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Wishing the  
BEST  
for the  
3rd Millennium

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## Miladunnabi today

Eid-e-Miladunnabi, commemorating the death and birth of Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (SM), will be celebrated today across the country with deep religious fervour, reports BSS.

The day will be celebrated through special prayers, milad mahfils and discussions under the auspices of different government, private and religious organisations including the Islamic Foundation.

The day is a public holiday and the National Flags will be hoisted atop all public and private buildings while the important streets and road islands in Dhaka and other cities will be decorated with colourful flags and banners inscribed with "Kalema Taleba." The Televisions and Radio will broadcast special programmes while newspapers will publish special supplements highlighting the significance of the day.

Special diets will be served at hospitals, children's homes and jails.

In a message on the eve of the holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi President Shahabuddin Ahmed said that the lifelong efforts of Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (SM) would act as a source of inspiration for establishing fraternity, equality and solidarity among the nations and also peace by removing injustice and untruth from society.

The President described the life and philosophy of the Prophet (SM) as an exemplary ideal.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in a separate message expressed her belief that peace could be established in the present day world, now fighting the menace of terrorism, anarchy and war by adhering to the teachings and ideals of Prophet Mohammad (SM).

"Our dearest Prophet (SM)

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### Holiday

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed today on the occasion of holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi.

Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow.

## Koreas sign landmark reconciliation accord

PYONGYANG, June 14: North and South Korea today signed a landmark accord on reducing Cold War tensions and bringing together families divided for the past five decades, officials said, reports AFP.

The accord was struck on the second day of historic summit meetings between President Kim Dae-Jung of South Korea and the North's supreme leader Kim Jong-Il.

The agreement covers four broad areas taking in North-South reconciliation, cooperation and moves toward reunification, tension reduction, families separated since the 1950-53 Korean War and exchanges and cooperation in various fields.

Presidential spokesman Park Joon-Young said "the two leaders signed the accord, which was drafted by South and North Korean delegates, after studying it."

The leaders held four hours of talks and attended a state banquet at which they were given a standing ovation before signing the accord, pooled television images showed.

Kim Dae-Jung hailed the success of the summit in a speech to the banquet.

"The sun is rising at last for national reunification, reconciliation and peace," he declared.

"The talks were successful," he added. "I express my thanks to Chairman Kim Jong-Il for helping to reach the accord."

The meetings produced results which indicated major strides toward ending more than half a century of enmity.

The Korean peninsula was divided between the communist North and pro-capitalist

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Happy reunion: South Korean First Lady Lee Hee-Ho (L) meets her old school teacher Kim Ji-Han, from the Ewha Women's High School in Seoul, in the North Korea's capital Pyongyang yesterday during the historic summit. Kim Ji-Han had left Seoul to Pyongyang just before the Korean liberation from Japanese colonial rules in 1945. —AFP photo

## Petrobangla's surprise move

### BAPEX asked to prepare development plan for Shahbazpur gasfield

By Sharier Khan

Petrobangla in a surprise move asked the BAPEX recently to prepare a development plan for the Shahbazpur gasfield, which is the centre of focus of the controversial Western Region Integrated Project (WRIP) of US oil company Unocal.

Discovered by Petrobangla's oil and gas exploration and production wing BAPEX in 1995, Shahbazpur gasfield is still under the purview of the on-going WRIP negotiations. As it is, BAPEX got confused when Petrobangla's asked it to submit a development plan, a well-placed source said.

"It is not clear if the government is really serious about BAPEX's venture in Shahbazpur," the source pointed out, "especially given the fact that Petrobangla is still holding meetings with Unocal over WRIP."

"It is unclear if there has been any government policy change regarding BAPEX or if it has any implication in the upcoming general elections," said a Petrobangla source.

The situation remains more or less unchanged. PDB.

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carbon exploration company hardly got its due attention from the government until recently. Few months ago, the government decided to promote its status from exploration company to exploration and production company. However, apart from the elevation of status there had been no commitment of a working capital.

Following the Shahbazpur discovery, the BAPEX gave a gasfield development plan twice, outlining drilling of two appraisal wells. But the ECNEC rejected both proposals as BAPEX failed to come up with any sound financial plan," he said. "But at the same time, this Petrobangla directive is significant."

He said that in mid-96, when BAPEX was formulating the Shahbazpur development plan, Unocal was one of the many foreign oil companies to express its interest to work with BAPEX.

"Unocal had submitted a joint venture proposal to BAPEX under which it would build a pipeline from Bholia to Khulna and set up a power plant there. All it wanted was a government guarantee for the sale of the power," he added, "it was totally different from the BAPEX."

"If law provides that a father is responsible for any action of an adult son, send me to jail. Staying in jail will be better than continuous police harassment."

Mojumder drew Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's attention to say, "Please send me to prison if the government's image is damaged for me."

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### 'Staying in jail better than police harassment'

By Staff Correspondent

Ruling party lawmaker Kamal Ahmed Mojumder made a fiery statement in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday accusing police of harassing him unnecessarily and blasting a section of the press for 'trying to blackmail' him.

Mojumder, whose son Jewel is an accused in the sensational Shipu murder case, also sought protection as a member of parliament.

Rising on a point of order, the Awami League MP claimed that police had searched his residence 16 times and his business office six times in connection with the killing of (Iftikhar Ahmed) Shipu, a businessman in the city's Bani area.

"If law provides that a father is responsible for any action of an adult son, send me to jail. Staying in jail will be better than continuous police harassment."

Mojumder drew Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's attention to say, "Please send me to prison if the government's image is damaged for me."

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### Prayer Timings

June	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
15		6.47pm
16	5.11 am	

### Prayer Timings

#### June 15

Azan Jamaat

Fajr 4.15 4.45

Zohr 1.00 1.30

Asr 5.00 5.15

Maghrib 6.50 6.55

Esha 8.15 8.45

### Breakthrough in arsenic treatment in the offing

By Naimul Haq

A possible breakthrough in arsenic treatment has been found after extensive clinical experiments in Bangladesh.

Clinical study suggests that spirulina, a green blue algae having a very high concentration of microelements and vitamins, may have good effects on people suffering from heavy metal poisoning like arsenic.

A recent non-randomised study by the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) found tremendous improvement in skin manifestation of arsenicosis patients after they were given a daily dose of 10 grams of spirulina each for four months.

As the study was confined to hospital-based patients, a further epidemiological study was necessary under strict protocol to validate the effect of spirulina on a larger size of population.

Dr A Z M Iftikhar Hussain, a leading public health expert and also a senior instructor at NIPSOM, and his associate researcher Dr Hasina Momotaj, conducted this study.

The study was conducted in three villages in Narayanganj district where hand-pumped

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## Spirulina may come as a rescue

### Breakthrough in arsenic treatment in the offing

By Naimul Haq

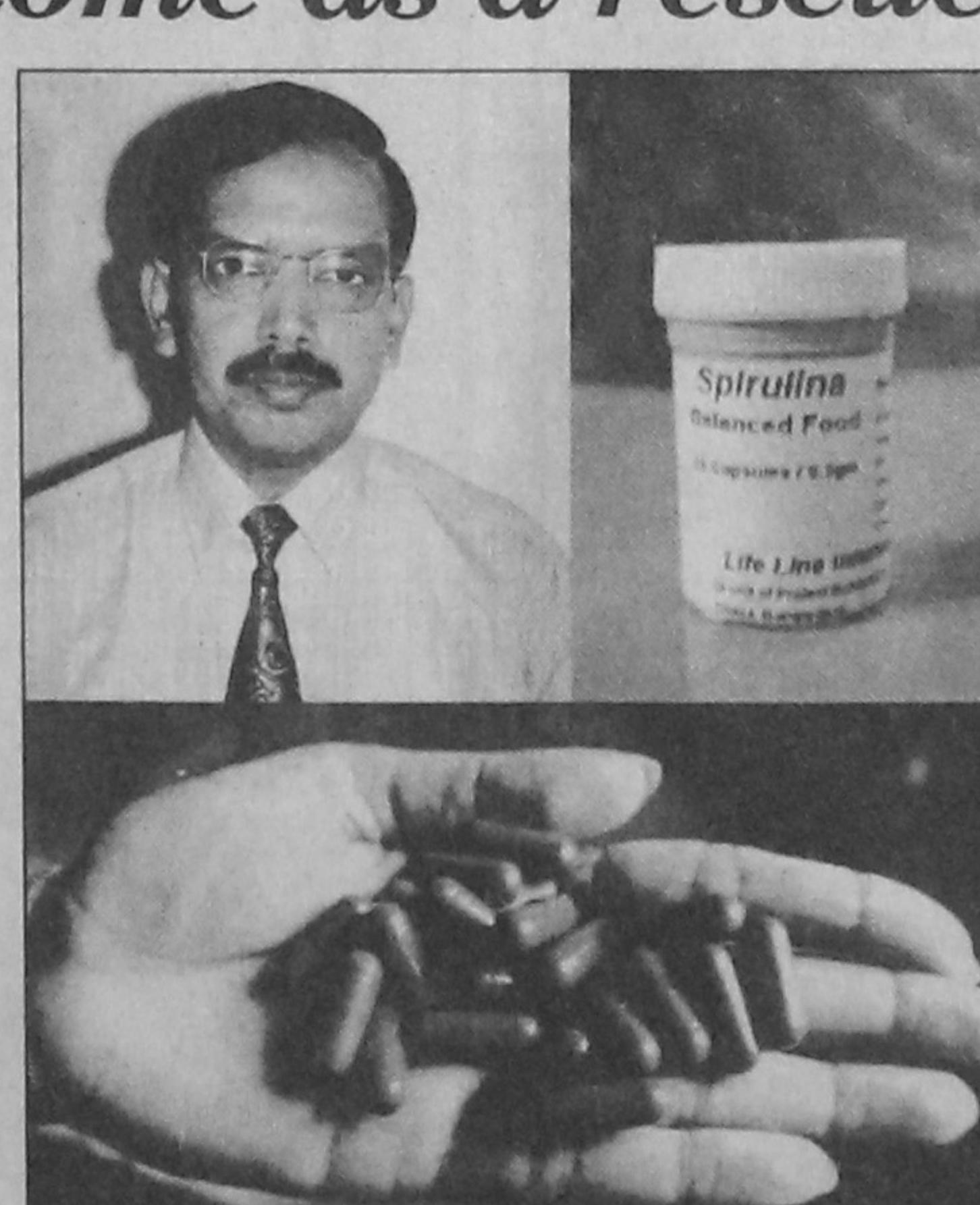
tubewells were known to be contaminated by arsenic.

Dr Hussain talking to the Daily Star said: "Fifty arsenicosis patients, both male and female, of different age groups were randomly selected from a total of 185 patients of the three villages. The patients were grouped into three stages - stage one included melanosis, keratosis and conjunctivitis; stage two included leucomelanosis and hyperkeratosis; and stage three hyperkeratosis with nodules in palm and feet."

Spirulina was distributed among the 50 patients in the form of capsule. Double blind method was followed in the study where 33 patients received true spirulina and the rest 17 got mock spirulina (capsules did not contain spirulina). The patients who received the capsules were at different stages of arsenic poisoning.

Prior to the study patients were examined to record visible signs of arsenicosis and photographs were also taken to compare the condition before and after the intervention.

The study was conducted in three villages in Narayanganj district where hand-pumped



Spirulina in the form of capsules and Dr A Z M Iftikhar Hussain, one of the two researchers who conducted the study. — Star photo

## BNP keeps all options open, devises plan for polls

By Rezaul Karim

BNP has devised an elaborate plan to prepare itself for the upcoming parliamentary polls.

The main opposition party is keeping all options open, including contesting the polls alone or through an electoral alliance, said a top party leader.

Sources said a good number of party leaders, ex-bureaucrats, academics, cultural activists and technical experts have already begun "research works" to get fully prepared within next six months for the national election.

BNP Chairperson and opposition leader Khaleda Zia is supervising the activities of

just formed groups assigned to prepare strategies for next election and on other issues, gather feedback from grassroots level and what people think of BNP.

The groups are also engaged in publication of booklets, leaflets and posters, selection of party nominees, resolving intra-party disputes and strengthening of party activities.

A new office at Banani has been set up and more such offices will be rented in the city soon, said a top BNP leader.

The office will be equipped with computer and other latest gadgets. There are office chambers only for Khaleda Zia, secretary general Abdul Mannan

Bhuiyan and Khaleda's eldest son Tareq Rahman. A limited number of people with prior appointment can visit the office on important occasions.

He said the Banani office is rented purely to carry out the research works. Khaleda will hold exclusive meetings with party MPs, businessmen, party's well-wishers, who do not want to meet her in public, and informal meetings with retired civil and military officials, and foreigners.

This office will mainly be used to carry out various research works and all necessary information and research

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## AI alleges widespread HR violations

By Staff Correspondent

Activists of political parties and student groups linked to both ruling and opposition parties in Bangladesh continued to perpetrate acts of violence, including beating political opponents and students to death, Amnesty International (AI) has said.

Scores of people were injured due to indiscriminate police beating of anti-government protesters or journalists covering hartals in the country. Disproportionate use of force by police against demonstrators continued to be reported throughout the country last year, AI said in its report released in Dhaka yesterday.

Institutional weakness, political instability and unchecked police brutality appeared to be major factors in continued widespread human rights violations in Bangladesh, the report said.

Neither the National Human Rights Commission nor the office of Ombudsman had been established by the end of 1999, it noted.

failure to take adequate measures to protect women and address underlying gender discrimination.

The report was simultaneously released from the AI Secretariat in London. 56 sections and 40 coordinating structures, said officials of Bangladesh chapter of AI while releasing the report.

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