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IDENTITY THEFT

Bangladesh Bank orders all banks to tighten security at ATM, POS

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RUSSIAN CONNECTION

Trump aide's email reveals effort to arrange meeting with Putin

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Niko deals illegal

Declares HC as two deals with Petrobangla, Bapex made thru' graft; court also orders return of assets that the company took over

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The High Court yesterday declared illegal and void the two deals Niko Resources Bangladesh Limited signed with Bapex and Petrobangla, as those were procured through corruption.

The court also directed the authorities to "revert back" to the state the assets Niko possessed through the Joint Venture Agreement (JVA) and the Gas Purchase and Sales Agreement (GPSA) signed in 2003 and 2006.

No payments can be made to Niko Bangladesh or its mother organisation Niko Canada till the pending damage case involving the company is settled and adequate compensation is given to the victims of the two blowouts in Tengraita of Chhatak in 2005, stated the HC.

Assets of the subsidiaries of Niko Canada, including the shareholding interests in Tullow Bangladesh Limited concerning Block-9 PSC, are to be attached and seized to provide compensation to the blowout victims, it added.

The two huge blowouts took place in January and May of 2005 due to "faultry and negligent operation of Niko".

The HC bench of Justice Naima Haider and Justice Abu Taher Md Saifur Rahman delivered the verdict following a writ peti-

tion by Prof M Samuil Alam, energy adviser to the Consumers Association of Bangladesh early last year.

Petitioner's lawyer Tanjib-ul Alam said the court also ordered the authorities to take legal action against those involved in the signing process of the deals.

Contacted, Attorney General Mahububey Alam said the government would get benefits of the verdict in dealing with other cases over the Niko issue.

At least five cases are now pending with national and international courts. BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and former BNP ministers Moudud Ahmed and AKM Mosharruf Hossain are accused in one of the cases.

"The Anti-Corruption Commission can now launch investigation to find out who were involved in the deals," the AG added. Niko's local counsel Rokanuddin Mahmud declined to comment on the verdict.

Following the filing of the petition, the HC on May 9 last year issued a rule upon the government and Niko, asking why the two deals should not be declared illegal and Niko's assets should not be seized to provide compensation for the blowouts.

Earlier in June 2011, Niko Canada pleaded guilty before a Canadian court to

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Two men taking a worn-out car apart on the premises of the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station recently. Dust continues to gather on seized vehicles as they are kept there for years. Sometimes, car parts get stolen from the place right under the law enforcers' nose.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUJON



Don't allow factory near Sundarbans

HC asks govt not to approve any industrial unit within 10km of the forest, submit a list of factories already set up there

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government not to approve any factory within 10 kilometers of the Sundarbans.

The court also ordered the authorities concerned to submit within six months a list of the factories already set up within that distance.

Secretaries to the ministries of forest and environment, industries and land and the director general of Department of Environment (DoE) were made respondents. The HC bench of Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury and Justice JBM Hassan passed the order following a writ petition filed by Sheikh Faridul Islam, president of Save the Sundarbans Foundation.

Faridul had submitted the petition seeking HC directives on the authorities concerned to relocate factories constructed within the 10kms of the world's largest mangrove forest.



In the petition, he said the environment and forest ministry issued a gazette notification on August 30 in 1999, declaring the 10-km zone an ecologically critical area (ECA). But the DoE reportedly issued site clearance certificates for 150 factories in that area over the years.

Earlier in a meeting of the National Environment Committee it was decided that the ministry would approve all the

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Stand beside flood victims

PM urges affluent people, says the affected will be rehabilitated

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government was tackling the ongoing flood situation and called upon the affluent to stand by the affected. "I want those who are well-off in society to stand by the country's flood-affected people," she said at her office while receiving cheques of donations from various government and private organisations to her relief and welfare fund.

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End Rohingya restrictions

Annan commission urges Myanmar

REZAUL KARIM

The Rakhine Advisory Commission, led by its chairman former UN chief Kofi Annan, has called for freedom of movement for all people in the Myanmar state of Rakhine and a review of the controversial 1982 citizenship law.

It has suggested bringing the law into line with international standards and abolishing "distinctions between different types of citizens". The law, which effectively bars Rohingyas from becoming citizens, currently recognises full, associate and naturalised citizens.

The commission, which was formed by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in September last year, made the recommendations in its 63-page report titled "Towards a peaceful, fair and prosperous future for the people of Rakhine".

Annan on Wednesday presented the report to President U Htin Kyaw in Nay Pyi Taw. The report said scrapping restrictions on movement in Rakhine and granting citizenship to its Muslim minority people could help avoid fuelling extremism and bring peace to the state.

An estimated 1.1 million Muslims, including many Rohingyas, are denied access to citizenship under the

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Review citizenship law to ensure equitable treatment of all citizens

Facilitate voluntary return of refugees from Bangladesh

Ensure full and regular humanitarian and media access to Rakhine State

Set up a ministry for implementing the recommendations



This 20-metre stretch of the Jamalpur-Madarganj road in Jamalpur was washed away by flood on August 15, snapping road communications and causing huge suffering for people. The photo was taken on Tuesday noon.

PHOTO: ABM AHMEDUL ISLAM

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