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GTCL GAS COMPRESSOR

Petrobangla questions Chevron job at Muchai

SHARIER KHAN

No sooner had the government changed Petrobangla chairman earlier this month than Petrobangla raised questions whether installing a costly gas compressor station for Gas Transmission Company Ltd (GTCL) by US company Chevron has any justification.

The \$52.7 million compressor project is supposed to increase gas-flow pressure to 1050 pound-force per square inch gauge (PSIG) from 937 PSIG in the GTCL's transmission pipeline.

With the recent increase of gas supply from different gas fields of Chevron, the flow pressure has already reached 1050 PSIG. "Therefore, why should Chevron be allowed to install such a costly device and get that money out of gas production and sales from block 12?" asks a Petrobangla official.

It is a sharp contrast to Petrobangla's earlier position. Its past chairman M Muktadir Ali had cancelled an open tender of the GTCL for the same project; and strongly recommended awarding the job to Chevron under a Production Sharing Contract (PSC) for block 12. But the GTCL is not a party to the PSC, thereby leaving a lot of legal issues for the future. Ali has been asking Chevron to install this station from last year when the GTCL had not yet opened its tender offers.

Besides, Ali's cancellation of the GTCL tender has affected installation of two other compressors in Ashuganj and Elenga to ensure a countrywide consistency in gas-flow pressure. Of the three, Muchai was the least problematic area in terms of gas-flow pressure as it is close to a number of large gas fields.

The prime minister had approved

Petrobangla's proposal on September 8 and Petrobangla issued work order to Chevron to install the compressor station on GTCL's pipeline at Muchai point.

Chevron's compressor station project cost is actually \$12 million higher than the cost proposed by Hyundai at Muchai point in the GTCL tender that was cancelled by Ali. This is also an unsolicited deal that is also the first of its kind in the public sector gas transmission system, which should be a monopoly of the GTCL.

On the day of Petrobangla chairman Muktadir Ali's retirement on October 15, Petrobangla's Director (operation and mines) Yusuf Ali Talukdar issued a letter to the GTCL managing director raising questions about the justification of installing the compressor station to improve gas pressure.

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday meets Emir of Qatar state Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani at his official residence.

Shops in parking space demolished

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha yesterday demolished a number of shops in six buildings in the city's Mirpur area for commercial use of their designated car parking spaces.

Rajuk started the drive at 11:30am with seven buildings--two at Mirpur-1 intersection and five on Rokeya Sarani--on their list for yesterday.

A Rajuk team led by Executive Magistrate Rokon-Ud-Dowla evicted ready-made garment shops in the basement of Mukti Plaza near Mirpur-1 intersection.

The basement of Muktiyoddha Haq Plaza was being used to serve commercial purposes though it was designed for car parking, said an

official, Aminur Rahman.

"We had to step back from eviction as the owner of the building produced a High Court stay order," Aminur told The Daily Star.

The team then moved to knock down a Limo showroom in the basement of a building on Rokeya Sarani in Senpara Parbata of Mirpur.

Probal Community Centre, T&I Tower, Ming Tower and FIR Tower also came under the drive as they were using car parking space on the ground floor to run shops.

Meanwhile, the magistrate on duty detained Rafiqul Islam of Sheorapara on charge of creating obstacles to the drive.

The magistrate told The Daily Star that they would release the detainee upon receipt of an

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Dhaka pushes for Saarc Food Bank

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh desires Saarc Food Bank to be effective as soon as possible and the central banks of the region to frame monetary policies to boost food production and accessibility to fight climate change impacts.

"We are at a critical moment due to frequent natural catastrophes. Saarc Food Bank is an opportune concept to practise humanity since the countries of the region have serious food shortage. Such food bank enhances confidence," said Finance Minister AMA Muhith.

The minister was addressing the inaugural phase of finance governors' symposium styled "Food Security: the role of Saarc central banks" organised by the Bangladesh Bank at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel in the capital. Central bank officials from the Saarc countries attended the daylong programme.

The concept paper of food bank was prepared at a Saarc summit in January 2004. Eventually, in 2007 a deal was signed to

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Deal signed to procure 3 dredgers

17 more to come

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will procure three dredgers after 37 years to continue dredging operation for restoring navigability of rivers in the country.

To this effect, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) and M/S Vosta LMG-Karnaphuli Joint Venture consortium signed a deal at the shipping ministry conference room yesterday.

Meanwhile, the government has decided in principle to procure 17 more dredgers at

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Qatar pledges to provide dredgers

UNB, Doha

Qatar will provide Bangladesh with dredgers to implement the government-planned massive capital dredging and maintenance project to restore navigability in the country's rivers.

The assurance came when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina met with Qatar's Prime Minister Hamad bin Jasssem bin Jabr Al Thani at his residence here on Sunday night.

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

The Qatari prime minister told the Bangladesh prime minister to provide his office with the project papers for the proposed river dredging.

He said Qatar will help Bangladesh in tackling the challenges of climate change.

The Qatari prime minister also expressed their willingness to make more investment in Bangladesh.

He apprised Hasina that Qatar will send a high profile

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Traders clash with market developer's men

5 hurt in Nilkhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several hundred traders in the city's Nilkhet area yesterday clashed with the hired men of a developer company, which attempted to evict some 670 traders for constructing a multi-storied building.

After the clash, the traders staged demonstrations putting barricades on the roads in

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Ombudsman on rights on cards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will very soon appoint an ombudsman in order to ensure constitutional rights of the people.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday said the process for appointing the ombudsman would be completed within a month or two.

Although the law regarding appointment of ombudsman

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Rajuk demolition team yesterday evicts Limo showroom at the basement of a building on Rokeya Sarani, Senpara Parbata in Mirpur to recover parking space.

Counsel seeks benefit of doubt for Shahriar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The counsel for a convict in Bangabandhu murder case yesterday pleaded with the Supreme Court that his client Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan could get acquittal on benefit of doubt since he was not present at Road-32 of Dhanmondi during the incidents of August 15, 1975.

Advocate Abdur Razzaque Khan was placing his arguments before the five-member SC bench headed by Justice Md Tafazzul Islam during the 16th day's hearing of appeals in the case.

Earlier yesterday, Khan Saifur Rahman, counsel for two other convicts in the case -- Syed Farooq Rahman and Muhiuddin Ahmed -- concluded his arguments before the same bench pleading for reducing the death sentence of his clients to life imprisonment.

Razzaque told the court that as per statements of the witnesses, and evidence in this case, it has been evident that Shahriar was not involved in the killing of Bangabandhu and his family.

Only two out of 61 prosecution witnesses -- Dafadar (ret'd) Abdul Jabbar Mridha and Havildar (ret'd) Aminur Rahman -- stated that they saw Shahriar at Balurghat parade ground, radio station at Shahbagh and Bangabhaban on August 15, 1975, the counsel said.

The court asked Razzaque why Shahriar had gone to the radio station at 6:00 am on that day.

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SC HEARING DAY 16

BANGLADESH V ZIMBABWE ODI series from today

SPORTS REPORTER

With a mission to continue their supremacy, Bangladesh go into the first match of the five-game one-day series against Zimbabwe today.

The day-night affair will start at 2:30pm at the

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Prayer Timing		
October 27		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-50	6-25
Zohr	1-45	2-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-32	6-35
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

200m more go hungry

FAO says developing world paying more for food

AP, Canberra

Most of the developing world is paying more for food despite drops in commodity market prices during the global economic slowdown, with 200 million people joining the ranks of the hungry in the past two years, the UN World Food Programme said Monday.

The agency's executive director Josette Sheeran blamed climate change, escalating fuel costs and falling incomes. She said the number of "urgently hungry" had now reached its highest ever 1.02 billion.

"One out of six people in humanity will wake up not sure that they can even fill a cup of food," Sheeran told reporters. "We have to make no mistake that hunger is on the march."

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BSF kills 1

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) gunned down one Bangladeshi cattle trader at Chawkpara border under Shibgonj upazila in Chapainawabganj on Sunday.

The deceased was identified as Habibur Rahman, 35, son of Mohammad Fitu of Bholamari village of Shahbajpur union under the upazila.

Commanding Officer of 39 Rifles Battalion Lt Colonel Zaed Hossain said a group of cattle traders were returning from India along with cattle around 10:30pm.

BSF of Shawshani camp of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

14 Americans killed in helicopter crashes

Taliban claim downing those in Afghanistan

AP, AFP, Kabul

A series of helicopter crashes killed 14 Americans in insurgent-wracked Afghanistan yesterday, the US military said. It was one of the deadliest days of the war for US troops.

In the first crash, a chopper went down in the west of the country after leaving the scene of a firefight with insurgents, killing 10 Americans seven troops and three civilians working for the government. Eleven American troops, one US civilian and 14 Afghans were also injured.

In a separate incident in the south, two other US choppers collided while in flight, killing four American troops and wounding two more, the

military said.

US authorities have ruled out hostile fire in the collision but have not given a cause for the other fatal crash in the west. Taliban spokesman Qari Yusuf Ahmedi claimed Taliban fighters shot down a helicopter in northwest Badghis province's Darabam district. It was impossible to verify the claim and unclear if he was referring to the same incident.

The Taliban said, however, it was behind the downing of the helicopter and claimed 14 Afghan civilians were killed in a subsequent aerial bombardment.

The Islamists also claimed to have caused a mid-air collision in the south of the country

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OnlinePoll

Would you support BNP if it starts a movement to make the government step down before completing its tenure?

Yes (41.1%)
 No (57.5%)
 No Comments (1.4%)

Total votes: 1368

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think raising funds for political parties with government contribution will bring transparency in their income and expenditure?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net