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Cairn gives up Block-10 over PSC discord

Gas exploration uncertain

SHARIEF KHAN

British oil company Cairn Tuesday announced withdrawal from the Production Sharing Contract (PSC) for oil and gas exploration in Block-10 covering Noakhali-Bhola region where it had found a petroleum structure during surveys in the past, highly placed sources said.

Cairn was seeking three amendments to the PSC that was signed under the Second Round Block Bidding in 1998. But Petrobangla had agreed to one—extending the tenure of the PSC which was due to expire two years back.

The amendments were proposed two years ago, after Cairn discovered the structure by spending \$12 million in 650 kilometres of seismic survey in this

block," said an official.

The caretaker government could not give a decision on the proposed amendments, he added.

One of the two rejected amendment proposals deals with the gas structure Cairn found in Companyanj area. This discovery was made on the border of Block-15, which was operated by Cairn in the past and then relinquished.

As most part of this gas structure lies in Block-15, Cairn proposed to Petrobangla to include that part of Block-15 as a "ring-fenced" area in the PSC for Block-10. Otherwise, it would not be commercially viable for it to tap Companyanj structure, Cairn argued.

Petrobangla sources said the proposal to ring-fence the discovered gas structure

did not comply with the PSC provisions. Besides, Bapex had already been given the task of working in Block-15 where most part of this gas structure is located.

While Bapex is a carried over partner of Cairn in Block-10, having 10 percent share in case of discovery, the British company had proposed to increase Bapex's carried over share to 20 percent in the ring-fenced area in Block-15. But Petrobangla did not agree to this.

The other rejected amendment proposal demands that Cairn be allowed to sell gas directly to a third buyer, instead of offering it to the government at first. The PSC dictates that the government holds the first right to buy any oil or gas discovered in the block. Only if the government

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Residents of Block B of Mirpur-11 flock with pitchers and containers to the only water pipeline in the area, which gets a flow of supply water only once a day.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

PM distributes cheques to 55 army officers' families

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister (PM) Sheikh Hasina yesterday distributed cheques, donated by Bangladesh Association of Banks (BAB), to the wives of army officers killed in the February 25-26 BDR carnage.

BAB earlier declared providing each of the families with an annuity of Tk 40,000 a month for ten years.

At the function at the Prime Minister's Office in the morning, the widows of 55 army officers received the total amounts of money for the next 12 months by cheque.

Sheikh Hasina handed over the cheques to the wives of the late army officers where children and other family

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Ineffective leadership puts BCL in trouble

Factional clashes on rise

RAKIB AHAMMED

Ineffective leadership of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) has made its leaders and workers 'unruly and uncontrolled' which caused several violent clashes in the country's higher educational institutions since Awami League-led government came to power.

Leaders and activists of the organisation, divided into several factions at different educational institutions, are involving in clashes one after another over establishing supremacy on the campuses. The parent party's chain of command prevails virtually inactive as BCL president and general secretary allegedly have

failed to take any effective measure to stop the factional clashes.

Sources from BCL central committee said communication among the central leaders hardly takes place while making decisions on its activities. The central committee also hardly makes contact with its unit leaders across the country to deal with any organisational matter.

No meeting of central committee was held even after violent clashes involving BCL men at Rajshahi University and Jahangirnagar University that led to shut down of the institutions, according to sources.

Without calling any meeting, BCL central

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Activities of BCL's DMC unit suspended
Classes to resume soon, says principal
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All activities of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) Dhaka Medical College (DMC) unit were suspended yesterday for three months following Tuesday's factional clash on the college campus.

"The BCL central committee took the decision after the clash involving BCL men," BCL president Mahmud Hasan Ripon told The Daily Star yesterday.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

11 burned in gas stove fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eleven people including 10 of a family sustained burn injuries as a fire originating from a gas stove broke out in a house in the city's South Keraniganj yesterday.

Lutfia Begum, 52, one of the victims and wife of house owner Motaher Sikdar, 65, said when she struck a gas lighter to light the gas stove at the kitchen around 5:45am, the room instantly caught fire with a bang.

The fire quickly engulfed the whole flat on the second floor of a five-storey building where most of her family members were asleep at that time, she added.

Hearing the noise, locals rushed to the spot and rescued

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2



A salesman sits at an empty open market sale (OMS) shop as the government-subsidised sales programme resumed yesterday. The sale of rice at a lower than market price has, however, failed to attract many customers this time around.

PHOTO: STAR

OMS of rice starts, draws a few buyers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday started Open Market Sale (OMS) of rice in six divisional cities and labour intensive areas of Narayanganj, Narsingdi and Gazipur districts to make the stuff available to low-income groups by selling it at Tk 18 per kg.

The OMS programme also begins in Savar today, sources said.

Meanwhile, the price of coarse rice came down by Tk 1 to Tk 2 per kg on the first day of the programme. The coarse rice was sold at Tk 19 to Tk 21 per kg yesterday while dealers bought rice from government stocks at Tk 16.50 per kg.

"At least 858 dealers

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Manpower market jeopardised by brokers' misdeeds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expatriates' Welfare Minister Khandker Mosharraf Hossain yesterday said unscrupulous business deals of recruiting agencies and manpower brokers had messed up Bangladesh's labour market in Malaysia and contributed to joblessness of many workers.

"It is our people who spoil the labour market there; They send workers more than the actual requirement and even offer advance levy (paid by employers to Malaysian government)," The minister told reporters at the ministry after his return from Malaysia.

He, however, said Malaysia has positively responded to consider recruitment of workers from 55,000 jobseekers whose visas were cancelled on March 10.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

Govt to root out militancy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Sahara Khatun yesterday directed the law enforcers to take stern action against militants and strengthen intelligence watch on militancy.

She gave the directives while speaking at a function on the occasion of 'Police Week-2009' held at Rajarbagh Police Telecom Auditorium here.

The minister expressed concern over the existence of militants' den at Daulat Khan of Bhola district and elsewhere in the country.

"The government will root out militancy from the country at any cost," she said.

Sahara asked the police chief to take initiatives to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Hunt on for 3 ex-investigators of August 21 attack case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) personnel yesterday conducted raids in an attempt to arrest three former investigators of August 21 grenade attacks case. They are accused for misleading the case and protecting the real culprits.

Sources said the CID officials raided the residences of the three investigators, retired special superintendent (SS) of police Ruhul Amin, assistant superintendent of police (ASP) (retd) Abdur Rashid and ASP (retd) Munshi Atiqur Rahman.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

BSF to check entry of fugitive BDR members into India

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) yesterday assured Bangladesh that any disobedient member of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) will not be allowed to enter its territory.

"We will ensure that recalcitrant elements of BDR do not enter India at any cost and if any one is caught we will hand over them to Bangladesh," said BSF Director General (DG) ML Kumawat.

Speaking at a joint press conference with BDR DG Brig Gen Mainul Islam after a DG-level meeting between BSF and BDR in New Delhi, the Indian side also offered all possible help in restructuring the BDR if Bangladesh desires.

"The BSF has shown prudence and wisdom during the (BDR mutiny) crisis. The force has been dealing the whole matter with wisdom and we expect the same from them in future," said the BDR DG.

The two sides discussed a range of issues related to border management and agreed to strengthen joint efforts to prevent trans-border crimes, including illegal movements, trafficking of women and children, smuggling of drugs, arms and ammunition across the border.

The BSF DG said there is no case of crossing over into India from Bangladesh till now from February 25 with or without weapons.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 3

JS passes consumer rights bill

UNB, Sangsad Bhaban

Parliament yesterday passed the Consumer Rights Protection Bill 2009 aimed at protecting consumers' rights by way of preventing cheating at weight, price and quality of what the consumers buy.

Commerce Minister Lt Col (retd) Faruk Khan piloted the bill that was passed by voice vote.

In the objective part of the Bill it is stated that due to the absence of a law the consumers have been "harassed and cheated" for a long time.

The new law bans the sale at high price, adulteration and faking products, forgery in weighing goods, selling date-expired items and fraudulence with advertisement.

"These are all serious crimes," it is stated in the strict law that also spells out fit punishment for such offences.

The punishment ranges from one year to three years'

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

G20 protesters break into London bank

AP, London

G20 protesters clashed with riot police in downtown London yesterday, breaking into the heavily guarded Royal Bank of Scotland and smashing its windows. Earlier, they tried to storm the Bank of England and pelted police with eggs and fruit.

At least 4,000 anarchists, anti-capitalists, environmentalists and others jammed into London's financial district for what they called "Financial Fool's Day." The protests were called ahead of Thursday's summit of world leaders, who hope to take concrete steps to resolve the global financial crisis that has lashed nations and workers worldwide.

Some protesters spray-painted the side of the RBS building with the phrases "class war" and "thieves." Others pushed against columns of riot police who swatted them away with batons.

Demonstrators shouted "Abolish Money!" and clogged streets in the area known as "The City" even as Prime Minister Gordon Brown and President Barack Obama held a news conference elsewhere in the British capital.

At least eight people were arrested but there were no serious injuries reported.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 3

38 rebels killed in SL fighting

PTI, Colombo

The LTTE's technical wing chief was among 39 Tamil Tigers killed in intense fighting in the island's northern combat zone where Sri Lankan troops backed by fighter jets battled to seize the last few pockets of the guerrillas, the military said yesterday.

S Kirupakaran alias Madivalahan, said to be the mastermind and chief coordinator of the LTTE's satellite-cum-radio communication network, was killed during clashes with security forces at the Mullaitivu battlefield recently, the Defence Ministry said citing intercepted LTTE communication.

It said according to information, LTTE yesterday offered self-styled 'Lt Colonel' status to the slain rebel leader.

Madivalahan was born in Jaffna and has reportedly spent most of his time at Trincomalee before joining

SEE PAGE 7 COL 2

Prayer Timing		
April 2		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:40	5:15
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:45	5:00
Maghrib	6:21	6:24
Esha	7:45	8:15

Sources: Islamic Foundation