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A worker drinks water to quench his thirst and stay hydrated in the sweltering summer heat. That he was melting bitumen with open flames all around him for road-repair work added to his discomfort. The photo was taken at Rupatoli in Barishal city yesterday. PHOTO: TITU DAS

TENTULTALA GROUND

## Police press on with construction

Environmental activists to mount legal battle

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police carried on construction work at the city's Tentultala playground yesterday though Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said he had asked the city corporation and others concerned to find an alternative place for Kalabagan Police Station.

Speaking to journalists after a programme in Tejgaon yesterday, the minister said if a suitable place for the station cannot be found, a decision would be made later upon discussions.

During a visit to the playground around 11:30am yesterday, it was found that construction work was going on amid presence of dozens of police personnel.

Earlier on Sunday, Kalabagan police picked up Ratna, who has been leading protests to save Tentultala playground, along with her son Mohammad Isha Abdullah. Police released the mother and son around 13 hours later, taking an undertaking that she would not get

involved in any movement to protect the playground.

Ratna, coordinator of Tentultala Math Rakkhya Andolon, and her son were detained around 11:00am when she went live on Facebook while construction work was going on at the playground under police supervision.

At a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday morning, green organisations and rights bodies said they would go for legal battle over the detention of Ratna and her son, the undertaking and retention of the playground.

They also demanded that the government ensure security of Ratna, her family as well as the protesters and conduct an impartial probe into the incident and bring to book those responsible for detaining Ratna and her minor son unlawfully.

The demands were placed by leaders of 12 organisations, including Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon;

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NEW MARKET CLASHES

## Hunt for Emon, Kaiyum on

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After primarily identifying around a dozen suspects who assaulted and hacked 19-year-old Nahid Mia during the clashes between Dhaka College students and shopkeepers in New Market area, police are now focusing their investigation on two individuals -- Kaiyum and Emon Bashar.

Kaiyum is a Dhaka College student who first hit Nahid and Emon was the one who carried out the final attack on the deliveryman on April 19, according to video footage and photos. Nahid died of his wounds at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital that night.

"We identified around a dozen suspects from footage and photos, and interrogated many of them. We are now continuing our investigation centring Emon Bashar and Kaiyum, both activists of Dhaka College Chhatra League," said a senior officer of the Detective Branch (DB) of police, who is involved with the investigation. HM Azimul Haque, deputy commissioner of (Ramna division) DB, told The Daily Star yesterday that officers made major progress in the investigation.

"But we are taking some time as it is a sensitive case and we do not want any innocent person framed," he said. "We have collected information from different sources and now we are scrutinising those."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## Fourth Covid wave looms Say NTAC and health minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With a fresh surge in Covid-19 cases in neighbouring India and other countries, the National Technical Advisory Committee (NTAC) has come up with some recommendations to prevent further surges in the country.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



With a football and a cricket bat in their hands, the children silently watch workers employed by the Kalabagan Police Station build a wall on their playground yesterday. A good number of police personnel can be seen in the background.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

# Gas reserves drying up

Experts stress need for exploration, overhaul

ASIFUR RAHMAN

The yield of Kailash Tila, the main source for Sylhet Gas Fields Ltd, was on average 69 million cubic feet per day in 2016, but it dropped to 29 million cubic feet in January this year.

Extraction from Kailash Tila began in 1983 following its discovery in 1962. It has seven wells. Over the years, the authorities suspended extraction from five of them, saying they were finding water, not gas.

This is not an isolated case. In fact, most of the country's 20 fields are producing less gas than before. The Daily Star has found analysing data from the Hydrocarbon Unit (HU) under the government's energy and mineral resources division.

The country faced a massive gas crisis when the Chevron-operated Bibiyana gas field, the highest gas producing field, stopped production from six of the 26 wells due to technical glitches earlier this

well drops over time. It's natural," said Mizanur Rahman, managing director of Sylhet Gas Fields Ltd.

"There are some maintenance and development work underway, but we will conduct studies to find why production from two promising wells in Kailash Tila stopped suddenly last year."

Experts said the drop in gas extraction was a threat to the country's energy security. They stressed the need for aggressive exploration for new reserves.

They said the government did not carry out gas exploration properly.

"It's true that the capacity of gas fields decreases gradually. It's called 'natural diffusion', which depends on the geological character, structure and technical maintenance of a field," said Prof Shamsul Alam, prominent energy expert and vice president of Consumers' Association of Bangladesh.

"But it's possible to extract more by overhauling the wells which is something

Gas field	Bakhrabad	Bangura	Beanibazar	Fenchuganj	Habiganj
2016 [mmcf]	36	98	9	30	225
2021 [mmcf]	35	74	8	10	165
Gas field	Meghna	Srikail	Moulvibazar	Semutang	Jalalabad
2016 [mmcf]	12	40	40	3	271
2021 [mmcf]	7	33	12	1	173
Gas field	Rashidpur	Sylhet	Salda Nadi	Titas	Kailash Tila
2016 [mmcf]	57	8	7	505	69
2021 [mmcf]	44	3	3	389	33

DECLINING GAS PRODUCTION

month.

Consumers in different areas of Dhaka experienced shortages or low gas pressure from the first day of Ramadan for a week.

The HU data shows three state-owned and two international companies extracted 2,352mmcf in 2021, down from 2,666mmcf in 2016.

Compared to five years ago, production increased only from four fields.

Amid this situation, Bangladesh Oil, Gas and Mineral Corporation (Petrobangla) says the country has gas reserves for nine to 10 years, assuming a consumption of around 1 trillion cubic feet every year.

The 28 gas fields discovered so far had a proven reserve of 29.9 trillion cubic feet. Of it, 19.11 TCF gas has already been extracted, Petrobangla data shows.

Natural gas is used for cooking, producing fertiliser, generating power and meeting the needs of industries.

"The capacity of any gas field or

that has not been done in most gas fields... gas was found in fields which were declared abandoned earlier," he said.

Shamsul said the government did not follow the recommendations of "Consultancy Services for Gas Production Augmentation" report of 2011. It emphasised the need for overhauling the wells, adopting a systematic and risk-based approach to best utilise resources, exploring in coastal areas and hill tracts, and moving to more frontier areas to unlock exploration potential.

A member of the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) echoed Prof Shamsul.

Wishing to be unnamed, the member said, "It was possible to increase the production of at least 40 wells and extract 400-800mmcf by investing about \$125 million, but the government didn't do it. Suggestions mentioned in the 2011 report have largely been ignored."

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**EXIM** এক্সপোর্ট ইমপোর্ট ব্যাংক  
BANK অব বাংলাদেশ লিমিটেড  
পরীয়াহ ভিত্তিক ইসলামী ব্যাংক

**সফটওয়্যার আপগ্রেডেশনের জন্য**  
**ব্যাংকিং কার্যক্রম সাময়িক বন্ধের জরুরি বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

এক্সপোর্ট ইমপোর্ট ব্যাংক অব বাংলাদেশ লিমিটেড এর সম্মানিত গ্রাহক ও সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, কোর ব্যাংকিং সফটওয়্যার আপগ্রেডেশনের জন্য আগামী ২৮ এপ্রিল ২০২২ বৃহস্পতিবার রাত ৮টা থেকে ৫ মে ২০২২ বৃহস্পতিবার সকাল ১০টা পর্যন্ত এক্সিম ব্যাংকের সকল শাখা, উপশাখা, এজেন্ট ব্যাংকিং আউটলেট ও এটিএম বুথে সব ধরনের ব্যাংকিং কার্যক্রম বন্ধ থাকবে। তবে ক্রেডিট কার্ড ও প্রিপেইড কার্ড দিয়ে অন্য ব্যাংকের এটিএম বুথ থেকে টাকা উত্তোলন ও পজ (POS) মেশিনের মাধ্যমে পেমেন্ট করা যাবে।

গ্রাহকদের সাময়িক অসুবিধার জন্য আমরা আন্তরিকভাবে দুঃখিত এবং উভূত পরিস্থিতিতে আপনাদের আন্তরিক সহযোগিতা কামনা করছি।

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