted, he said, adding that reports against him in Bangla and English newspapers made him a national and international personality instead of doing any harm to him.

He said in the past he twice assaulted local AL leader ASM Firoz who was elected member of parliament four times that added to his (MP) image with his party's central committee.

Repeating threat to assault journalists if they continue writing against him and his party, the lawmaker said entrance and selling of newspapers in his areas will be restricted if journalists do not carry out his orders.

Meanwhile, five local journalists including assaulted Manzur Morshed lodged a general diary seeking security of life.

Condemning Shahidul Islam Talukdar for his threatening and abusive statements, Barisal Reporters' Unity demanded his punishment.

Shahidul Alam Talukdar MP, who was called by the central BNP on August 10 following the report of journalist assault published in the media, returned to Baufal on Thursday after three weeks to stage a show down of his prowess.

Our Jessore correspondent reports: Ruling BNP lawmaker Shahidul Islam Master of Jhenidah-3 constituency said none of the five cases he lodged against 17 journalists will be withdrawn "till doomsday" as journalists are "threatening".

"Mosaddeq Ali Falus (people like chairman of Amar Desh Publications) will have to appear in the court," the lawmaker said while addressing a public meeting on Maheshpur Pourasava premises yesterday afternoon.

Meanwhile, the journalists of Jhenidah have started boycotting programmes of Shahidul Islam Master as per their decision taken on Friday.

They boycotted a meeting of the State Minister for Agriculture Fakrul Islam Alamgir where Shahidul Islam was special guest.

Shahidul Islam, however, did not attend the meeting.

Jessore journalists submitted a memorandum to the prime minister through the deputy commissioner of Jessore on Saturday demanding immediate withdrawal of cases filed by the BNP lawmaker.

Noapara Press Club and Keshabpur Press Club in Jessore and Kaliganj Press Club of Jhenidah condemned the filing of cases by Shahidul Islam MP.

Agora

FROM PAGE 1

jail if they failed to pay the sum.

A mobile court led by Magistrate ABM Fattah raiding some hotels and restaurants at Gulshan area fined Tk 82,000 for keeping adulterated and sub-standard food items and filed six cases against the people involved.

Another court led by Magistrate Mizanur Rahman raided Bismillah Bakery, Liza Bakery and Shaheen Hotel and Restaurant at Gulshan and fined them Tk 48,000.

A mobile court led by Syed Mozibul Haq raided some restaurants and fastfood shops in Demra area and fined Tk 45,000 for keeping below standard foods and unhygienic environment.

The court also filed five cases against five people of those shops.

Niko chairman

FROM PAGE 16

operational failure, Chhatak gasfield blew up on June 23 and caused a lot of damage to public properties and dwelling houses in and around the field area, he added.

Carification

FROM PAGE 16

"While making a verbal presentation on the overall activities of Biman it was stated that there were 10 trade based unions and associations functioning in Biman. Biman official further informed the committee (the parliamentary standing committee on government undertakings) that as per Industrial Relations Ordinance, only three registered trade unions are allowed to function of which only one would hold the office of CBA," reads the clarification.

It also said the Biman Bangladesh Airlines earned a net profit of Tk 34 crore in FY 2003-04 while the projected profit for FY 2004-05 was Tk 44 crore. "Now that the airline industry has been hit by the unprecedented price of jet fuel in recent times, it is anticipated that Biman is going to incur a loss of about Tk 250 crore subject to audit which is in progress," added the clarification.

OUR REPLY

We filed the story on the basis of the information provided by the chairman and members of the parliamentary standing committee on government undertakings after a meeting discussing the situation in Bangladesh Biman. We also included in our report some facts from a Biman report submitted to the committee.

One more held

FROM PAGE 16

Ziaul Karim, officer-in-charge (OC) of the Panchlaish Police Station told The Daily Star last evening, quoting Arif.

Kuddus, however, rejected the statement, denying that he grabbed one of the attackers during the incident. It might be an effort to evade charges of attempt to murder and hide the real motive, he said.

Meanwhile, the three others Arif named in the confessional statement include none of the four arrested earlier as suspects and placed on a four-day remand each.

OC ABM Ziaul Karim said Arif was held acting on the information extracted from the four remanded--Bipen Dey, Babul Barua, Amzad Hossain and Abul Kashem.

Following Arif's confession, the remanded four were sent to jail custody in connection with different crimes, he said.

Investigating officer (IO) of the case Sub-Inspector (SI) Atiqur Rahman said police have now got leads to solve the case. "We have launched hunt for the rest three criminals and hope to find the motive behind the attack soon," he said.

Meanwhile, the condition of Golam Kuddus remained unchanged.

BNP holds

FROM PAGE 1

Science Laboratory crossing after parading the city streets.

The participants adorned themselves with colourful costumes of farmers, freedom fighters, bride and bridegrooms.

The ruling party took a three-day programme to celebrate the founding anniversary that ended yesterday with the grand rally.

Among others, Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas, Information Minister M Shamsul Islam, Environment and Forest Minister Tariqul Islam, State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar took part in the rally.

Mannan Bhuiyan in a brief speech before the start of the rally said the huge gathering proves that BNP is the most popular and largest political party of the country.

As BNP works for people according to the party's 19-point programme, people will once again give their mandate for BNP in the next election, he hoped.

Dhaka City BNP President and City Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka said BNP will foil any kind of conspiracy against the country.

SCBA

FROM PAGE 16

termed the verdict a small bomb, the blast of which has embarrassed and panicked the nation," it adds.

The SCBA condemned the health minister and the BNP joint secretary general for making such contemptuous comments. It also slammed the incident of not taking action against anybody for obstructing the court function by the members of intelligence agencies.

The HC bench of Justice ABM Khairul Haque and Justice ATM Fazle Kabir on August 29 declared that the fifth amendment and the takeover of state power by Khandkar Mostaque Ahmed, Justice Abu Sadat Mohammad Sayem and General Ziaur Rahman was illegal, unconstitutional and made without jurisdiction.

Two days after the verdict, members of an intelligence agency entered the courtroom and interfered in court proceedings by insisting on talking with the judges of the bench.

The SCBA on Thursday organised a meeting at South Hall of the SCBA to protest against the intelligence men's activities and Law Minister Moudud Ahmed's 'contemptuous comment' about the HC verdict.

After adjournment on Thursday, the meeting resumed yesterday at the same venue.

Presided over by SCBA President Advocate Mahbubey Alam, the meeting was addressed, among others, by former SCBA presidents advocates Abdul Baset Majumder and Ozair Farooq, Advocate Subrata Chowdhury, SCBA Secretary Advocate M Enayetur Rahim, and advocates Mamtajuddin Mehedi, Shamsul Huda Manik, Shahidul Islam, Abdul Matin Khasru and PC Guha.