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# Coal-fired power plants can ruin Ctg

Says joint study of 3 bodies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chattogram division is at high risk of being one of the world's largest carbon catastrophes, said speakers at the launch of a study yesterday.

Once all the coal-fired power plants come into operation in the division, they will have disastrous consequences for the local ecology and waterways, communities and livelihoods, health as well as the climate, they said.

The study titled "A Carbon Catastrophe in the Making: The Dirty Energy Plans in Chattogram", jointly conducted by Market Forces, Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA) and Waterkeepers Bangladesh, was unveiled at a press conference.

The government is moving ahead with almost two-thirds of its fossil fuel projects to be implemented in the Chattogram division.

The study highlighted the adverse impacts of the proposed 20 gigawatts (GW) of new coal and gas power capacity.

During the plants' operational lifetime, there could be as much as 1.38 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions, it said.

The most damaging of them is the Matarbari coal-fired power plant. If built, the health effects of air pollution from the Matarbari 1 and 2 projects would result in an estimated 6,700 premature deaths throughout their operational years.

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A woman seen using an earthen stove to cook yesterday because her gas line has been disconnected. Many residents of Kamrangirchar have been suffering for over a week as Titas Gas authorities have allegedly cut off the main gas supply line in the area without any prior notice due to unpaid bills by some. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## JUSTICE SINHA'S WEALTH

# His nephew, brother testify

Claim to be made scapegoats

MAHUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Former chief justice SK Sinha, who is convicted in a corruption case, used his elder brother and a nephew to cover up his ill-gotten wealth.

His elder brother Narendra Kumar Sinha, nephew Shankhajit Singha and neighbour Sujan Kumar Singha yesterday described how they were made "scapegoats" while giving statements under Section 164 in a case filed against Justice Sinha for amassing over Tk 7 crore illegally.

On October 7 last year, Gulshan Anwar Prodhan, deputy director of Anti-Corruption Commission, lodged the case.

"They have given important statements that will help us prove the case."

Dhaka Metropolitan magistrates Mamunur Rashid, Mohammad Jashim and Mehedi Hasan recorded their statements.

The Daily Star has obtained the copies.

According to the case statement, Justice Sinha spent the money to construct a nine-storey building in the capital's Uttara on a plot registered in his brother's name.

In his testimony, Narendra, who retired as the chief light keeper at the Mercantile Marine Department in 2005, said he got Tk 16,000 as monthly salary before retirement and did not have any other source of income.

He said his brother asked him to sign some papers.

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## STATE OF ECONOMY

# Hard times may be in store

Citizens' platform cautions govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government may face the next election with the most unstable economic situation in over a decade, which is going to affect the low- and middle-income brackets most, said a citizens' platform yesterday.

Macroeconomic stability has never been under so much strain since 2007-08, and in such a situation, the government needs to focus on increasing the purchasing capacity of the communities left behind, it observed.

The media briefing, styled "Current Socio-Economic Condition, National Budget and Perspectives of the 'Left Behind' Communities", was organised by the Citizens' Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, at CIRDP auditorium.

Debapriya Bhattacharya, convener of the platform and

a distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, presented a paper at the briefing, saying there are three major backdrops of the upcoming budgets -- firstly, the country's economy is yet to

**"If the price hike in the international market continues, we will face a big crisis in foreign reserves. Our exchange rate is under pressure."**

come back to the pre-pandemic level.

Secondly, the Russia-Ukraine war created uncertainty in the global market, raising commodity prices and dislocating the supply chains. And finally, the internal economy is also facing uncertainty.

"Our foreign income, including export, remittance, foreign aid and investment, was strong enough in the previous years, which properly balanced the export-import costs."

He said the deficits in the trade balance, current account and overall balance have been increasing.

"We have forex reserves that can cover only five months' import bill," he said.

"If the price hike in the international market continues, we will face a big crisis in foreign reserves. Our exchange rate is under pressure."

Debapriya urged the government to make curbing the inflation the main theme in the upcoming budget.

"If the situation becomes unstable, the main victims will be the poor, the low- and middle-income people. Their

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## TTE Shafiqul gets clean chit

OUR CORRESPONDENT, PABNA

The allegation that Travelling Ticket Examiner Md Shafiqul Islam misbehaved with three train passengers and illegally fined them for travelling without tickets has been found false, a railway probe body said in its report.



The three-member committee submitted the report to the manager of Pakshey Railway Division yesterday.

"We have come to this conclusion after talking to nine people, including the complainant, accused and some of those who were present at the scene," said Sajidul Islam, assistant

transportation officer at Pakshey Railway Division, who led the probe body.

"There were no issues between the accused and complainant Emrul Kayes Pranto regarding the fare. The guard of the compartment persuaded Emrul to lodge the complaint against him [TTE Shafiqul]," Sajidul added.

Asked about the involvement of the railways minister's wife in the incident, he said, "It was not the matter of the enquiry."

Sajidul added that after the probe, the committee made three recommendations -- reinstating TTE Shafiqul, departmental action against guard Shariful Islam who persuaded

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None would be more relieved than Bangladesh captain Mominul Haque after the hosts were able to come back to a position of strength against Sri Lanka, thanks to Shakib Al Hasan and Nayeem Hasan as the spin duo's four scalps in the span of four overs on either side of Lunch interval was instrumental in pulling back the odds in the Tigers' favour after day two of the Chattogram Test. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Floods worsen in Sylhet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

With three major rivers -- the Surma, Kushiyara and Sari-Gowain -- swelling beyond the danger level, the flood situation in Sylhet district has worsened in seven upazilas and the Sylhet city area.

As the vast areas of Kanaighat, Zakiganj, Gowainghat, Jaintiapur, Companiganj, Beanibazar, Fenchuganj upazilas and Sylhet city areas have been submerged, thousands are facing food and drinking water crisis.

The district administration has allotted over 100 tonnes of rice for the affected people, but many are yet to receive any aid.

Kawsar Ahmed of Shahgoli village in Zakiganj upazila said, "Naturally, it floods in late June or in July. But this

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## NOT ACTING ON RTI REQUEST Gazipur jail super fined

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The information commission yesterday fined the superintendent of Gazipur district jail Tk 2,000 for failing to provide information requested under the Right to Information Act.

Mohammad Shahjahan, a contractor from Moulvibazar, had filed an RTI request concerning tenders to supply food to the jail. He had requested a comparative description of the bids made between July and December 2020, as well as the meeting minutes of the assessment of the bids made.

When the jail superintendent failed to provide the information, he filed an appeal to the deputy inspector general (DIG) of prisons. Failing to get a response from the DIG, he filed an appeal with the information commission.

On March 2, 2022, the information commission held a hearing and discovered that it last year instructed the jail superintendent to provide the information within seven working days. Furthermore, the commission had issued a warning to Rashid for failing to respond to the RTI application.

However, he once again failed to provide

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