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Govt signs LNG deal with US firm

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has signed a heads of agreement (HOA) with the US-based Argent LNG to import up to 5 million tonnes of liquefied natural gas per year for 20 years.

Argent LNG is developing a 25 million tonnes per annum LNG facility in Louisiana, a southeastern US state on the Gulf of Mexico. The facility is slated to go into operation in early 2030.

The HOA is a non-binding agreement, meaning neither party is obligated to agree to the terms listed in the document.

The agreement was signed by Ashik Chowdhury, executive chairman of the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority, and Jonathan Bass, chairman and chief executive officer of Argent LNG, at a ceremony held at the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington, DC, on Friday.

If the Argent LNG

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8



Anti-Discrimination Student Movement holds a rally at Raju memorial sculpture on the Dhaka University campus yesterday, protesting the killing of a Bangladeshi woman after alleged sexual assault in Bengaluru, India recently.

PHOTO: STAR

Promote ACC hotline, public engagement

Recommends reform commission

DIPAN NANDY

The Anti-Corruption Commission Reform Commission has urged the ACC to formulate a detailed strategy to combat corruption, proposing short-term, medium-term, and long-term action plans.

“The ACC must create a robust corruption prevention strategy, grounded in an impartial assessment of current initiatives and developed with input from experts. Effective implementation of action plans is vital,” Iftekharuzzaman, chairman of the reform commission, told The Daily Star.

The commission submitted its report to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus on January 15.

Among its recommendations, the commission called for the incorporation of ethics, honesty, and anti-

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Comprehensive strategy to combat corruption
- Short-term, medium-term, long-term measures
- Integration of anti-corruption ethics into curriculum
- Youth engagement in anti-corruption campaigns
- Collaboration between ACC, NGOs

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

JULY UPRISING Will identify unknown martyrs Says Nahid

BSS, Dhaka

Efforts are underway to identify the unknown martyrs of the July uprising buried at Rayerbazar graveyard, Information Adviser Nahid Islam said yesterday.

He said this after paying tribute to the martyrs at the graveyard.

Following the visit, the adviser met with the relatives of the martyrs and inquired about their wellbeing.

“The debt of the martyrs can never be repaid,” he said.

He assured that the interim government remains committed to supporting the families of those who lost their lives in the uprising.

Financial assistance for the families of the martyrs will start early next month, he added.

Underfunding a key factor behind police bribery

Says reform commission, proposes increased allocation for operational expenses

SHARIFUL ISLAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

When we talk about corruption in the police force, the focus, rightly so, often falls on bribery and abuse of power.

However, we rarely address the systemic issues -- such as inadequate allocations -- and how they create fertile ground for corruption and malpractice.

From out-of-pocket expenses for investigations to dismal detainee meal allowances and insufficient fuel budgets, the shortfalls leave officers with no choice but to seek alternative -- and often unethical -- means to meet operational needs.

Now, a proposal by the Police Reform Commission aims to address these gaps by ensuring proper allocation for operational expenses.

Sub-inspectors and officers-in-charges from several Dhaka police stations say that without adequate and timely financial support, systemic issues will persist, forcing police to rely on questionable



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase operational allowances
- Set up audit, inspection wing
- Allocate funds directly to SPs
- Raise investigation funds per case
- Provide special allocations for staff
- Allocate purchasing funds
- Increase budgets for vehicles, fuel costs

practices.

“We rarely have vehicles or funds to hire one when we need to travel outside the capital for critical cases like murder or robbery,” said one SI, adding that operational expenses often fall

directly on their shoulders.

“Hiring a vehicle alone can cost Tk 30,000–40,000,” he said. “If the complainant is poor, we are left to manage the cost ourselves.”

Then, they resort to alternative means, such as arresting innocent individuals and then extorting bribes for their release.”

While the government provides some allowances—Tk 875 for daily expenses and Tk 15 per kilometre for travel outside duty stations—officers say these sums are far from sufficient to cover real-world demands.

CASE EXPENSES: INSUFFICIENT AND OUTDATED

Police are granted Tk 6,000 to investigate murder or robbery cases, Tk 5,000 for abduction cases, Tk 4,000 for unnatural deaths, and Tk 2,000 for theft or petty crimes. However, officers say these capped amounts rarely reflect the actual costs of gathering evidence, engaging informants, or making arrests.

An SI from Bhasantek Police

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

BHORER KAGOJ CLOSURE Journos, staffers stage protests

UNB, Dhaka

A faction of Bangla daily Bhorer Kagoj employees, including journalists and officials, staged protests in front of its office at Malibagh in the capital yesterday, demanding an explanation from its management for its sudden closure and the settlement of their dues.

With placards and slogans, the protesters expressed their dismay over the decision of closing down the newspaper.

At the demonstration, the journalists spoke out against the management’s action and alleged financial irregularities.

Bhorer Kagoj chief reporter Khandaker Kawsar Hossain said, “After the editor was arrested, Arun Kumar Sarkar, the resident director of Saber Hossain Chowdhury’s business establishment, assumed the role of executive editor.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

Those discovering ‘Ziaism’ have bad intentions: Khasru

UNB, Dhaka

Those who have suddenly discovered the term “Ziaism” (Ziabad in Bangla) has ill-intentions, said BNP Standing Committee Member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday.

Speaking at a discussion at Jatiya Press Club, marking the 89th birth anniversary of BNP founder and former President Ziaur Rahman, Khasru said, “If there are plans beyond democracy regarding power transfer, the consequences will not be good, and BNP’s support may not continue.”

**We support the interim government for ensuring a peaceful transfer of power through elections. Any agenda beyond this will lead to the withdrawal of support.**

The event, titled Shaheed Zia’s Contributions to the Great Liberation War and the Building of Modern Bangladesh, was organised by Zia Parishad.

“We have never heard of ‘Ziaism’. Those who oppose BNP coined the term, and their intentions are questionable,” Khasru said.

He said BNP, despite being in power three times,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

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