

# Blown-out well finally killed at bottom of Gulf

AP  
The well is dead. Finally. A permanent cement plug sealed BP's well nearly 2.5 miles below the sea floor in the Gulf of Mexico, five agonizing months after an explosion sank a drilling rig and led to the worst offshore oil spill in US history.

Retired Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen, the federal government's point man on the disaster, said Sunday BP's well "is effectively dead" and posed no further threat to the Gulf. Allen said a pressure test to ensure the cement plug would hold was completed at 5:54am CDT. The gusher was contained in mid-July after a temporary cap was successfully fitted atop the well. Mud and cement were later pushed down through the top of the well, allowing the cap to be removed.

But the well could not be declared dead until a relief well was drilled so that the ruptured well could be sealed from the bottom, ensuring it never causes a problem again. The relief well intersected the blown-out well Thursday, and crews started pumping in the cement on Friday.

The April 20 blast killed 11 workers, and 206 million gallons of oil spilled. The disaster caused an environmental and economic nightmare for people who live, work and play along hundreds of miles of Gulf shoreline from Florida to Texas. It also spurred civil and criminal investigations, cost gaffe-prone BP chief Tony Hayward his job, and brought increased governmental scrutiny of the oil and gas industry, including a costly moratorium on deepwater offshore drilling that is still in

place.

Gulf residents will be feeling the pain for years to come. There is still plenty of oil in the water, and some continues to wash up on shore. Many people are still struggling to make ends meet with some waters still closed to fishing. Shrimpers who are allowed to fish are finding it difficult to sell their catch because of the perception -- largely from people outside the region -- that the seafood is not safe to eat. Tourism along the Gulf has taken a hit.

## DCC polls

FROM PAGE 16  
of the wards under the DCC.

Though the tenure of the DCC expired three years ago in May 2007, the polls could not be held on time due to the state of emergency and lack of a voter list.

## Biman

FROM PAGE 16  
worked as an acting director for Marketing and Sales of the airline.

"The move was based on decisions made by the board," Jamal Uddin Ahmed, chairman of board of directors and managing director of Biman told The Daily Star.

He, however, declined to share the reasons behind the action. Earlier this month, there was an unrest among its staff over low pay scale, cancellation of pension scheme and pay rise which was not in line with the government salary structure.

The board finally relented and bowed to its employee's demands.

# Firm fetters

FROM PAGE 1  
mutiny includes two or more people jointly disobeying a legal order of the authorities of the border force, armed forces and auxiliary force or challenging and resisting their authorities or expressing angst jointly to the authorities or making attempts to express it.

A senior BDR officer, however, said the new legislation would not prevent BDR jawans from expressing their problems and dissatisfaction if they have any. But they will not be allowed to do it collectively or in a group, or in procession. Even the existing law does not allow this, he said.

The official said the BDR members now could speak about their problem at the monthly Darbar held at every unit. If it is a common problem then one person can speak on behalf of all, he said.

There is a provision to sentence a member to three years' imprisonment if he intentionally hurts someone's religious sentiments. The proposed legislation also imposes strict restriction on freedom of speech and organisation.

On prior permission of the government or director general, a person can be enlisted in any professional body or organisation to improve professional efficiency.

It also proposed keeping the post of director general of the force reserved for the army and other officials will be appointed by the government from armed forces' commissioned officers on deputation or by promoting junior officers of the force.

The director general will command, administer and control the force in accordance with this law while superintendence of the force shall be vested with the government.

About the functions of the force, the bill said during wartime the border force will be placed under the control of the defence ministry and will discharge functions assigned by the ministry.

The proposed legislation has also provision for formation of a reserved force of the border guard consisted of retired junior officers and retired border guard men. They will assist the regular force if they are asked to do so.

On approval of the government, the director general may appoint reserved force members as junior officers and rank holder border members, and enlisted members for a certain period due to shortage of manpower of the force.

The proposed law also vests the director general with the power of remitting or commuting any sentences

# Musharraf wanted to hand over Qadeer to US

Former Pak premier discloses  
TIMES OF INDIA, Islamabad

Former Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf had all intentions of handing over nuclear scientist Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan to the United States, former Prime Minister Mir Zafar Ullah Khan Jamali has disclosed.

Jamali said that he had summoned a cabinet meeting over the issue of the nuclear scientist and clearly told Musharraf that though he might be the president, but the government would not hand over Khan to the US, The Nation reports.

Upon the Cabinet's refusal, Musharraf over-turned his government, he added. Meanwhile, Qadeer Khan has endorsed Jamali's statement, calling him gentle, honest and sombre.

He added that he knew the former prime minister as a patriotic and loyal person, and had never seen him cheating anyone. Jamali's disclosure was absolutely correct and Pervez Musharraf was a traitor who has sold out his own country, Dr Khan claimed.

## Sadarghat

FROM PAGE 1  
The rest of the family members helplessly saw them die.

"It happened too quickly. Mayur hit Koko with a huge force and bounced back," said Golam Mostofa, eldest brother of the four who was standing beside Monir.

"As soon as Mayur bounced back I jumped into the small boat and brought Nasima and Al Amin back on Koko," he added.

"But it was too late. Nasima was already flattened and Al Amin was seriously injured," said Mostofa as he broke into tears.

Amin was rushed to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital where doctors announced him dead.

Monir told reporters after reaching Sadarghat they hired the boat from rear of the passenger vessel as it would save time.

Nasima and Al Amin were students of class two at a local primary school in Nizambagh.

Officer-in-Charge Abul Bashar of South Keraniganj Police Station said the accident occurred at about 6:00am.

He added Mayur-2 came from Chandpur and offloaded passengers before taking the turn backwards.

It is a common practice at Sadarghat that passengers use rear of vessels instead of the front to save time. Neither law enforcers nor launch terminal authorities have any effective measure to stop this dangerous tendency.

## Driver gets

FROM PAGE 16  
sentence yesterday under sections 279/338(A)/304(B) of Bangladesh Penal Code.

The court directed the authorities concerned to send a conviction warrant asking officer-in-charge of Chandina police station of Comilla district for taking the next course of action. Driver Nurul Islam's permanent address is under Chandina police station.

Such a verdict came when tough punishment is being demanded following the death of a female and an additional secretary in a road accident in Manikganj district recently.

"This is the highest punishment handed down by any court in a road accident related case," said Additional Public Prosecutor Shah Alam Talukder of Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge Court.

Usually, killer drivers get acquitted or punished for a very short period due to negligence and reluctance on the part of the prosecution, investigators and others, observed a number of lawyers of Dhaka Judges Court.

However, Sufiya Begum, mother of the victim, who was present at the court yesterday said the punishment to the convict was very light compared to the offence.

She urged the government that punishment for driving recklessly and running over people should be like the punishment for murder.

Sources said the doctors declared Farzana Hossain Silvi dead when she was taken to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital for treatment after the accident on October 26 in 2007.

Later, a case was filed against the driver with Ramna police station.

The investigation officer of the case pressed charges against Nurul Islam on March 25 of 2008, showing eight people as prosecution witnesses.

# Flood situation

FROM PAGE 16  
and it was near the red mark at 25 points.

The Jamuna was flowing 18 cm above the red mark at Sirajganj point and the Padma 65cm and 48cm above that at Bhagyakul and Goalundo points.

Our Faridpur correspondent reports: Although flood situation improved, the affected people in two upazilas -- Sadar and Charvadrason -- continued to suffer due to shortage food, pure drinking water and fodder.

A total of 53,602 people of 10,720 families have been affected by the flood, district administration sources said.

On relief operation, Deputy Commissioner Helaluddin Ahmed said yesterday more than 85 tonnes of rice, Tk 1,21,400, 316 kg of potato and 100 rolls of polythene were distributed among the flood-hit from August 31 to September 18.

Besides, 2,200 families in Decree Char union under Sadar upazila were given 10 kg of rice each, he said at a press conference at his office.

A report from our Kurigram correspondent says: Hundreds of people have been affected as the Jamuna, Teesta, Dharia, and Dudhkumar eroded land, houses and other structures.

Deputy Commissioner Md Habibur Rahman said they have proposed that the higher authorities take steps to prevent river erosion.

Our Madaripur correspondent reports: Flood situation deteriorated due to heavy

rains yesterday.

Around 200 families have become marooned as some fresh areas including Kuldipt, Puranbazar and Kumartek in the district town have gone under water.

## Arms case

FROM PAGE 1  
Investigation Department (CID) assigned an officer to investigate the Ibrahim murder case after the police headquarters asked the Detective Branch to hand over the case to the CID.

Abdul Kahar Akond, senior assistant superintendent of police, said they appointed ASP Khandaker Abdul Halim as the investigation officer.

Md Moniruzzaman, additional deputy commissioner of the Detective Branch, said they were yet to hand over the case documents to the CID as the newly appointed IO had not contacted them.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun decided to transfer the case to the CID at a meeting of AL presidium on instructions from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, said a source.

The decision came after DMP Commissioner AKM Shahidul Hoque on Thursday told journalists that Shaon was not involved in the killing.

He said Ibrahim was killed by a shot from Shaon's pistol in the lawmaker's car parked on Block-6 in front of the MP Hostel at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban complex on August 13. But the lawmaker's involvement in the shooting was not found.

# JS committee

FROM PAGE 16  
government system, and curtailing the power of the prime minister, he added.

The original constitution of 1972 stipulated secularism as one of the four fundamental principles of the state.

But military ruler Ziaur Rahman through a martial law proclamation amended the constitution and replaced the principle of secularism with "absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah".

Another military ruler HM Ershad amended the constitution again in 1988, giving Islam the status of state religion.

The Supreme Court recently in a verdict declared the fifth amendment illegal. The amendment had ratified all acts of the Zia regime including the changes it brought to the constitution.

With the cancellation of the fifth amendment, secularism was restored in the constitution, but it has been in contradiction with the clause that declares Islam the state religion.

The special committee might also recommend that the parliament includes new clauses in the constitution to protect the environment, and to recognise indigenous communities, the sources said.

Constitutions of 177 countries have specific clauses for protecting the environment, but the constitution of Bangladesh does not.

Against such a backdrop, the parliamentary standing committee on forest and environment ministry recom-

mended that the special committee suggests adding a specific clause in the constitution pledging to protect the environment.

The special committee will start preparing its recommendations after getting expert opinions.

"The Supreme Court declared the constitution's fifth amendment illegal and void. Now we will seek expert opinions on how to restore the provisions that were changed by the fifth amendment," Suranjit Sengupta, co-chair of the special committee, said in a media briefing yesterday in the parliament's Media Centre after a meeting of the committee.

The meeting held in Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban decided to invite those constitutional experts who were earlier invited to scrutinise ordinances promulgated by the immediate past caretaker government.

At that time, eminent jurists Mahmudul Islam, Dr M Zahir, Rafique-ul Huq, and Tawfique Nawaz were among the invitees.

This time around, eminent jurists Dr Kamal Hossain, and M Amir-ul Islam might also be invited, a member of the committee said.

Suranjit said the experts will be allowed to give opinions on any issue.

No person other than members of the special committee, the law minister, and the Law Commission chairman was allowed to attend yesterday's meeting.

# Invest in homeland

FROM PAGE 1  
improve the socio-economic of the people.

Hasina mentioned her government's success in maintaining the economic growth almost at 6 percent even despite global economic downturn.

The expatriates expressed deep gratitude to the PM as her government has facilitated them to gain their voting rights.

They expatriates also congratulated the premier as she has been placed at sixth on a list of the 10 top women leaders of the world prepared by internationally-reputed Time magazine.

On democracy, the PM said her government is strongly committed to establish all democratic rights of the people.

She said following the landslide victory in the December 29, 2008 general elections, the people have reposed a great responsibility on her government to work for their social and economic development.

"People have voted us to power and we are working hard to fulfil the people's expectations," Hasina said.

She recalled the contribution of the Bangladeshi expatriates throughout the world to ensure her release from jail of the army backed caretaker government.

Hasina also expressed her

gratitude to the expatriates for their historic role at a time when she was prevented from returning home from abroad by the caretaker rulers. "We all have worked hard to restore democracy in our motherland," she said.

On investment, the PM said during the rule of the last BNP-Jamaat regime and the immediate past caretaker government, country's economic and industrial development came to a standstill.

"With the blessings of Almighty Allah and by dint of hard labour and implementation of various innovative projects, our government has been successful to bring dynamism to all economic sectors including in the field of investment," she said.

Hasina said expatriate Bangladeshis can play tremendous role in national development by making investment in the country in a big way. She mentioned the government's initiatives to form the Expatriates Welfare Bank, which will ensure safe migration and effective investment of the expatriates.

The PM was scheduled to leave Brussels for New York at local time 11:15am yesterday.

Sheikh Rehana, All-Europe Awami League President Anil Das Gupta, UK Awami League Adviser Sultan Sharif and PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad, among others, were present.

# PARTEX GROUP CHIEF Hearing on tax evasion charge now on Oct 20

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday adjourned the hearing on charge framing against former BNP lawmaker and Partex Group Chairman MA Hashem in a tax evasion case till October 20.

Judge Mohammad Ismail Hossain of the Senior Special Judge's Court set the date after Hashem's lawyer submitted a petition seeking time.

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) filed the case with Gulshan Police station against Hashem, also chairman of United Commercial Bank Ltd, for evading tax on August 23.

The court also directed the officer-in-charge of the police station to submit a report on execution of the arrest warrant by September 19.

In the case statement, Kabir Uddin Mollah, deputy tax commissioner, alleged that Hashem evaded Tk4,76 crores income tax from 1977-1978 fiscal year to 2005-2006 fiscal year.

Hashem is on anticipatory bail from the High Court.

He was also arrested in a case filed on May 28, 2007, for his alleged involvement with syndicates behind price hikes of essentials in 2008. He was released on bail from the HC on August 4, 2008.

## DB check-post!

FROM PAGE 16  
the handcuff while committing the crimes.

For a few months police were getting complaints that a gang, impersonating DB policemen, were mugging people, he said.

Kazi Yusuf, one of the arrestees told The Daily Star at Mirpur Police Station that they formed the gang around three months back.

"We bought the wireless set from a private company and the handcuff from Kachukhet bazaar, and used to rent cars to set up checkposts," he said.

KM Ariful Kabir, one of the victims mugged by the gang, told this correspondent that the gang took away his motorcycle and two mobile phones at a temporary check post on August 21 when he along with a friend was going to Tamanna City in Mirpur around 9:00pm.

"I saw firearms with them at that time," he mentioned.

Kabir recognised Shahidul Islam Shahid, one of the gang members.

He had filed a general diary on the day with Shah Ali Police Station in this connection.

## Govt wants

FROM PAGE 16  
nationwide anthrax threat.

An inter-ministerial meeting comprised of 25 representatives from the livestock, health, environment, home affairs, foreign affairs ministries and Dhaka City Corporation would be held at 11:00am and the committee will be formed following the meeting.

The committee will ensure all the ministries concerned and bodies perform their duties properly regarding the handling and import of cattle and also management of cattle diseases, without solely depending on the livestock ministry.

The health ministry officials said formulation of a taskforce would work better as it remains active in the field level while the steering committee depends on technical committee and other implementing bodies.

They also argued for blanket vaccination of the cattle to halt the anthrax outbreak immediately.

Prof Nazrul Islam, virologist and former vice chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) also placed stress on blanket vaccination.

"But the livestock department should let us know about the effectiveness of the vaccine they are manufacturing," he said.

"Still the government is taking strategies depending on the manifestation of the outbreak, which is not enough. The government needs to go for proper management system and strong monitoring following a sero surveillance," he added.

This is the second instance of human anthrax infection in the country. Last year about 35 people contracted the disease.

The disease has already spread to 12 districts from August 18 this year affecting a total of 583 people, shows the record of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR).

Meanwhile, one person was infected with anthrax yesterday at Madaripur Sadar Upazila, reports our Madaripur correspondent.

Panic also gripped Bagerhat district following the death of two cows at Afra village of Jatrapur Union.

Our Benapole correspondent reports, a total of 150 cattle imported from India were kept under the BDR supervision in Puthkhal border yesterday for health screening.

The cautionary measure was taken soon after the government imposed restriction on importing sick cows from India.

# Logging fest

FROM PAGE 1

the first two chars. Parts of Noboganga, where more than 100 trees were chopped down on September 2 alone, and Char Sonaikandi bear signs of extensive denuding.

However, Rajshahi Range Officer M Rabiul Islam claims no trees have been felled. "We are only collecting the trees washed away by the river," he told this correspondent.

Replying to another query, he said they did not sell the trees at auction beforehand because they did not know that erosion would strike. "What if we sold the trees and there were no erosion?" he asked.

Besides, the officer argued, the trees were to mature in 2012.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found trees being felled and sold in presence of nursery attendant Abdur Razzak, who is officially assigned to look after the char forest.

Razzak said his supervisor and forester M Moyen Uddin and range officer M Rabiul Islam are aware of the activities.

Contacted, Moyen Uddin said, "We are giving away the branches to the locals as they are helping us collect the trees and save the trunks for government auction."

He, however, admitted they are doing this without following proper procedures.

Rabiul Islam said they have so far collected only 500 trees for auction this year. Last year, he added, they sold some 2,000 trees at Tk 40,416. Asked how the trees could sell so cheap, Tk 20 apiece, he said, "We cannot interfere in the auction. Besides, those were sold as firewood."

According to forest department officials, erosion has shrunk the forest to 17 hectares with only 2,000 trees.

WDB Superintendent Engineer M Mahtab Uddin told The Daily Star, "We had warned them of erosion. Since the chars were in the middle of the river, they were sure to wear away."

But the forest department ignored the warning and sought permission from the Deputy Commissioner's Office in Rajshahi.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (revenue) Khondoker Mahbubur Rahman said, "We gave them permission, as we thought short-term forestry programme on the chars, which were lying useless anyway, might help the local people."

Locals say plundering began in 2005 and peaked in 2007-08 when most of the trees had matured.

Haripur union chairman Bazle Rizvi Al-Hasan Manzil said the forest officials never paid heed to his "verbal complaints" against logging.

"None of the 100 beneficiaries [participants in the programme] has ever been paid either," he added.

Felu Mollah, an elderly man from Haripur, alleged, "They [plunderers] do not even allow us to collect firewood for cooking."

Ward councillor Atiqur Rahman Sena said no-one dares stand against them. "They threatened us whenever we tried to raise our voice."

When this correspondent went to Char Sonaikandi, nursery attendant Razzak

was sitting inside a tin-shed room, around which were lying logs of over 300 trees. While some people were chopping woods, some were weighing those in a scale.

Nearly 40 maunds of firewood are sold a day at a rate of Tk 80 per maund, locals said.

Johra, who lives in a thatched house behind Razzak's shed, said she sells firewood for her neighbour Yunus and Saral with permission from Razzak.

Pointing at the logs Razzak said, "These trees were washed away and later collected from the river."

Asked about signs of tree felling in areas that had not yet been affected by erosion, he said, "The thieves took away those trees."

His shed though was not far from the spot where tree felling was still on. When he was taken there, one Sohail Rana was cutting down trees.

"The river devours a vast stretch of land at a stroke. And that's why we have allowed Rana to fell these trees in advance," Razzak explained.

Refuting the allegation of his involvement in forest plundering, he said, "I am rather putting some money in the government coffers. All who worked before me let these trees get washed away."

Rabiul Islam said, "It's for Razzak that we are still getting something out of this forest."

He also claimed Razzak and Moyen spent Tk 15,000 from their own purse to carry the collected trees to Rajshahi city for auction.

Asked why they would do so, he said they wanted to turn in a good performance so their jobs remained secure.

Razzak and Moyen say they did it as they are "loyal to the government".

# Basque separatist calls for mediation in conflict

BBC ONLINE

The outlawed Basque separatist group Eta has appealed for international mediation to resolve its conflict with the Spanish government.

The call, published in a Basque newspaper, comes two weeks after Madrid dismissed the group's latest unilateral ceasefire as "inadequate".

Madrid says the group must renounce violence forever.

Eta's campaign for independence from Spain has cost more than 800 lives since 1968.

A previous unilateral ceasefire in 2006 led to preliminary talks, but the government broke off contact after a bomb at Madrid airport killed two people.

"Faced with the stubbornness of France and Spain, Eta has decided again to launch the boat of opportunity for the democratic resolution of the conflict," the group said in excerpts of the communique published by the newspaper, Gara.

The paper said it would release the entire statement in its Sunday edition.

Eta said it took the decision "without throwing anchor, ready to navigate in deeper waters".

# Iranian rights