

## Gas blast kills 11 in north China

AFP, Beijing

A gas blast killed 11 people at a coal mine in northern China yesterday, state media reported, in the latest accident to hit the country's mining industry.

A total of 21 miners were working underground when the blast struck at the Tianyu coal mine in Tongchuan City, Shaanxi province, a spokesman for the city government was quoted as saying by the official Xinhua news agency.

The bodies of 11 miners were retrieved, while the 10 others were lifted safely above ground, the spokesman said.

China's mining industry has a notoriously poor safety record.

In 2010, 2,433 people died in coal mine accidents in China, according to official statistics -- a rate of more than six workers per day.

Labour rights groups say the actual death toll is likely much higher, partly due to under-reporting of accidents as mine bosses seek to limit their economic losses and avoid punishment.

## Nepal sacks minister implicated in murder

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's ruling Maoist party announced on Sunday it was removing a minister accused of involvement in the murder of a Hindu activist.

Party leaders said parliamentary protests against land reforms minister Prabhu Sah were distracting from the peace process and had made his position untenable.

"Despite a legal clean chit, we have decided to recall Prabhu Sah from the government due to the controversy that is ongoing at the parliament," Maoist chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal said in a statement.

"We have taken this decision because the issue was deviating our focus from the fundamental issues of the peace process and constitution making and was unnecessarily wasting our time."

## Khaleda slates

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capital last night.

The leader of the opposition said the project's fate is now uncertain for sure.

She said Awami League has given politics a bad name by giving nominations to businessmen and wealthy people.

Recalling BNP founder Ziaur Rahman's remark that he would make politics difficult for the politicians, Khaleda said, "He [Zia] meant to stop drawing-room politics and make sure that politicians go to the masses for their welfare."

She said the present government is misguiding people, particularly the youth, by using the media.

## Ershad sees

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Engineers in the capital.

He said his party will participate in the next parliamentary election on its own.

"We have been preparing to contest unaided since the grand alliance government assumed power and now we are ready," he said.

He urged the party activists to keep up the field work at grass roots level to reorganise the party and earn popularity.

In response to the chants of hundreds of party activists in the council saying they wanted to see Ershad president again, he said, "I want to be the chief of the government instead of the president."

While speaking on the latest constitutional amendment, he said "Before the amendments, I warned the government that I would leave the alliance if secularism is established. We do not accept secularism."

Moulana Anisul Haque, convenor of Jatiya Ulama Party, chaired the programme, while JP presidential members Kazi Jafar Ahmed and ABM Ruhul Amin Hawlader were present, among others.

## PM questions

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for vote rigging, killings and other crimes.

Hasina termed the opposition's road march a car rally. "We all know that road march means marching through roads, not travelling by cars," she quipped.

Mentioning that some 2,000 cars were used in the road march, she said, "Every car's number plate would be examined to know from where so many expensive vehicles were arranged," Hasina said.

After the death of Ziaur Rahman, the premier said, Khaleda and her family used to live on various allowances when they had told people the 'broken suitcase' story. "Now where is the broken suitcase, and how you can arrange 2,000 cars to stage such a road march?"

She alleged that all the cars have been bought from the money looted by BNP during its last tenure. "What can people get from the party that loots orphans' property?"

Hasina said people feel shy seeing the long saga of corruption by the BNP chairperson's two sons. "One son's corruption was proved in the US Federal Court, while another's in Singapore. They earned the nation a bad repute and shame with such activities," the prime minister said.

The prime minister said Khaleda's criticism of the last caretaker government is nothing but a falsehood.

"Chief adviser Fakhruddin was of her (Khaleda) choice. Fakhruddin was made the Bangladesh Bank governor by her government who later helped her two sons siphon off public money abroad," she said.

Moeen U Ahmed was also made the army chief bypassing nine major generals by the BNP government, Hasina said. "And president Iajuddin Ahmed did not face her wrath as he became the Yes Uddin for her (Khaleda)."

Hasina said the opposition chief and her party men are now very unhappy as the people are living in peace and happiness. "People's happiness brings unhappiness for the BNP chairperson and her party leaders."

She said Khaleda often scolds Fakhruddin and Moeen U Ahmed as she could not rig the last general election using 1.23 lakh fake votes and she could not enjoy the money and property she had looted during her last regime.

The prime minister said while the BNP government did not add even a single megawatt of power during its last five-year tenure, the present government has so far added several thousands megawatts to the national grid.

Hasina also declared that the government would turn Gazipur into a city corporation considering its importance and that it would be linked with Dhaka through an elevated expressway.

## Accused snatched from cops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Miscreants attacked police and snatched a handcuffed accused in Sirajdikhan upazila of Munshiganj yesterday.

Four policemen were injured in the incident. They are undergoing treatment at a private clinic in Keraniganj; two of them are said to be in critical condition.

The accused, Afiluddin, 42, had been fugitive since an arrest warrant was issued against him on charges of abduction and attempt to murder around 10 days back, said Mahedi Hasan, officer-in-charge of Sirajdikhan Police Station.

Police arrested him at a place near Tulshikhali Bazar in Chitracourt area yesterday morning. Shortly afterwards, as they were taking him to the police station, they came under an attack.

Besides taking away Afiluddin, the attackers looted a rifle and a shotgun from the cops. Later, the weapons were recovered from a roadside bush.

In the afternoon, two suspects--Mostafa, 25, and Hassan, 20--were detained over the attack.

Md Shafiqul Islam, the district superintendent of police, confirmed the incident.

## India wants

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Wasim Akram Malik, who is studying in a medical college in Sylhet, were involved in the blast that killed 15 people and left nearly 80 injured.

This is for the first time that the suspected involvement of Shibir in terror activities in India has come to light, the officials were quoted by Indian Express newspaper today as saying.

Wasim, a resident of India's Jammu and Kashmir, was arrested by NIA on October 7 and during interrogation, he reportedly said that two Bangladeshi nationals had participated in the attack, the detectives said.

Officials claimed to have identified the Shibir members and are now seeking diplomatic help in tracing them. The duo is reported to have travelled with Wasim to India on August 27, first visiting Jammu and then Delhi. A team from NIA is already camping in Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, NIA claims they found the laptop which Wasim used while studying in Bangladesh. They suspect he had used the laptop to send communications to his brother Junaid, who is absconding, and Aamir Abbas Dev, another youth from Jammu and Kashmir, who has since been arrested.

The laptop has been sent to forensic test and NIA is trying to retrieve some files purportedly deleted by Wasim.

Meanwhile, a Delhi court on Friday recorded the statement of Aamir before a magistrate in connection with the blast.

## Govt moves to resolve crisis

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minister, would write to the WB integrity vice president in Washington.

In the letter, Mashiur would convey the government's response to the WB's corruption allegations involving the project, the minister explained.

Under a new arrangement, the WB and the government jointly appoint an integrity adviser to any big project financed by the bank. The adviser is responsible for looking into any irregularities related to the project.

As a World Bank governor, Muhith will also dispatch a letter to the WB president touching upon all aspects of the Padma bridge issue.

The finance minister said he will brief reporters and issue a statement on the

matter the same day he sends the letter to the WB president.

Both the letters have been prepared following discussions with the prime minister, Muhith said.

Asked about a possible solution to the snags in the WB's financing for the project, he said, "I think it can be resolved."

"I have been saying all along that it is a temporary problem and it will be resolved very soon."

Asked whether the communications minister would be removed, Muhith said, "I will not comment on this."

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni told journalists at her ministry that the government would provide donors with all necessary information regarding the Padma bridge

project.

She hoped that there would not be any problem.

Dipu Moni met the WB vice president for South Asia in Washington on October 13.

On September 21, the WB integrity vice presidency handed over a letter and a copy of its probe report on corruption to the finance minister. The documents raised allegations of corruption against Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain and his business firm.

The WB has already suspended its fund of \$1.2 billion to the Padma bridge project. Two other major donors -- the Asian Development Bank and Japan International Cooperation Agency -- have opted to "wait and see" until the government and the WB settle the issue.

## 4 Ctg cops sued

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Sessions Judge.

The court took the case into cognizance and ordered the Anti-Corruption Commission to submit a report after investigating the matter.

The plaintiff stated that he owns a shop and a warehouse on around seven kathas of land at Supariwalapara of Pathantuli and has been importing and selling motor parts for the last 38 years.

Nurul Amin, a local trader, recently attempted to evict him from his property claiming that he owns the shop, Bazal alleged.

Bazal's lawyer Rezaul Karim quoting the case statement said his client has filed a general dairy with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court on September 14 in this connection.

On September 18, OC Rafiqul and the two other SI's took Bazal to Double

Mooring Police Station saying that they need to examine his documents but they demanded Tk 15 lakh bribe, claimed Bazal in his case statement.

As he refused to pay, police instantly sent him to jail filing a false case against him with the same police station, added Bazal.

Bazal got bail from court the following day and alleged that the OC took Tk 11 lakh as bribe from Nurul Amin.

On September 27, a team of police led by the two SI's looted goods worth Tk 1 crore from his shop and warehouse and evicted him from his land, said Bazal.

When contacted, OC Rafiqul Islam termed the allegations false and baseless. He said SI Osman was the investigation officer of the case.

Meanwhile, another case was filed against a sub-inspector of Chandgaon Police Station yesterday in

connection with snatching Tk 50,000 from a trader.

Osman Gani Manik, a trader of Bahaddarhat, filed the case with the Court of Chittagong Metropolitan Sessions Judge.

In his case statement, Osman claimed that SI Abul Kalam Azad of Chandgaon Police Station called him at a hotel in Bahaddarhat to settle a family feud between Osman and his wife over his wife's affair.

As he reached the hotel, SI Abul Kalam arrested him and took him to the police station where the SI took the money and a mobile phone from him on September 09, 2011. Osman claimed that the SI also realised Tk 20,000 bribe from his brother Arif Mahiuddin for releasing him.

As he asked for his money back, after getting bail from the court, SI Abul Kalam threatened to kill him on October 2, Osman claimed.

## Transit fees to be fixed

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"BNP has also moved away from its earlier position," he said. "Now the question remains about the fees and benefits of giving transit."

Muhith mentioned that said the government core committee has already identified routes for transit. The government, however, will decide which routes are to be allowed and which routes have scope for transportation of more goods.

Transit goods are being carried through Ashuganj on an experimental basis, he said.

Bangladesh has yet to provide formal road transit facilities to India, even though river transit has long been in operation between the two neighbours.

In recent weeks, Indian ships have used Ashuganj river port for transshipment of goods and equipment to Tripura.

The transshipment of Indian goods was a trial, the government said responding to concern that Dhaka is

already providing limited transit to New Delhi before a formal agreement is signed.

Muhith also said yesterday the government is considering an Indian request for limited use of Chittagong and Mongla sea ports to carry goods mainly to its northeastern states through Bangladesh territory.

Bangladesh has excess capacity in the two ports, and it can consider allowing India to use these ports, he said.

The finance minister further said he has told India to provide Bangladesh the figures on how much goods they want to transport using the two ports, and then Dhaka can consider providing the facilities.

Rajeet Mitter told journalists New Delhi has requested Dhaka for permission to use Chittagong and Mongla ports for transit. If the facilities are given, the people and businessmen of both the countries will be benefited.

Muhith also spoke about India's failure to sign a deal with Bangladesh on sharing the Teesta water during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's recent visit to Dhaka.

Bangladesh refused to sign any deal on providing road transit to India since the Teesta deal was not signed because of last-minute opposition from Paschimbanga Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Muhith said he can't give any deadline for the signing of the Teesta deal.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will soon visit Angorpota enclave, and two or three Indian ministers will also be there. Teesta agreement will also come up for discussion during the visit, the finance minister said.

He, however, said it would have been better if Mamata would come to Angorpota. But unfortunately she will not be there, he added.

Rajeet Mitter also could not provide any timeframe for the Teesta accord.

## French left votes for its presidential champion

AFP, Paris

Left-leaning French voters headed back to the polls yesterday to decide whether Francois Hollande or Martine Aubry should take on Nicolas Sarkozy in next year's presidential election.

Whichever of the pair wins the Socialist Party nomination will immediately become the frontrunner in the race, as polls show the centre-right incumbent trailing either in April and May's two-round contest.

The vote is also France's first US-style open primary - any elector who says he or she supports the ideals of the left can vote -- and a big turnout could serve as a springboard for the campaign proper.

## 4 die

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All the six entered a room of the ship to make it gas free, said a worker of the yard preferring not to be named.

Probably, a CO2 gas leak caused their deaths, said the worker who took them to the hospital.

Safar Ali, president of Ship-Breaking Yard Sramik Kormochari Federation, accused the owner of the yard of not having the necessary safety measures in place.

Lokman Hossain, owner of the ship-breaking yard, informed police that some of his workers fell sick while working at the yard at about 6:30am, said Habibur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Sitakunda Police Station.

"We have sent an officer to get details of the incident," the OC added.

With yesterday's accident, the number of casualties from ship-breaking yard-related accidents rose to about 40, raising questions about the role of the departments concerned.

Ship-breaking yard owners have been conducting operations in their shipyards without adequate safeguards for years.

On March 5, 2009, the Supreme Court directed the government to ensure the safety of those working at ship-breaking yards.

The government has so far failed to comply with the directive, as it continues to allow the yards to operate without ensuring workers' safety and also without obtaining environment clearance certificates.

## Muggers kill

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Amzad Hossain, manager of the agency, said a gang of six on three motorbikes went to the company's Dholaipara office and opened fire on Didarul and Ohidul when they were getting on a car around 10:30am.

The criminals snatched the briefcase containing the money and fled the scene, he said. The two were going to deposit the money in the bank.

Meanwhile, three people including a teenage boy were injured as criminals opened fire at a construction site at Gendaria in the city yesterday.

Injured Md Jahid, 35, caretaker of the under-construction building, and Wasa employee Ali Azim, 38, were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital while Md Sohel, 14, was taken to a local clinic.

Condition of Jahid and Azim was stated to be critical.

A group of two extortionists entered the site at about 2:00pm and opened fire on the Jahid. Later, they shot Azim, who went to monitor the construction work. Sohel, the teenage boy, was hit in the leg by a stray bullet.

Iqbal Khan, owner of the building, told The Daily Star that one Emon had been demanding Tk 10 lakh in extortion.

"He [Emon] even threatened to kill me if I don't give him the money," said Iqbal.

Faruk Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Gendaria Police Station, said the incident might have taken place over collecting extortion.