

RAJSHAHI GAS PROJECT

# Today's inauguration by PM a political stunt

## Speakers tell rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The scheduled inauguration of US\$ 430 million Rajshahi Gas Project by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at Kharkhari on the outskirts of the city today is only a political stunt, said the leaders of local trade and social bodies yesterday.

During a demonstration at Shaheb Bazar area at noon, they said the inauguration of the gas project before the parliamentary election is nothing but a deception.

Leaders of Rajshahi Bytasyai Oikya Parishad (RBOP) demanded immediate gas supply to Rajshahi through pipelines.

They chanted slogans like 'we want gas before poll, otherwise we will not vote BNP.'

Addressing a rally after the demonstration, the speakers said gas would have reached Rajshahi much earlier if the government had any genuine interest.

"Our demands were not cared at all although we (citizens) had been demonstrating for gas for over two years," they added.

Chaired by RBOP President Mosharraf Hossain Akhunjy, the rally

was also addressed by its Secretary Farid Mahmud Hasan, prominent businessman Harunur Rashid, Bimol Kumar, Golam Rasul and Sekandar Ali.

Talking to reporters Rajshahi Rakha Andolon Parishad (RRAP) Convener Zamat Khan said, "The inauguration of gas project at the time of the departure of the government is nothing but a fraud."

Mahtab Uddin, convener of Rajshahi Gas Andolon Parishad (RGAP), said gas was taken to Chittagong and Comilla in only 29 days during Ershad regime.

"Actually, the government is yet to be assured of money for the project and that is why it has taken shelter of political stunt," he added.

Mahtab claimed that even the floating of tenders for laying pipelines and setting up of gas networking in Rajshahi is false.

He said, "Tenders were floated before the project was approved by the Ecneec and there were many examples of such projects that were left uncared over years."

Energy Adviser Mahmudur Rahman told a Rajshahi gathering on September 4 that gas would be coming to Rajshahi by the end of

2008. He said, "The Asian Development Bank has agreed to provide US\$ 230 million for the project and the government will provide the rest."

During her visit to Rajshahi, Khaleda is also scheduled to inaugurate Rajshahi Women Polytechnic Institute which was built at Tk 10.98 crore and started academic activities months ago.

She will also inaugurate the newly modeled Rajshahi Railway Station although its construction work is yet to be completed at a cost of Tk 29 crore.

Formal functioning of the station will take few months more, said experts concerned.

The PM will also lay the foundation stone for upgrading Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital into 1000-bed at a cost of Tk 30 crore. The project, however, is stated to be designed only.

Besides, she will inaugurate the academic building and a 500-seat student hall of Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology.

In the afternoon, Khaleda will address a public meeting at Chapainawabganj.

## Develop ties with Muslim nations

### Nizami urges western societies

UNB, Dhaka

Jamaat Ameer and Industries Minister Matlur Rahman Nizami has called on the western societies to make fundamental paradigm shift in their attitude towards Muslims to make fruitful relations with the Muslim nations.

"Religion plays a very important role in Muslim societies and would continue to do so in countries like Bangladesh in the foreseeable future," he said while delivering a speech at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House of London on Monday.

Nizami was attending a meeting entitled 'Islamic political parties within the democratic process in Bangladesh: The Jamaat approach', under the institute's Asia programme lectures, according to a message received here yesterday.

The minister is now in the UK to attend a conference organised by the Islamic Forum, Europe.

The Jamaat leader said Islam and democracy are the same in essence as far as governance is concerned. "Islam rejected hereditary kingship, autocratic rule as well as the use of force to gain power."

Nizami also underlined that Jamaat in line with its constitution has in theory and practice demonstrated its unflinching commitment to democratic means through its long and distinguished history of political participation.

The meeting was widely participated by leading muslim organisations in the UK and Europe, as well as by key institutions of the British government, including the British Foreign and Commonwealth office, the Ministry of Defense and the Department for International Development (DFID).

Academics and researchers from leading British think tanks, including RUSI and IISS as well as representatives of the Amnesty International and members of the diplomatic community in London also took part in the deliberations.

Bangladesh High Commissioner to the United Kingdom Sabihuddin Ahmed also spoke at the meeting.

## Ebtadaee madrasa, community teachers to get same salary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Osman Farruk yesterday said teachers of Ebtadaee Madrasas will soon get the same salary scale like the teachers of community primary school from the government exchequer.

"The salary scale of Swatantra Ebtadaee Madrasa's teachers is now in process and we will soon announce the salary scale before our BNP-Jamaat government tenure ends," the education minister said while addressing a conference of madrasa teachers at the auditorium of Engineers' Institution in the city yesterday.

He ensured the madrasa teachers that the government has already decided to allow salary for all teachers of Swatantra Ebtadaee Madrasa as around 10 to 15 per cent primary students are imparting from the Ebtadaee madrasas.

The minister also said that he will soon announce the recognition of Ebtadaee madrasa's equivalence to a registered primary school.

Bangladesh Madrasa Teachers' Association organised the conference while Deputy Minister for Information Advocate Abdus Salam Pintu, law-maker Advocate Syed Moazzem Hossain Alal, Jatiya Shikkhak Karmachari Oikya Jote Chief Convener Selim Bhuiyan, Bangladesh College Teachers' Association General Secretary Prof CM Mahmud, Bangladesh Teachers' Association President Kazi Abdur Razzak and Bangladesh Madrasa Teachers' Association Chairman Moulana MA Latif and Secretary General Moulana Delwar Hossain spoke on the occasion.



Participants at a debate programme on 'Free and fair election can be held only through electoral reforms' jointly organised by Sushasoner Jonyo Nagorik (Sujon) and Debate for Democracy at Baitul Iqra auditorium in the city yesterday. From left are Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, Prof Emajuddin Ahmed and Nowajish Ali Khan.

# 'Empowerment of EC a must for strengthening democracy'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) has to be properly empowered for ensuring a formidable democratic system, speakers at a debate programme observed yesterday.

"Reforms in the electoral system are a must. The EC has to be independent, and trust and accountability are of the essence in such an institution. It should be voter-friendly as well," said Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, president of Sujon.

Sushasoner Jonyo Nagorik (Sujon) and Debate for Democracy jointly organised the debate on 'Free and fair election can be held only through electoral reforms' at Baitul Iqra

auditorium in the city. Six debaters from different universities took part in the debate conducted in parliamentary style.

Treasury bench members stressed reforms in the electoral system, including appointment of an 'acceptable' chief election commissioner, introduction of transparent ballot boxes and provision of photographs of candidates beside the election symbols on the ballot paper and submission of reports on income and election expenses of a candidate.

On the other hand, the opposition attached top priority to the political will.

Later, Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said the Election Commission has failed to perform its duty, as it is incapable of

going against the government's wishes.

He stressed that the EC should have the authority to hold elections and form investigation committee to look into any election-related irregularities and take action against the culprits.

The people should be made aware of their constitutional rights in order to restore trust in the democratic institutions and bring the honest and competent candidates to power, he added.

Speaking as the chief guest, Prof Emajuddin Ahmed said the spirit of coordination among the political parties, which was seen during the 1991 elections, no longer exists today.

The major political parties then agreed on the separation of the judiciary from the executive and freedom of the press, but all of those have been shelved, he said.

Prof Emajuddin suggested that the president should be given more power and the opposition leaders should participate in parliamentary institutions.

He also called for behavioural change and reforms in the political parties.

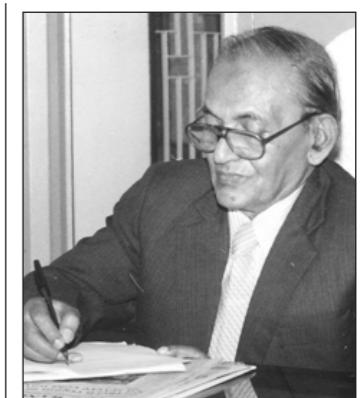
Dr Badiul Alam Majumdar called on the lawmakers to ensure accountability and good governance.

The speakers also called for an end to the use of muscle power and black money in elections, decentralisation of the government and the establishment of a true democracy.

Nowajish Ali Khan, senior vice-president ATN Bangla, Rafiqul Islam Sarkar, former chief news editor of Bangladesh Television, and Prof Dr Borhanuddin Khan also spoke.

Hasan Ahmed Chowdhury Kiron, chairman of Debate for Democracy,

moderated the debate.



## Prof Shamsul Haque passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof M Shamsul Haque, former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, passed away yesterday afternoon at the age of 80, says a press release.

Prof Haque was also a former adviser to the caretaker government.

Born on June 1 in 1926, Prof Haque began his career as a teacher of the university in 1950. He also held different important positions, including chairman of the University Grants Commission.

He is survived by one daughter, two sons and four grandsons.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held at Dhaka University mosque after Zohr prayers today.

## Prof Quddus

Dr Abdul Quddus, a professor of Mathematics Department at Dhaka University (DU), passed away due to cardiac complexities at a city hospital yesterday at the age of 58, says a press release.

He is survived by his wife and a host of relatives.

His body was sent to his village at Baniachang upazila of Habiganj for burial after a namaz-e-janaza at DU central mosque last night.

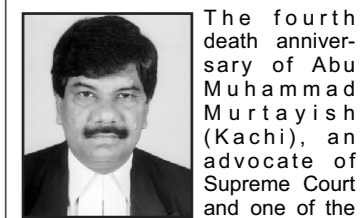
DU Vice-chancellor (VC) Prof SMA Faiz and Dhaka University Teachers' Association President Prof Sharif Ullah Bhuiyan and General Secretary Prof Dr Mohammad Akhtaruzzaman expressed deep shock at his death.

## Death anniversary

Today is the 6th death anniversary of eminent journalist, sport organiser and social worker late Mahboob ul Huq (Payera), says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa and milad mahfil will be held at his house at Huq Villa, Mizan Road in Feni after Maghrib prayers today.

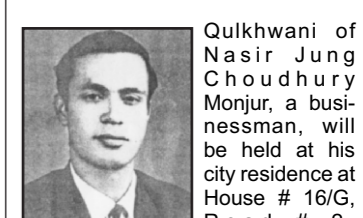
## Abu Muhammad Murtaish



The fourth death anniversary of Abu Muhammad Murtaish (Kachi), an advocate of Supreme Court and one of the founders of the Bangladesh Law Association, will be observed today, says a press release.

A milad mahfil will be held at

## Qulkhwani



Qulkhwani of Nasir Jung Choudhury Monjur, a businessman, will be held at his city residence at House # 16/G, Road # 2, Cantonment, after Asr prayers today, says a press release.



Newly appointed High Commissioner of Trinidad and Tobago to Bangladesh Pundit Maniedeo Persad Fimi presents his credentials to President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

## Four labourers die in B'baria road accident

UNB, Brahmanbaria

Four day-labourers were killed in a fatal accident at Bertala on Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Sarail upazila yesterday morning.

Police and witnesses said a speeding truck plowed through a roadside crowd killing two people on the spot and injuring two others. The two injured died on their way to hospital.

Two of the deceased were identified as Jubaer, 18, of Kishoreganj district, and Borhanuddin, 48, of Ashuganj.

The truck sped away after the accident.

## 13 DU students get Dean's Award

DU CORRESPONDENT

Faculty of Social Sciences of Dhaka University (DU) will give away prestigious 'Dean's Award' to 13 students of different departments under the faculty for outstanding academic performance.

The students, who stood first class first in honours or masters examinations in 2003 and 2004, will receive a certificate and a crest at a ceremony at Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) auditorium at 11:00am tomorrow, said Dean of the faculty Prof Dr Harun-or-Rashid.

Vice-chancellor Prof SMA Faiz will deliver a 'Felicitation Speech' while University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman Prof Dr Mohammad Asaduzzaman will be present as guest of honour.

All the faculty members, including chairmen of departments under the faculty, guardians of the award recipients and all students of the university will attend the ceremony.

### Moderate to heavy falls likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at most places over all the six divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderate to heavy falls are also likely at places during the period, Met Office said, predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 34.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 23.2 degree Celsius at Sitakundu.

**The sun sets in the capital at 6:05pm today and rises at 5:44am tomorrow.**

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	29.9	24.6	92	93
Chittagong	31.8	25.8	82	80
Rajshahi	34.2	25.8	87	87
Khulna	31.6	27.4	89	86
Barisal	30.6	25.4	92	91
Sylhet	26.0	24.3	97	97
Cox's Bazar	32.0	24.0	67	80

# Chaos in JS over attacks on MPs, law and order

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Lawmakers should be punished following a thorough investigation. She said otherwise, the dignity of the parliament will be tarnished.

During the unscheduled debate on issues ranging from the declaration of independence, to the assassination of Bangabandhu in 1975, proclamation of marshal law, killing of army officers during late president Ziaur Rahman's regime, law and order situation, rigging of votes in 2001 election, and price spiral of essentials -- the opposing lawmakers blasted each other without any restraint.

Sheikh Hanisa said during the debate, "I want to know whether you will adjourn the Sangsad and form an inquiry

committee?" But the deputy speaker did not reply to her.

She also said, "My statement is clear -- were those policemen who beat the lawmakers or were they BNP and Shibir cadres wearing police uniforms?" She also alleged that the ruling party prepared a hit list of opposition leaders and killing them one after another to pave their way back to power again.

BNP lawmakers countered her allegations by saying that the culture of attack on lawmakers started during the rule of AL. They also alleged that during the AL government its cadres were found moving openly brandishing firearms.

In defence of the opposition's proposal for electoral reforms Hasina said the reform

proposal is to protect the rights of the voters. She said the alliance government is opposing the reform proposal because it will not be able to rig the election if the reforms are carried out.

She also said the BNP-led government signed the agreement with Asia Energy when Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain was the energy minister. Soon after Sheikh Hasina's speech Health Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain took the floor adding fuel to the opposition lawmakers' ire.

Amid the chaos the health minister sat down and BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan took the floor prompting the AL lawmakers to walk out of the House at

around 8:35pm led by their party chief.

After AL's walkout, the session continued for an hour when ruling party lawmakers delivered their speeches bashing AL. Soon after the AL walkout, Mannan Bhuiyan requested the speaker to allow his fellow party members to speak as long as the AL lawmakers were allowed to speak.

Before adjourning the house around 9:40pm, the deputy speaker told the house that the torture of two lawmakers is unfortunate, but such incidents also took place before.

He said there is no scope for forming an inquiry committee to investigate the incidents and the existing law is enough to hold trials regarding the incidents.

Earlier, criticising Sheikh Hasina's speech, LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said he would resign if the opposition could prove that Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal cadres carried out the attacks on AL lawmakers wearing police uniforms. He said if anyone breaks section 144, police have no choice but to go into action.

He urged the opposition to sit in a dialogue as no decision could be taken keeping BNP out of the loop.

Earlier after the magrib prayer, AL Presidium Member Suranjit Sen Gupta took the floor on a point of order and said the government is using the police to torture and harass opposition leaders right before its tenure ends.

He said yesterday's attack on AL lawmakers are planned and politically motivated. "From this day on this government has turned into the nastiest autocratic government in the history," he said.

After AL's walkout Law Minister Moudud Ahmed said everything AL did in the House including the walkout was planned.

In a press briefing after the walkout Sheikh Hasina said they staged the walkout from the House because the deputy speaker did not go to see the injured AL lawmakers and because he did not form an inquiry committee.

In reply to a question she said they will attend the House today.