

Govt to go after jam

FROM PAGE 1
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

Turag

FROM PAGE 1
Advocate Manzill Murshid filed the petition on behalf of Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh, a human rights organisation.

He told The Daily Star that the HC in a verdict on June 24 this year directed the authorities concerned to protect Turag, Balu, Shitalakkhya and Buriganga rivers around the capital from encroachment and earth filling.

Copies of the judgement had been sent to the authorities concerned and the media reported it extensively, he said.

However, the land grabbers continue filling parts of Turag at Mirpu with earth, without caring about the HC verdict, the lawyer said.

The HC fixed today for hearing the petition, he added.

Dhaka-Ctg

FROM PAGE 1
month after the cabinet purchase committee approves the project and selection of the firms.

"All necessary tasks are being done very fast so that primary works of the project like setting up of offices and arrangement for accommodation are initiated by December," said Sabir.

The 215-kilometre dual carriageway will be constructed on build, own, operate and transfer (BOOT) basis. The main construction work is expected to begin in January and the winning firms will get three years to complete the job.

The project director said an option is there for giving the contractors another year to revamp the dual carriageway at their costs if any flaw or defect is found in its construction.

The cost of the project was estimated at Tk 2,168 crore when it was initiated four years ago.

But it failed to make headway due to bureaucratic tangle in floating tenders and lack of coordination among the authorities concerned. Finalisation of the project was delayed and tenders for the project were also cancelled twice.

Sabir said the same firms would carpet the existing two-lane Dhaka-Chittagong highway at the fag end of construction of two more lanes. Its cost has been included in the revised budget, he said.

The present government has chosen it as a priority project and has been pressing the communications ministry to complete all procedures as soon as possible.

Communications Minister Syed Abdul Hossain said upgrade of the Dhaka-Chittagong highway to a dual carriageway is one of his ministry's priority projects and its implementation will make traffic movement on the highway smoother as well as enhance economic activities. He told The Daily Star that there would be no problem this time regarding tender for the project.

The Dhaka-Chittagong highway that links the port city with the capital has become risky to ply along because of its narrowness and poor condition that contributed to the increase in accidents on the motorway.

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

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

FROM PAGE 1
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 Shahjahan 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," Shahjahan 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 fisherman 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

FROM PAGE 16

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 Ga (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 Shahjahan Khan agreed with the committee's recommendations and assured the committee of taking necessary steps to implement the recommendations.

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

Sugar price

FROM PAGE 16
to bring back normalcy in the prices of sugar.

Finally the government decided to fix the mill gate rate of sugar at Tk 45 per kg, the wholesale rate at Tk 46 per kg and Tk 49-Tk 50 per kg at retail level, Ferzor said.

"At the retail level, the price of sugar will not go beyond Tk 50 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.

Annisul 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 Tk 39 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 Jessor 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.

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

Rough sea

FROM PAGE 16

"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.

55 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 Shahed and Ismat Jerin, two tourists from Dhaka among many others said, they came to Cox's Bazar to enjoy the Kushtia correspondent.

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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

EC expects

FROM PAGE 16

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.

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

Nobel prize

FROM PAGE 16

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 show the ribosome's individual atomic structure.

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, Mohammanadpur and Dhanmondi can collect their cards at Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) officers club. People of Motijheel, Sabujbagh, Sutrapur, Demra and Kotowali can collect those at Basabha 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

FROM PAGE 16

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.

Police recovered one LG

gun and five bullets from 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.

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