

## Businesses

FROM PAGE 20

builder of vessels for foreign buyers.

"It affects overall business activities. At the same time, the cost of doing business has also gone up."

He said businesses face problems of funds from banks when uncertainty over political stability deepens.

"Political unrest and uncertainty hurt business and investment confidence," Saiful said. "Business confidence improved earlier due to infrastructure development projects taken up by the government. But uncertainty in the political arena discourages domestic and foreign investors."

Fazlul Hoque, former president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said recognising the outstanding performances of the business personalities is encouraging. "Of course, such recognition will inspire us."

The economy however has been suffering from different prongs, he said. "The industrial sector has been suffering from the crisis of gas and power and for weak infrastructures."

Hewent on, "The economy grew positively over the years despite various challenges. The industry especially the garment sector increased its capacity and bagged a good market worldwide. But suddenly there is an unexpected fall in the inflow of orders from overseas buyers."

Hoque said if political stability could be ensured, exporters would be able to evade the fallout in western economies.

The government's proposed 1.5 percent tax at source might hamper the exports, making the garment sector uncompetitive, he feared.

"Cost of doing business has increased in Bangladesh for different reasons like price hike of gas, power and petroleum products," Hoque added.

David Hasanat, chairman and managing director of Viyellatex Group, said recognition is always inspiring.

"The most important thing is that the recognition will act as an inspiration for the next generation for doing positive changes in the business areas," said the former "Business Person of the Year".

"We want an industry-friendly environment, adequate supply of gas and power and political stability for smooth running of business."

Hasanat also said, "We do not have to be worried, as the future of ready-made garment is bright with the world recovering from the recession."

Nasir A Chowdhury, an insurance pioneer and managing director of Greendelta Insurance, said The Daily Star-DHL Business Award is the most prestigious and unique recognition in the country. "It is very encouraging and inspiring for us," he said.

Michael Kuehner, managing director of Robi, the country's third largest cell phone operator in terms of subscription, said this is a country of dynamic development. "It needs a lot of entrepreneurs who can take on challenges," he added.

"Bangladesh is doing well and has a very good investment prospects," Kuehner said, referring to the recent acknowledgement of the country's economic growth by leading globally renowned financial institutions like Goldman Sachs.

## Polls without

FROM PAGE 1

amendment, which scrap the caretaker government system.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed placed the Constitution (15th Amendment) Bill, 2011, in parliament.

The BNP acting secretary general said people will resist the government's move to abolish the caretaker government system.

Fakhrul said new party agitation programmes will be announced on June 28.

As announced previously, BNP and its allies will organise countrywide demonstrations on June 28 to protest the raising of fuel, gas, electricity prices and hike in the fares of all modes of transport.

BNP and its ally Jamaat-e-Islami had simultaneously called countrywide dawn to dusk hartal on June 5 and a nationwide 36-hour hartal on June 12-13 on the caretaker government issue.

## Mosharraf denies

FROM PAGE 1

heaped all faults on me. The court let Niko off the hook by allowing the Canadian company pass all mistakes on me," he said.

Although Mosharraf yesterday denied taking any car from Niko, back in June 18, 2005 he told The Daily Star he saw nothing wrong in taking the car and he would not return the vehicle.

"This is just an over-magnification of a small issue. It is unjustified to call this a gift. I shall use this on official purpose -- it's not for my personal use. It will go back to Bapex once I have finished using it," Mosharraf said after his resignation.

His driver received the Land Cruiser Cygnus by signing a document from Niko that was severely being criticised for its negligent operation in an exploratory gas well in Tengratila -- leading to an explosion on January 8, 2005.

According to press reports Friday, Niko was fined more than \$9 million after it admitted to the Canadian court that it had bribed Mosharraf with a vehicle and a trip to North America.

The company pleaded guilty yesterday to providing goods or services "to influence the acts or decisions of a foreign state".

The former BNP state minister noted, "How could the court allow this? It should have conducted investigation whether Mosharraf Hossain has accepted the bribe. Then it could have given out punishment."

"Perhaps, Niko has admitted to bribing me to prove its innocence and evade punishment. Perhaps, the company is failing to give proper account of the money and its officials were risking jail."

He said the court should not have let Niko go scot-free. "What documents do they have to support the case? I do not think that they have any documents."

The former energy minister maintained he never accepted any money in the form of bribe in life. He urged the present government to look into all his records to probe the accusation.

"Nobody was able to prove that I took a car from Niko."

He also said in 2005 he stood down on his own as state minister for energy. "Quitting was a mistake. But I did that out of anger."

"I will take legal advice from lawyers to move against the Canadian court. How the court had accepted the claim of Niko that it has bribed me with a car and money?"

On the deal with Niko, he said, "I did not sign agreement with Niko. The deal was signed in 2000, a year before I became minister."

"I also took legal advice

whether it was possible to cancel the deal with Niko, but it was said that the deal cannot be cancelled, as it was a valid deal."

Although the previous Awami League government had initiated the unsolicited joint venture deal with Niko, the actual agreement had taken place in 2003.

In the name of developing marginal or previously used fields, Niko was given the unexplored Chhatak West gas field where Tengratila was located.

However, within a month of Mosharraf's resignation, Niko once again proved its poor skills through a second explosion at the same place of Tengratila.

Following the first blast, Mosharraf had strongly defended Niko and punished some Bapex officials who were in no way related to the disaster.

Mosharraf's bribe scam came into the limelight when a photograph of the car was supplied to the press from the government. Later, the prime minister asked him to resign.

Mosharraf was convicted in a corruption case during the rule of BNP government in early 90s, but was picked up as a state minister by Khaleda after her coming to power in 2001.

Immediately afterwards, he was seen strongly promoting a gas export proposal of US company Unocal.

Back then, sources in the Prime Minister's Office told The Daily Star, Mosharraf's resistance to pledging 20-year gas supply for Indian giant Tata's investment in Bangladesh, while advocating for export of gas to India had angered the Hawa Bhaban, the alternative powerhouse of the BNP-led coalition government.

And this led to his ouster; he was replaced by Mahmudur Rahman as energy adviser.

## Hezbollah says finds three CIA spies within group

REUTERS, Beirut

Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said on Friday the group had captured three spies among its members, two of whom were recruited by the US Central Intelligence Agency.

The spies, one of whom was recruited five months ago, did not pose a serious threat to the movement or its military capabilities, he said. "None of them have sensitive information that could harm the structure of the resistance."

Nasrallah said the CIA agents who hired the spies had diplomatic protection from the US embassy in Beirut. He accused the CIA of recruiting the spies on behalf of Israel.

## Talks must

FROM PAGE 1

movement on the caretaker government issue.

"No threat will work," he said referring to BNP's warning that the government will be forced to give in to its demand.

Mentioning the BNP chairperson's name, Selim said, "Resign if you have the courage. We will hold by-elections and win them. If necessary, HM Ershad will play the opposition leader's role."

Citing the Supreme Court's verdict on the 13th amendment, the senior AL leader said now there is no scope to keep the caretaker system.

However, he added, the opposition may return to parliament and propose alternatives if they have any.

**MENON BLASTS GAS DEAL**  
Speaking in the House yesterday, the Workers Party chief strongly criticised the government for signing recently a gas deal with US company ConocoPhillips keeping people in the dark.

He demanded the government make public the deal and place it in parliament for discussion.

"The prime minister had once said no gas would be

exported unless there was a reserve to meet 50 years' domestic demand. But it's her government that has signed a deal allowing gas export to a third party," he observed.

"It's not acceptable that only a few advisers, chairman [of Petrobangla] and secretaries will know about the deal, while the public will be in the dark," he continued.

"People know very well about the top government officials and what they could do. We now know how a minister of the last BNP-Jamaat government had been bribed by Canadian company Niko. We may hear similar stories in future about signing of the deal [with ConocoPhillips]."

Menon slammed the state minister for forest and environment for calling Anu Muhammad a foreign agent.

"Who are the foreign agents? Those who want to protect the country's natural resources or those who give our gas to a foreign company?"

Anu Muhammad, an economist, is the member-secretary of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas and Mineral Resources.

## Dyeing factory

FROM PAGE 20

Earlier, locals filed complaints with the authorities against the factories at Kumkumari village near Ashulia for polluting water bodies and agricultural land.

DoE sources say Apparel Village has also been running the factory illegally for 10 years without approval.

The DoE found 95,000 cubic metres of liquid industrial waste discharged by Apparel Village where the amount of oxygen was less than 1.3 milligram per litre.

Asked, the factory authorities could not satisfy the DoE officials with their replies regarding the pollution.

Locals say Apparel Village was continuing its operation violating the rules using power of political link.

During the drive, the DoE officials opened a drain of the factory and found evidence of huge pollution after testing the canal's water.

Although the factory authorities installed an Effluent Treatment Plant in 2008, they have reportedly never used it. The DoE has asked the factory to stop discharging liquid waste in the canal and use the ETP effectively without further delay.

The team also found an illegal pipeline set up by Sparkle Knit Composite Ltd. The pipeline was hampering normal water flow of a canal at Zirani near Dhaka-Tangail highway.

The DoE team served the factory authorities with a notice in this connection.

## Forest Dept

FROM PAGE 20

Each of the case documents named 15 persons and around 150 to 200 others unnamed, Masud Sarder, range officer for Kukrimukri told The Daily Star yesterday.

"I have sent the documents to Bhola Judicial Magistrate's Court through the divisional forest officer of Bhola," he added.

The three former UP chairmen are Jahangir Hossain of Gajalia UP, Samsuzzaman Likon of Panpatti UP and Mizanur Dakuia UP, all under Galachipa upazila.

Bellal Hossain Shishir, inspector of Bangladesh Ain Sahayata Kendra, is the main accused in both the cases.

A group of around 400 people felled the trees on Thursday destroying the much of the forest.

The forest official noted his department planted the trees in 2004-05 and 2005-06 fiscal years.

## CNG-run

FROM PAGE 20

Union and Dhaka Auto-Rickshaw Shramik Union jointly staged a demonstration and held a rally in front of the National Press Club in the afternoon in favour of the strike.

Addressing the rally Mohammad Hanif Khokon, general secretary of Dhaka Auto-Rickshaw Shramik Union, said they would enforce the strike if the government did not meet their demands by July 2.

He said, auto-rickshaw owners are charging Tk 1000 as opposed to Tk 600 adjusting to the price hike of CNG. The drivers buy the gas as well, which is why the government's fixed rate for auto-rickshaw fare is inadequate, he added.

The 10-point demand also include punitive measures against the auto-rickshaw owners who collect extra fee from drivers ignoring the government-fixed rate, end of police harassment in the name of checking driver's licence, adapting a new hassle-free system of obtaining driver's licence, creating parking space for auto-rickshaws at different places.

## 2 killed

FROM PAGE 20

Women's College.

Both were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared them dead, hospital sources said.

Shariful was laying rods on the sixth floor of the building around 11:00pm when he slipped and fell.

Amirul Islam got electrocuted when he switched on the motor for lifting underground water to the upper floors. His coworkers rushed him to DMCH where doctors announced him dead at 3:00pm.

## Business heroes honoured

FROM PAGE 1

(IIDFC), was crowned with the Lifetime Achievement Award for a career that spanned six decades. He is best recognised as a doyen of banking for building a financial system to give up the war-ravaged economy soon after the Liberation War.

Matul Islam, as the country's first finance secretary, nationalised six banks and set up Arab Bangladesh Bank, a first step in the private sector.

Architect Tanya Tazeen Karim, co-partner of Tanya Karim NR Khan & Associates, was crowned as the Outstanding Woman in Business on the glittering night at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka. The award recognises her footprints in design solutions and consultancy. She can best explained as one of the very few women who are famed for designing buildings at home and abroad. Tania said she was "pleasantly surprised" to have won the award and thanked The Daily Star and DHL for thinking "out of the box" to award an entrepreneur like her.

Eastern Bank Ltd was named the Best Financial Institution under the Bangladesh Business Awards 2010. The bank that rose from the ashes of the closed BCCI is an example of innovations in improvement of commercial performance, efficiency and customer engagement.

BSRM Group, which has been in operation for the last six decades, won the Enterprise of the Year Award for its historic presence in the steel industry. The company chairman, Alihussain Akberali, said the secret of their success is integrity, hard work and relentless

quest for innovation. "We want to tell the nation that we have not let them down," he said.

Bangladesh Business Awards stepped into the 11th year of its journey that began in 2000. The award has become the country's premier recognition for businesses that have made major strides in economic development.

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan, who graced yesterday's awards ceremony as the chief guest, attributed the country's extraordinary export performance to the entrepreneurs. Bangladesh's export grew more than 40 percent in the last 11 months of the outgoing fiscal year.

The minister, who gave away the awards to the winners, said it would not have been possible without the hard work of the entrepreneurs and assured the business community that all obstacles to economic development would be removed.

"There are many stumbling blocks and challenges. Bangladesh knows how to take on challenges. During the economic crisis, we showed that we can manage any disaster in the economic field too," Khan assured that the government would do everything to help businesses flourish.

The ceremony was attended by 300 businesspeople, diplomats, bureaucrats, politicians, entrepreneurs, celebrities, civil society members and academics. The award aims to acknowledge the contributions of companies and individuals in business, create an environment for entrepreneurship and improve the standards of

corporate management.

"The year 2011 marks the 11th year of the Business Awards. We are proud to celebrate the spirit of excellence of Bangladesh's business community together with The Daily Star," said Desmond Quiah, country manager of DHL.

"In the last 11 years, we have seen Bangladesh emerge as one of the competitive developing economies in the world. This nation has succeeded despite natural disasters. Even, during the global economic crisis, Bangladesh economy defied the threat," he said.

In this light, it is important to acknowledge the country's dynamic business leadership that drives this momentum, said Quiah.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, praised Bangladesh's leading businesses for their roles in taking the economy to a new height, and said businessmen should be awarded for increasing the "productive capacity of the nation".

"The business entrepreneurs took an idea, built an institution around it, introduced a quality product, went to people -- so that the product is bought -- made a profit and reinvested the profit in the company," Anam said.

"In this whole process, they create employment and increase the purchasing capacity of people at large. With the whole process, a business institution grows and thereby the country grows."

Anam said the country's entrepreneurs progressed but could not go too far for insufficient policy framework. "Unless we remove the stumbling blocks, we will

not be able to get the true benefit of market economy."

He said Bangladesh is a story of limited success, and the untold story is that it has immense potential.

The businessmen lead in an environment where impediments trouble entrepreneurs, he said, adding that Bangladesh faces some serious issues that prevent it from tapping into its immense potential, but those issues are not seriously discussed or debated. "We must nurture in our heart the unrealised potential of Bangladesh."

Bangladesh posted more than \$20 billion in exports up to May of the outgoing fiscal year, Anam said.

"But there are many more things to be done before Bangladesh can tell the world 'we Bangladeshis are a proud nation.' Our economic emancipation is yet to come. The business entrepreneurs have to be given environment, support and freedom," he said.

Amjad Khan Chowdhury, CEO of Pran-RFL Group, said: "From day one, we focused on the dairy industry out of the belief that if we can develop the sector, we will be able to eradicate poverty from the country."

Ali Reza Iftekhar, managing director of EBL, said: "I am inspired, but not surprised. I was confident that today or tomorrow the bank would win awards such as this."

For M Matul Islam, his philosophy is to never look back. "I always look forward. That is my guiding principle. Life is nothing without productivity."

Rokia Afzal Rahman, chairman of Mediaworld Ltd, the owning company of The Daily Star, was also present.

## BCL factions clash at RU

FROM PAGE 20

BCL controlled rooms of Bangabandhu hall from 3:30pm to 6:30pm.

The raid was launched after a clash between two RU BCL factions -- one led by activist Shariful Islam alias Sharif and the other by its former vice president Rezwan Ahmed Shuvro.

At least 10 BCL activists were injured in the fight.

The authorities found 25 machetes, three Chinese axes, 13 swords, 13 scythes, six hockey sticks, five knives, six hammers, three chains, 25 iron rods, 12 Phensedyl bottles, eight bottles of fermented liquor and one sack of stone and hundreds of sticks from room no 222 to 233.

Sources said around 1:30pm, activists loyal to Sharif chased Khaled Hossain Nayan, a follower of Shuvro, in front of Rabindra Bhaban.

Failing to catch Nayan, on the Tukitaki premises they stabbed Md Behesti, a student of History department, and Aminul Islam of psychology department.

Ariful Islam of mass communication and journalism department, Palash and Rocky, both of Public Administration department, reportedly led the assault.

They stormed into Bangabandhu Hall to attack their rivals but found nobody.

Meanwhile, Shuvro-led faction carrying firearms and sharp weapons took position in front of Madar Buxhall.

A running battle started as Sharif's men went there.

Supporters of Shuvro severely stabbed Polash, a student of public administration, around 3:00pm.

On information, law enforcers rushed to the spot and baton-charged the clashing activists, leaving at least seven from both groups injured.

All the injured were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital.

Police also arrested Sajib and Mohosin Ali, both supporters of Sharif.

What actually triggered the fight was unknown.

Contacted, Shariful Islam said they just protested criminal activities, including extortion, by some BCL cadres.

On the other hand, Shuvro said a group of BCL activists attacked his supporters who protested extortion on campus.

Asked about the weapons and drugs recovered from BCL controlled rooms, both of them said they are not aware of the matter.

About the raid, Bangabandhu Hall Provost Haidar Ali said they acted on information received earlier about the stash.

The RU proctor said he will take stern steps against persons creating chaos on the campus.

Officer-in-Charge of Mothar Police Station Akbar Hossain said additional police personnel have been deployed at the university.

## BEA now supports

FROM PAGE 20

said Barkat.

The government in the proposed budget for the next fiscal year allowed money whitening only through investment in infrastructure funds and treasury bonds ignoring pressure from some quarters to allow it into the stock market.

Barkat also linked the recent unusual hike in US dollar price with black money.

The money that had been taken out of the capital and money markets is yet to roll into the banking system. A good portion of it is in foreign currency, which has made dollar costlier, said the BEA president.

Black money has become a major topic of debate in the country, as a section of politicians, government high-ups and capital market investors continue to demand a scope for whitening money in the stock market since the finance minister placed the budget in parliament on June 9.

The BEA at its pre-budget recommendations had strongly opposed any scope for money whitening and recommended making mandatory tax identification

number (TIN) for opening BO account. But the forum has taken a U-turn on both the issues.

The BEA however keeps mum on whether black money should be allowed into the capital market.

Barkat said the government should think how the money could be utilised in productive sectors.

BEA General Secretary Tawfik Ahmed Chowdhury said they now support the government decision to allow black money in two sectors as a "short-term trade-off" although they are against allowing money whitening.

"Similarly, TIN for opening BO account can be made mandatory after the market becomes stable," he said.

Dr Farashuddin, a senior economist and former governor of the central bank, said the amnesty has been allowed in a sector that offers very low return.

"Black money has been allowed for investment in treasury bonds that yield 5-6 percent return annually," he said.

The BEA placed 17 recommendations including implementation of the budget, reducing deficit, raising

investment and management of bank borrowing and inflation.

It said the government misguidedly the nation over the status of unemployment. In his budget speech, the finance minister put it at 4.4 percent, which, in reality, is not below 20 percent.

The forum said budget implementation would be the government's biggest challenge followed by containment of high inflation and deficit financing.

BEA said it is essential to strengthen the coordination between the ministries and divisions for implementation of the budget.

"A drop in non-development expenditure could reduce the budget deficit," said Barkat.

On inflation, the BEA said only a contractionary monetary policy and strengthening the trading corporation would not be enough to ease the inflationary pressure. It would require market monitoring and intervention, it said.

The forum also recommended reducing tax at source. In the proposed budget, it has been increased to 1.5 percent from present 0.5 percent.

## Canadian

FROM PAGE 20

lobbied members of the country's government on behalf of Niko Resources.

For nearly four years, an RCMP team has been investigating Niko Resources' natural gas operation in Bangladesh, Canadian newspaper The Globe and Mail reported yesterday.

The RCMP alleged in a sworn affidavit that between 2004 and 2006, Harb travelled to Dhaka at least four times to lobby Bangladeshi officials about a dispute over natural gas payments -- despite warnings from Canada's diplomatic corps that he was not welcome.

Specifically, a former high commissioner to Bangladesh told the Mounties that because Harb was "personally involved with the company" his trips were "not good for the image of Canada."

On Friday, Niko, the Calgary-based oil and gas company, agreed to pay a fine of \$9.5-million after pleading guilty to trying to influence former Bangladesh state minister for energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain by providing him with a luxury SUV as well as a paid trip to Calgary and New York.

The bribes were made after explosions at one of Niko's natural gas fields