

Govt to go after jam

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construction of roads, malls and schools and colleges."

GAS ISSUE

During the question-answer period, Hasina strongly criticised those opposing the government's plans to explore the offshore blocks for gas. "I wonder why they are opposing gas exploration. Maybe they don't want to see the country make progress and industries expand," she added.

"We will however press ahead with our plans to search for gas in the interests of the country's development."

Earlier on August 24, the cabinet committee on the economic affairs approved deals with two foreign companies for oil and gas exploration in three off-shore blocks.

The National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas and Mineral Resources observed a half-day hartal in the city on September 14, demanding the government scrap the deals.

About worries that the contracts would oblige the government to export gas to foreign countries, Hasina said the gas to be extracted from the Bay would be used for industrialisation in the northern districts.

The prime minister was scheduled to answer six questions yesterday. Of those, three were from opposition and independent lawmakers.

On this point, Speaker Abdul Hamid said, "It's a good sign

that the prime minister has accepted questions from the opposition."

Addressing the PM, he noted, "You have honoured the opposition lawmakers by accepting their questions. In one sense, it's their [opposition] participation in the parliamentary proceedings."

A smiling Hasina replied, "Yes, you can say that."

She said BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia never accepted questions from opposition lawmakers while a prime minister.

"Not only that, the then speaker would not allow the opposition lawmakers to raise supplementary questions. I'd however like to reply to their queries," she added.

Speaker

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riverbed with silt.

"Ultimately, they grab and fill up the rivers," Hamid said while the water resources minister was replying to lawmakers' queries on dredging the rivers to give them a new life.

Replying the lawmakers Water Resources Minister Ramesh Chandra Sen said the government is planning to purchase 15 dredgers to dredge major rivers including the Padma, Meghna and Jamuna.

"On completion of dredging of the major rivers, the dredgers will be used to bring back the navigability of smaller ones," he added.

Meanwhile, Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan said the government has already formed a task force on river dredging.

"Process of purchasing three dredgers is almost completed and it will take one and a half years to get those," the shipping minister said.

He added by this time the ministry will carry out dredging using privately owned dredgers.

"The government will work with private organisations at home and abroad to dredge the rivers, if they are interested," Shajahan said.

The water resources minister also informed the House about the measures taken by the government to increase fish production to meet the country's demand.

On leasing out tiny water bodies (Jalmahal), the minister said the government would lease out water bodies to genuine fishermen in line with the "Jalmahal Management Policy 2009."

"A project is under active consideration of the government to issue identity cards to genuine fishermen," he said.

Matin

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Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) for further investigation. The ACC has already filed a case against MA Matin on charge of irregularities in awarding the container-handling work at the port to a private company.

The ACC has begun investigation and quizzed the former adviser in connection with the case. The former adviser, however, denied the allegation.

"The probe found that former shipping adviser MA Matin violated section 58 Gha (1) of the constitution by increasing the age limit of pilots of Chittagong Port," Noor-e-Alam Chowdhury, chairman of the standing committee, told reporters after the meeting at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

"He also violated the Public Servants (Retirement) Act, 1974 in this regard," Chowdhury, also a ruling Awami League lawmaker, added. He said the former shipping adviser abused his power and it seems financial matter was related behind increasing the age limit of the pilots.

The four-member sub-committee headed by Shah Alam yesterday placed its probe report to the main committee.

"It is clearly defined in the act that no one except the parliament has the authority to increase the age limit of public servants. Besides, it is also a violation of Rules of Business as it was done without any approval of the establishment and finance ministries," he further said.

The parliamentary body also recommended upgrading the marine academy to a university and accommodating more students.

It also stressed the need for setting up two marine academies at Barisal and Mongla of Khulna and setting up marine courts at Narayanganj, Chittagong, Khulna and Barisal.

Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan agreed with the committee's recommendations and assured the committee of taking necessary steps to implement the recommendations.

Sugar price

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to bring back normalcy in the prices of sugar.

Finally the government decided to fix the mill gate rate of sugar at Tk45 per kg, the wholesale rate at Tk 46 per kg and Tk 49-Tk50 per kg at retail level, Feroz said.

"At the retail level, the price of sugar will not go beyond Tk50 per kg," the commerce secretary told the reporters after yesterday's meeting.

He said the government is strengthening the market monitoring of basic commodities to tackle market manipulation, adding that this time the price will not go up abnormally as the refiners vowed to maintain smooth supply of sugar to wholesalers.

Anisul Huq, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), who led the business delegation at the meeting, said recently sugar price soared globally due to production shortfall and switching to other crops in the major sugar producing countries like Brazil and India.

He said the government earlier fixed the mill gate rate of sugar at Tk39 per kg and it continued till 30th September. Then the global price of sugar was between \$350 and \$360 per tonne, which is now \$570-\$580 per tonne.

Earlier, both the commerce ministry and businesspersons at a daylong meeting on Monday decided that the date and rate of sugar must be written on the delivery order (D/O) letters and the buyers must lift the sugar from the warehouses in 30 days.

The validity of D/O letters will remain effective for 30 days from the date of issuance, the Monday meeting decided.

CASE AGAINST SUGAR TRADERS

On October 1, District Marketing Officer of Jessore Sujat Hossain Khan filed two cases with Abhaynagar Police Station against 14 sugar traders.

In the case statement, he said the defendants had hoarded a total of 71,010 sacks of sugar instead of supplying them to market last month.

The High Court (HC) on October 6 granted anticipatory bail to them and also issued separate rules upon the government to explain why the accused should not be given regular bail.

The government yesterday filed two petitions with the SC to stay the HC orders.

After hearing the petition chamber bench of the Appellate Division Justice Muzammel Hossain stayed the HC orders and also fixed October 11 for hearing the petitions before the regular bench of the apex court.

Rough sea

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'Surfing the Nations' and a resident of Hawaii island, inaugurated the competition at Kolatoli point sea beach at 9:00am on Tuesday. Bangladesh Surfing Club organized the competition.

45 members of Bangladesh Surfing Club - both male and female - were divided into three groups and started surfing at 9:00am. None of them, however, could surf for more than 10 seconds against the turbulent waves.

Yet 9 participants, three from each group - were adjudged best surfers and awarded trophies. At the very start, Bangladesh's first surfer and president of the Bangladesh Surfing Club, Zafar Alam, 27, jumped into the Bay for surfing. Then other surfers joined him.

Saifur Shahedin and Ismat Jerin, two tourists from Dhaka among many others said, they came to Cox's Bazar to enjoy the surfing.

Tom Brower said the main target of the competition was to popularise surfing in Bangladesh and to show the world that Cox's Bazar sea beach is a proper venue for this.

Fertiliser

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crops during the imminent Rabiseason.

Copies of a government circular regarding the time extension reached to all deputy commissioners' offices yesterday.

Rabindra Kumar Majumder, additional director of Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in Rajshahi, quoting a circular from the agriculture ministry said the date was extended, as the recruitment process missed the previous deadline.

He said once the recruitment is complete, none other than the selected retailers would be allowed to sell fertiliser.

The government is recruiting some 10,629 retailers under 1,600 fertiliser dealers appointed by Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) in 85 municipalities and 1096 unions of northern districts.

"The union level selection committees are failing to reach a consensus on recruitment as there is pressure on them of an unusually large number of applicants," said Sirajul Islam, Godagari upazila DAE officer.

EC expects

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of prospective voters in four city corporation areas--Rajshahi, Khulna, Sylhet and Barisal--has already been completed. And the task in Chittagong city corporation area will continue till October 10.

On completion of collecting particulars of prospective voters in the DCC area, voter registration will begin on October 12 and continue till November 10 at 91 registration centres.

Prospective voters will have to visit the registration centres designated for them to have their photographs and fingerprints taken for preparing the voter list with photographs.

Shahadat said people born after January 1, 1992 are not eligible for being registered in the voter list since they would not be 18, the qualifying age for being voters.

"It is a punishable offence to register under-aged people in the voter list. Registering names in the voter list twice is also a punishable offence. We can identify if someone is registered twice as voter," he said.

The project director suggested that the city dwellers contact thana election officers if they need any assistance. Voters who want to correct their national identity cards in case of any mistakes may also contact the offices of thana election officers in the capital.

Replying to a query, he said they want to finalise the voter

list for the DCC area by mid-January next year as the EC plans to hold the long due polls to the corporation soon.

DISTRIBUTION OF CARDS
On distribution of national identity cards prepared earlier, the project director said it will begin on October 18 and continue till October 24 in the DCC area.

People who were registered in the voter list before the ninth parliamentary election but did not get national identity cards can collect those this time. EC officials will distribute the cards at four places in the capital from 10:00am to 5:00pm.

People living in Lalbagh, Mohammapur and Dhanmondi can collect their cards at Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) officers club. People of Motijheel, Sabujbagh, Sutrapur, Demra and Kotwali can collect those at Basabo Community Centre.

Residents of Uttara, Gulshan, Tejgaon, Ramna and Cantonment areas can collect their national identity cards at the College of Textile Engineering and Technology, Tejgaon. People from Mirpur and Pallabi have to collect their cards at the community centre at Ward-10.

Shahadat said voters who live outside the DCC area should contact the upazila election offices in their respective areas to collect their national identity cards.

Shootouts

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an under-construction CNG refuelling station in the area where a gang had gathered.

Sensing the presence of Rab, the miscreants opened fire prompting them to retaliate. Twenty-two shots were fired.

Rab team found the bullet-hit body of Julhas left lying on the spot and also recovered a pistol and two bullets from there while his accomplices managed to escape.

As Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) doctors declared him dead after Hazaribagh police took him there, the body of Julhas was sent to DMCH morgue for autopsy.

Julhas was accused in eight cases including two for murder with Dhanmondi, Mohammapur and Hazaribagh police stations, police said.

In Kushtia, Sunnot Ali, son of late Dabir Uddin of Nolkhola under Sadar upazila, was killed in an 'encounter' between his cohorts and police at Uzangram village in the upazila, reports our Kushtia correspondent.

Sunnot, accused in six cases, including four for murder, was a close companion of Obaidul alias Lal Bhai, a military commander of Gono Bahini, source said.

According to police, a team of Islamic University Police Station raided Uzangram where some Gono Bahini cadres were holding a meeting under a bridge around 3:30am.

Sensing presence of the

police, the outlaws opened fire prompting them to retaliate that triggered a gunfight.

At one stage, the outlaws fled the scene leaving Sunnot's body lying on the ground.

Police recovered one LG gun and five bullets from there.

On information, a team of Rab-12 conducted a drive at Kachipara in Pabna Sadar upazila where a gang of Sarbaha cadres was holding a meeting, reports our Pabna correspondent.

As soon as the Rab members reached there, the outlaws opened fire forcing them to fire back.

Moktar, son of Moslem Pramanik of Dighi Goalbari under Sadar upazila, died on the spot but his accomplices fled the scene.

Rab members recovered one LG and three bullets from there.

Moktar was accused in a number of cases, including three murders, Rab sources said.

Criminals kill

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the police station said criminals might have pushed him from upstairs to kill him or dumped the body after killing him somewhere else.

SI Ataur quoting Habibur's wife said he (Habibur) went out with his rickshaw from his house Tuesday evening and remained missing.

The wife also told police that Habibur usually returned home late at night and he used to pull a rented rickshaw.

Huda, Noor

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In 1975, Abdul Quddus was a guard at the official residence of Bangabandhu on Road-32 in Dhanmondi.

In his statement, Quddus said on the day of the incident, Major AKM Mohiuddin with his lancer sepoy went upstairs of Bangabandhu's house. When they were bringing down Bangabandhu to the ground floor Major Noor said something in English.

Mohiuddin and his companions stepped aside and Captain Bazul Huda and Major Noor shot Bangabandhu, who then fell on the staircase and died.

Quddus, the fourth prosecution witness in the case, said he and other guards heard continuous shooting from the lakeside on the south of the house while hoisting the national flag on August 15 morning.

At one stage the shooting stopped and then sepoy in black and khaki dresses entered the house through the gate saying "hands up". Quddus said he then saw convict AKM Mohiuddin and two other army officers at the gate.

The court adjourned the hearing until 9:30am today. Barrister Mamun will continue his submission today before the five-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Justice Md Tafazzul Islam.

In his submission, Mamun placed the findings of the High

Court judgment delivered by Justice Md Ruhul Amin over the matters of convicts Sultan Shahariar Rashid Khan, AKM Mohiuddin and Bazul Huda.

He yesterday started reading the part of the judgment on the involvement of another convict Mohiuddin Ahmed.

The five convicts--dismissed army personnel Syed Faruque Rahman, Sultan Shahariar Rashid Khan, Mohiuddin Ahmed, AKM Mohiuddin and Bazul Huda who are in jail now--filed the appeals with the SC in October 2007.

After the hearing, Mamun told The Daily Star that he would place the verdict delivered by High Court Judge ABM Khairul Haque after delivering the part of the judgment on Mohiuddin Ahmed's involvement.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam told journalists at his office that the state counsels would make their submissions after the convicts' counsels conclude their submissions and arguments.

Authorities yesterday set up metal detector at the door of the courtroom. Mahbubey Alam said the measure was taken to ensure security during the hearing of a sensational case like the Bangabandhu murder case.

A number of counsels for both the state and convicts of the case, law officers and journalists were present at the court during the hearing.

Nobel prize

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The ribosome "reads" DNA and translates the code to make the body's tens of thousands of different proteins, thus building and controlling life at the chemical level.

The Nobel committee said the trio's contribution had been in X-ray crystallography that had generated 3D models, helping to showing the ribosome's individual atomic structure.

These models are now being harnessed by scientists in the quest for new microbe-killing drugs, "directly assisting the saving of lives and decreasing humanity's suffering," the jury said.

"Many of today's antibiotics cure various diseases by blocking the function of bacterial ribosomes," it said.

"Without functional ribosomes, bacteria cannot survive. This is why ribosomes are such an important target for new antibiotics."

Last year, the prize went to Osamu Shimomura of Japan and US duo Martin Chalfie and Roger Tsien on Wednesday for a fluorescent protein derived from a jellyfish that has become a vital tool in research.

On Tuesday, the Physics Prize went to Charles Kao, Willard Boyle and George Smith for work on fibre optics and light sensing that helped unleash the Information Technology revolution.

Kao is a British and US citizen. Boyle holds Canadian and US citizenship and Smith is from the US.

And on Monday, the Medicine Prize honoured Australian-American scientist Elizabeth Blackburn and Carol Greider and Jack Szostak of the United States for identifying a key molecular switch in cellular ageing.

The Literature Prize will follow on Thursday, while the Peace Prize will be announced in Oslo on Friday. The Economics Prize will wrap up the awards back in Stockholm on October 12.

Laureates receive a gold medal, a diploma and 10 million Swedish kronor (1.42 million dollars, 980,000 euros), which can be split between up to three winners per prize.

The formal prize ceremonies in Stockholm and Oslo will be held as tradition dictates on December 10, the anniversary of the death in 1896 of the prize's creator, Swedish industrialist and inventor of dynamite Alfred Nobel.

Nobel died childless in 1896, dedicating his vast fortune to create "prizes to those who, during the preceding year, shall have conferred the greatest benefit on mankind."

The prizes were first awarded in 1901.

PM presses

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bilateral and regional trade and business."

She said during every talk with Indian authorities, Bangladesh always requested India to give Bangladesh transit facilities with Nepal and Bhutan.

Hasina also called for creating Regional Food Security System in South Asia for future welfare of the people of the region.

PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed the newsmen after the meeting.

The premier observed that at present in all South Asian countries elected governments are in power, which paved the way for regional and bilateral understanding and consensus to work for attaining food security and solving other problems.

Mentioning her government's plans for tackling the challenges of the climate change, the PM told the high commissioner that India can help Bangladesh in launching its planned capital and maintenance dredging in the country's rivers.

The PM further requested the Indian government to give duty-free access of more Bangladeshi products to their market.

Talking on the UN General Assembly 2009, the Indian diplomat lauded Hasina for her "wise and visionary" speech in the session depicting the total picture of global-warming challenges, necessity of increasing food production and the path of ensuring economic emancipation of the world people.

Pinak on behalf of Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh invited Hasina to visit India.

The PM accepted the invitation and gave consent to visit India at the time of her convenience.

PM's Office Secretary Mollah Waheeduzzaman and Deputy High Commissioner of India Mukta D Tomar were present.

Govt plans

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interested in resolving all kinds of problems in a peaceful way through dialogues giving priority to the country's interests." She also said it is better for all to resolve problems with the neighbouring country through discussions instead of engaging in quarrels.

"Through dialogue, we have signed a 30-year-long water-sharing treaty with India on the Ganges. We will continue holding discussions with India to ensure that Bangladesh is not affected in anyway," she said.

Meanwhile, chief of the parliamentary delegation Abdur Razzaq placed in parliament the report on their visit to the Tipaimukh dam site.

In the report, the delegation said they came to know that the proposed Tipaimukh dam project is for generation of electricity and for controlling the floods. "There is no component of irrigation in the project and water will not be withdrawn from the Barak," the report said.

The report said several Indian ministers, experts and high officials informed the team during its visit to India that the project would be implemented only to set up hydro power plant and to reduce the impact of floods.

The report said during their visit a presentation was made for them analysing the data on pre- and post-dam situation.

It said the data and information presented by the Indian authorities show that water level of the Barak would increase at Bangladesh border during dry seasons while water level will drop during monsoons, which will reduce severity of floods in Bangladesh.

In the report the delegation said they did not notice any kind of structure in and around the Tipaimukh site. Besides, the

Rights eye

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ASK, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) and Karmojibi Nari.

The court also asked the government to explain why departmental and punitive actions should not be taken against those responsible for such killings.

In their writ petition, the human rights bodies said at least 969 people were killed in custody or in incidents of 'crossfire' or 'encounters' with 'law enforcement agencies' across the country since 2004 in violation of the law as well as the constitution.

During the hearing of the writ petition, counsels for the government told the HC that no instance of extra-judicial killing had taken place during the present government's rule.

However, surveys by ASK and some other organisations have found that more than 100 people have been killed in crossfire or encounters or gunfights since that claim, petitioners' lawyer barrister Saifur Rashid told The Daily Star on October 3.

He said an experts committee should be constituted to properly investigate these extra-judicial killings.

Delwar

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saying that BNP has to think whether it will take part in city corporation elections as the commission is working in favour of the government.

"People as well as BNP have no faith in the election commission as fair and neutral election is not possible at all under them [EC]," he said while talking to reporters at party office in Nayapalton.

He said the present election commission brought Awami League into power through 'a stage-managed election' so that the government rewards the election commissioners. "Election commission was playing for the last caretaker government and now it is playing for the present government."

Referring to recent terrorist activities in different areas including Narayanganj, the BNP leader said countrymen can now understand the activities of the government and they will resist such acts.

Criticising the bill placed before parliament to ensure security of the members of Bangabandhu family, he said the government is busy ensuring only their security though country's people have no security now.

Party leaders Abdullah Al Noman, Goyshwer Chandra Roy, Rizvi Ahmed, among others, were present.

During the briefing two factions of Jhenaidah district BNP erupted into a scuffle that was later brought under control by the leaders.

Meanwhile, Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal, an associate body of BNP, yesterday formed a human chain in front of the party's central office protesting women and children repression and demanding punishment of those involved in the rape incidents happened recently.

Party leaders Sarwari Rahan, Selima Rahman, Shirin Sultana, Rehana Akhter Ranu, Rasheda Begum Hira, among others, took part in the programme.

delegation also did not notice any barrage or any other structures downstream of Tipaimukh.

In the introductory speech to the report, delegation chief Razzaq said Indian government has provided them with some important information and data, which had not given to Bangladesh government earlier.

"The Indian government also assured us of providing necessary information on the issue in future," Razzaq said.

In the wake of stormy debate on the proposed Tipaimukh Dam and its negative impact on Bangladesh environment and economy, the government sent the parliamentary delegation to visit the dam site.

The 11-member delegation led by Razzaq visited India from July 29 to August 4.

The main opposition BNP, which did not nominate its lawmakers for the delegation, termed the visit a picnic party since the delegation members were not able to land at the site.

In the report, the delegation, however, said the helicopter carrying them could not land at the site due to bad weather but they had a good aerial view as the chopper flew low.

Renounce

violence for talks: Chidambaram

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Mumbai</