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**Phulbari highway blocked over coalmine issue**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Angry residents blocked the Phulbari highway yesterday demanding immediate resignation of Dr Tamim, special assistant to Chief Advisor, for his controversial role over the Phulbari open pit coal mine.

The crowd vowed to continue their agitation if Asia Energy goes ahead with their plans to develop the local open pit coal mine in the name of development, which some locals oppose.

People from the upazila, including Phulbari, Birampur and Nawabganj, blocked the road near Aftabganj in the morning after rumours spread that a meeting about the development of the coalmine was to be held at Shapnapuri under Nawabganj upazila of Dinajpur.

The crowds dispersed after ASP of Phulbari Circle Md. Atiqur Rahman Miah arrived at the spot and assured the people that the coalmine was not a topic under discussion at the meeting.

Later a smaller crowd assembled at Nimtola junction and held a

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

**2 youths shot dead, motorbike taken away**

UNB, Shariatpur

Miscreants shot dead two youths and took away a motorbike at Sajanpur in Bhederganj upazila of the district on Friday night.

Family sources said the dead, Mintu Khan, 20, of Abura village, and Alamgir Hossain, 20 of Bhulalar village under Sadar upazila, used to rent their motorbikes.

Police and locals said a gang of five in the guise of passengers hired Mintu and Alamgir from a motorcycle stand in the district town at 10:00pm for going to Bhederganj.

Later, a patrol team of police found the bullet-hit body of the two near an abandoned cinema hall at Sajanpur on Chandpur-Shariatpur road at about 10:45pm.

The gang also took away Mintu's motorbike. No one was arrested in connection with the killing as of 5:00pm yesterday.

**CODE OF CONDUCT EC wants it only for pre-poll period**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) might bring changes to the proposed code of conduct for parliamentary political parties, making it effective for only the pre-poll period, scrapping the earlier proposal for having the rules effective for an indefinite period of time.

According to the proposed code of conduct the pre-poll period has already begun with dissolution of the immediate past parliament on October 27, 2006, which will end with the publication of the ninth parliamentary election's result through an official gazette.

It is supposed to become effective from the day after its promul-

gation, according to the original proposal.

"The Election Commission will now determine whether the code of conduct will become effective only after the announcement of the election schedule or even ahead of it," a senior official of the EC Secretariat said referring to the new plan.

But the stringent provisions in the code of conduct for electoral parties and candidates will remain unchanged, and they will have to abide by the law once it becomes effective, sources in the EC said.

The originally proposed code of conduct said registered parliamentary political parties will have to abide by the law from the day after

its promulgation.

Officials in the EC Secretariat said the EC plans to promulgate the code of conduct this month following the caretaker government's assurance that the commission's other electoral reform proposals will be made into laws.

"Once the electoral reform proposals are made into laws, the Election Commission will promulgate the code of conduct using its authority," the senior EC official said.

If the EC promulgates the code of conduct this month without any modification in the earlier proposal, the electoral parties will be expected to abide by it from the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



PHOTO: STAR

Inmates of Chittagong District Jail collect bath water from a tank yesterday as they were allowed to have two baths a day due to the scorching heat.

**Country far away from democracy**

Says Akbar Ali

UNB, Dhaka

Regulatory Reforms Commission (RRC) Chairman Akbar Ali Khan yesterday said Bangladesh is still far away from real democracy.

"There is no democracy in the country, we're much behind compared to the scale of world democracy," he told a discussion meeting titled "Press Freedom and Safety of Journalists".

National Association of Unesco Clubs in Bangladesh organised the discussion marking the World Press Freedom Day with Prof Muzaffer Ahmad in the chair.

About press freedom, Khan said the country's media are not enjoying full freedom. "What they're enjoying is partial. Without meaningful press freedom, democracy

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

**Hold public hearings at grassroots level**

Law adviser asks media on Press Freedom Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Adviser AF Hassan Ariff yesterday urged the media to arrange grassroots-level public hearings so that people who cannot reach local administration for solutions to their problems or place their demands could be heard.

"As a citizen, I would ask you to see whether public hearings can be arranged at grassroots-level for listening to their demands," the adviser said yesterday addressing a seminar titled "Is Amending the Press Council Act, 1974 a Must to Make the Press Council More Effective?".

Suggesting such hearings could be organised at local press clubs,

Hassan Ariff said he has heard that many people who cannot reach the local administration to talk about their problems contact the local press clubs instead.

Bangladesh Press Council organised the seminar at the Jatiya Press Club on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day yesterday. Justice Kazi Ebadul Hoque, chairman of the council, presided over the programme.

Mizanur Rahman Shelly presented the keynote paper. He suggested updating the Press Council Act, 1974, involving the parliament in the appointment of the chairman of the press council, and appointing the chairman and a

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

**Indian prices at 3-year high**

BBC NEWS

Indian inflation is at its highest in over three years as food and energy costs continue to rise, official figures show.

India's wholesale price index, released weekly, hit 7.57% for the year up to 19 April, the highest since November 2004.

The government has been taking steps to control inflation, raising bank cash requirements and limiting rice exports.

India's finance minister Palaniappan Chidambaram said food prices would fall in coming months.

In India, the wholesale price index, which measures inflation at the "factory gate", is more closely watched than the consumer price index because it tracks a wider range of goods.

The consumer price index reflects shop and market prices. Record prices of rice, wheat and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

**Bodies of three found after car plunge in Padma**

UNB, Munshiganj

The bodies of three of a family, who went missing as their car plunged into the Padma at Maowa ferryghat on Friday, were recovered yesterday morning.

Officials said divers salvaged the car at about 9:00am with a tugboat from 40 feet of water near terminal no 1.

They recovered the bodies of architect Rezaul Karim, 55, his wife Shahanara Karim, 42, and their son Safat Karim Koushik, 10, from the car.

Police and witnesses said the accident occurred at about 6:00pm when a car carrying the family of four skidded off a pontoon and sank into the river.

Nusrat Jahan, Rezaul's daughter, was found unconscious and floating 20 minutes after the accident. She was rescued and given first aid.



PHOTO: STAR

Polluted water from nearby dyeing factories flows into paddy fields next to Shafipur Ansar Academy in Gazipur, damaging both crops and the environment. The photo was taken yesterday.

**3 of a family burnt to death**

UNB, Cox's Bazar

Fire killed three members of a family and injured 10 others at Ghonarpara in the town early yesterday.

The dead were identified as Prodip Acharya, 45, his wife Kalpana Acharya, 38, and son Sujon Acharya, 15.

Local sources said the fire originated from an oven at the kitchen of Prodip's house at about 1:00am when the family members were asleep.

"No one could come out of the house as the fire soon engulfed the entire house," says a witness to the incident. Three of the family were burnt to death while two others injured.

The fire also spread to the adjacent houses, injuring eight neighbours of Prodip.

The injured were admitted to Sadar Hospital. Of them, condition of Pradip's two sons--Rocky Acharya and Durjoy Acharya--was stated to be critical by the hospital sources.

On information, firefighters rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze.

**Govt faces Tk 40 lakh loss for free pipeline to housing cos**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

The government incurred a loss of at least Tk 40 lakh as a few unscrupulous PGCL (Pashchimanchal Gas Company Limited) officials laid gas pipelines for two private housing companies free of charge, said sources at PGCL.

A preliminary investigation of Petrobangla revealed that the free gas service pipelines were installed for Jannat Rasul Model Town and Snigdha Housing under Bogra Town Gas Supply Project.

Admitting the irregularities, Saiful Alam Chowdhury, managing director of PGCL, yesterday told this correspondent over cell phone that he was not certain about the exact amount of loss the government incurred due to this.

At least two kilometres of pipeline was laid for the Snigdha Housing at Nisindara and another 500 metres for the Jannat Rasul Model Town at Banani in Bogra free

of charge, the Petrobangla investigation found.

Snigdha Housing owner Moez Uddin Mian earlier admitted to receiving the free pipeline at the housing project.

Engineer Fazole Alam, deputy manager and in charge of PGCL Bogra office, a few days back said any government or non-government organisation has to pay connection and service charges for a gas service pipeline.

To conform to this rule, the PGCL charged around Tk 77 lakh to lay gas pipeline for Bogra cantonment, added Alam.

Earlier, PGCL's former managing director Mohammed Kamrul Islam said it has been almost a year since the irregularities in laying pipeline for the Jannat Rasul Model Town prompted the PGCL to lodge a formal complaint and form an investigation committee.

The committee, however, is yet to conduct any investigation, he added.

**RAMNA BLAST Huji man Suman remanded again**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Harkatul Jihad al Islami (Huji) operative Arif Hasan Suman was placed on a fresh two-day remand yesterday in connection with the Ramna Batamul blast during Pahela Baishakh celebrations in 2001.

Investigation officer (IO) of the case Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Inspector Abu Hena Mohammad Yusuf produced Hasan before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka with a petition for a five-day remand.

The IO mentioned in the remand prayer that Hasan has already given significant information about the blast at the Ramna Batamul during interrogation in remand. He said Hasan needs to be placed on a fresh five-day remand to glean more information from him.

After hearing the petition, Metropolitan Magistrate Shamsunnahar granted a two-day remand.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

**Gas crisis in Bogra, Pabna, Sirajganj**

New gas supply connections suspended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

The PGCL (Pashchimanchal Gas Company Limited) has stopped providing any new connection to industrial establishments and CNG refuelling stations in Bogra, Pabna and Sirajganj due to acute shortage of gas.

Talking to The Daily Star, Engineer Fazole Alam, deputy manager and in-charge of PGCL Bogra office, admitted that they were forced to stop giving new connection due to short supply of gas.

Applications for opening of some 30 CNG refuelling stations in the three districts could not be approved for this reason, he added.

Talking to The Daily Star, a senior official of PGCL feared that the gas situation would worsen when the 20-Megawatt (MW) rental power station in Bogra goes into operation in June.

The situation will turn grave by November, as there would be an additional demand for 19 mmcf (million cubic feet per day) with the opening of two other power stations, he added.

At present, the company is supplying them 76 mmcf of gas on an average against the total demand of over 87 mmcf in the three districts, source's said. The sales department of PGCL,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

**Musharraf ready to give up power to dissolve parliament**

PTI, AP, ISLAMABAD

President Pervez Musharraf has agreed to give up his powers to dissolve parliament and dismiss the prime minister following several rounds of secret parleys with the ruling Pakistan People's Party, a media report said yesterday.

The embattled President conveyed his in-principle assent to the removal of his sweeping powers under Article 58(2b) of the constitution to PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari through a messenger, Dawn News channel reported.

The presidential camp contacted Zardari after several rounds of secret talks between Musharraf's aides and the PPP, the channel said. However, Musharraf linked the

repeal of the controversial constitutional article to two conditions--that legal cover would be provided to all the actions he had taken as army chief after imposing emergency on November 3 last year, and that the National Security Council would not be scrapped.

The channel also quoted sources in the presidential camp as saying that Musharraf would back the reinstatement of dozens of judges he sacked during the emergency provided he is allowed to serve as constitutional head of state for his full tenure.

Musharraf was re-elected for a five-year term in October last year before he doffed his military uniform.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka Wasa dumps dug-up earth on Sonargaon Janapath in Uttara, creating traffic jams. The photo was taken yesterday.

**Cuba lifts ban on home computers**

BBC NEWS, Havana

The first legalised home computers have gone on sale in Cuba, but a ban remains on internet access.

This is the latest in a series of restrictions on daily life which President Raul Castro has lifted in recent weeks.

Crowds formed at the Carlos III shopping centre in Havana, though

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Prayer Timing		
May 4		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-31	6-35
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

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Grand Opening of Naval Base Branch May 04, 2008

Naval Base Branch: BNS Issa Khan, Naval Base Anchorage Building (1st floor) Patenga, Chittagong

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