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TK 15CR BLOCK ALLOCATION

Muhith says no to MPs

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Finance Minister AMA Muhith has rejected the lawmakers' fresh call for a block allocation of Tk 15 crore for development works in each of their constituencies.

At a pre-budget meeting with the finance minister on Wednesday night, chairmen of the parliamentary standing committees made the proposal for the block allocation to each of the MPs.

Muhith, however, told the meeting that the government was considering spending the money for health, education and LGED sectors through the local government bodies.

He said he had talks with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina over strengthening the local government, meeting sources said.

In the previous tenure of the Awami League-led government, Tk 15 crore was allocated to each of the MPs for development works in their constituencies, like constructing small roads, culverts.

Major (ret) Rafiqul Islam Bir Uttam, chairman of a parliamentary standing committee, told The Daily Star yesterday that all the chairmen strongly opposed the government's plan for channelling the money through local government bodies.

"We told the minister that such plan of the government



Five-year-old Arif getting an injection on a trolley in Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday after he picked up a crude bomb, thinking it was a taped-tennis ball which children often play cricket with.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

2 brothers shot dead in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Unidentified assailants shot dead two brothers at their house in the district's Baghaichhari upazila early yesterday.

Deceased Priyodev Chakma, 40, and Sushanta Chakma alias Sushil, 35, were members of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (MN Larma).

Quoting locals, Azizul Haque, officer in-charge of Baghaichhari Police Station, said an armed gang stormed into the house of

Irked by poor governance

Foreign energy investors want access to onshore blocks to tap 3-5 tcf gas; power companies seek fair tendering process, ask ministries to follow rules

SHARIER KHAN

Foreign investors in energy and power sector yesterday expressed their concerns to the government that red tape, dysfunctional regulatory process and various restrictions were affecting their investment and performance in Bangladesh.

Under the banner Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), they met State Minister for Energy Nasrul Hamid Bipu and said restrictive tendering practices in the sector were keeping reputed compa-

nies away.

They alleged that the tenders were crafted narrowly to favour certain companies, discouraging better technologies and competitive prices.

The team, which included chiefs of Chevron Bangladesh, Asia Energy, Santos and Siemens, noted that inadequate offshore fiscal terms in Production Sharing Contracts and restrictive onshore access have resulted in limited exploration investment.

Headed by Executive Director Jamil Osman of FICCI, the team cited examples of dysfunctional regulatory

processes, their impacts and mentioned how those could be solved.

They said the energy ministry in the mining sector was ignoring the 60-day timeline, outlined in the regulation, to give approvals to mining companies.

"As a result, the coal sector is stalled denying the country large-scale affordable electricity leading to excessive expenditure on imported liquid hydrocarbons," a meeting source said.

"In oil and gas sector, delay in the signing of PSC [Production Sharing Contract] for offshore blocks has

BB directive goes against HC order

ADVERTISEMENT IN BANGLA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The central bank has asked banks to use Bangla for advertisements in all media, including English newspapers, which is contradictory to the latest directive of the High Court.

The HC in a modified directive on April 29 allowed English newspapers to publish advertisements in English.

The Banking Regulation and Policy Department of BB issued a circular giving the instructions to all chief executives of banks based on a court verdict in February, said an official of the department.

The court on February 17 asked the government to take necessary measures in a month to ensure the use of Bangla in all advertisements in the electronic and print media.

But the HC came up with the modified order when Deputy Attorney General Biswajit Roy brought the issue before it.

The HC bench of Justice Quazi Reza-Ul Hoque and Justice ABM Altaf Hossain extended the time until May 15 for the government to submit a report on the compliance of the February 17 order.

In response to a writ petition, the HC in



Hérons, egrets and cormorants, which had found a safe habitat on the Rajshahi University campus, crowded on a tree. A severe nor'wester on May Day left hundreds of these birds and their chicks dead, inset, and their nests destroyed or damaged. Many trees on the campus had been uprooted or damaged by the storm. "They [the birds] are flying away in hundreds almost every day as they feel insecure since the storm," said zoologist Prof AM Saleh Reza. The photos were taken after the storm.

PHOTO: ANWAR ALI



No more money whitening scope

Muhith pledges to scrap provision in next budget

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is going to scrap the provision for whitening undisclosed money, commonly known as black money, from the upcoming fiscal year, said Finance Minister AMA Muhith.

Once implemented in the 2014-2015 FY budget, this will put an end to a practice that earns very little for the exchequer.

"There will be no provision for whitening black money. We almost abolished it last year. This time, it will go away completely," he said at the 35th consultation meeting of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) at a city hotel yesterday.

The provision was aimed at bringing thousands of crores of undisclosed money into the mainstream economy and checking rampant money laundering.

However, the concession did not yield the desired results. Between fiscal 1971-72 and fiscal 2012-13, around Tk 13,808 crore was whitened, with the NBR receiving taxes of Tk 1,455 crore during the period, which is just around 1 percent of this year's collection target.

Between 2002 and 2011, \$16 billion of illicit capital left the country, according to a December 2013 study by Global

SEE PAGE 17 COL 5

The Daily Star

Integral Energy Limited

ONLINE POLL

Do you think that dismissal of 3 Rab officials from the services for their alleged involvement in Narayanganj 7-murder incident is good enough as punishment?

Yes (03%)

No (97%)

TOTAL VOTES: 305

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think Rab should be reformed following the widespread allegation of extra-judicial killings?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT www.thedailystar.net

Modi vs Mamata

2 leaders at war of words over 'illegal Bangladeshi' issue

STAR REPORT

Showing no sign of calling a halt to her tirade against Narendra Modi, Mamata Banerjee yesterday alleged that the BJP was collecting "Modi for PM" funds and said her party would write to the Election Commission about it.

"Modi for PM fund is illegal. PM and CM can only have Relief Fund. How can a political party collect funds for PM?" Mamata, the Trinamool Congress chief, asked at an election meeting in Titagarh in North 24 Parganas.

"We will write to the EC against the 'Modi for PM fund'," she said waving a paper,

reports PTI.

In an apparent reference to the 2002 Gujarat riots, she said yesterday, "See the enormity of the riots in Gujarat when little children and women were burnt alive... If they come to power, they will sell the nation and incite riots.

"People of all faiths, castes, creed live together in peace in Bengal. This makes 'Danga Babu' [Mr Riot] very jealous and angry," she said, without naming the BJP prime ministerial candidate, reports PTI.

Mamata had earlier charged Modi with inciting violence in the north eastern state of Assam and demanded his arrest for

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

Boy hurt as abandoned bomb explodes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A five-year-old boy fell victim to an explosion from an abandoned crude bomb in the capital's Mirpur yesterday.

Arif Hossain, son of rickshaw puller Anju Mia, suffered injuries on his

SEE PAGE 17 COL 5

PRAYER TIMING May 9

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-50
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-34	6-38
Esha	8-00	8-30

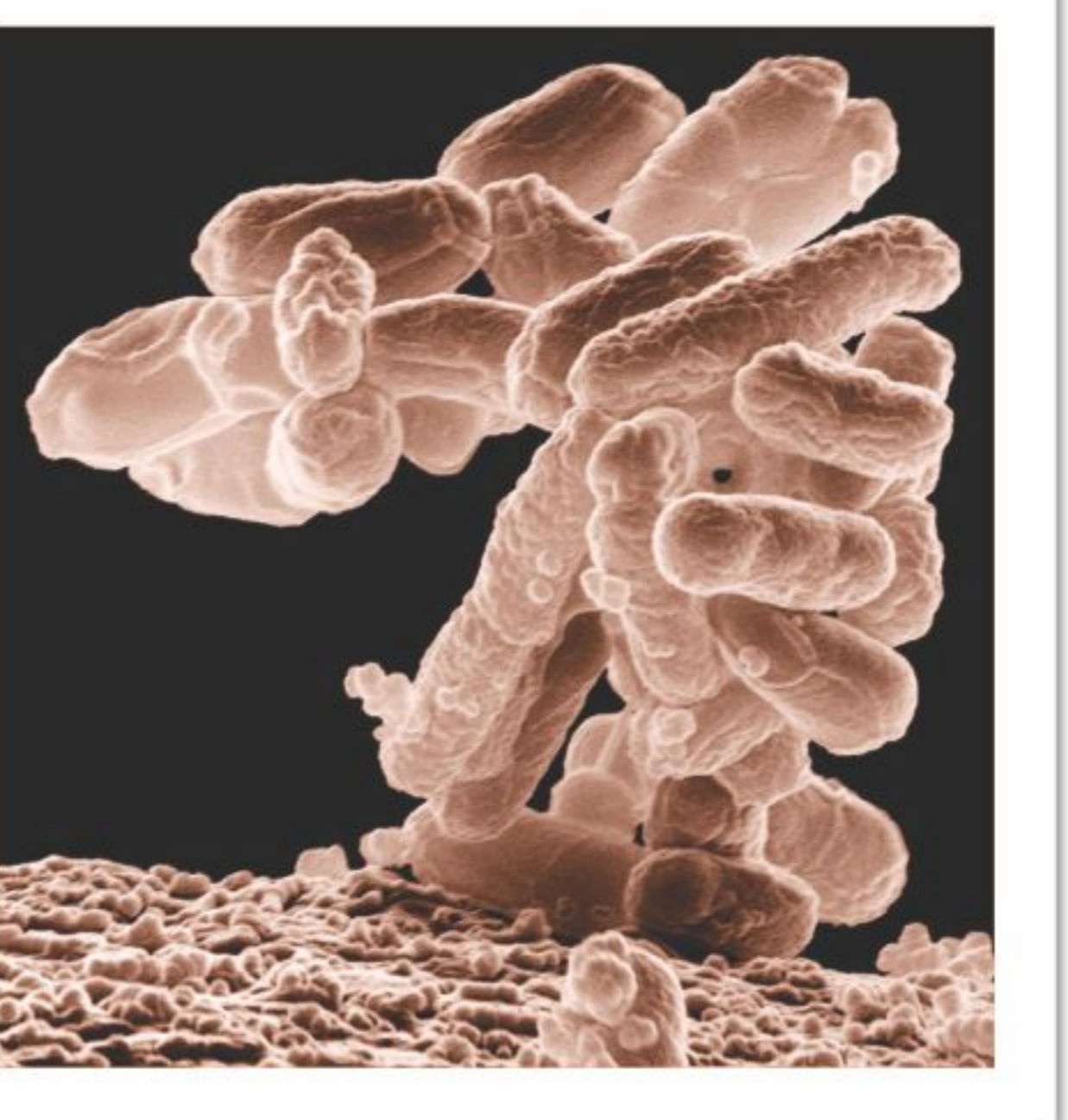
Source: Islamic Foundation

Alien life form grown in lab

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have created the first "semi-synthetic" micro-organism with a radically different genetic code from the rest of life on Earth.

The researchers believe the breakthrough is the first step towards creating new microbial life-forms with novel industrial



SEE PAGE 2 COL 3