



## Mahbub Anam's first anniversary of death today

Today is the first death anniversary of Mahbub Anam, former editor of the now-defunct Bangladesh Times, says a press release.

He passed away on this day last year at the age of 70. He had been suffering from cancer of the pancreas.

Born on March 28, 1931, Mahbub Anam became the editor of the Bangladesh Times in 1991 and served with distinction till 1996.

He was a senior vice-president and executive committee member of the Bangladesh Editors' Council. He was actively involved with the Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Parishad, the Bangladesh Press Council, and the Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha Porichalona Board.

Mahbub Anam actively took part in the language movement in 1952. He was jailed for his role in the movement as general secretary of the Rastrabhasa Sangram Parishad. He was also the acting publication secretary of the Jukta Front on behalf of the Awami League in 1954 and served as the general secretary of Saimullah Muslim Hall of Dhaka University in 1954-55.

A former Director of the Petroleum Corporation of Bangladesh, Mahbub Anam also served as a senior executive of the Jamuna Oil. He also worked as a senior executive of the then Pakistan Observer.

Mahbub Anam authored numerous books, including 'Adherence versus Distortion' and 'Amra Bangladesh Amra Bangali'.

A recipient of the Sher-e-Bangla Gold Medal and Swadhinata Padak, Mahbub Anam was also awarded the Bhasa Andoloner Bir Shaikh Padak by President Ziaur Rahman in recognition of his contribution to the language movement.

Mahbub Anam was the second son of late Abul Mansur Ahmed, an eminent litterateur, veteran politician and editor. He was the elder brother of Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star and publisher of the Prothom Alo.

On the occasion of death anniversary of Mahbub Anam, a milad mahfil will be held at Masjid-e-Takwa in Dhanmondi after Asr prayers. Friends, relatives and admirers have been requested to attend the milad.

## DMCH

FROM PAGE 12 The DMCH director issued notices on various occasions to evict the illegal shopkeepers, minibuses and non-staff workers from the hospital, but his efforts went in vain for reasons unknown.

Staff of the DMCH, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the director is not sincere in his efforts. "Issuance of notices is merely an eyewash. He never goes for follow-up actions."

## PM: Army

FROM PAGE 12 sionalism of the Bangladesh Army, she said professionalism could not be attained without proper evaluation during selection.

"Talent, skill, patriotism, honesty and sincerity can ensure professionalism," she said, adding that professional commitment is necessary to maintain and improve standard of the force.

She lauded the role of the army in safeguarding country's independence, sovereignty and national unity, maintaining law and order and providing service to humanity in time of need.

The PM also mentioned the laurels bagged by Bangladeshi soldiers in various missions of the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces and asked them to continue their efforts further to brighten their image.

Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Hasan Mashud Chowdhury also spoke on the occasion.

## Shipman

FROM PAGE 12 January 2000 for murdering 15 elderly patients. Home Secretary David Blunkett ruled on last Thursday that he must spend the rest of his life behind bars.

Most of his victims were elderly women killed by an overdose of morphine in their own homes without having experienced any life-threatening symptoms. He pleaded not guilty and his motives remain a mystery.

Blunkett's decision means Shipman, known as "Doctors Death", is likely to die behind bars as cases of whole life inmates are reviewed only after 25 years, and then every five years after that.

## Dubai consortium

FROM PAGE 12 policy issues of the host country. The consortium will engage working committees to fine-tune such a market-driven business plan.

These provisions are highly advantageous to all parties to the SEA-ME-WE 4, especially the ones enjoying monopoly over international gateways.

For example, the BTTB will be allowed to enter the Mumbai cable landing station of the VSNL and sell the bandwidth to the deregulated Indian telecom market.

But the VSNL will have to exclusively deal with the BTTB if it plans to do similar business in Bangladesh because the private operators here are mandated to use the BTTB transmission backbone and international gateways.

The BTTB will have similar advantage to other liberalised markets. The private sector in Bangladesh will be equally benefited when the country's international gateway is deregulated.

However, the BTTB officials stunned the SEA-ME-WE 4 meeting by strongly opposing such privileged immediate and future business plans. Their disagreement on the open landing concept has been put down to their lack of understanding on international bandwidth trade.

The BTTB's ignorance disap-

pointed other consortium members and they contemplated to exclude it from the consortium.

"These provisions are intended to attract non-member investors to the consortium," said an official of a Middle-East telecom monopoly.

Such incorporation will significantly reduce the estimated cost of installing the SEA-ME-WE 4 cable and ensure fast recovery of investment - the advantage the BTTB officials did not realise.

"If that remains the case, unfortunately the consortium will have to go ahead without the BTTB," the Arab telecom official told this correspondent on the second day of the meeting.

However, the BTTB finally agreed on the proposed open landing concept on the concluding day of the meeting.

The Dubai meeting unanimously finalised the MoU, to be signed by all parties at 10:30am on September 4 in Indonesia. The venue will be either at Jakarta or Bali.

Meanwhile, the BTTB chairman requested his Middle-Eastern counterparts to employ more BTTB engineers at their submarine cable operations.

The Arab members of the consortium have assured Bangladesh of off-out cooperation.



Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra reviews the guard of honour accorded upon his arrival at the Zia International Airport yesterday.

## High hopes hail Thai PM

FROM PAGE 1 A child presented a bouquet to Shinawatra, who is leading a 59-member strong delegation, including the commerce minister, the foreign minister and some other senior officials.

The Thai prime minister was given a guard of honour by a smartly turned-out contingent drawn from the three services. Dean of the diplomatic corps Shata Zarab, Ambassador of Thailand Phitthak Phrombubpha and members of the Thai community were at the airport.

The reception over, the Thai prime minister was taken to the National Memorial for the independence war martyrs at Savar in a motorcade to pay respect.

The major city thoroughfares from the airport were decorated with national flags of the two countries and festoons. The portraits of the prime ministers of Thailand and Bangladesh were hung at different key points all the way. Schoolchildren greeted the Thai prime minister on his way to Savar.

Bangladesh is now turning to South East Asia for accelerated collaboration in trade, commerce and economic development. The creation of BIMSTEC - Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand for Economic Cooperation - speaks of the emerging reality in recent times.

Pointing to growing trade with Thailand, the sources in the FBCCI said it has significantly increased over the past several years. Thai exports to Bangladesh is currently much larger than its imports, they said, pointing to a huge trade deficit of US\$170 million against Bangladesh in the last fiscal.

The FBCCI is likely to request for free access to the Thai market for all products.

The Bangladesh government may ask for opening the Thai market

in two phases. The first phase will include free access to items of high trade potential and the second phase will include a wide variety of exportables.

Both sides may agree in setting up a joint business council to discuss business issues and sort out problems, the sources said. They may also sign an "account trade" agreement, facilitating trade settlement through periodic payment like a quarterly or half-yearly clearance of the balance of payment.

The Bangladesh side may ask for simplifying visa formalities for businessmen and tourists to Thailand. The existing procedure is all too tough and results in harassment of visa applicants, said a FBCCI source.

Pointing to the potential scope of economic and technical cooperation, he said, Thailand is much more advanced than Bangladesh. Its success in fisheries, poultry and agro-processing industries rivals many.

Bangladesh may benefit from transfer of technical know-how and economic collaboration, the sources added. The political quarters in Bangladesh have put emphasis on the development of a strong and viable land route from Bangladesh to Thailand through Myanmar. It may ultimately establish a land link with the Kunming province of China, they said. They also pointed to the need for creating a business corridor from the Chittagong port to up to China's southern province.

Referring to the Arakan trunk road, they said Bangladesh can easily reach Yangon, the capital of Myanmar.

The good road network from Yangon to Bangkok can be upgraded to create an excellent regional road communication, as part of the Asian Highway. The

sources said the Asian Development Bank is ready to finance it.

## 65 transferred

FROM PAGE 12 From now on, the transferred officials will be accountable to the finance ministry instead of the CGA office.

As many as 131 officials have been transferred as part of the implementation of the programme since July 1. Earlier, 66 officials were transferred in two phases. Sources in the CGA office said yesterday's was the last phase.

## GAIL, ONGC

FROM PAGE 12 Depending on Bangladeshi gas, GAIL is also planning to market gas in the eastern part of India. Dr Chhobi said, India is hopeful its neighbour would provide gas.

GAIL is also discussing Bangladeshi gas distribution to various fertiliser factories at Durgapur and Haldia in West Bengal.

Meanwhile there is also a hint that ONGC would soon purchase British oil company Cairn's Bangladeshi concerns. By discovering gas in Sangu in 1996, Cairn began the era of PSC (Production Sharing Contract) based oil and gas investment in Bangladesh. However, Cairn sold out half of its Bangladeshi concerns to Shell Oil three years ago.

A Cairn source said the company's performance in India was very good as it discovered an oil field in Gujarat recently. But in Bangladesh, it was not happy with Petrobangla's irregular payment for purchase of Sangu gas. "It might be a possibility that Cairn would sell out its concerns to ONGC," he said.

## Opposition Day

FROM PAGE 1 recommendations, which also included the idea of an "Opposition Day" to the then speaker of the parliament.

Accordingly, the then speaker had asked a sub-committee to look into the matter. But the seventh parliament expired before the committee prepared its report.

The UNDP also is planning to submit the recommendations afresh to the authorities concerned and ask for their implementation to strengthen the parliamentary democracy in Bangladesh.

In Britain, the opposition lawmakers usually get a chance to speak 20 days out of at least 130 sitting days a year on those designated days. The UNDP recommends a Westminster style of democracy as a role model for Bangladesh.

As envisaged in line with the British parliamentary system, the opposition would set the tone on once-a-week 'Opposition Day' in the parliament. It would reign over the Treasury Bench during that particular day's business, enjoying a maximum time to speak on various public issues.

When asked about the development, Farooq Khan, an opposition whip, said the AL was moving in that line. He viewed that the opposition would have more time to express its views under the proposed arrangement.

Sources pointed out that non-minister lawmakers have their day in the parliament every Thursday, designated as 'Private Members' Day' when any MP can pilot any proposed law or resolution. Similarly, lawmakers belonging to the opposition parties could also enjoy some exclusive time on the 'Opposition Day'.

When the AL was in office during 1996-2001, it brought amendments to the rules of procedure, making provisions for non-ministers to head

the parliamentary standing committees. The change resulted in greater accountability of and transparency in the functioning of the important committees.

Likewise, the opposition now hopes that all the parties would agree to the proposed 'Opposition Day' to further strengthen the parliamentary system and minimise bickering over allocation of time for the opposition.

Meanwhile, nine months down the line since the eighth parliament went into its first session, the AL is now looking forward to play a vital role in the parliamentary committees, which are yet to be formed.

The AL has finalised its fit list for placing its 58 lawmakers in different standing committees. It has also almost selected its lawmakers who would head some of these would-be committees.

Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid said the list is ready and would be handed over whenever his Treasury Bench counterpart asks for it.

Sources said the AL and the other smaller opposition parties together have 80 MPs in the 300-seat parliament.

The combined opposition would ask for chairmanship of some 12 to 15 standing committees out of the total 49, sources hinted.

The formation of the committees is pending due to differences over proportional representation of the opposition.

Against the possibility of a reshuffle in the jumbo cabinet of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, the ruling BNP-Jamaat alliance is not as yet sure about who are to be stripped of their portfolios.

After the reshuffle, some of the axed ministers might be accommodated in different parliamentary standing committees as chairmen, sources hinted.

## Not enough gas

FROM PAGE 1 dividend in the future."

The committee saw profit from gas export through pipeline. But regarding export of Bibiyana gas, some members of the committee raised several questions about how much gas should be set aside for export and what would be the real profits.

The report projected that if 200 million square cubic meter per day (mmscdf) of gas is exported at a wellhead price of US\$2.8 per unit, there would be a cash flow of \$4.09 billion in 20 years at wellhead. And, if 500 mmscdf is exported, the cash flow would stand at \$10.2 billion.

However, the report asserted that under any export formula, the present production sharing contracts (PSCs) with foreign oil companies must be renegotiated and new deals involving the possible buyer should be signed.

The power export option has been viewed as a profitable but complex proposition since it entails many technical as well as financial uncertainties.

Leaving aside the uncertainty about the price of power across the border, there is also a technical uncertainty about long distant power transmission and additional investment for gas pipeline up to export-oriented power plants.

In the context of a shortage of gas supply in the future, the report

emphasises examining the prospects of other options like biogas, solar home system or wind power for rural Bangladesh.

A greater emphasis should be put on the use of the CNG in the transport sector, which is a viable option. Vehicles in Dhaka and possibly Chittagong can be brought under the CNG conversion scheme.

The report forecasts by 2010, the country could convert at least 50,000 vehicles and a maximum of one lakh vehicles. To meet their requirement, the country would need between 50 and 100 million cubic feet per day (mmscdf) of gas.

Besides, the committee is also looking into the prospect of gas utilisation in fertiliser and other chemical by-products.

## Live-together

FROM PAGE 12 woman and her Indian lover were reported by an Emirati neighbour to the police, who arrested them after determining they were not married.

Sharia courts throughout the United Arab Emirates federation of seven city states hand down severe punishment for couples caught having affairs outside wedlock.

## Bhairab bridge

FROM PAGE 12 Development (DFID) provided Tk 142 crore as grants for the construction of the bridge.

The bridge would be exactly 929 metres with seven spans and eight piers, and have six toll plazas on it. A 1,070 metre embankment has also been constructed.

The bridge will have two lanes for the movement of vehicles and two under passes for pedestrians. Tk 63 crore was disbursed for land acquisition and rehabilitation projects.

## AJM workers

FROM PAGE 12 benefits to the workers and employees of the mill through accounts payable cheques drawn on Rupali Bank Ltd (local office, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka), Sonali Bank (local office, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka), and Sonali Bank (Adamjeenagar Branch, Narayanganj).

Bank branches will judge the genuineness of the payees on the basis of their identity cards and other documents, the press release said.



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia chairs a meeting of the Bangladesh Army Selection Board at the Dhaka Cantonment yesterday.

## AIDS vaccine likely by 2005

FROM PAGE 1 Twenty-one years after the fight against AIDS began, only eight vaccines are currently being tested on humans to any significant degree.

Most of these are still in the early stages, but VaxGen says work on its product is nearing completion. It is the only firm testing its products on humans in an end-stage trial.

But to be granted a licence it will have to show the vaccine is effective in at least one third of patients.

The umbrella body promoting research, the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative, is warning that preparations need to begin now for the distribution of a successful vaccine to the countries most in need.

Most importantly, it must be made affordable. "One of the critical things is that, because we don't have a perfect

animal model or know exactly what's needed for protection, the only way to figure this out is by testing it on large numbers of humans," Dr Seth Berkley told BBC Radio 4's Today programme.

"The problem is that, if this vaccine is efficacious, we really have not prepared for it yet," the IAVI president said.

He said vaccination would initially be targeted at high-risk groups such as intravenous drug users and commercial sex workers.

But he said it was hoped one day that a vaccine would be available for everyone.

"We would hope to use it as part of immunisation for every child so we can put an end to this terrible disease."

Jose Esparza, co-ordinator of the UNAIDS HIV vaccine initiative in Geneva said the company's announcement was "premature",

although he praised their commitment to developing a vaccine.

He added: "No one can predict when a vaccine will be ready, no one has a crystal ball, but we do have the equivalent of a crystal ball of sorts in the clinical trials."

"If the vaccine is effective then we will have a cause for celebration, but even then it will not be the end of the epidemic."

But he said even if the vaccine was 40 to 50 per cent effective it would be "significant".

The conference also heard about a drug which tests have shown cuts the levels of HIV in patients by stopping it entering blood cells.

The injectable T-20 drug, made by Roche Holding AG of Switzerland and US biotech firm Trimeris Inc is due to go on to the market early next year.

It is said to offer hope to patients with serious drug resistance prob-

lems.

Existing treatments attack HIV only after it has entered cells.

But a US study presented to the conference showed that three in four young gay and bisexual men infected with AIDS in major American cities were unaware they were carrying the virus.

Meanwhile PTI reports from New Delhi: Indian scientists have isolated a compound from a bacterium, which they claim is the first in the category of biologically-derived ones, that targets HIV multiplication by inhibiting a crucial viral enzyme.

One of the major advantages of the new compound isolated by scientists at National Chemical Laboratory, Pune, is that it may not be affected by HIV mutations which render many currently available inhibitors ineffective, a report in the 'CSIR News' said.

HIV requires HIV-1 protease to

multiply. This enzyme is an excellent target for developing drugs against the virus. Research has shown that drugs that inhibit this enzyme in combination with another group of drugs called reverse transcriptase inhibitors, reduce the levels of HIV in blood dramatically, the report said.

While a large number of synthetic compounds which inhibit the viral enzyme, HIV-protease, have been reported, not much is currently known about biomolecule inhibitors from microorganisms, the report said.

The compound, aspartic protease inhibitor (ATBI), isolated from the bacterium, Alkalothermophilic bacillus which thrives in adverse environments, is the first in the biologically-derived category, it said.