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Ctg chemical complex reopens after 6yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Industries Minister Dilip Barua yesterday said the draft industrial policy that the government announces today is aimed at turning Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021 when the country will celebrate its golden jubilee.

The minister said this while talking to reporters after the inaugural ceremony of reopening of the state-owned Chittagong Chemical Complex (CCC) at Barakunda under Sitakunda upazila after more than six years.

Dilip Barua, as the chief guest, inaugurated the reopening of the chemical plant, which suspended its operation in December of 2002.

Additional Secretary of Industries Ministry and SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Govt may miss MRP deadline

Project delayed as no tender floated yet; nothing done for introducing e-passports

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

Bangladesh's hope of meeting the international deadline to introduce machine-readable passport (MRP) by April, 2010 looks bleak and the authorities are now not even thinking about the 2014 deadline for introducing e-passports.

The government's frequent change of mind has led to delays in launching the MRP project in the past. Shifting of stance of the Awami League (AL) government regarding it seems to delay further the implementation of the MRP project.

Sources in the Department of Immigration and Passport said the government, which was about to appoint German HJP Consulting Firm to initiate the MRP project, is now considering involvement of local firms.

However, the authorities concerned are hopeful about meeting the MRP deadline. Sources in the home ministry said they would

try to meet the approaching MRP deadline first and then think about the e-passport deadline.

Since the MRP would not be applicable for international travels after 2014, many fear the fund to be spent for MRP would eventually be a waste. Then MRP will be replaced by e-passport, a combined paper and electronic identity document that uses biometrics to authenticate the identity of travellers.

"We are not thinking about e-passport system at the moment. We will introduce e-passport when the deadline comes," State Minister for Home Affairs Tanjim Ahmed Sohel Taj told The Daily Star.

He said initially the government would go for the machine-readable passports as they have already moved ahead with the project.

However, no tender has been floated in this regard.

Abdur Rob Hawlader, director general (DG) SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

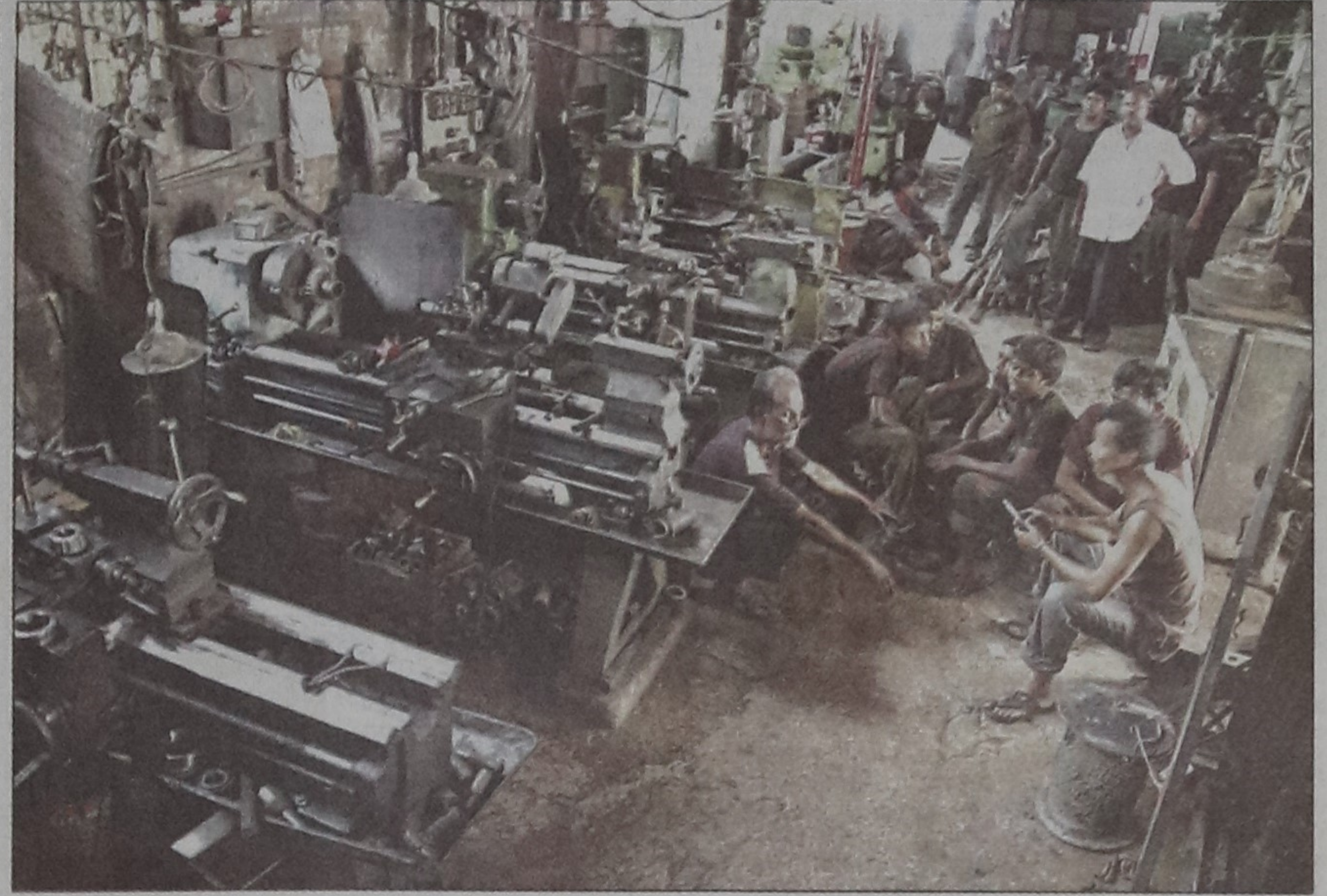


PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Workers of this engineering workshop in Jurain sit idle as the shop could not operate due to severe power outage during working hours. The shop experienced power cuts several times till 2:00pm Friday, said the owner.

China's help sought for rail link with Myanmar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has sought financial and technical assistance from China to expand the country's railway network up to Gundum of Myanmar and link it up with the Trans-Asian Railway (TAR).

The government has already sent a letter to the Chinese government for assistance in laying about 130-kilometer railway tracks from Dohazari in Chittagong, communications ministry sources said.

Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain in his recent visit to China held talks with Chinese President Hu SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

World heritage site left in ruins

Terracotta artefacts at Paharpur monastery damaged due to lack of maintenance

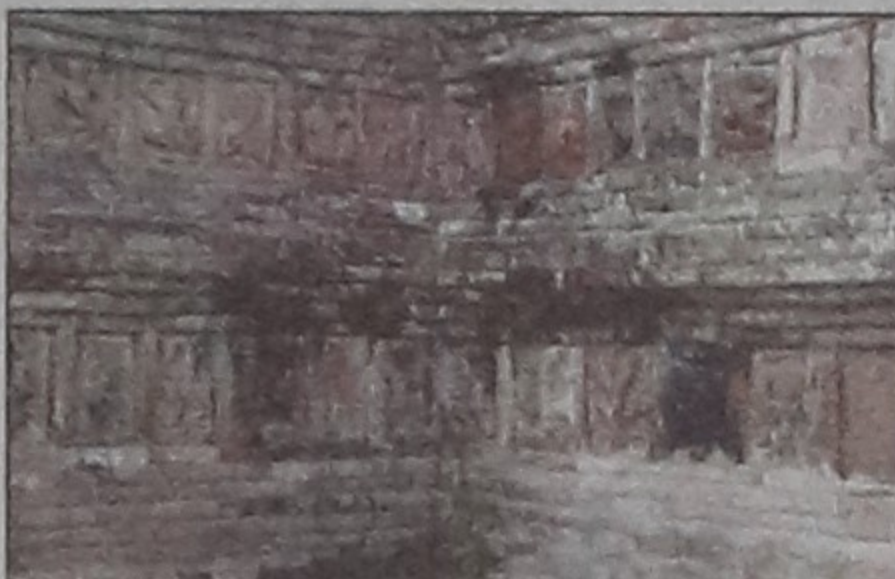
HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, back from Paharpur, Naogaon

Terracotta artefacts at the Paharpur Buddhist Monastery, a world heritage site, are on the verge of ruin due to sheer negligence of the Department of

Archaeology.

The Monastery, one of the most important archeological sites in South Asia, was declared as a protected site dates back to 1919 during the British colonial rule.

Custodian of the ancient site Abdul Latif SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



The priceless terracotta, top left, of Paharpur monastery in Naogaon is covered with spider webs. Sheer negligence causes moss, top right, to grow on a number of terracotta plaques. The monastery in Paharpur. PHOTO: STAR

Govt won't go for strict control of market: Faruk

DU CORRESPONDENT

The government does not want to strictly control the commodity market, rather it wants to see a more responsible role from wholesalers, retailers and consumers to keep prices below the government-fixed price, said Commerce Minister Faruk Khan.

"We do not want to impose too much control over the market even though we can do it if want... we can send magistrates anytime. We want SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

BDR MUTINY, CARNAGE Anomalies in Dal-Bhat scheme key factor

KAILASH SARKAR

The jawans punished for irregularities in the BDR's Operation Dal-Bhat led the vicious killings during the Pilkhana mutiny on February 25-26.

However, the bloody revolt could be traced to the grievances nursed for years over alleged discriminations against the border guards, said sources close to the home ministry's high-powered probe committee and Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

The resentment among the rank and file for not being paid the allowances for duties in the Dal-Bhat programme only made things worse, they added.

"The killings were not part of the mutineers' original plan," said a member of the home ministry's probe committee, requesting anonymity. SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

"They were the senseless acts of vengeance by the jawans who had been meted out punishment for stealing rice and wheat meant for the Dal-Bhat programme," he added.

Investigation sources said the February 25-26 carnage that left 75 people including 57 army officers dead was the third of its kind after the mutinies in 1991 and 1973.

Around 160 BDR men were disciplined for various irregularities and corruption including misappropriation of rice during the Dal-Bhat [rice-lentils] programme, which was introduced to rein in the spiralling prices of essentials during the caretaker government rule.

According to sources, a section of border guards misappropriated a huge quantity of rice and wheat on several occasions. They stole the staple goods while carting those to the BDR SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

BNP-JAMAAT RULE Govt reviews Milk Vita probe reports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has started reviewing probe reports about alleged embezzlement of a large amount of fund from state-run Milk Vita during the BNP-Jamaat-led alliance government between 2001 and 2006.

The reports point fingers at former local government, rural development and cooperatives (LGRD) minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

"The ministry is reviewing the reports submitted during the immediate-past caretaker government, on irregularities in Milk Vita during the BNP-led government. Necessary actions will be taken after the review," incumbent LGRD Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam said on Thursday.

The immediate past caretaker regime during its anti-graft drive in 2007, carried out two separate investigations of the process of setting up Milk Vita plants, their locations, and the process of purchasing machinery for those. SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Ctg Port operations resume

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Vessel movement in Chittagong port resumed in full swing from yesterday morning.

Sources in Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) said the main channel between Red and Green buoy at the Karnaphuli estuary has been dredged wide. However, for incoming movement of vessels the authority had to wait till yesterday morning as an extra precaution, sources said.

Nine vessels from the outer anchorage entered the port SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

MPs' discretionary funds used without rules

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Members of the Parliament (MPs) have been spending from their annual discretionary fund totalling around Tk 3 crore each fiscal year since 1992, while guidelines for the spending are yet to be formulated.

Legal experts said the rules must be made to give the expenditures legal coverage, otherwise serious questions might be raised about them.

According to the Members of Parliament (Remuneration and Allowances) Act, spending from the discretionary grants shall be subject to the conditions as may be prescribed by a committee led by the leader of the House.

But no move has yet been made, since the introduction of the fund in 1992, for making the rules that will subject the spending to questions on grounds of legality. SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

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Yes (84.27%)

No (11.07%)

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