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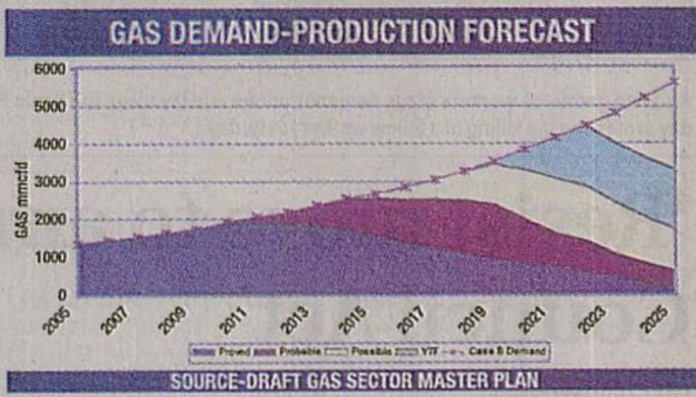
## Gas reserve to last till 2011

### Experts alarmed at chilling prospect, suggest govt to go out for intense exploration right away

SHARIEF KHAN

As new figures forecast a serious gas crisis from as early as 2011, the government should immediately open up the existing oil and gas blocks for international oil companies instead of going for a time consuming deep sea data collection, officials and experts say.

The energy ministry's proposal to float a tender for deep sea survey, stalled by the cabinet last week, is inappropriate as it will not help address the upcoming gas crisis, they said.



Quoting the draft of a gas sector master plan, they stress that in addition to inviting foreign oil and gas companies for a third round bidding, the government should also focus on tapping the potential gas reserves of the existing fields like Titus or Bakhrabad.

Moreover, the national exploration company Bapex should be given adequate allocation to conduct seismic surveys in blocks 8 and 11 with an aim to drill five exploratory wells by 2008-09. If it is not possible for the government to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## 31ST NIGHT Revellers to face traffic ban, strict vigilance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transport movement on some city areas will be restricted on the 31st night to tackle unruly New Year revellers and ward off any subversive act, according to the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

Except for two crossings at Kakoli and Phoenix Road (Gulshan Shooting Club), all the roads and intersections leading to the Gulshan, Banani and Baridhara areas will remain closed for 10 hours from 8:00pm today.

The home ministry earlier

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## 2 Petrobangla executives, wives killed in road crash

### Their sons injured, 9 others die in 2 accidents

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

Thirteen people including two Petrobangla high officials and their spouses were killed and five others injured in two road accidents on Dhaka-Sylhet highway in the district yesterday morning.

The first accident claiming seven lives took place at around 4:30am at Chaitanya Bus Stand and the second killing the remaining six, including the Petrobangla officials, occurred at around 10:30am at Baghata in Sadar upazila.

Of the dead, Petrobangla Director (Planning) Quazi Shahidur Rahman, 45, and Senior General Manager MA Baset, 52, were on their way in a microbus from Dhaka to attend an annual general meeting (AGM) of Sylhet Gas Fields Company Ltd at Khadimnagar Resort in Sylhet.

The 10:30am mishap took place when a lorry (Jessore Ta-05-0057) running in the opposite direction veered and rammed into the Petrobangla microbus (Dhaka Metro Cha-14-1209).

Witnesses said the truck speed-

ing along the wrong side of the road hit a rickshaw-van first and then crashed into the microbus, which caught fire immediately and its CNG cylinder blew up.

Shahidur Rahman, his wife Nasreen Shahid, Baset, his wife Mahfuza Baset, and driver of the vehicle Kismat Ali died on the spot.

The two other passengers in the microbus, Shahidur Rahman's 8-year-old son Nihad Nahian and Baset's son Nyme Ahmed Amit, 15, were severely injured.

The rickshaw-van-puller hit by

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

## Mirpur garment worker lynched for a T-shirt

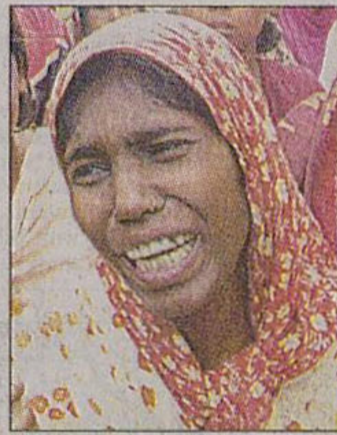
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Security guards and production manager of a garment factory in Mirpur allegedly killed a young garment worker early yesterday for trying to go out of the factory in a new T-shirt, a product worth not more than Tk 60 of the factory.

Co-workers of the victim, Panna, 18, said he had the T-shirt on as he was feeling cold during the graveyard shift. Later when he was going out for breakfast, the security guards of the factory, Titanic Products Ltd, stopped him, they added.

When he tried to go out, a

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



Sister of the killed Mirpur worker

TIPAIMUKH DAM

## Indian move to trigger severe eco-disaster

### Fear experts, rights activists of two countries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The water flow to Bangladesh's major river system -- the Meghna and its tributaries -- might be slashed by around one third resulting in massive intrusion of saline water from the Bay of Bengal with its devastating effects on the country's farm productivity, fish population and ecology

when the biggest ever Indian dam is built at Tipaimukh at the confluence of the Barak river.

The dam could reduce 15 billion cubic metres (bcm) of the 48 bcm flow of water towards the Meghna from the Barak and a barrage on it downstream as part of the project might cause drying up of the Surma and Kushiara rivers in Bangladesh during the

lean period.

Experts, academics and rights activists from the Indian states of Assam and Manipur joined their Bangladeshi counterparts in expressing such fears at a two-day 'International Tipaimukh Dam Conference' (ITDC-2005) that began in the capital yesterday.

The ITDC is being held in the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

RELIEVED AT LAST: Unlike many gloomy faces, a child joyously rushes to her parents after the admission test for class I at Viqarunnisa Noon School and College yesterday.

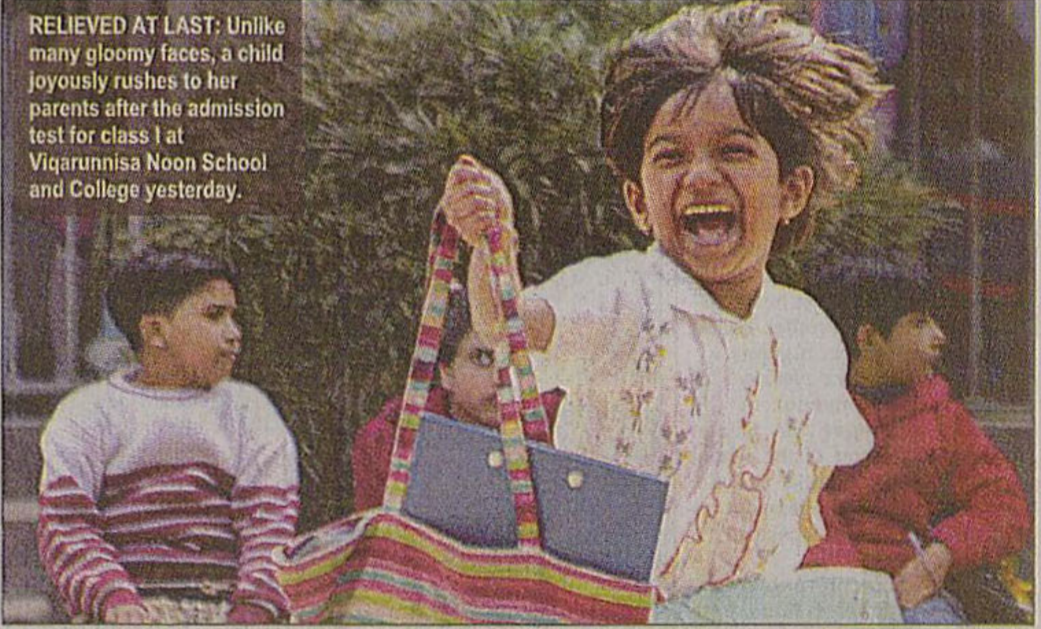


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For details please see page 4