

Ecneec okays

FROM PAGE 1
The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec) meeting yesterday approved the project as part of the government plan to dredge the country's 310 rivers to bring back navigability, control floods, and ensure proper irrigation.

Six of the 17 dredgers, likely to be procured from India by mid 2012, will cost Tk 639 crore. Of the cost, \$71.69 million (Tk 472 crore) will come from the \$1 billion Indian credit and the government will provide the rest of the money.

Of the six, one will be used at Mongla port, while the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) will use three and Bangladesh Water Development Board (WDB) two.

Another 11 dredgers will be procured with Tk 1310 crore of government fund by June 2012.

Meeting sources said the prime minister asked the ministries concerned to prepare a detailed plan including how to use the dredgers and the earth excavate.

Planning ministry sources said the government has already prepared several projects for river dredging. One of the projects will cost nearly Tk 12,000 crore and the government has already sought donors' assistance to implement it.

Deadline

FROM PAGE 1
The storage of combustible chemicals and directed the traders to move the items to a safer location.

"We want a clear guideline from the government on where to shift the warehouses, as many building owners are unwilling to rent out places to us. We want a special industrial zone," said Kamal Ahmed, a chemicals trader.

State Minister for Law Qamrul Islam said, "We will not allow store of combustible chemicals in densely populated areas."

He said the government gave traders ample time to relocate the warehouses, but they took no significant steps they pledged earlier.

"We will go for legal action against businessmen who fail to meet the fresh deadline," said Qamrul Islam.

In yesterday's meeting at the industries ministry, the chemicals traders said the business community is passing a tough time. The import of chemicals has dropped by 40-60 percent as panic gripped the sector.

Earlier on August 3, during a strong reminder to the businessmen of Old Dhaka, Dilip Barua said the government would not tolerate storage of risky chemicals in such densely populated area from August 17.

The warning came against the backdrop of the devastating fire at Nimtoli on June 3, which originated from a chemical warehouse in the area and claimed at least 123 lives.

Leaders of Bangladesh Chamber of Industry (BCI) and businessmen of Old Dhaka were also present at the August 3 meeting.

Ensure security

FROM PAGE 1
daughters of Sadequr couple, informant in the murder case and his lawyer.

The bench comprising Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Sheikh Md Zakir Hossain passed the order in response to a writ petition by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB).

The Dhaka-based rights group filed the petition as public interest litigation on the basis of a report published in The Daily Star on August 14 with the headline "Killers now target two daughters". The petition sought the HC directive on the government to provide security to the victims' family members, informant and lawyer.

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BSF kills 2

OUR CORRESPONDENT, C'nawabganj

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) gunned down two Bangladeshi cattle traders and injured another along Shingnagar frontier in Shibganj upazila on Monday night.

BSF men of Doulatpur camp under Maldah district in West Bengal also took away the bodies into their territory.

The deceased were Fatik, 30, son of Tarajol Miah of Parchouka village and Ismail Hossain, 25, son of Makhlesur Rahman of Piamari village in the upazila.

The BSF troops of Doulatpur camp opened fire on the group of traders when they tried to cross the border at about 10:30pm, killing the two traders on the spot, said Lt Col Zayed Hossain, commanding officer of 39 Rifles Battalion, Chapainawabganj.

Ershad, 25, who also received bullet injury during the incident, was admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

Bangladesh Rifles already sent a protest letter to the BSF asking them to return the bodies immediately, the commanding officer added.

Boy killed in DU wall collapse

DU CORRESPONDENT

A class III student of Nilkhet High School was killed in a collapse wall behind Teacher Student Center (TSC) at Dhaka University yesterday.

The victim was identified as Zakaria Hossain, 9, son of Motaleb Hossain, a fourth class employee of TSC.

Motaleb said the wall fell down on his son when he was playing with the other three children near it at around 11:30am.

With severe injury to head, Zakaria was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Shaheenur Begum, Zakaria's mother, said his playmates managed to escape when the wall started falling to the ground but her son fell victim to it.

Director of TSC Alamgir Hossain told The Daily Star that the recent rainfall might have caused the dilapidated wall to collapse.

Police handed over the body to the parents without performing autopsy.

A number of employees at TSC said electric technician Tayabul erected the wall in 2008 to hide his tin-shed house from the eyes of students and others who visit TSC daily.

DU Vice-Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique visited the place and directed TSC authorities to demolish the abandoned water tank near the accident spot immediately.

Motaleb said his son would be buried in their village home in Tangail.

Culprits

FROM PAGE 1
The August 17 serial bomb blasts across the country. "Such massive and unusual bomb attack is not possible without patronisation from the state."

She asked, "If there was no state patronisation, how the terrorists could explode some 500 bombs within just 30 minutes?"

The PM said that without state patronisation, the militants would not have succeeded to explode the bombs at the country's 63 districts almost at a time.

She further said that the unprecedented bomb attack of August 17, 2005 was an attempt to encourage the militants and militancy in Bangladesh.

The PM in her speech voiced strong condemnation against the heinous serial bomb attacks.

"We are determined to ensure that heinous incidents like August 17 serial bomb blasts would never take place again in Bangladesh," she said.

On August 17 in 2005, in an unprecedented terror attack, about 500 time bombs were blasted simultaneously in 63 of the 64 districts in the country.

The 30-minute mayhem in the morning killed one person in Chapainawabganj and injured over 100 others. Another boy was killed in a blast at Savar in the afternoon.

Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), the banned militant group, had claimed responsibility for the blasts through leaflets that left the countrymen in shock.

Panic had gripped the country at the extent of the network of the terrorists who meticulously synchronised the timing of the bombings between 11:00am and 11:30am, targeting government establishments, mainly the offices of the district administration and courts.

Gas there, not linked

FROM PAGE 1
supply 230 mmcf of gas for a long time, but it was not able to supply that much due to lack of pipeline support.

The country had not taken up any major gas pipeline construction between 2000 and 2009. Some pipeline projects are now being implemented mainly to connect the gas-deprived southwestern region to the eastern region.

But these pipelines are not meant to allow an increased supply from the gas fields which are situated in the central and northeastern parts of the country.

"Petrobangla was in charge of the central planning. But it did not play its due role in planning for the pipelines. The GTCL also had a responsibility to review the gas supply system, but there was lacking in its work as well," one of the experts noted.

"Petrobangla did not even take up the urgent steps that it needed to take in the last 18 months when the alarm bell was already rung. Had it taken those steps, we could have moved a few steps closer to solving the gas crisis," another expert added.

Moreover, the gas production increase plan of the national and international oil companies would not be enough to meet the next five years' demand.

According to the study, in 2015 the total gas production would hit 3,818 mmcf which is almost double of the present production. But at that time, the demand would go up to 4,162 mmcf.

"These pipelines are long overdue. But it will take some time to take decisions in this regard as there is a planning process to complete," said Energy Secretary Mohammad Mejbahuddin.

He added financing for these pipeline projects could derive from a combination of sources. Companies like GTCL or Titas could self-finance some pipelines, while the government could fund the rest, he noted.

The study, prepared on the basis of software simulations and data on the country's gas sector, states that the simulations clearly indicate the need for import of LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) at an initial rate of 500 mmcf (million cubic feet per day).

Earlier in April, Petrobangla assigned GTCL and TGTIDCL to identify the need for development of additional transmission pipelines and associated facilities for the evacuation of incremental gas production from different fields within 2015.

The experts assessed that the Power Development Board's plan to nearly double power generation [from present 4,500 MW] requires present gas consumption of 945 mmcf to be raised to 1,841 mmcf in next five years.

Chevron has given a clear plan to increase gas production from three gas fields of Jalalabad, Bibiyana and Moulvibazar to 1,550 mmcf by 2015 from the present 920 mmcf. The American company expects to add another

100 mmcf by June 2013 from a new gas field in Patuakhali.

The experts noted that as there was no plan to increase capacity, the fertiliser sector will be consuming a static 280 mmcf of gas in next five years. But they suggested that indigenous fertiliser production should not be interrupted to ensure maintaining adequate fertiliser production for the agriculture sector.

In recent years, the government on several occasions had shut down fertiliser production to increase gas supply for power generation. Experts say this is a bad practice for the fertiliser industry.

Gas demand in the domestic, refuelling and commercial sector [also called non-bulk sector] is rapidly growing and it should be dealt with carefully as it is a sensitive issue for the public. This sector would continue to demand more.

Aminur Rahman, managing director of GTCL, noted, "We need some major pipelines. Firstly, we need one to evacuate extra gas to be produced by Chevron in next three years. We will also need a major pipeline for supply of the LNG."

He added all of these pipelines must be completed by 2013.

The GTCL has already floated tender for a 30-inch pipeline between Bakhrabad and Siddhirganj and taking up another pipeline project between Bakhrabad and Ashuganj. Both of these would reduce bottlenecks in the present gas distribution system.

BCL unrest at RU

FROM PAGE 16
Contacted, Ilias claimed innocence. Mamun is now in Rajshahi jail detained on charges of adultery.

Fardin said the group had collected money from students to spend for the hall's security. He also claimed to have returned the amount.

Students, however, know nothing about the refund. Students of the Ziaur Rahman Hall alleged many of them fell victim to the extortion. BCL men threatened to drive them out of the hall if they refused to pay the money.

"I left the dorm a few weeks ago fearing an attack from Chhatra League men. They had threatened to beat me up as I refused to give them Tk 500 they demanded," said a student of the dorm.

He is now residing at a rented house near the campus. Students had to pay around Tk 100 to 1,200 each, depending on the individual's family income.

The administration sources said BCL cadres have forced around 60 students to leave the dorm. Ziaur Rahman Hall Provost Prof Rezaul Karim told The Daily Star "It's not true that 60 students have left the dormitory at a time. Following violent incidents in February some students might have opted for rented houses in the city," Karim said.

"I have not received any complaints about any extortion in the dormitory," Karim added.

RU Proctor Prof Chowdhury Mohammad Zakaria said they had not received any complaints from any quarter regarding these incidents involving the BCL.

WAYS TO MAKE MONEY
The same faction was allegedly involved in stealing six computers worth Tk 1,20,000 after breaking into the rooms of some students who had left the dormitory immediately after the February violence.

"Chhatra League cadres about a month ago took away my computer from my room and beat up my roommate while I went away home for two days," said another student seeking anonymity.

Sources said the driving force behind the BCL men's bid to win the campus turf is the flow of money from different channels.

Sharif Hossain, owner of a photocopy outlet on the campus and loyalist of Islami Chhatra Shibir, went into

hiding following the February clash that left BCL activist Faruque Hossain dead.

Sharif resumed his business recently after paying Chhatra League Tk 5,000. Shajahan, the owner of a local confectionery shop at the University Paribahan Market, alleged a group of BCL men led by Golap Hossain of Suhrawardy Hall demanded Tk 1 lakh from him.

Otherwise, they would cancel the allocation of his shop space, he added. Golap denied the allegation and said he knew nothing about it.

RU BCL President Awal Kabir Joy was unavailable for comment. He has been hiding since the unit's August 8 factional feud. General Secretary Apu is in prison in connection with the clash.

Following the unrest in which ten students were injured, two by bullets, the central committee suspended all activities of the unit.

PAKISTAN FLOODS Bangladesh to send aid

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will send emergency relief materials to Pakistan to help its several million flood-hit people fight the devastating aftermath.

The foreign ministry formally conveyed the decision to the Pakistan high commission in Dhaka yesterday.

Officials of different ministries met in the foreign secretary's office yesterday and decided to send the relief materials as soon as possible.

The materials include tents, emergency medicines, water purifying tablets, tea, jute products, etc.

The worst ever flooding in Pakistan has affected about 14 million people and left some 2,000 dead. More people are likely to be affected as water continues to move towards densely populated areas.

The flood victims are now in dire need of drinking water, shelter, and medicines to prevent diseases.

JCD activist killed by Jubo Dal man

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Joint convenor of Magura District Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Mahub Hossain was hacked to death last night allegedly by a Jubo Dal leader here in the district.

Party sources said Mahub attacked Harun-Ur-Rashid, former assistant secretary of district Jubo Dal, with a machete at Syed Ator Ali Road near Magura Sadar Police Station around 10:00pm injuring him seriously in his eyes and head.

Harun, however, managed to take away the machete from Mahub and indiscriminately hacked him to critical injury. Mahub was declared dead when he was rushed to Magura Sadar Hospital while Harun was sent to Dhaka after primary treatment at a local hospital.

Sources in the BNP said Mahub and Harun had an old dispute over party leadership that might have led to the incident.

MPs at odds

FROM PAGE 16
Deputy Commissioner M Samsur Rahman, who chaired the meeting, adjourned the proceedings amid tension between the two lawmakers.

The meeting held at the deputy commissioner's office discussed law and order situation, traffic jam, unrest in garment sector and gas and electricity crisis.

Reckless bus

FROM PAGE 1
parents left for work leaving the child to neighbours.

Second officer Rezaul Islam of the police station quoted locals saying Bristhi was playing by the road with some other kids of the neighbourhood.

The bus ran over the girl as she walked to a weeping woman sitting on the road divider. Police said they were preparing to hand over the child's body to her parents.

Sarkozy crime racism charge

AFP, Paris

President Nicolas Sarkozy's racially-tinged security crackdown has begun to cause concern even within his own right-wing camp and raise fears that he has damaged France's international image.

Every day French police raid more Gypsy settlements, rounding up hundreds of foreign-born Roma for expulsion, using tactics that one member of Sarkozy's ruling party compared to those of France's Nazi-era collaboration.

The crackdown on illegal Gypsy campsites comes alongside planned measures to strip some foreign-born criminals of their citizenship, after the government made an explicit link between immigration and crime.

Sarkozy hopes such draconian tactics will restore his flagging popularity with French voters in the run-up to the 2012 presidential election, but the harsh tone has raised eyebrows even among some politicians of the right.

"The policy of dismantling illegal camps has taken an ugly turn," said Jean-Pierre Grand, a lawmaker from Sarkozy's majority UMP, after police rounding up Gypsies were seen separating men from women and children.

Afrin dies

FROM PAGE 16

untimely death. Afrin's husband Mahub Alam Rony also suffered burns while trying to save his wife. He is in police custody and undergoing treatment at the burn unit. Police also arrested his father.

Officer-in-Charge of Bongshal Police Station Abdul Mannan said they are now trying to catch Rony's mother. Afrin's husband Rony told this correspondent last evening none of his family members tortured Afrin. Rony, a final year law student at Northern University, however, said his mother used to rebuke him, as he was unemployed.

Afrin's father Ataur Rahman on August 14 filed a case with Bongshal Police Station against Rony and his parents under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

Ataur Rahman quoted Afrin as saying she set herself afire following a row with her mother-in-law.

Stalkers attack

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Zakir, 30, and Constable Emdad, 32, -- were admitted to Medi-Tech General Hospital Pvt Ltd at Nikunja.

The gang comprised of 20-25 hoodlums equipped with sticks, machetes and firearms also snatched a pistol and a walkie-talkie from SI Habib. They ransacked their van and tried to set it afire, said the sub-inspector.

Police were yet to recover the pistol and walkie-talkie as of today 1:00am.

Mitu told The Daily Star that a group of youths were teasing her about her dark complexion as she went a local shop around 8:45pm. They called her Ma Kali (Goddess Kali) and hurled abuse.

"The youths have been teasing me for one and a half years."

As she informed the matter to her maternal uncle Nasir, the AL activist, he called police. He also went down and rebuked the youths.

At one stage, Nasir slapped one of the youths triggering a heated altercation.

The group started beating him. When police reached the spot, the stalkers hid in the under construction building.

59 killed

FROM PAGE 16

officials said. The recruitment centre explosion was the bloodiest single attack in Iraq since December 8, when a series of coordinated blasts in the capital killed 127 people, and recalls a spate of suicide bombings against army recruitment posts in 2006 and 2007, when Iraq's insurgency was at its peak.

Violence has surged in the past two months in Iraq, with 200 people already killed in August alone and Iraqi government figures say that 535 people died in July -- the deadliest month in Iraq since 2008. The US military disputes the July figure, saying 222 people died violently.

The latest bloodletting, which also coincides with Ramadan, which began in Iraq on August 11, has sparked concern that local forces are not yet prepared to handle the country's security on their own.

American commanders, however, insist, that Iraqi soldiers are up to the job as they pull out thousands of their forces ahead of a declaration to an end to combat operations at the end of August.

Grand used the loaded term "rafle" -- "a round-up" -- to describe the raids, implicitly linking them to France's wartime detention of Jewish citizens.

Another UMP deputy, Bernard Debre, wrote in the daily Le Monde on Tuesday to warn against drawing a straight line between immigration and crime.

"I wouldn't be right to link everything: integration, religion, terrorism and foreigners coming to France. There are French terrorists, there are French criminals," he wrote.

"Obviously, we need a reasonable immigration policy and integration policy. Let us be wary of taking too easy a shortcut," he warned.

On the Left, while the main opposition Socialist Party has been wary of being drawn into a debate on law and order with a president who has usually made the issue a vote-winner, criticism has been more harsh.

The Green Euro-MP and likely presidential candidate Eva Joly accused Sarkozy of pursuing a policy of "state racism" and described the president's singling out of Roma and foreign-born citizens as "very fascist".

CNG stations

FROM PAGE 16
4:30pm. In front of the filling station there were at least 30 CNG-run auto-rickshaws waiting after 3:00pm for gas.

Rahman earned Tk 800 yesterday, of which he had to pay Tk 660 to the owner of the vehicle. He could earn only Tk 40 against a regular earning amount of Tk 700 to Tk 800 excluding the daily expenditure.

The government has recently ordered to keep CNG filling stations shut for six hours a day between 3:00pm and 9:00 pm to increase gas supply to the power plants against the backdrop of unbearable load shedding in the country.

People's sufferings turned even worse in the days ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr as the partial shut-down of CNG stations, already hit by low gas pressure, entered the second day yesterday.

Visiting several filling stations, this correspondent found that vehicles were waiting in long queues in front of the filling stations.

"Vehicles carrying goods are suffering the most as they need more gas. But you cannot refill your car fully during daytime due to low gas pressure," said Al-Amin, driver of a goods-laden pick-up van. He had been waiting at Shahjahan CNG filling station at Parbagh for four hours since 3:00pm.

Al Amin was on a trip from Palashi to take some plastic raw materials to Tongi, a one-and-half-hour drive. By the time he was supposed to get back after delivering the goods and turn around for next trip.

"We usually do not sell gas in daytime as the gas pressure remains too low between 7:00am and 10:00pm. Our electricity bill exceeds our income if we run the station during this period," said the machine operator of Shahjahan filling station.

Those who have alternatives to run car on fuel oil are the luckiest. Others who do not have the option were seen pushing cars on the streets.

CNG-run auto-rickshaw has to refill the gas cylinder twice to thrice a day while goods-laden large vehicles need more.

"We would have to live this way if the partial shut down of CNG station continues," said Monir Hossain, a three-wheeler driver.

Ibrahim's death

FROM PAGE 16
Medical College Hospital, were summoned to the DB office yesterday for interrogation on the incident.

Kala stuck to his earlier statement that Ibrahim was killed on Friday night when he was handling Shaon's licensed pistol, and a bullet went off accidentally.

The DMP commissioner claimed that investigation into the incident is going on in its own course. The UD case will not have any impact on it.

And they will be able to ascertain whether it was a case of murder or accident, he said.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Mollah Nazul Islam said Kala and Mithu were interrogated but no new information was gleaned from them.

They were not arrested at this stage but they will be under watch, he added.

Meanwhile, Rina Islam told this correspondent that she is getting threats over telephone not to proceed with the case. And she is under tremendous pressure from different quarters to settle it in exchange for 'compensation'.

She further said if Kala and Delwar are arrested, the fact behind the killing of her husband will come to light.

The family members said they will file a murder case with a court if police refusal to record a murder case continues.