

Hasina pledges to remove plight of Monga-hit people

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the sufferings of the people of the northern districts would be alleviated if Awami League (AL) comes to power in the next general election.

Addressing a dozen roadside rallies during the first day of her four-day visit to the northern districts, Hasina blasted the BNP-Jamaat-led ruling coalition 'for not taking any steps yet' to mitigate the misery of the Monga-hit people in the country's northern part.

"When thousands of people are starving, the prime minister, her son and the cabinet members have been siphoning public money out of the country," said Hasina, also the president of AL.

The former prime minister called on the well-off and leaders of

TATA INVESTMENT

# Gas guarantee, coal mining main issues

**SHARIER KHAN**

The government has landed in a very difficult situation over Tata's conditions on gas supply guarantee and coal mining issues as part of its \$2.5 billion investment proposal, highly placed sources said.

The Indian industrial giant's whole investment plan for fertiliser, steel and 1,000 megawatt coal-fired power plants depends on these conditions, now being negotiated.

While negotiations with Tata that began in April saw some progress in different areas, several written conditions spelled out by it are being viewed as very hard to resolve. Tata officials however say these issues can be

resolved easily if the government understands the spirit behind the conditions, instead of taking them literally.

Tata wants the government to provide it with gas reserve data on daily or regular basis (from the time it starts project implementation). It also asks the government to stop new gas connection in case the gas reserve-production ratio exceeds a certain limit. If there is further problem with gas supply, the government may ration its supply to other consumers and ensure full supply to Tata. And if required, Tata will be supplied gas by closing other entities, its conditions say.

On coal mining, the company

wants a five square km area in Barapukuria of Dinajpur awarded to it for open cast mining. This would include the existing half a square km Barapukuria shaft mine, now developed under a Tk 1,500 crore Chinese supplier's credit. Tata wants to dismantle the shaft mine and does not want to be a party to the existing mining company of Petrobangla.

But to compensate for the dismantling of the existing mine, which is supposed to produce one million tonnes of coal a year, Tata wants to give Bangladesh the same quantity of coal without any charge.

The company also has reservation about the system of six percent

Goods worth Tk 40cr gutted in Ctg fire

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg**

A devastating fire gutted huge quantity of fabrics, machinery, and electric equipment of the bonded warehouse of a textile and garment factory at Kulgaon in the city on Monday night.

Fire service sources put the approximate losses at over Tk 40 crore while the factory authorities claimed to have lost goods and properties worth Tk 150 crore.

The fire that started at the warehouse on the first floor of the five-storey building at around midnight gutted all the fabrics and finished products stored there before the fire fighters could bring it under control at around 5:00am yesterday, sources said.

Over 100 fire service men with the help of ten fire-fighting vehicles equipped with nine additional pump machines were still working hard to extinguish the fire when it was 6:00pm.



Cloths recovered after a devastating fire at the warehouse of Saad Musa garment factory at Kulgaon in Chittagong early yesterday.

DINAJPUR-1 BY-POLLS

Six submit nomination

**BDNEWS, Dinajpur**

Six candidates yesterday submitted their nomination papers for the by-election in Dinajpur-1 constituency.

The candidates are Abdul Malek Sarker, Aftabuddin Mollah, Nasirul Haque Rustom, Monoranjan Shil Gopal, Shibli Sadik and Krishak Md Sadek.

They submitted nomination papers to the returning officer along with their supporters and activists.

The nomination papers will be scrutinised today and by the election will be held on December 5.

The seat fell vacant following the death of Jamaat-e-Islami lawmaker Abdullah Al Kafi.

# Hajj agencies to stop booking tickets

Criticise ministers for indifference

**REAZ AHMAD**

The Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (HAAB) has criticised the state ministers for civil aviation and religious affairs for their indifference in resolving the deadlock over Hajj flights and decided to stop booking tickets and depositing fees for over 50,000 non-ballottee pilgrims.

The HAAB, which represents 363

Hajj agencies responsible for facilitating around 56,000 pilgrims intending to perform Hajj in January 2006, at an emergency meeting in the city last night also set November 15 the deadline for the government to resolve the crises over fixing fares for Hajj flights.

While the Biman Bangladesh Airlines has trimmed its loss-making flight frequencies on Dhaka-New York route from twice-a-week to once

to fly at least 4,000 ballottee hajjis to Saudi Arabia, the overwhelming majority non-ballottee pilgrims have been left on their own to bargain fares with the private and foreign airlines.

The foreign and private airlines are asking for fares as high as \$1250-\$1350 per passenger compared to \$950 of the Biman.

BBC to launch 'Bangladesh Sanglap' Nov 17

The BBC is going to launch its biggest ever season of programmes on Bangladesh, called Bangladesh Sanglap on November 17 with a discussion entitled "Are People Receiving Justice?"

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed and Awami League leader Abdul Matin Khasru will be among the panellists taking questions from the audience, says a BBC press release.

Alongside eight live discussions,

# 5 GIs killed in Iraq bombings

**REUTERS, AFP, Baghdad**

Four US soldiers were among at least 15 people killed in a bloody day of suicide car bombings in and around Baghdad on Monday as a major offensive against Sunni Arab insurgents took place near Iraq's border with Syria killing 36 insurgents and an American soldier.

The four soldiers from Task Force Baghdad were killed when a car bomber attacked their checkpoint on a road south of Baghdad, the military said in a statement.

The attack echoed a similar attack a

TRAWLER CAPSIZE

# 7 still missing in Sandwip Channel

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg**

The Bangladesh Navy and Coast Guard yesterday thoroughly searched the Sandwip Channel near Sitakunda for the missing passengers of cargo-trawler MV Madina that capsized there Monday afternoon, but found none.

The local administration, police and coast guard believe that most of the passengers might have either swum ashore or been rescued by the trawler MV 65, which was passing by at the time.



A fountain constructed on Bijoy Sarani as part of beautification of the capital city for the 13th Saarc Summit beginning November 12.

13 cocktails found in Jhalakathi

**BDNEWS, Jhalakathi**

Police recovered 13 cocktails from an abandoned building in front of BIP Colony at East Chandkathi under Jhalakathi Sadar Police Station on Monday night.

On information, police went there and found the cocktails in a bag on the ground floor of the building.

Police picked up Abdus Sattar Hawladar, owner of the house, his son Moniruzzaman and a local named Sankar for interrogation.

# Health experts seek to boost flu drug supply

**REUTERS, Geneva**

Global health experts said on Tuesday it would be possible to produce 900 million doses of a new vaccine against a human pandemic flu outbreak but even that would not be enough to meet demand.

Some 400 animal and health experts meeting at the World Health Organization in Geneva want to build up regional stockpiles of antiviral drugs to counter a possible pandemic virus that could travel around the

world in 3-4 months.

"So 900 million in 8 months will not reach the target of global, equitable and timely access. One needs enough vaccine for 6.4 billion people and that is currently not in the cards," said Dr Klaus Stohr, the team coordinator of the WHO's Global Influenza Programme.

He told the meeting to map out a plan to halt the spread of bird flu that strong surveillance and response networks for early detection of pandemic viruses will make a difference.

KHULNA BLAST CASES

# 3 charge sheets filed against Rahman, Bangla Bhai, 7 others

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna**

Three separate charge sheets were submitted to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Khulna, yesterday accusing nine, including Shaikh Abdur Rahman and Siddiqul Islam Bangla Bhai, of August 17 serial bomb blasts at 11 places of Khulna city.

The seven other chargesheeted accused are Shahidullah alias Lokman, Hafez Mahmud, Asaduzzaman alias Arif, Mintoo, Mahbubur Rahman alias Palash, Mehedi Hasan and Shaikhul Islam.

Of the nine accused, two--Shahidullah and Mahbub--are now in jail custody while the remaining seven, including Shaikh Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai are still at large.

# Jalil gets bail in abduction, land grabbing case

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil, who was granted anticipatory bail from the High Court yesterday in an abduction and land occupation case, said the case was false and politically motivated, and filed only to undermine his and his party's image.

"I will contest the case to prove the truth," Jalil, also chairman of the Mercantile Bank, told a press briefing organised at the bank's head office after getting the bail.

One Mustari Begum on November 2 filed an abduction case with the Gulshan Police Station against Abdul Jalil and 10 to 12 others.

In the case, she alleged that Abdul Jalil along with 10 to 12 unknown persons went to her

Prayer Timing		
November 9		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	5-00	5-35
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-25	5-30
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

