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Your Right to Know

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"The process to provide subsidy on diesel for irrigation purpose is so complex. So, the government has no plan to provide any new subsidy to farmers in this regard."

AGRICULTURE MINISTER ABDUR RAZZAQUE ON INCREASING SUBSIDY



I had always thought of going on a high and I believe this is the right time to end my test career.

MAHMUDULLAH ON RETIREMENT FROM TESTS



"The United States prefers ... to divide countries into those that -- in their opinion -- are good, and those that are bad."

KREMLIN SPOKESMAN DMITRY PESKOV ON INVITATION TO BIDEN'S DEMOCRACY SUMMIT



STATE-RUN FERTILISER FACTORIES

White Elephants they're now



Old machinery, poor gas supply blamed for low efficiency; govt subsidy keeps climbing by the year

ASIFUR RAHMAN and SUKANTA HALDER

The factories are consuming natural gas heavily, but producing urea fertilizer much less than their modern peers do.

The wastage of gas in these four state-run fertiliser factories in just nine days is enough to produce a day's electricity, about 9,000MW, for the entire country, according to an estimate by the government's Power System Master Plan.

The four factories in question churned out 7.96 lakh tonnes of granular urea in FY 2019-20, consuming around double the required gas, the key ingredient to manufacture urea.

On average, the four factories consume 43.72 million cubic feet (mcf) of gas to produce 1 tonne of urea, when the global standard is 25mcf, show documents of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC).

The factories, which operate under BCIC, are Jamuna Fertiliser Co Ltd (JFCL), Ashuganj Fertiliser and Chemical Company Limited (AFCCL), Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Ltd (CUFL) and Shahjalal Fertiliser Company Ltd (SFCL).

Government officials attributed this low efficiency to old machinery with no overhaul in years, interruption in gas supply and lack of skilled workforce.

Of the four factories, AFCCL, CUFL and JFCL have already exhausted

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IN THE DEPTHS OF GRIEF ... Shah Alam, father of Notre Dame College student Nayeem Hasan, breaks down at Dhaka Medical Collage Hospital yesterday after hearing about the death of his son in a traffic accident in Gulistan.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Defying odds, Bangladesh marches on

Hasina tells parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday told parliament that Bangladesh was marching ahead despite numerous obstacles, and that the country would still go a long way.

"I hope that the Sonar Bangla as dreamed by the Father of the Nation will one day stand tall among all other nations," Hasina said, giving her speech on a proposal to hold a special discussion on the Golden Jubilee of the country's independence.

The proposal, tabled by Hasina yesterday, is expected to be adopted today after two days of deliberations.

Bangladesh is marking the 50 years of its independence from Pakistan this year.

Recalling Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's return to Bangladesh after liberation, Hasina, Bangabandhu's eldest daughter, said, "We were waiting for our father to come home.... But he put the people of the country above everything else."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Khaleda 'getting weaker day by day'

Still in critical condition, say physicians, relatives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, now undergoing treatment at the capital's Evercare Hospital, is getting weaker day by day. She cannot eat anything. She only has liquids, said her physicians and close relatives.

Blood was detected in her vomit and stool which is making her health even more critical. She was given blood yesterday, they said.

"Doctors are thinking of conducting colonoscopy and endoscopy tests to establish the cause of the bleeding. She vomits whenever she eats anything," a close relative of Khaleda told The Daily Star wishing not to be named.

Dr AZM Zahid Hossain, Khaleda's personal physician, said an endoscopy was performed on the BNP chief as her health deteriorated. She was later taken back to the CCU.

The 76-year-old former prime minister was admitted to Evercare Hospital on November 13, nearly a week after being discharged from the same healthcare facility.

She was moved to the CCU on November 14.

BNP leaders said Khaleda still remain in critical condition and her health can deteriorate anytime. They have been demanding that the government allow her to go abroad for better treatment.

Her family members have urged the government to allow her to receive treatment in any foreign country under any condition.

They also said the government was responsible for ensuring better treatment for her as she had been the prime minister of the country thrice.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

'We want safe road'

Peers chant after Notredamian killed in crash



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Like every morning, Nayeem Hasan, a Humanities student, yesterday said goodbye to his parents and headed out for classes at Notre Dame College. That turned out to be the last time he had stepped out of his Kamrangirchar home, his final goodbye to his parents.

"Why did I send my son to college today?" an inconsolable Shah Alam,

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KEY POINTS

- 3 of the four state-run urea plants already exhausted 20yr lifespan
- No overhauls in years, affecting production
- Cumulative effects result in huge gas wastage
- Multinational joint venture KAFCO stands in stark contrast

"The country cannot afford to waste natural gas or sell it at a cheaper price as the LNG price is rising day by day worldwide."

ENERGY EXPERT DR IJAZ HOSSAIN

SOURCE: BCIC

BUSINESS

Remittance powering economy

Remittances are playing an increasingly important role in the economy of Bangladesh. They are a major source of external financing and help meet families' increased need for livelihood support. In recent months, money transfers by the migrant workers rose to record highs. Now, the government should make it easy for the workers to go abroad and at a lower cost. Besides, measures should be put in place to bring down the cost of sending remittance using technology with a view to retaining its steady flow.

TO KNOW MORE, READ TODAY'S BUSINESS SUPPLEMENT



Workers under the banner of non-government jute, thread, garment workers-employees federation go on hunger strike in front of the gate of Shiromoni Mohsen Jute Mills in Khulna yesterday to press home their five-point demand, including reopening of their factories.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

COUNCILLOR KILLING

Rab arrests accused at hospital

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

An accused in the Cumilla ward councillor murder case was arrested yesterday at Cumilla Medical College Hospital while undergoing treatment, said Rab officials.

Sumon, 32, a resident of Cumilla city's Sujanagar Bou Bazar area, was held around 10:00am, said Maj Mohammad Sakib Hossain, company commander of Rab-11.

Sumon was admitted to the hospital's urology department on November 15, said a hospital source.

The source could not say whether Sumon was outside the hospital on November 22 when Syed Mohammad Sohel, 48, councillor of ward-17, and his close aide Haripada Das, 45, were shot dead by masked gunmen in the councillor's office in the city's Pathuriapara area.

However, no one from the hospital authorities spoke on the issue on the record.

The councillor's younger brother Syed Mohammad Roman told The Daily Star, "We have heard that Sumon was undergoing treatment at the hospital. But the CCTV footage showed that he was involved in the killing."

Sumon is the number four accused in the murder case filed by Roman with Kotwali Police Station early yesterday.

Twenty-one people, including 11 identified ones, were made accused in the case, said Anwarul Azim, officer-in-charge of the police station.

The 11 accused are: Shah Alam, "Jail Sohel", Sabbir, Sumon,

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Sohel