

# OLDEST ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIND Asiatic Society might extend fellowship to archaeologist

Excavator asks for more help from philanthropists, donors, government

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Asiatic Society might extend the fellowship it awarded to Associate Professor Sufi Mustafizur Rahman of Jahangirnagar University (JU), the archaeologist who discovered the country's oldest road at Narshingdi's Belabo upazila last month, to help him continue with the excavation work.

"Since it is a very big discovery, we may extend the fellowship to help him continue his work," said Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, president of Asiatic Society and former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University.

But he said the Society cannot entirely support the project due to fund constraints. "We have limitations, we cannot fund the whole excavation as it is a matter of a several crore taka."

"We will take up the matter with the government and Unesco (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) to see if we can get funds for the excavation," Ahmed said.

A JU team led by Associate Professor Sufi Mustafizur Rahman, who has been hammering away at the site since 2000, discovered the 18-metre by 6-metre and 30-centimetre thick ancient road on March 21 at Wari in Belabo, some 70 km north-east of the capital.

Discovery of the road along with a fortified citadel and a large number of artefacts dating back to 450 BC promised to redefine history of eastern India and lend support to the excavator's claim that Narsingdi was part of the Brahmaputra civilisation and formed the eastern fringe of the Mauryan Empire.

A prime trade centre flourished in Narsingdi that maintained contacts with contemporary South Asian and Roman civilisations through waterways, the archaeologist said.

Noted Indian archaeologist and teacher at Cambridge University, Prof Dilip Kumar Chakrabarti, also backed Mutsafizur's claim and recommended full-scale excavation at the site. Prof. Chakrabarti said such a long and wide road was not found in the second urbanisation period between 600 BC and 100 AD. After working from April 2000 through June 2002, Mustafizur had to call off work for the entire year 2003 due to fund crisis. But after Asiatic Society granted him a post-doctorate fellowship last year, he resumed excavation on March 4 this year with 76 of his students.

Thanking Asiatic Society for its role, Mustafizur Rahman asked philanthropists, other donors and the government to fund a full-scale excavation at the region, where he says the remains of a civilisation lies buried.

Mustafiz said a preliminary report will be submitted to the government in three months. "We will need three years to publish the full report on works at the site as we

have to clean the artefacts, make drawings, photograph details and conduct laboratory tests. All this is very time consuming and expensive."

He asked the government to appoint researchers to properly excavate the large site (Wari-Bateshwar) to trace the country's glorious past, adding that the country is in need of experts in this field.

## Illegal migration into India has reached horrific proportions, says Advani

AFP, New Delhi

India's deputy premier L.K. Advani, on a tour of the western state of Rajasthan canvassing for votes in upcoming polls, said yesterday that illegal immigration into India had assumed "horrific proportions".

"Illegal immigration is a major problem for India and it has reached horrific proportions," Advani was quoted as saying by the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency.

"No other country faces this problem to the magnitude that India does," he told a rally in the desert state's Chittorgarh district.

Advani, who is also Home Minister, said there was a need for a consensus on creating a national register of citizens and providing identity cards "for internal security".

He urged India's independent Election Commission in New Delhi and political parties to prepare an "ideal voting list" that would include the names of all bona fide citizens eligible to vote.

This would enhance the quality of Indian democracy and governance besides facilitating the detection and deportation of illegal immigrants, he said.

In September, defence minister George Fernandes said that every month some 100,000 people infiltrated into India from Bangladesh.

India says illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and other neighbouring states foment unrest and often aid rebel groups in the country.

In January last year, Advani said New Delhi would undertake a deportation of millions of Bangladeshis staying illegally on Indian soil, amid tensions after Dhaka had refused to accept the return of about 200 immigrants who had allegedly crossed into northeastern India.

Bangladesh at the time denied any illegal emigration to India and accused New Delhi of violating due procedure by "shoving" people across their border.

The two neighbours share a porous 4,095-kilometre border.

## Adamjee suppliers warn of hunger strike if dues not paid in 15 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 1,500 farmers and traders yesterday warned to go on hunger strike if the government does not pay up their Tk 22 crore dues for jute and other materials supplied to Adamjee Jute Mills within the next 15 days.

A committee representing the traders and farmers at a press conference said the laid off mill owed them a total of Tk 44 crore, of which the government so far had paid them only half, Tk 22 crore, in June last year, that too after much agitation.

Claiming that 40 to 50 thousand people are directly suffering from the default, Khorshed Ahmed Dulal, joint convener of the committee, declared, "If the government doesn't pay us our bills within the next 15 days, we'll fast unto death in front of Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) office."

Dulal also accused the BJMC of harassing them by procrastination.

"Though the government promised to clear all dues within three months from the closure of the jute mill, it is far from keeping its words," said Kiron Shankar Das, a trader who owes Tk 363,000 to the government for jute supplied to the mill.

The mill, which used to buy 20 lakh metric tons of jute a year on an average through 36 purchasing centres, was shut down on July 1, 2002.

## 13-year-old girl raped

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

A 13-year-old girl was raped allegedly by a ruling party activist yesterday at Maniknagar village in Kalaroa upazila.

The victim, student of a local madrasah, went to take her bath in a nearby pond when rapist Akkas Ali, son of Anisur Rahman of the same village and reportedly a BNP activist, raped her, locals said.

On hearing her cry, locals later rushed to the spot and found the girl. The culprit is absconding.

## Feni Jamaat chief killed in road accident

UNB, Feni

A local Jamaat leader was killed and six others were injured in a road accident here yesterday.

Police and witnesses said the accident occurred at about 12:45pm when a truck collided head on with a microbus on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway near Muhuriganj, killing district Nayeab-e-Ameer of the Jamaat-e-Islami Mohammad Mostafa on the spot and injuring six others.

The injured are former commissioner of Feni Pourasabha Mofizur Rahman Khan, Prof Abu Yusuf of Gunobati College, Principal of Al Falahia Madrasah Abul Hashem and teachers Shah Alam, Ziauddin and Nurullah Khan. They are now undergoing treatment at a local clinic.

Mostafa, also the principal of Shaheen Academy, Feni, and the six were going to Chittagong by the microbus.

Police seized the truck and arrested its driver.

In another accident, a worker of Dula Mia Cotton Mill was run over and killed by a truck in front of the mill at Dagonbhuianj on March 6:00am.

The dead was identified as Shahidullah, 42, of village Shyameragan in Senbagh upazila.

## Sharon

FROM PAGE 12 company give them coverage," Sharon told Israel's Haaretz daily.

"Anyone who kills a Jew or harms an Israeli citizen, or sends someone to kill Jews, is a marked man."

Sharon's most explicit threat yet against Arafat came 10 days after Israeli assassinated Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin in a helicopter strike in Gaza. Hamas, dedicated to destroying Israel, has killed hundreds of Israelis in suicide bombings.

An Israeli-Arab legislator who visited Arafat said the Palestinian leader dismissed the threat saying: "Sharon has tried to kill me 13 times and failed. I'm not an easy mark."

Palestinian cabinet minister Saeb Erekat said of Sharon's remarks that the alternative to Arafat would be "chaos, extremism and anarchy" in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In Jerusalem's Old City, Israeli police stormed the square outside al-Aqsa Mosque, one of Islam's holiest sites, and used rubber bullets and stun grenades to disperse Palestinian stone-throwers after Friday Muslim prayers.

Adnan Husseini, director of the Islamic Waqf, which oversees the compound, said police acted without provocation and called the Israeli action a "flagrant violation of freedom of worship."

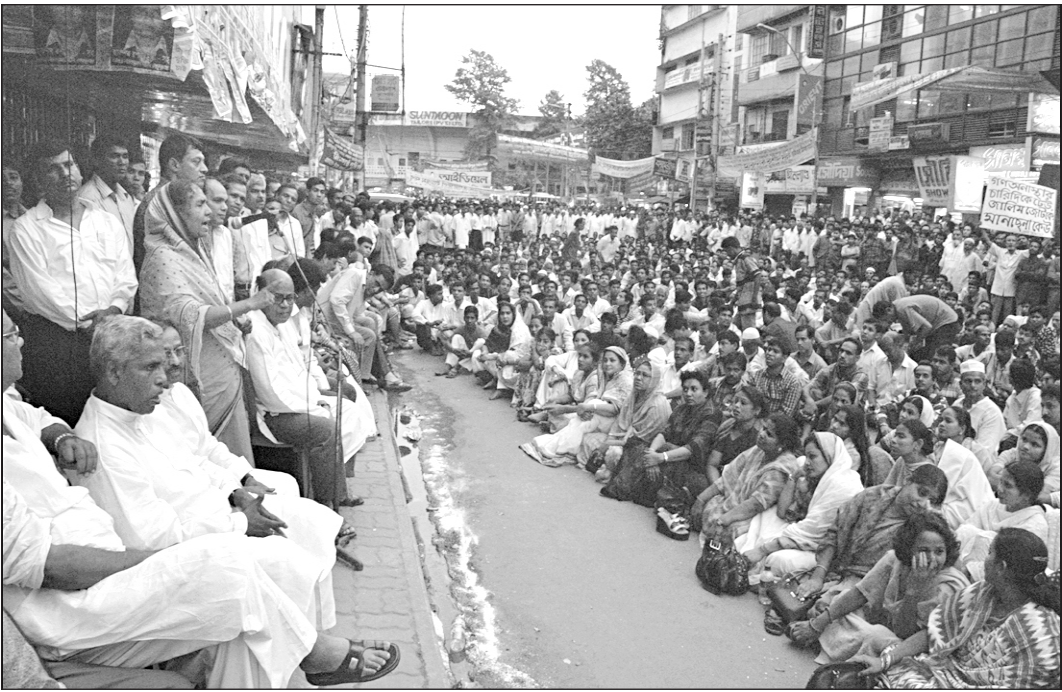


PHOTO: STAR

Awami League (AL) presidium member Motia Chowdhury addresses a rally on Bangabandhu Avenue in Dhaka, protesting an attack on the motorcade of AL President Sheikh Hasina, who went on a five-day visit to as many districts of Barisal Division yesterday.

## Unocal to exploit

FROM PAGE 1

In 2001, Unocal proposed construction of a 30-inch diameter, 1,363 kilometre pipeline with a capacity of exporting 500 mmcf of gas from the Bibiyana gas field to the Indian capital of Delhi.

Unocal said it would give Bangladesh \$3.7 billion in revenue under a 20-year project with \$500 to \$700 million immediate foreign direct investment.

In support of its export proposal, Unocal said Bangladesh had not enough domestic demand for development of Bibiyana field for consumption.

In view of pressure for gas export from the World Bank-led development community and the United States, two national committees on gas utilisation and reserve were formed to tackle the issue.

The utilisation committee came up with a forecast for gas crisis from 2015, saying Bangladesh should not export gas unless the discovery of new reserves to meet local demands.

A wave of anti-export sentiment, largely sparked by major opposition parties, swept the nation and stopped the government from giving Unocal the nod to go for gas export.

A confidential report to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia a few months ago said the export proposal projected pots of profit to Bangladesh, but such a deal would make it to

beled.

"We must remember that the import substitution of gas (petroleum) is five times costlier than the gas we will export," said a source quoting the report. "We import petroleum for power generation in places where we have no gas and we spend a lot for such import."

"If we are making a profit of \$1 from each unit of gas export, we are actually bracing for \$5 expenditure for import of its substitute in near future. Once we spend the gas we have now, it will not grow back," said the source.

The report said the running of a project like Unocal's required a reserve of 9 trillion cubic feet (TCF) of gas. Bibiyana gas field has a proven reserve of 2.4 TCF and may run into 5 TCF in a very optimistic scene, the report added.

"Unocal's calculations show that 5 TCF reserve is enough for the export market. But Petrobangla has its share in Bibiyana gas what it is not going to export."

"So Unocal will need more sources -- it will need a reserve of 9 TCF to support its export plan," said the source.

The present gas demand has soared up to 1,300 mmcf, growing by 100 mmcf last year. This demand is set to grow by 10 percent every year and likely to peak at 1,824 mmcf in June 2007.

## A clinic closer

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women like Shaheda.

"I listen to Dada (the doctor at the clinic) a lot more than I listened to the upazila doctor. Over there, we were made to sit on the ground since we are poor. Others who paid more got to sit on chairs. The doctors also scolded us. But my doctor here is like my nephew, so I have to listen to him" a satisfied Shaheda says.

"It is OUR clinic ... It's the poor people's clinic ... it's the union's clinic," says Shaheda, emphasising the role the community plays in sustaining the health centre's operations.

How did people like Shaheda come to receive the services of the clinic? The community participation in the clinic began when the Centre for Advanced Research and Social Action (Carsa), the only non-governmental organisation (NGO) to work in the area, alerted community leaders to the acute health crisis.

Accompanied by about 20 representatives from the villages, Union Parishad Chairman Shahjahan Howlader sat day after day with Carsa to carve out a plan that came true in the establishment of the clinic three years ago.

On the previous state of health service in his area, Shahjahan says: "The government community clinic established four years ago was always a shady habitation for cattle, as the government did not care to send any doctor here."

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## Hasina's motorcade

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Hasina alleged the attack was pre-planned and instigated by Zahiruddin Swapan, local BNP lawmaker. They condemned the attack and demanded punishment of the attackers.

Leaders present at the briefing included Tofael Ahmed, Jahangir Kabir Nanak and Mahmudur Rahman Manna.

Hasina left Barisal in the afternoon to address a public meeting at Patuakhali.

## Arms haul

FROM PAGE 1

ment except for the five arrested fled the scene.

The haul dwarfs the seizure of over 100,000 rifle bullets and 200 kilograms of explosives in Bogra.

Caches of sophisticated weapons were also seized in restive Chittagong Hill tracts over the last few months.

## Beheaded body of BCL activist recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The beheaded body of Shamjan Ali, 22, a Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activist, was recovered from Majuthkhal under Digholia upazila yesterday.

Son of Asgar Ali of Barakpur in the same upazila, Shamjan went missing from his house on March 31.

Police are investigating the murder.

## 15 injured at AL council

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least 15 people were injured in a clash between two factions of the Awami League (AL) at a triennial council yesterday.

Witnesses said AL central leaders, including Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, were receiving garlands at the council of the sadar upazila AL at a local community centre when a group was trying to enter the venue. The other faction resisted their entrance, which led to the clash.

Both the factions blasted explosives and vandalised furniture. Police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Of the injured, municipality unit Chhatra League Convenor Zahidul Islam Raju, Sumon, Razzak, Tarun, Manik and Ripon were admitted to Pabna General Hospital, while others received first aid.

Party sources said the conflict erupted due to the election to the post of the general secretary of the district AL. The supporters of the candidates for the post Ahad Babu and Sohail Hasan Shahin locked into the clash to evict their opponents from the spot, they added.

## Petroleum agent's kidnap Dealers' association threaten strike from tomorrow

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna Divisional Petroleum Product Dealers' Association has threatened to go on an indefinite strike from tomorrow in protest against the abduction of Sanatan Kumar Pal of Magura, an agent of Padma Oil Company Limited, and police's failure to rescue him.

Leaders of the association on Thursday submitted a memorandum in this regard to Divisional Commissioner Nazmul Ahsan.

Pal was abducted from his house at Natun bazar of Magura town at 11:00pm on March 30.

## Hasina: Rally

FROM PAGE 1

her son, for corruption and misappropriation of public funds, "The prime minister's son has siphoned off 11,000 crore taka to set up industries in Malaysia and Australia."

The former prime minister also accused leaders and workers of the ruling party of grabbing public lands.

Hasina came down heavily on the government for stopping 'all development activities' initiated by her government and for politicising the administration.

On the ongoing one-point out-government programme of AL, she said, "We placed 15-point set of demands to the government, to which it didn't pay any heed. So, we'd to go for this [one-point movement]."

The opposition leader also deplored the press freedom situation, saying, "Seven journalists have been killed and 700 journalists repressed after this government came to power."

AL presidium members Tofail Ahmed and Amir Hossain Amu, Mirza Azam MP, AKM Jahangir MP, Obaidul Kader, Mahmudur Rahman Manna and Jahangir Kabir Nanak also spoke at the meetings.

## Insurgents kill 3 cops as US vows retaliation

AFP, BAGHDAD

Insurgents killed three policemen as persistent violent acts forced the postponement of a much anticipated trade show, and US officials vowed a harsh response to the gruesome killing of four Americans.

In an apparent bid to avoid escalation, town leaders in Fallujah denounced the murders of the four American contractors and imams decided to devote Friday prayers to condemn such acts considered sins in Islam.

The grisly killings have raised tensions in the already boiling region where insurgents are leading a battle against US-led occupation forces.

Speaking at a graduating ceremony at Baghdad's police academy on Thursday, an angry Paul Bremer, the US overseer in Iraq, said: "Their deaths will not go unpunished."

Top US military spokesman Mark Kimmitt said, "we will respond. It is going to be deliberate and precise and it will be overwhelming."

"We will re-establish control

## Two PBCP men arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Sonadanga police yesterday arrested two suspected members of the Janajuddho faction of Purbo Banglar Communist Party and recovered two firearms and 10 cartridges from them.

They were identified as Khalilur Rahman, 22, and Tariqul Islam, 24, of Chhoto Boyra.

## Myanmar PM

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bilateral issues including trade, construction of the 55-km stretch of highway establishing direct road link between Yangon and Dhaka is expected to be a dominant agenda of the discussion between the heads of government, foreign ministry sources said.

In fiscal year 2001-02, Bangladesh imported goods worth Tk 16.94 million from Myanmar while exporting that of Tk 2.39 million to that country, sources said.

Nyunt will stay in Dhaka Sunday. The next two days he will spend mostly in the port city of Chittagong. He is also scheduled to visit several pagodas in Bandarban and Cox's Bazar.

The general-turned-premier will leave for his country Tuesday from Cox's Bazar.

## Nato

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Earlier yesterday, Nato celebrated the entry of seven ex-communist countries into its ranks at a colourful welcome marking the US-led military alliance's biggest expansion ever.

But serious business awaited foreign ministers of the now-26-nation alliance in talks with an irate Russia, which has made no secret of its anger at Nato's expansion up to its borders.

In the courtyard of Nato's Brussels headquarters, the flags of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia were raised and their national anthems played by a military band.

The foreign ministers of the seven entrants looked proudly on from a raised podium, in front of representatives from the existing members -- including US Secretary of State Colin Powell.

The new members formally joined Nato on Monday when they deposited their accession treaties in Washington, opening a new chapter for an alliance long defined by its Cold War role.

## Save link canals

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then president Ziaur Rahman, local peoples said.

Most part of Atir Khal near Waispur is now dry due to a recently built road across it. A local brick kiln owner built the road by dumping earth in the canal. The manager of the brick kiln however said the road will be removed in the rainy season.

"Most part of Atir Khal was sold off to some influential people years ago. They bought it in connivance with officials at the deputy commissioner's office, Dhaka, and started demarcating plots and paying land taxes," said Shahadat Ali, a local schoolteacher.

The plots were later sold to hundreds of city dwellers.

Another canal -- Jinjira Khal, opposite Sadarghat launch terminal, is also in a sorry state. Although the canal still serves thousands of commuters and traders, residents and small industrial units along it dump solid waste gradually filling it up.

Alauddin Munshi, a trader who uses the canal for transporting vegetables and other merchandise, said if the authorities do not dredge

and will pacify that city," he added. "It will be at the time and place of our choosing."

On Thursday, the US army recovered what remained of the four slain Americans, a day after they were killed in an ambush by armed insurgents in downtown Fallujah, 50 kilometers west of Baghdad.

Two of the charred bodies were dismembered and publicly paraded by rejoicing residents in this town located in the so-called Sunni triangle, a hotbed of rebellion northwest of Baghdad.

Violence continued to claim lives elsewhere, as three police officers were killed and three others wounded by gunmen who fired and threw a hand grenade at them in Baaquba, north of Baghdad, one of the injured men told AFP Friday.

## CU siege

FROM PAGE 1

resident students were reportedly leaving the dormitories.

During a press conference at a local hotel, PSA leaders vowed to enforce the strike at any cost. They also announced a three-day agitation programme including a daylong countrywide student strike on Sunday, rallies at Central Shaheed Minar premises on Sunday and Tuesday, and a human chain programme on new market premises on April 10 to press for their demands.

Earlier yesterday morning, CU VC AJM Nuruddin Chowdhury visited leaders and activists of the PSA and JCD injured in Thursday's attack at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

Meanwhile, another attack on the campus Thursday night by Islami Chhatra Shibir left two students of forestry critically injured.

The injured students Shyamal and Mohtasem were admitted to the CMCH.

Students of the forestry department announced an agitation programme protesting the attack.

## Lankan polls

FROM PAGE 12

incidents reported," said Jayantha Wickremaratne, deputy Inspector General of Police. "We have got the assistance of the army to help us with mobile patrols and in manning road blocks."

During campaigning for the 2001 parliamentary vote, at least 41 people were killed and 700 wounded. This time round only five election-related deaths were reported.

The island was tense in the election run-up, however, after V. Muralitharan, better known as Karuna, led a split in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) who have been battling since 1972 for a separate Tamil homeland.

In the island's embattled north, a Tamil politician complained that supporters of Tamil Tiger rebels attempting to rig voting.

The Tigers are not contesting the election but have openly backed the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) which is expected to fare well and emerge as kingmaker following a close fight between the leftist Alliance and the rightwing UNP.

Kumaratunga, who voted at her home district of Gampaha, outside Colombo, said she had taken steps to ensure a fair election.

"Every one of you can go to the polls without fear and freely use your precious vote, she said in a message broadcast yesterday.

Voting was not taking place in rebel-held northeast areas but authorities set up booths near the de facto front lines, officials said. The Tigers had arranged to bus in voters from their areas to vote.

## Rice to address

FROM PAGE 1

the governor questioned whether Clarke had political motives and pointed to prior instances in which Clarke had criticised the Bush administration's policies.

Kean, a former Republican New Jersey governor, said he didn't consider it inappropriate that Fielding and Thompson were in contact with the White House when Clarke was testifying.

Kean said he and commission Vice Chairman Lee Hamilton, a former Democratic representative from Indiana, had specifically instructed Fielding and Thompson to maintain regular contacts with the White House as "go-betweens" to try to get Rice to publicly testify.

"We were doing our very best to get Dr. Rice on that day of the hearing," Kean said. "Commissioner Thompson came to me during Mr. Clarke's testimony and told me that he