

# Right, unpopular decisions

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inaugural session of the Bangladesh-Malaysia Business Forum to a packed Hotel Sonargaon ballroom yesterday.

"Governments cannot always do popular things if they want to govern well. Doing the right thing is often unpopular. Only strong governments with big majorities are capable of doing unpopular right things and still survive," Mahathir said in his speech that was telecast live on a private television channel.

He added, "It is simple enough to make a decision about what needs to be done in order to develop the country," but implementing the decision requires a 'great deal' of skill and dedication from the implementers from the prime minister to the 'lowest rung of the administration'.

Mahathir also said Malaysia's low-level of corruption was achieved by sparing no-one, "not even the ministers and prime minister".

Asked about his prescription for the endemic corruption that is crippling Bangladesh, Mahathir said corruption cannot be stopped if everybody "right from the top" are involved in it. He said when senior government officials are involved in corruption, there is no way to stop it.

On Malaysia's ability to deal with the Asian economic crisis in 1997, Mahathir said it was his ability to think outside of "textbook economics" and a strict adherence to national interest that had allowed him to ignore external economic advice that he felt would have "bankrupted the country".

Mahathir recalled that Malaysia's political differences were resolved only by taking a decision that all parties got a "slice of a growing economic cake", rather than "sharing a shrinking cake".

Peace and stability could only be attained by ensuring a fair share of national wealth, he added.

He explained that Malaysia's leadership decided that the 'only way' to industrialise, "was to invite foreign industrial investors to invest in labour intensive industries".

It was at a time when Malaysia had no manufacturing expertise, no capital, no management skills and no knowledge of the markets.

He noted that this policy created so many jobs that the country ran out of labour, which had paved the way for two million foreign workers to work there, including a large portion from Bangladesh.

"It is fairly easy for the government to adopt investor friendly attitude and policies. But the work force must also help to make investments in Malaysia attractive," he warned.

Mahathir said Malaysian workers had in the process become highly skilled and commanded better pay.

"All these changes require a radical change in attitude" of workers, Mahathir said. "Workers need to appreciate the importance of quality."

He also stressed that innovative administrative reform was crucial for Malaysia's progress such as stringent anti-corruption policies, effective and regular meetings of crisis-

management committees, and training.

Infrastructure development by the government and subsequent privatisation, Mahathir added, meant that new towns and economies were sprouting along highways which, in turn, created greater demand for services and utilities.

Chief Guest at the inaugural session, Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman said "Bangladesh may have not been able to attain the desired level of growth but we have not failed." He added that Bangladesh was doing better than India on Millennium Development Goals despite a decreasing amount of arable land and more mouths to feed.

"We also have our political instability," he said, explaining that Bangladesh's political institutions are not supportive of political stability and the parliamentary process has in-built weaknesses.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, Malaysian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Ashaary Bin Sani, Bangladesh Malaysia Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Salahuddin Kashem Khan and Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry President Abdul Awal Mintoo also addressed the session.

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina and former president HM Ershad are scheduled to meet with Mahathir this morning before his departure at 10:00am.

# DU honours Mahathir

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uates attired in convocation dresses joined teachers and guests at the colourful opening ceremony of the two-day convocation at the university playground.

Dr Mahathir in his convocation speech urged Muslims to expand their field of learning, not confining themselves only to the knowledge of religion.

"We, the Muslims must not neglect the study of our religion.....but we must try hard to acquire knowledge in all fields in sciences, technology so that we may serve the Ummah and Islam better," he said in the thought-provoking speech.

Neglect in these fields of study has made the Muslims more easily subject to oppression, observed the great Asian leader of the Muslims.

Delivering the speech the architect of modern Malaysia pointed to the difference between rule of law and the rule of justice in a society.

"We need rule of justice, rule of law may not be just and I feel rule of law is not enough," he said amid huge claps from around 8,000 graduates.

Mahathir told the graduates that this is not the end of acquisition of knowledge. "The processes of knowledge acquisition never ends. It goes on throughout the life," he said urging them to contribute to the improvement of society.

Citing the first divine message received by Mohammad (SM) from Allah, he said Islam gives priority to acquiring knowledge.

Recalling the great days of Muslims during the early centuries of Islam, he said Muslims produced great scholars in many fields and

they excelled in all the fields of knowledge of their times.

He mentioned that the Muslims of the early centuries of Islam went to Greece to acquire knowledge. They translated and studied the works of the Greeks, Persians and Indians and spread the teachings of Greek philosophers, scientists and mathematicians.

"With these efforts, the dark age of the Europeans ended and they began to build their present civilisation. Unfortunately, the Muslims themselves decided to reject knowledge other than of their own religion," Mahathir said.

"The consequence is decline of the Muslims and the rise of the Europeans," he observed.

President Iajuddin Ahmed who is the chancellor of the university, ministers, members of parliament, representatives of the foreign missions in Bangladesh also attended the convocation ceremony.

President Iajuddin urged the graduates to enrich themselves with high moral principles of integrity, conscience and love for humanity to render the desired service to the people. "The nation and the world expect a lot from you," he said.

Vice-chancellor Prof SMA Faiz handed over a crest to Dr Mahathir at the ceremony.

A total of 8,069 graduates, including 4,387 female, will receive certificates while 79 students will be awarded gold medals for their outstanding academic performances by the chancellor today, the concluding day of the convocation.

The chancellor will lead a colourful convocation rally that will begin at 2:00pm today from Curzon Hall.

# 1 killer was known

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before a court today.

Police earlier said the murder took place sometime between 1:45am and 2:15am Friday, but evidence suggests it was between 8:30pm to 9:00pm Thursday.

Shamsul who was in Chittagong called his wife and daughter several times after 9:00pm. But no-one received or returned his calls.

On the other hand, Sharmin phoned one of her friends at 8:30pm.

Sabera and Sharmin were buried at a family graveyard on Road No. 9 in Baridhara yesterday.

Police suspect Sabera's hostility with a few members of her school's governing body was the motive. But intelligence men do not rule out the possibility that Sharmin's 'enemies' might kill them.

The case was yesterday transferred to Criminal Investigation Department (CID), which is yet to receive a case docket.

## STAFF'S STATEMENT MISMATCH

Johor called his colleague Jahangir, caretaker Faruq and Dhanesh, a driver of singer Syed Abdul Hadi, who lives in the same building, just after he came under attack at around 1:45am. But Dhanesh said he was not bleeding although he suffered major injury.

Johor said the killers hit him from behind but Faruq claimed he was attacked when he and other staff tried to stop them.

Dhanesh told The Daily Star that after they had learnt Johor was attacked, Faruq rushed upwards, detected the killings, and they all went to Hadi's house. Hadi also said he called Gulshan police when the staff informed him about the killings.

However, while talking to The Daily Star Friday, Faruq denied his going upstairs before arrival of police, saying the law enforcers first discovered the bodies.

## FIR

"Former governing body member Nurul Islam had forced my wife at gunpoint to resign," Shamsul said in the FIR filed with Gulshan Police Station Friday night.

"Abul Bashar was promoted to the headmaster and tried for a second term, but failed," said the FIR. He held Sabera responsible for his failure and falsely implicated her in a case.

## THE CONFLICT

A few members of the governing body forced Sabera to resign on January 22, 2000. She filed a case but police submitted a final report as no-one gave statement for her.

Sabera filed another case and was reinstated on August 18, 2002 with intervention of the deputy commissioner's office, as the court verdict went in her favour, sources said.

Different sources corroborated the fact that five of the 10-member governing body including two teachers opposed her, as she did not support their irregularities in recruiting teachers.

Fourteen teachers were appointed during her absence and Sabera, after her reinstatement, took steps to cancel the appointments, which were underway.

She also opposed awarding construction of a new two-storey building to a contractor backed by two influential members, several sources said.

Police also found a file on teachers' appointment and tender of the construction on Sabera's bed.

"I think the killers went there to kill Sabera but also killed her daughter, who intervened, possibly to save her mother," Deputy Commissioner Golam Rasul told The Daily Star yesterday.

Many of Sabera's students and colleagues went to the school yesterday hearing the news. They hoisted a black flag on the school premises. Milad mahfils will be held at the school today and tomorrow.

# Jamaat MP asks police not to harass grenade attack suspect

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Saikhira*

A Jamaat-e-Islami lawmaker allegedly has asked police not to harass the family members of Mokbul Hossain Mukul, a suspect in the August 21 grenade attacks on an Awami League rally in Dhaka.

Earlier, police arrested and pressed some relatives of Mukul to tell them about his whereabouts. The arrestees were, however, released later.

Sent by Jamaat lawmaker Maulana Abdul Khaleque Mondal, local Jamaat leader Sahid Hasan requested Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Abdul Kader Beg not to harass Mukul's family members, sources said.

## Delhi

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Vergheese said the Supreme Court of India had ruled against those who had petitioned the court to try to stop the project.

He noted that at present, many states like West Bengal, Assam, Kerala, Goa, and Chattisgarh did not agree to the idea, and the project could only go ahead after they had consented.

## DIALOGUE STRESSED

DN Dhungel of the Institute for Integrated Development Studies, Nepal, presenting his paper on "The Nepalese Perspective on Regional Cooperation on Trans-boundary Rivers", stressed the importance of dialogue among the countries.

"Dilly-dallying over exchanging information might create suspicion," he said. He added that the Joint River Commission of India and Nepal was supposed to have its secretary-level meeting every six months, but they had not sat together in the last several years. "This attitude will not help the countries come together."

Emphasising Nepal's willingness to consult on any issue concerning the interest of the neighbouring countries, Dhungel said, "We should have a permanent mechanism both at government and non-government level to continue our dialogue on the common resources."

## KL interested

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He also said there is a lot of scope for Malaysian investment in other fields, particularly telecommunications, communications and power.

Mahathir made the remarks during his discussion with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office. Welcoming the former Malaysian premier, Khaleda sought cooperation with Malaysia so that the Bangladeshis working in Malaysia can work on a regular basis and more skilled and unskilled manpower is recruited from Bangladesh.

Mahathir informed Khaleda that the new administration in Malaysia is "taking time in reviewing its new intake" and the new prime minister would inform Bangladesh about the manpower matter.

About the trade gap between the two countries, Mahathir said the business delegation accompanying him will explore the business prospects in Bangladesh.

Khaleda sought Malaysian cooperation in the development of the potential tourism sector in Bangladesh either through joint venture or fully owned entrepreneurship.

"There are a number of beautiful tourist spots like Saint Martin's Island and the Sundarbans that can be developed for tourists' attraction from home and abroad," the prime minister said, seeking investment in a bigger way in the potential areas.

Malaysian High Commissioner in Dhaka Ashaary bin Sani and Foreign Secretary Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury were present.

# Mahathir asks

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economic potential and argued that democracy has 'weakened' many Muslim countries.

Mahathir was talking at a breakfast meeting organised by the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) on "Islam and the West".

"The same dollars that we trade in are being used to develop and supply US arms to Israel that kill Muslims," Mahathir stated. "I've asked Arabs to sell oil in other currencies. If we don't use US dollars, the currency will become useless".

He explained that if the oil and other raw materials possessed by Muslim countries are sold in currencies other than dollars, the dollar would devalue. "If the US is poor it cannot dominate the world."

Mahathir renewed his earlier proposal of a new joint currency, the Muslim Dinar, that Muslim countries could use to boost trade and economic cooperation among themselves.

Mahathir also warned that China, India, Japan and Korea would be the new powers dominating the world in the future and that these countries may follow "a tendency of the powerful to throw their power around".

He said these nations could take charge and warned that, "We may escape the Europeans and the US only to find ourselves behind the newer dominating powers. Today the problem may be the US, but tomorrow it may be these countries."

He emphasised the need to strengthen the Muslim Ummah. "Blaming the US or Israel will not help us," he said. "Muslim countries would have to unite to develop themselves and that is the only way to save the Ummah."

"Our disunity is the cause of our weaknesses and that is how other countries take advantage of us," he said.

"They (the West) push democracy in our lands because they know

we do not understand it. Democracy is a very good system if you know how to work it. However, we have seen that it has weakened a number of our Muslim nations by splitting the polity."

He said the Muslim nations are not exploiting their potential and the rich ones are not helping to develop the poorer Muslim nations.

Mahathir also stressed that Muslim nations needed to put their "houses in order" and should focus more on the material aspects of society which would result in "a greater fulfillment of our potentials and capabilities".

He stressed the importance of education and suggested the creation of 'centres of excellence' at the very best universities in the Muslim world that would allocate scholarships to the cream of Muslim students. He said that this would revive the mastery of knowledge that Muslims had before the 14th century.

Mahathir observed that most of the top scholars in US and European research institutes are of Asian origin and there needs to be a reversal of the 'brain drain'. He said this could happen if Asian countries valued the knowledge of these Muslim scholars not only in monetary terms but also by providing them their freedom of opinion.

He said he was prepared to travel to various Muslim countries and develop a core group that would initiate the union of such Muslim interests.

The eminent personalities at the breakfast meeting was former foreign minister Dr Kamal Hossain, former state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hassan Chowdhury, former foreign secretaries Faruk Chowdhury, Mohammad Mohsin and Farook Sobhan (the organiser of the meeting), the Prime Minister's Adviser MM Rezaul Karim, beside other former Bangladeshi envoys and local intellectuals.

# Dhaka peacekeepers

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and a process is underway to purchase another three for the Air Force to participate in different peace-keeping missions, the sources said.

"We are now preparing to send our troops to Sudan to provide humanitarian aid," a senior army official told The Daily Star yesterday on condition of anonymity.

Nearly 1.7 million people have been displaced since rebels took up arms last year and thousands of people in Sudanese villages are getting raped and killed in what the United Nations (UN) has termed the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Highly pleased with the performance of the Bangladeshi soldiers, the UN has asked for more troops. But the Army and Air Force lack the necessary sophisticated equipment such as the APC, bulletproof jackets and helicopters and are facing difficulties in further contributing to peacekeeping operations, sources said.

Troops require such sophisticated equipment, the procurement of which involves huge funds and takes quite some time that Bangladesh hardly gets.

Finally, the Armed Forces have initiated steps to purchase equipment on its own, the official added.

"Bangladesh's participation in the peacekeeping missions will be strengthened through the procurement of the necessary equipment," Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman, defence advisor to the prime minister, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Mahbub, an ex-army chief who later became a lawmaker on the BNP ticket and the chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on defence ministry, said the UN earlier used to help the participating countries by providing war equipment, but now they have to join the peace-keeping missions on their own

arrangements.

Since Bangladesh started participating in the UN peacekeeping mission in 1988, it earned Tk 4,600 crore by contributing 40,793 soldiers -- nearly half the total troops in Bangladesh Army -- to 31 missions over the last 16 years.

Currently, 7,816 members of the Army are serving in the UN peace-keeping operations in 12 missions in different countries. The Air Force and the Navy are also participating in the peacekeeping missions.

## New antigraft

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charge of its Khulna, Rajshahi, Barisal and Rangpur region as the director. His new assignment is in addition to his existing responsibilities.

Until yesterday, Lt Col Hannan Mridha was taking care of both administration and establishment at the ACC as the director.

The ACC is to outline an organogram before seeking government approval. However, it has not put an organogram in place, but it is making these decisions on the basis of its executive powers, sources said.

"While drawing up the organogram, the ACC will propose two departments to deal with establishment and administration," a source pointed out.

The ACC also replaced a deputy director to oversee establishment tasks. The previous deputy director, Mohammad Shahiduzzaman, has been transferred to the ACC Task Force 3, while his replacement Abdul Halim was working with the same task force. Halim was earlier put in the Bac on deputation from the administration cadre.

This is the first staff reshuffle in the administration after the ACC came into being late last month.

# Crushing defeat

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India might have finished their first innings at 540, but Bangladesh could be well satisfied for taking eight wickets for 206 runs on a placid pitch.

But despite a promising start the batting-ache resurfaced for the hosts when they collapsed to 50-3 at stumps after at one stage being 48 for no loss.

Javed Omar (10) and local boy Nafees Iqbal (33) saw off the initial threat from first Test destroyer Irfan Pathan and Zaheer Khan. But just as things were looking promising leg-spinner Anil Kumble made the breakthrough having Javed caught at slip by David in the slips and then trapped nightwatchman Mashrafe

leg before with the last ball of the day. Harbhajan Singh removed the other opener Nafees, who was caught short leg.

Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar was not out without facing a ball and much will rest on his shoulders when play resumes today on a wicket that is starting to take turn.

But it could have been easily a great day for Bangladesh had they not lost three quick wickets under fading lights.

It was a sensational Saturday morning for Mashrafe when the Narail quick put to rest any talk of Sachin Tendulkar, overnight 36, scoring a 35th Test century. The 19-year-old fast bowler had the champion right-hander trapped in front of the wicket with the day's first ball.

Mashrafe also claimed the wicket of Rahul Dravid, who was caught behind after making a superb 160.

Mohammed Rafique then got in on the act to wrap up the Indian lower half. He finished with 4-156.

Bangladesh's most successful bowler Rafique removed VVS Laxman (9), wicketkeeper Dinesh Karthik (11) and Irfan Pathan (4) before lunch.

But Indian skipper Sourav Ganguly launched a counterattack in the second session to take the total past the 500-run mark.

The 'Prince of Calcutta' smashed 88 from 153 deliveries that included nine boundaries before becoming Rafique's fourth victim.

Mashrafe however was the most impressive in his second comeback match, conceding 60 runs in 26 overs for his three wickets.

Debutant Nazmul bagged two wickets for 114 runs in 25.5 overs.

# Doctor says maid was murdered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A doctor who with two others had performed the post-mortem on Bilkis, a domestic help at the residence of Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain, hinted yesterday that the maid did not commit suicide, but rather she was murdered.

The doctor, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the autopsy was done at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital Morgue yesterday. He refused to say more on the matter.

Bilkis was found hacked to death in her room at the Gulshan residence of Akbar Hossain on Friday night.

Meanwhile, police and intelligence agencies were still trying to investigate what actually happened on that night. Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (north) Golam Rasul said, "Only after receiving the post-mortem report will we be able to confirm as to whether she was murdered or she committed suicide."

Police suspect that the Bilkis' son Shaheen Hossain, who came to the minister's Gulshan residence about an hour before her mother was found dead, might have killed her.

Shaheen, arrested on Friday from the minister's house, was placed on a three-day remand yesterday when police produced him before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka. Gulshan police, however, petitioned for a seven-day remand.

Kabir Hossain, an orderly at Akbar Hossain's house, filed a case with Gulshan Police Station on Friday night. But he did not name anyone in the first information report (FIR).

Bilkis' nephew Nurul Islam received her body from the DMCH yesterday afternoon. She will be buried at her village home at Motihar upazila in Rajshahi.

## AFHANULLAH MURDER

# Witness says Jatiya Chhatra Samaj men killed him

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The fourth prosecution witness in the Aman Uddin Sarkar, president of Tongi unit Bangladesh Chhatra League, gave his statement before Judge Shahed Noor Uddin of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1.

He was cross-examined on some points on behalf of Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal leader Nurul Islam Sarker, the mastermind of the killing, and two others. He will be cross-examined again after the hearing resumes at 11:00am today.

In his deposition he gave a detailed description of the murder and the place where it took place. He told the court that Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Samaj leaders Nurul Islam Dipu, Shipu, Tipu, Khokan, Ratan, Alamin, Majnu, Hira, Roni, Bulu, Faisal, Monir and Dulal shot at Afhanullah with pistols and revolvers.

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## US won't strike

**FROM PAGE 12**  
and there's no point in getting everybody excited about this."

The North Korean government is "constantly accusing us of having hostile intent," Powell said. "We have no hostile intent. We have no intent of invading. We have no intention of attacking North Korea."

## Three nations

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meeting, sources said, adding that the prime ministers of India and Bangladesh may also discuss common energy issues in a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the Saarc summit.

A cabinet committee earlier shelved a transnational gas pipeline project proposed by a private company on the grounds that such a scheme requires political tie-in from the governments involved.

Following that decision, the prime minister formed a secretary-level committee to scrutinise various aspects of a transnational gas pipeline that would carry gas from Myanmar to India's Tripura, entering Bangladesh in the east and exiting in the west to West Bengal.

Energy ministry sources said the secretariat committee will submit a set of recommendations based on its findings, which the ministers of finance, energy and foreign affairs will then discuss. They will then discuss the matter with the prime minister. The government intends to finalise its position on the issue before the Saarc summit.

Earlier, the finance minister said that Bangladesh will not pursue the pipeline proposal as an independent issue with India. Rather it will try to settle this issue in concert with a host of others, such as Bangladesh-Nepal transit through India and the removal of tariff barriers for Bangladeshi exporters to India.

The concept of the transnational pipeline is eight years old, but in recent times the Myanmar government has stepped up pressure to promote the idea, including inviting Bangladesh and India to sit on energy issues in Yangon in early January.

# Victim shifted

**FROM PAGE 12**  
The local unit of BNWL had the 36-year-old woman, who suffered rapes allegedly by four BNP adherents in Tanore 17 years ago, and her son in safe custody on Thursday and were scheduled to send them to the association's Dhaka Safe Home today after completing certain formalities.

Dil Sitara said the BNWL would arrange income-generating training for the woman and schooling for the boy. "They will be kept there until the case is settled or they feel secure enough to return home," she added.

The woman went into hiding a few weeks ago, as the alleged rapists threatened her with death if she did not cancel the move to re-start the rape case after a nine-year gap or settle the matter for money.

The woman accused Mofiz Uddin, now a vice president of Tanore upazila BNP and the chairman of Chanduria union parishad, and his accomplices Omar Ali, Yaad Ali and the then Soronaj UP Chairman Abdul Mozid Mollah of kidnapping and raping her repeatedly in April 1988. She was an 18-year-old orphan then.

Meanwhile,