



Anti-clockwise from top right, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina along with guests offers prayers at a rally organised by Bangladesh Islamic Foundation marking its founding anniversary at Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital yesterday. The premier, vice president of Al-Masjid al-Haram (the Sacred Mosque) in Makkah and Al-Masjid an-Nabawi (the Prophet's Mosque) in Madinah Dr Mohammed Bin Nasser Bin Mohammed Al-Khuzaim and preacher of the Prophet's Mosque Abdumehsin Bin Mohammad Bin Abdul Rahman Al-Qasim speak at the event participated by hundreds of Olamas and Imams across the country among others. Hasina presents a crest to the vice president of the two holy mosques. Volunteers offer bottled water to the participants. Since vehicular movement was blocked on some of the key thoroughfares, traffic was significantly thinner. Unable to find a public transport, a patient suffering from back pain heads home on foot with the help of his wife from Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University in Shahbagh.

PHOTOS: STAR, PID

# Conspiracy influenced 2001 election results: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the 2001 national election result was influenced by a huge conspiracy against her party Awami League.

"I directly witnessed the incident of BNP giving an undertaking that they would sell gas if they could come to power," she told a conference of agriculturists at Krishibid Institution, Bangladesh in the capital.

BNP won 193 seats and AL 62 seats in that election.

Hasina said that during the caretaker government, just before the 2001 polls, she along with her then party general secretary Zillur Rahman and BNP chief Khaleda Zia and BNP secretary general Mannan Bhuiyan attended a luncheon at the house of then caretaker government head Latifur Rahman.

Former US President Jimmy Carter attended the luncheon meeting where the issue of selling gas by a US company to India came up for discussion, she said.

"I then said I had told the US President (Bill Clinton) what I was to say during his visit to Dhaka and mine to the US. So there'll be no change in my policy," Hasina added.

She said she and Zillur left the meeting at one point, but Khaleda Zia and Mannan Bhuiyan were still there and gave an undertaking to sell gas to another country.

"If you see the result of the 2001 national election, you will find AL got more popular votes, but didn't win a majority of seats in parliament. No doubt it was a huge conspiracy against our party," she said.

BNP secured 41.4 percent of votes, while AL got 40.02 percent.

Hasina said she had told then US President Bill Clinton following his request to sell gas to India that she was unaware of the real gas reserves in Bangladesh, and the country's gas belonged to its people.

"I told Bill Clinton that if there was any additional reserve of at least 50 years' gas after fulfilling the country's demand, only then can we sell the additional gas; otherwise we'll not, and it was quite natural for a president to be unhappy hearing this," Hasina said.

Describing diploma agriculture scientists (Krishibids) as front-ranking soldiers in agricultural production, Hasina said they were working hard by remaining beside the

## 'EMBEZZLING TK 3CR' ACC sues ex-Padma Oil boss Khair

Files two cases against six more including four high-ups of state-run company

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, City

Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday lodged two cases against former managing director of Padma Oil Company Ltd for "embezzling more than Tk 3 crore" from two projects of the state-run oil company.

Abul Khair is now holding the post of MD of state-run Jamuna Oil Company Ltd.

Six more including four high-ups of Padma Oil were also sued.

ACC Assistant Director Md Sirajul Haque lodged the cases with Sadarghat Police Station in Chittagong city, said Marjina Akter, officer-in-charge (OC) of the police station.

Complainant Sirajul Haque told The Daily Star that a case was lodged over embezzlement of Tk 2.75 crore from a project on installing the Hydrant line, an aviation fueling system, at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in fiscal 1995-96.

Three accused in the case are construction firm Max Oil & Engineering Works Ltd's MD Fahim Zaman Pathan, Padma Oil's official

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