

PM for women's

FROM PAGE 20
Sajid Kamal, son of Poet Sufia Kamal, eminent writer Rizia Rahman and Chairman of Jatiya Mohila Sangstha Prof Momtaj Begum.

On Women Development Policy, the premier said the government has formulated the policy to establish rights of the country's women in all spheres of society.

"We had to face adverse situation to implement the policy although we had formulated it in light of the Holy Quran and Sunnah," she said, adding that there was nothing wrong in the policy that could hurt religious sentiments.

Paying rich tributes to Poet Begum Sufia Kamal, she said that she (Sufia Kamal) was a symbol of truth, justice and humanity and one of the pioneers of the country's independence and cultural movements who had never deviated from her secular stand.

Sheikh Hasina said the women community of the country would ever remember Poet Sufia Kamal for her relentless efforts for establishing equal rights of women and bringing them to light from darkness. "We are working to complete the unfinished tasks of Begum Sufia Kamal."

For women empowerment, she said the present government has taken various measures for expansion of women education, ensuring gender equality and health and their safety and security in society.

She said her government has formulated prevention of domestic violence and protection act-2010, included women in its efforts to build a "Digital Bangladesh" and imparted their training on housekeeping, mobile servicing and English language to ensure their economic empowerment.

Later, the Prime Minister witnessed a cultural show and a documentary on life and works of Poet Sufia Kamal.

13 BNP men

FROM PAGE 20
charges of creating anarchy, vandalism and arson during the 36-hour hartal on June 12 and 13 enforced by the main opposition and its ally Jamaat-e-Islami.

The HC bench of Justice Syed Mohammad Ziaul Karim and Justice ANM Bashirullah passed the order following three bail petitions filed by the accused.

The accused yesterday appeared before the HC bench.

Barrister Moudud Ahmed and barrister Anwarul Islam Shaheen appeared for the petitioners.

Sheikh Mamun

FROM PAGE 20
Services Public Relations (ISPR).

Fakhruddin was made the DG by transferring former DG of DGFI Lt Gen Molla Fazle Akbar as the commandant of National Defence College.

ISPR sources said, Maj Gen Mamun Khaled, logistic area commander of the army, earlier had served the DGFI as a director for around three years.

Mob beats

FROM PAGE 20
Police rescued them and sent to a local hospital where Sumon died around 7:00am.

The gang entered the house of one Sagor cutting the iron bars of a window around 3:30am, Abul Basar, officer-in-charge of South Keraniganj Police Station told newsmen.

Sensing the presence of robbers, residents of the house shouted for help. Locals came forward and caught them red-handed, added the OC quoting witnesses.

The body was sent to Sir Salimullah Medical College (SSMC) morgue for an autopsy.

The law enforcers were investigating the incident whether it was a burglary or a case of local rivalry.

Meanwhile, police around 6:00am yesterday recovered the body of an unidentified 40-year-old man from near a mosque on Shah Shaheb Lane in the capital's Gendaria area.

The body bore marks of injuries on the forehead and back and was sent to SSMC morgue for an autopsy, said Farukh Ahmed, OC of Gandaria Police Station.

Police asked some devotees who went to the mosque for Fajr prayers, but could not ascertain his identity.

Babar charged

FROM PAGE 1
alliance led by BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami.

Kibria's family rejected the new charge sheet as strongly as it denounced the first one.

"This charge sheet is nothing but farcical," Kibria's widow Asma Kibria told The Daily Star in her reaction to the supplementary charge sheet. "It has not identified the real culprits and the masterminds," she said.

Investigation Officer (IO) Rafiqul Islam, an additional superintendent of police, said they found enough evidence to name the 14 new suspects in the supplementary charge sheet.

He said police retained the 10 previously-charged people in the charge sheet as their names came up in the first one.

The charge sheet was ready for submission on May 25. But the investigators deferred the submission due to Asma Kibria's allegation that the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police had excluded the real culprits and masterminds.

Asked what changes came in the charge sheet he submitted yesterday, the IO replied, "Nothing."

"I readied it a month ago. But the senior officials took more time for a final check."

Finding no mistake or flaw, they kept it unchanged and asked me to go ahead with it," Rafiqul told The Daily Star.

Of the new accused, only nine are in custody now, said the IO. The detained nine are former state minister Lutfozzaman Babar, Indian national Md Abdul Aziz Butt alias Abdul Mazed Butt, Mufti Mainuddin Sheikh alias Abu Zandal, Huji kingpin Mufti Abdul Hannan, his brother Muhibullah alias Muhibur Rahman alias Ovi, Sharif Shahedul Alam Bipul, Hafez Syed Nayeem Ahmed Arif, Md Badrul Alam Mizan, and Mizanur Rahman alias Mizan.

Kibria, also a former Awami League lawmaker from Habiganj, was killed in a grenade attack on a rally at Baidyer Bazar in Habiganj on January 27, 2005. His nephew Shah Manzur Huda, local AL leader Abdur Rahim, Abul Hossain, and Siddique Ali were also killed in the attack.

CID official Rafiqul was tasked with "further investigation" on May 6, 2007, weeks before the then IO, CID's SP Munshi Atiqur Rahman went on retirement.

Six years into the murder, the investigators found Babar's alleged involvement in the plot executed by militants, officials said.

Babar, the then state minister for home, arranged sending abroad Maulana Tajuddin, an accused in the murder who is also the brother of former state minister Abdus Salam Pintu, using a fake name days after Huji kingpin Mufti Hannan was nabbed by the law enforcers on October 1, 2005, the investigator said.

Babar is now in jail in connection with several graft charges.

Rafiqul said banned militant organisation Huji was behind the attack.

"The killers were determined to carry out the assassination as part of a plan to eliminate the AL leadership on the pretext that it was a pro-Indian political party," the IO said.

The attackers held several secret meetings in the capital and in Habiganj to execute the plan, he added.

Badrul Alam Mizan was caught from Habiganj town on a tip-off by Mufti Hannan on October 1, 2006, the IO said. Mizan also confessed that he had joined the attack on instruction from Mufti Hannan.

The other newly accused are Moulana Tajuddin, Mufti Shafiqur Rahman, Mufti Abdul Hye, Mohammad Ali, and Badrul Alam Badrul.

They were determined to kill the man under a plan to eliminate AL, the IO said.

About the 10 accused in the previous charge sheet, Rafiqul told The Daily Star, "We did not find any evidence on the allegations brought against them. But their names came up in the first charge sheet. Now it is up to the trial court to look into the matter."

BACKGROUND
After the deadly grenade attack, Habiganj district AL Organising Secretary Abdul Mazid Khan, now a lawmaker, filed two cases in this connection -- one for killing and the other for using explosive substance -- with Habiganj Sadar Police Station the following day.

The home ministry assigned CID's Munshi Atiqur Rahman as the IO of the two cases.

A high-powered government probe committee submitted its report in April 2005 accusing 10 people of Habiganj including some local BNP leaders and grassroots activists.

The first 10 accused are district BNP Vice-president Abdul Quaiyum, Juba Dal leader Zainal Abedin Jalal, Zamir Ali, Tajul Islam, Zainal Abedin Mumin, Shahed Ali, Selim Ahmed, Ayat Ali, Muhibur Rahman, and Kajol Miah.

In his charge sheet submitted on March 10 the same year, the then IO also accused the same 10, and his report was identical to that of the probe committee.

Receiving the first charge sheet, Sylhet Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal Judge Biplab Goswami started a trial through framing charges against the 10 accused. But following appeal by the complainant, the High Court stayed the proceedings.

The complainant in the cases and Kibria's family repeatedly expressed their "no confidence" over the investigation and asked for reinvestigation.

Further investigation was done during 2007-2008 caretaker government regime, following a court order.

All the 10 got released on bail during the army-backed caretaker government rule, one of whom later died.

5 educationists

FROM PAGE 20
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University.

President Zillur Rahman approved their appointment. National professors are entitled to government allowances and other benefits.

AL MPs

FROM PAGE 20
Mannan from Bogra-1 constituency raised the issue while speaking on the budget at parliament.

All our discussion is likely to go in vain as the premier and the finance minister will take final decision on any possible change to the budget proposals, he mentioned.

"Even though, I am taking part in the budget discussion and hoping if any of my point is entertained," added Mannan.

After a break for Maghrib prayers another member of parliament from AL, KM Khalid expressed resentment over the absence of Finance Minister AMA Muhith in the House during the budget discussion.

"The finance minister is not here. I find no officials from the finance ministry in the galleries to hear or note down our proposals," Khalid said drawing the attention of Speaker Abdul Hamid.

It does not make any sense if the lawmakers have to regurgitate what they are told, noted Khalid.

AL MP Manoranjan Shil Gopal observed the country's national security and sovereignty is under threat due to dominance of foreign operators in the mobile telephone sector.

He demanded more allocation for the state-run operator Teletalk to attract major share of around seven crore of subscribers.

"We need to popularise Teletalk among the people to safeguard our national security and sovereignty," he insisted.

Indian army

FROM PAGE 1
members martyred in the Liberation War and met Bangladesh Army chief Gen Mohammad Abdul Mubeen.

Today, the Gen Vijay Kumar will call on the naval and air chiefs of Bangladesh and GOC of Chittagong Cantonment and visit Chittagong East Bengal Regiment where he will place wreath at a monument built in the memory of liberation war martyrs.

He will attend the passing out parade at Bangladesh Military Academy and visit Rangamati for site seeing.

The general is the only living Indian Army veterans who took part in the Liberation War in 1971 for allied forces under the Eastern Command.

He fought in Feni, Chittagong and Cox's Bazar as a second lieutenant after being commissioned in the Rajput Regiment in 1970.

Gen Vijay Kumar is visiting Bangladesh at the government invitation. It is a reciprocal visit, according to Inter Services Public Relations.

In 1998, the then Bangladesh Army chief Gen Mustafizur Rahman visited the neighbouring country and attended a passing out parade of the commissioned officers of Indian army.

BSS reports, during the meeting at her official residence Gono Bhaban, Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh believes in peaceful coexistence and maintaining friendly relations with all its neighbours including India.

She also recalled with deep gratitude the contribution of the then Indian government, its military personnel and civilians in 1971 war.

At the meet, the Indian Army chief handed over to Hasina some rare photographs of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's India trips and also some photos of Bangabandhu published in different Indian dailies.

During the meeting with President Zillur Rahman at Banga Bhaban, Gen Vijay Kumar laid emphasis on increasing exchange of training and sharing of experiences between Indian and Bangladesh armies for further strengthening capacity of the two neighbouring forces.

Also, President Zillur Rahman recalled the contribution of Indian Army during the Liberation War.

The Indian Army chief apprised the president that he had imparted training to freedom fighters at different frontier camps from April to September in 1971.

Gen Vijay Kumar arrived in the capital on June 20, accompanied by his wife Bharati Singh and five officials of Indian Army.

He is scheduled to leave the country on June 23.

3 ministers

FROM PAGE 1
Hasina and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Khaleda Zia on June 22. He will also hold a press conference the same day.

German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Dirk Niebel and the Commissioner for Development Cooperation of the European Union Andris Piebalgs were also in Dhaka late last night.

Niebel and Piebalgs will jointly meet with the Prime Minister, and also with ministers for finance, education and environment separately today and will hold a press conference in the evening.

They will hold a press conference again on June 23 after meeting with the Leader of the Opposition. They will also exchange views with the representatives of the civil society.

The European nations are major development partners of Bangladesh and largest export market for its products. They want improvement in human rights, transparency and better governance, the issues linked to their aid and market access.

Diplomatic sources said the ministers will visit projects funded by their countries and discuss trade, climate change, health, development issues. They are also expected to review the current political situation as the visits are taking place amid growing signs of political unrest in the country.

Govt share up to 80pc

FROM PAGE 1
share will be 65 percent."

But critics claim that Petrobangla's share will be only 20 percent.

The critic group also argues that the US company will export all the discovered gas by putting pressure on Petrobangla to give it a very high price for the gas. And in case of the demand for a very high price, Petrobangla will have no option but to turn it down, and thus let the company invoke the export clause.

EXPORT DEBATE
The Petrobangla official, who is also known as one of the top PSC experts, noted that the issue of exporting gas was far-fetched.

"As per contract, when ConocoPhillips discovers enough gas, it will at first bring that to Petrobangla with a development plan. If Petrobangla agrees, then the company will supply gas to it," he said. "Petrobangla will buy only the company's gas plus the company's gas share for recovery of its cost. We will get our share for free."

Price of the gas discovered in the deep sea blocks cannot be fixed randomly since there is a pricing formula as in the other existing contracts with international oil companies. The contract with Conoco offers no room for the oil company to go outside the pricing formula.

Again, given the present gas crisis, the government has taken initiatives to import liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Qatar at a cost more than double that of the most expensive gas produced by a foreign oil company. It shows the nation will be willing to pay more if the crisis is acute.

"If Petrobangla declines to take that gas -- which will happen only if we are saturated with gas -- then ConocoPhillips may go to a local third party."

"If the third party refuses, the oil company can explore the possibility of export only in the form of LNG, and not through pipeline or any other means," the Petrobangla official explained.

Again, the export option will be a very difficult one for the oil company. Explaining this, the official said, firstly the company will have to set up an LNG processing plant in the mainland. It will have to invest for the 280 km pipeline to bring the deep sea gas to the plant. The plant should have a minimum production capacity of 5 million to 7 million tonnes per year and have a production life of 20 years, which means the gas field must have a significant recoverable reserve.

"But this is almost a fantasy that we will see discovery of a massive gas field," he said.

The LNG facilities require \$ 3 billion to 5 billion investment.

"Why did we keep this provision? Because we thought, if there is a situation ever when we don't need gas, we will still want to add value to the gas discovery. If the company invests \$3 to 5 billion, this will help the country," he said.

Finally, all other PSCs have similar provisions of exporting gas by converting it into LNG. But no company has ever tried to export it that way. In the past, Unocal sat over the Bibiyana gas field and sought government approval to export it through pipeline, saying Bangladesh market was saturated. It was not approved.

EXPORT FROM FLOATING TERMINAL?
Critics said ConocoPhillips will never bring gas through pipeline, will process it in a "floating LNG terminal" and export it.

"To our knowledge, there are presently 50 LNG processing plants in operation around the world and 30 more under construction. None of those are floating. The floating LNG terminals are for docking purposes and not for LNG production," the Petrobangla official noted.

As per international practice, an LNG plant should have a minimum production capacity of 7 million tonnes a year.

Recently, an LNG plant has been constructed in Australia, with the participation of ConocoPhillips in it. It has a production capacity of 20 million tonnes a year, and it cost \$30 billion, he said.

"We do not know whether it is practical to set up a floating LNG plant (even if it is available) 280 km off the coast. You must also consider the fact that in the Bay of Bengal, no oil and gas exploration or development activities take place except in the winter because of rough weather. In the summer and monsoon, usually there are storms with a wind speed of around 150 km an hour," he explained.

DEEP SEA HYPE
The Petrobangla official also watered down excessive optimism about making huge discoveries in the Bay. He mentioned that two offshore gas fields of Myanmar which are near Bangladesh have 7 tcf (trillion cubic feet) gas, while the only discovered offshore gas field of India in Godabari have 14 tcf gas. The problem with the Indian field is that the reserve is spread in many small segments and there is no single stream. As a result, India could not market this gas in a large way even 10 years after its discovery.

In the Bangladeshi waters, French company Total had conducted exploration in the Bay, and ultimately left the country after spending \$ 45 million for surveys. "It does not mean we don't have gas. We have to be cautiously optimistic," he pointed out.

Cost recovery debate
The critic group also claimed that the oil company will take out the majority share of gas in the form of cost recovery.

Cost recovery is a contractual provision allowing a company to recover its exploration and development cost from a producing oil and gas field. If there is no production, the company swallows the cost as a loss. Cost recovery is made from a share in the sale of Petrobangla's gas, and usually it takes six to seven years. During this period, Petrobangla's share of free gas shrinks.

The Petrobangla official noted that the cost recovery provision is not perpetual. Except for Sangu, costs of all other fields under a production sharing contract (PSC) have been recovered or has almost been recovered. Three major fields of Bibiyana, Jalalabad and Moulavibazar passed their cost recovery period more than two years ago, and is giving Petrobangla around 76 percent share.

Sangu field is an exception where cost recovery went on perpetually for many years as the field faced a lot of problems and needed re-investment.

IS IT A SECRET DEAL?

The PSC with ConocoPhillips was signed last week with some modifications and additions over the model PSC. The additional provision deals with giving the company the right to explore the "disputed" deep sea areas once the disputes are resolved. Part of the company's blocks are claimed by Myanmar and India, and that has been left out from exploration.

The official mentioned that a modification of the model PSC was made by omitting a word "inefficient" in dealing with the clauses for blowout compensation from the company in case there is a blowout. This was deleted as the word inefficient is used in contracts nowhere in the world. "But the contract asks the company to fully compensate for environmental and resources damage caused by negligent operation of the company leading to a blowout."

"Our PSC is one of the toughest PSCs in the world. Its tougher than those in Malaysia," he claimed.

"The model PSC is a public document for the last several years. Anyone can go to the Petrobangla website to read the contract. (http://www.petrobangla.org.bd/MODEL%20PRODUCTION%20SHARING%20CONTRACT%202008-FEBRUARY.pdf) to see who gets what share," he said.

DOES PSC MAKE GAS COSTLY?

Critics say Petrobangla's deals harm national interest. They argue that the PSCs have made gas costly while gas produced by the national companies is cheap. They demand that all explorations and developments must be done by the local Bapex, instead of foreign oil companies.

But the petrobangla official said gas produced by local companies is cheap mainly because Dutch company Shell Oil gave Bangladesh all the five major gas fields including the Titas field, which it discovered in the sixties and early seventies, for a token 4.5 million pounds. In terms of oil price (\$70 per barrel), the gas reserve of these fields is worth around \$ 130 billion.

This means Bangladesh was not required to pay the cost for exploration or development of these fields, he said.

"Bapex is now making its own exploration and development. We estimate that the cost of Bapex's gas will be Tk 100 per thousand cubic metres."

The official further said price of the same gas under a PSC can be as high as \$3. But Petrobangla has free share in the PSC gas. The Bibiyana field that produces more than 650 mmcf/d gives Petrobangla 76 percent free gas.

"We had expected critics to demand the government increase its supervision capabilities so that oil companies fully comply with the agreements. That would have been a bid to protect the national interest. Our job is to ensure energy, and we cannot do so the way they want," said the Petrobangla official.

Babar

FROM PAGE 1
The controversial ex-state minister was a close aide to Tarique Rahman, the eldest son of Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia, during the tenure of the previous BNP-led alliance government.

A supplementary charge sheet was submitted yesterday in the Kibria murder case against 24 people including Babar. Former finance minister Kibria and four others were killed in a grenade attack in Habiganj on January 27, 2005.

Talking to The Daily Star, Babar's counsel Abdullah Mahmud Hasan said the Anti-Corruption Commission filed a case against his client and five others in October 2007 on charges of taking Tk 21 crore in bribe to save the Bashundhara Group chairman's son from a murder case.

Babar, currently serving 17 years behind bars in an arms case, was also shown arrested in connection with the August 21 grenade attack on an Awami League rally in 2004 when he was the state minister for home.

His lawyer added Babar is also an accused in the 10-truck arms haul case, while another case filed by the National Board of Revenue is still pending for trial.

During the state of emergency, the joint forces recovered four firearms from his Gulshan residence and arrested him on May 28, 2007. A court later sentenced him to 17 years' rigorous imprisonment for possessing the illegal arms and ammunition.

His party BNP expelled him for breaching party discipline before the parliamentary elections held on December 29, 2008 but withdrew the expulsion order on December 19, 2009.

Police arrest 2 in city after

gunfight
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police last night arrested two alleged criminals including one with bullet injury after a gunfight at a check post near Rajarbagh Police Lines area in the capital.

The law enforcers also seized two revolvers and 10 rounds of bullets from their possession.

Bullet-hit Tanvir Ahmed Sajib, 20, and Nur Mohammad, 22, were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Police signaled a motorbike to stop at a temporary check post near Rajarbagh Police Lines around 11:00pm but the riders opened fire forcing the cops to retaliate, Shahidul Haque, officer-in-charge of Palton Police Station told The Daily Star.

They arrested Tanvir and seized a revolver from his possession, while Nur Mohammad was arrested from the city's Shahjahanpur area after he tried to flee the spot. Police also another firearm from him.

Another, Shakil managed to flee the spot with the motorbike, added the OC.

Turag grabbers

FROM PAGE 20
from the river between BIWTA landing station and Ashulia Sluice Gate, said the press release.

An investigation revealed that none of the traders, who extract sand from the Meghna, has DoE clearance though mandatory under environment law, said Mohammad Munir Chowdhury, director of DoE, who led the drive along with Rapid Action Battalion-2 and other DoE officials.

River bed, ecology, morphology and navigable channels are being destroyed as a result of sand-extraction from the country's various rivers without environmental impact assessment, he also said.

The vessels carrying sand had no document, he added saying the ongoing drive is a part of measures to keep the river Turag and its adjacent water body free from illegal encroachment, filling and pollution.

Rumana

FROM PAGE 1
"My daughter is too young. My parents are sick and now he has done this to me. I feel threatened, insecure.... Brother, press for his trial," she told reporters.

From the airport she was straightway taken to LabAid for continuation of treatment.

Doctors and family members will brief reporters about her condition at the hospital around 11:00am today.

The family brought her back, as doctors said no treatment for her eyes was available at the moment.

The eye specialists in Sankara Nethralaya, however, recommended taking Rumana to the hospital after two months.

"We're considering taking her to India after two months," said a cousin.

Tanzim Uddin Khan, a DU teacher of international relations department, said they will hold an emergency meeting today to chalk out protest programmes against the torture on Rumana, who is also a postgraduate student of the University of British Columbia in Canada.

Her father Manzur Hossain who was present at the airport demanded exemplary punishment of Sumon.

Following his arrest on June 15, Sumon on police remand confessed to torturing Rumana.

US drones kill 6 in Pakistan

AFP, Paris

France and Britain plan to set up a joint team to oversee the possible development of an unmanned military aircraft, French Defence Minister Gerard Longuet said yesterday at the Paris Air Show.

The team will be based in Britain and charged with drawing up requirements for a European drone so the allies can eventually put the programme out to tender to the defence industry, he said.