

# ETV case HC dismisses govt attorney's plea

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday turned down the government attorney's plea for dismissing the writs seeking return of the seized equipment and granting of broadcasting licence to the ETV.

"After analogous hearing from the contending parties, we cannot entertain your plea at this stage," the court told the attorney and asked him to come up with arguments.

Additional Attorney General A J Mohammad Ali submitted that the writs are not maintainable as the methods followed by the ETV's two contending chairmen in submitting applications for broadcasting licence do not have any legal bearing.

He said the question of the ETV's chairmanship is yet to be decided by the appropriate civil court and the matter could not come under the writ jurisdiction.

He questioned if the court should interfere in the matter of granting licence when the applications are not in accordance with the law. The licence should be awarded on the basis of merit and compliance with the existing law, he contended.

Earlier, Barrister A Hasib, counsel for Nasir Chowdhury, contending chairman of the ETV, submitted

that Abdus Salam is not the chairman of the ETV.

The meeting of the ETV board of directors held in London at Hotel Holiday Inn where Salam took over as chairman was convened illegally with malafide intention ignoring the company's articles of association, he contended, adding that Salam failed to manage support of the majority of directors.

The inclusive hearing resumes today.

## Bus rams traffic police to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A traffic policeman died when a bus rammmed him at Shanirakhra in Demra yesterday.

Constable Amir Hossain, 37, suffered fatal injuries as the bus knocked him down at about 10:00am when he was on duty at Shanirakhra crossing.

Amir was rushed to the Rajarbagh Police Line Hospital where he died at 11:00am.

Police seized the bus, but its driver managed to escape.

## Adab slams 'attacks, harassment'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two non-governmental organisations (NGOs) yesterday condemned a series of attacks and condemned 'police harassment' against them.

In separate press releases, Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (Adab) and Oikyabaddha Nagorik Andolan (ONA) expressed concern at the recent attempt on ADAB Chairperson Dr Kazi Farooq Ahmad's life, police harassment of the NGO's Patuakhali President AH Mansur, repeated attacks on a Proshika office, and obstruction to ONA organised discussion on good governance.

"The events in Patuakhali is a threat to civil society," ONA President and National Professor Kabir Choudhury said in the release.

Citing newspaper reports, both Adab and ONA alleged that these 'disgraceful acts' were being openly performed by cadres 'under the visible incitement from an influential wing within the ruling party'.

"This is the latest expression of the vindictive mindset exhibited against the progressive NGOs and greater civil society."

Both Adab and ONA alleged that the recent attempt on Dr Ahmad's life followed the police harassment of Dr Ahmad, ransacking of a Proshika training centre, and the harassment of various NGO leaders through state agencies.

The NGOs further accused the government of being politically motivated in blocking hundreds of crores of taka in bills owed to various NGOs, including Adab and Proshika.

# AL, JP rattle sabre

FROM PAGE 12

to go for gas export. "We are not against gas export, but any export should be out of the surplus amount after meeting domestic demands by our industry and power plants and ensuring a reserve for 50 years," AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil told UNB.

He also dismissed as a mere propaganda the state minister's statement that the AL had prepared all the groundwork for pipeline export of gas.

Former president and Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad echoed AL's views saying, "We are against gas export without ensuring sufficient reserve and people will not accept it either."

Ershad said industrial growth in the southern and northern regions has been hampered because there are no gas connections.

Jatiya Party Chairman Anwar Hossain Manju MP vehemently opposed gas export even if there is

adequate reserve.

Manju, a former energy minister, said Bangladesh has the technological know-how for hydrocarbon exploration and asked why the government now requires foreign investment in this sector.

"When three-fourths of the people do not have electricity, why should the question of gas export ever arise," he said pointing out that the northwestern and southwestern regions are starving for gas energy.

Referring to the discovery of oil in the mid 1980s at Haripur in Sylhet, Manju said, "As a former energy minister, I want to know the fate of that oil field."

He said if any decision is taken for gas export, "this government would be held responsible," adding that "Of these two democratic governments -- the AL and BNP-led alliance -- one has created the background and the other is giving the full shape to it (gas export)."

# Srikanta murder

FROM PAGE 1

Hamid, Paritosh Rakshit, Irfan Chowdhury, Jahangir Alam, Kajal Rakshit, Aparup Rakshit, Arun Rakshit, Barun Rakshit, Amit Rakshit, Saroj Guha, Elahi Jan, Dipak Dutta Bhola, Mohammad Mubarak, Shahabuddin Sabu and Kamrul Hasan Titu. The first 11 of them were accused in the first information report (FIR), said police.

Investigation Officer (IO) Sub-Inspector Abdul Latif submitted the chargesheet against 17 after 110 days of investigation beginning on April 22 this year and quizzing 48 witnesses, police said.

Srikanta Rakshit, 27, son of lawyer Mridul Rakshit, was kidnapped from city's Ice Factory Road on the evening of April 19 while he was going to Agrabad commercial area with a friend to buy computer accessories.

Police recovered the beheaded body of Srikanta from Tandrabil area of Shikarpur union under Hathazari thana the following morning. The severed head was found in Mahamaya area under Mirersarai thana on April 24.

Shikha Rani Rakshit, mother of Srikanta, lodged a murder case on April 20 with the Doublemooring Police Station accusing 11 persons including Azimuddin Mahmud, a neighbour of the Srikanta family at Hazarigoli, as prime suspect.

Of the 17 accused, only five are now in jail. They are Jahangir, Dipak, Mubarak, Sabu and Titu.

Sources said Jahangir, Dipak and Mubarak later gave confessional statements and the name of the AL lawmaker surfaced in the statements of Dipak and Mubarak, reportedly activists of Roazan thana chapter of the AL's student front Bangladesh Chhatra League.

The IO in the chargesheet said past enmity and greed to gobble up huge property of the Srikanta family in the city were the prime motives behind the gruesome killing.

The chargesheet further said Azim, Jahangir, Dipak, Kamrul, Sabu and Mubarak executed the

## DCC

FROM PAGE 12

new amusement equipment would be installed for children. Some parks are today in such a rundown condition that they may be called anything but parks. The Sayedabad park is now a waste-dumping site. Part of it has been occupied by illegal businesses and a market is being planned there.

The DCC has recently leased out a park at Sayedabad to a private firm, which has installed amusement equipment for children.

Another park at Jatrabari in Demra is occupied by a market. In Old Dhaka near English Road, a children's park has become a parking place and a haven for drug addicts. The Karwan Bazar park is illegally occupied by slum dwellers.

# Probe into Kelly's death

FROM PAGE 12

political truce in place since Kelly was found with a slit wrist near his home in Oxfordshire, southern England just over three weeks ago appeared to have been unravelling.

The run-up to the government weapons expert's suicide highlighted a "culture of duplicity and deceit" in Blair's government, charged a senior member of the opposition Conservative Party.

The country had "a prime minister who's a stranger to the truth and a government that's rotten to the core," finance spokesman Michael Howard said.

Kelly's death came after he was identified as the main source for a highly contentious BBC report in May claiming Blair's staff exaggerated intelligence data on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction ahead of the US-led war.

The weapons expert was revealed as having briefed Andrew Gilligan, a BBC radio reporter who alleged that the government deliberately "sexed-up" a dossier last September on Iraq's weapons.

Blair was the United States' closest ally in the war to unseat Saddam Hussein, launched in March, and repeated claims that he

duped a sceptical nation over the case for the conflict have caused him severe political damage.

The veracity or otherwise of the intelligence about Saddam's alleged illegal weaponry will not come under the remit of Hutton's inquiry, which was officially opened on August 1.

Nonetheless, the possibility that ministers or officials deliberately tried to deflect attention from the weapons row by starting a war of words with the BBC and then sacrificing Kelly would be almost as damaging.

A lawmaker from the ruling Labour Party charged yesterday that Kelly's death saw what was a bitter but somewhat arcane row with the BBC over its journalism practices spiral into a full-blown scandal -- a process for which Blair's own administration was entirely responsible.

"The latest crisis for the government stems entirely from its obsession with presentation over substance," Peter Kilfoyle wrote in the Independent on Sunday newspaper.

Blair -- currently on holiday in Barbados -- is considered very unlikely to lose his job immediately.

## Criminal Kamrul nabbed in Khulna drive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Joint forces yesterday arrested Ghazi Kamrul Islam, 50, a listed criminal of the country's south-western zone at his residence at Diana under Daulatpur thana.

He was nabbed at around 3:30pm.

Wanted in about 40 murder cases recorded with various police stations in Khulna, he had gone into hiding soon after the launch of 'Operation Spider Web' on July 19.

Kamrul leads the outlawed Biplobi Communist Party that has at least 2,000 armed cadres and a huge possession of ammunition in 10 south-western districts.

According to sources, besides being a dealer of illegal arms, he is a drug baron.

Kamrul had surrendered to police in 1999 but after being released from Khulna district jail under general amnesty, he returned to criminal life.

He is now being questioned at the Daulatpur Police Station for arms and ammunition and the whereabouts of his associates, the sources said.

Meanwhile, the joint forces are gradually wrapping up their operations in the Paikgachha, Rupsha, Mongla and Mollahat upazilla.

## Body formed to probe Suraiya's death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The health ministry formed a probe body to investigate the alleged laxity of duty by the doctors in the death of Suraiya Begum.

Following a press report, the ministry formed the three-member probe committee.

The committee, headed by a joint secretary of the ministry and two other officials, will submit its report on August 13.

It was inquiring into the medical history of Suraiya Begum, an associate professor of Information Science and Library Management Department of Dhaka University, said a health ministry press release.

Suraiya Begum died on August 2 reportedly for neglect of doctors.

## Renaming

FROM PAGE 12

surfaced only when the RCC mayor laid the foundation stone for a new building of the college on August 9. In the invitation card for the ceremony, the college was mentioned as Housing Estate College.

The RCC mayor could not be reached for comment. But, Acting Principal Shahaduzzaman confirmed it, saying it was done as per the decision of the college governing body.

The Rajshahi Awami League held a meeting at its office to protest the incident, and different socio-cultural and professional organisations also condemned the incident.

## PSC

FROM PAGE 12

The daily quoted her saying, "Demand to cancel the exam is irrational as there was no incident of question paper leakage."

The BCS examinees continued agitation yesterday and various student organisations brought out processions on the Dhaka University campus demanding immediate cancellation of the test.

The Bangladesh Chhatra League yesterday reiterated its demand for resignation of the BPSC chairman.

A Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) procession, marching towards the BPSC secretariat, was barred by police near Shahbagh intersection yesterday.

The BCU leaders demanded punishment to those involved in the question paper leakage.

The 24th BCS preliminary test was first held on February 28 this year but was cancelled due to alleged leakage of question papers.

## Frigate case

FROM PAGE 12

as well as two guarantors for each. After a yearlong investigation, the Bureau of Anti-corruption (BAC) chargesheeted the four along with former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and Chairman of Trans World Engineering and Trading Company Limited Abdul Awal Mintoo for purchasing the DW 2000H frigate for the Bangladesh Navy in 1996 causing a loss of Tk 511.17 crore to the public exchequer.

Among the nine firms that had submitted 24 quotations for the frigate deal, M/S BOMETEC PLA of China was the lowest bidder with a price of \$68 million, but M/S Daewoo Corporation of South Korea the fourth lowest bidder quoting \$99.7 million, was awarded the contract to supply the "unproven design frigate," the case alleged.

As a result, the country suffered a loss of Tk 511.17 crore in public money in the deal, said the BAC officer who filed the case with the Tejgaon Police Station on August 7 last year.

Advocate Shahara Khatun and Rezaul Rahman appeared for the defendant, while Public Prosecutor (PP) Abdullah Mahmud Hasan stood for the state.

# One gets death for killing Musum

COURT CORRESPONDENT, Dhaka

One person has been sentenced to death and three to life imprisonment for killing Musum in July, 2000.

Mollah Mamun, a criminal of Demra, was given death penalty while Liton alias Chor Liton, Mollah Masum and Liton were given life imprisonment.

Of the convicts, Masum and Liton have been absconding since the incident. Their punishment will be effective from the date of their surrender or arrest.

The convicts can appeal to the High Court within seven days from the date of judgement.

The fifth additional metropolitan sessions judge, Mohammad Rezaul Islam gave the verdict in a

jam-packed courtroom in presence of the two accused Mamun and Liton.

The case filed with Demra Police Station alleged that the accused persons knifed Musum to death at about 11:00 am on July 31, 2000 in the city's Demra area.

The victim's father, Kabir Ahmed, filed a murder case accusing Mamun and six others the same day.

The investigation officer of the case submitted the charge sheet against Mamun and three others on June 17, 2001.

On May 14 last year, the court framed charges against the accused.

Seven out of 15 prosecution witnesses were cross-examined during the trial.

## Thieves bore

FROM PAGE 12

flowed through Ashuganj station.

A government plant in Kailashtila manufactures liquid petroleum gas (LPG) from condensate for use as cooking fuel. A private firm, Super Refinery, in Chittagong purchases 600 barrels a day for the same purpose. However, there are allegations that a large part is leaked out from the refinery and used as kerosene adulterant.

A Petrobangla official said racketeers dominate the Sylhet Gas Field System and investigation is underway to uncover their activities in the pilferage of condensate.

The first case of pilferage by boring holes in gas pipelines was reported in 1998 when the GTCL took over the Ashuganj pipeline from Sylhet Gas Field System.

"It was a novice attempt. Condensate leakage had flooded a pond and we sealed off the leakage. But from then on, there had been sporadic cases of pilferage," a senior GTCL official noted.

He pointed out that as the private security company of the GTCL and the GTCL employees themselves were involved in the theft, the authorities put new security arrangements in place in 2001.

"But for the last six months theft has been on the rise. On average, we have detected pilferage of more than 10,000 litres of condensate a day in recent times," he added.

Two teams of GTCL officials and experts have begun patrolling the gas pipeline system in Ashuganj to detect more leakage points as meter readers continue showing that the thieves are taking away the condensate.

## 3 tremors

FROM PAGE 12

code responsible for the damages caused by the July 27 quake that killed two people, injured another 25 and flattened 500 houses in the Chittagong region.

He suggested construction of houses in the quake-prone region with light materials, relocation of the homeless and immediate medical support for the victims to prevent the spread of diseases.

The briefing was attended by the deputy commissioner, Director of the local Geological Survey Mir Fazul Karim, Municipality Chairman Habibur Rahman and members of the taskforce Dr M Shamsul Alam, Dr Ehsan Ahmed, Reaz Akter Mollik and Quazi Zulfiker Ali.

The findings of the taskforce will be submitted to the government soon, Jahangir said.

## Launch

FROM PAGE 1

During the strike, launches anchored in mid-river. Launches plying the southern routes from Dhaka to Barisal called the strike in protest at fining 26 launches by a mobile court.

M Kolimullah, president of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport (passenger) Organisation, an association of launch owners, told the BBC Radio last night that it is an offence to call such a strike and that punitive action would be taken against strikers.

# Shazneen case

FROM PAGE 1

incident and he submitted a written statement to the court

The prosecution lawyer read out the charges derived from statements of 22 prosecution witnesses in the case.

The four others -- Badal, Shanirah, Minu and Parvin on December 12, 1998, showing 74 people as prosecution witnesses.

The tribunal framed charges against Shahid and five others on April 13, 1999.

The trial of the case began on July 9, 2000.

The Shazneen murder case which is pending with the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, was earlier stayed by the High Court (HC). The HC order will remain valid till disposal of the rape case.

Special Public Prosecutors (PPs) Arfan Uddin Khan and Mahbub Ahmed appeared for the state, while Mosharraf Hossain Kjol, Mizanur Rahman and M A Kamrul Hasan Khan Aslam appeared for the accused.

# PM: Gas-fired plants

FROM PAGE 1

The prime minister said shortage of "Peaking Plant" was felt for long to meet the demand of growing requirement of electricity in Dhaka, particularly to meet the additional demand during peak hours in the evening.

The electricity requirement during peak hours in Dhaka and surrounding areas will be met by this new gas-propelled turbine power plant in Tongi.

Khaleda informed the function that the government was also planning to set up more such peaking plants in Dhaka, Khulna and Chittagong Hill Tracts to meet the extra demand of electricity.

The government has taken necessary initiatives to set up 18 power plants in phases to meet an estimated demand of 6,071MW of power by 2007. These plants will be set up with the government's own resources, she added. Besides, private sector independent power plants (IPPs) would also be encouraged.

Necessary policy guidelines have been formulated to encourage the production of power by the private sector and joint venture IPPs alongside the government-funded power plants.

In this context, she said responsibility of power transmission has been given to the newly formed Power Grid Company of Bangladesh Limited, which will function independently. Besides, DESCO, a power distribution com-

pany, has been formed.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, Agriculture Minister M K Anwar, State Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmud and Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka Hu Qinyuen also spoke.

M Saifur Rahman said if waste in the power and gas sectors cannot be stopped, investment would not be effective.

## Taylor to quit

FROM PAGE 12

His one condition for bowing out was that West African peacekeepers arrive to ensure order. The first elements of a Nigerian force flew into Monrovia last week to a heroes' welcome from weary Liberians desperate for peace and change.

As well as the nearly 800 regional troops, the United States has 2,300 Marines on ships anchored offshore but has not said it will commit itself to more than a backup role for the West Africans.

While the shooting has died down in Monrovia itself since the peacekeepers came in, fighting has continued for the second city of Buchanan and in northern Liberia.

There is also little sign of a let-up in the desperate humanitarian crisis in Monrovia, where the United Nations estimates that at least 450,000 people are displaced -- many of them hungry and sick.