

## Matiur Rahman

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equivalent of the Nobel Prize, are a Thai senator, an Indonesian anti-graft campaigner, an Indian physician, a South Korean Civil Society leader and a Laotian community leader.

Matiur won the award for journalism, literature and creative communication arts. The foundation praised "his wielding the power of the press to crusade against acid throwing to stir Bangladeshis to help its many victims," says AFP.

About 300 people, many of them young women, are permanently disfigured every year in Bangladesh in attacks often motivated by spite after victims deny the attackers sex, marriage or suitable dowries.

Our Staff Correspondent adds: Matiur Rahman said he will donate the prize money (\$50,000) for the victims of acid throwing, oppressed journalists and for anti-drug campaign in Bangladesh.

The Prothom Alo naturally covered the alarming rise of acid throwing in Bangladesh. But in 2000 a heartrending case involving a 15-year-old girl riveted Matiur's attention. He determined to harness the resources of his newspaper to fight the scourge, says the foundation in a citation for him.

In prominent daily appeals, Matiur declared war on acid throwers and called upon his readers to contribute to the Prothom Alo Aid Fund for acid victims.

With scarred women at his side, he solicited donations at rallies and press conferences and called upon celebrities and volunteers to carry the appeal throughout the country. People from all walks of life and even Bangladeshis abroad became donors.

Matiur steered help directly to the victims: money for burn treatments, plastic surgery, legal fees, and living expenses plus new dwellings for some and income-generating assets such as milking cows, sewing machines, cultivable lands, and shops for others.

By June 2005, about Tk 8.2 million had been coursed to over one hundred victims.

At the same time, the Prothom Alo pressured the government to strengthen laws against acid attacks and the reckless sale of dangerous chemicals.

In 2002, the country's Acid Crimes Prevention Act and Acid Control Act stiffened penalties for acid throwers and tightened licensing requirements for acid sales.

Matiur has been described as "the

navigator of positive social and cultural change" in Bangladesh.

He used his authority as editor of the Prothom Alo not only to fight the crime of acid throwing but also to raise public consciousness about HIV/AIDS and drug abuse and to reveal the role of certain Muslim extremists in fomenting militancy and violence, says the citation.

Born in 1946, Matiur founded the Prothom Alo in 1998 and established the daily's credibility by exposing the missteps of both the government and its foes and by aggressively covering corruption, terrorism, and human rights violations.

The Magsaysay award was introduced in 1957 and named after the Philippines' most popular president. Each award-winner is to receive a cash prize and will be asked to take part in a series of public lectures at the foundation offices in Manila.

### OTHER RECIPIENTS

Thai Senator Jon Ungphakorn was cited by the Philippines-based foundation for "his impassioned insistence as a senator that Thailand respect the rights and attend humanely to the needs of its least advantaged citizens."

Teten Masduki of Indonesia Corruption Watch won the award for public service for "challenging Indonesians to expose corruption and claim their right to clean the government."

Indian physician V Shanta, a second public service awardee, was honoured for "her untiring leadership of the Cancer Institute as a centre of excellence and compassion for the study and treatment of cancer in India."

South Korea's Yoon Hye-Ran, founder of the Citizens Opening the World for Welfare, won the award for emergent leadership. She was cited for "her catalytic role in enabling (her hometown) Chenoan's civil society to exercise its social responsibilities dynamically and democratically."

Laotian Sombath Somphone won the award for community leadership. The founder and executive director of the Participatory Development Training Centre was recognised for "his hopeful efforts to promote sustainable development in Laos by training and motivating its young people to become a generation of leaders."

## Bangladesh observes

**FROM PAGE 1**  
minister and the leader of the opposition have expressed profound grief over the death of King Fahd.

The Bangladesh leaders also congratulated Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud as the new King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and Defense Minister Sultan bin Abdel Aziz as the Heir Prince.

President Iajuddin Ahmed left for Saudi Arabia to attend the funeral ceremony of King Fahd. He is leading a 10-member delegation that includes State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin.

The president in his condolence message sent to the new King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, who succeeded his brother, expressed deep shock at the death of King Fahd.

"He (King Fahd) was the most respected leader of his people and symbolised the unity and solidarity of the entire Muslim Ummah," the president said.

"The late King will be long commemorated among all his friends and admirers for his prudent leadership and individual contribution to the cause of peace, stability and progress of the humanity. He was also a close and revered well-wisher of Bangladesh," he said.

The president prayed to Almighty Allah to grant eternal peace to the departed soul and courage and fortitude to the bereaved members of the royal family and the people of the kingdom to withstand the irreparable loss.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia also expressed profound shock at the demise of King Fahd.

In her message to the new King Abdullah, she said, "His [Fahd's] demise is an irreparable loss for the Kingdom as well as the entire Muslim Ummah."

She noted that King Fahd's sagacious leadership was a source of inspiration to remain united for the Muslim brethren all over the world.

"The late King's great service for the Muslim world and his noble deeds of charity and assistance for the poor humanity will long be remembered with reverence," she said.

Khaleda Zia said the brotherly relations between the two countries reached a new height in different areas of cooperation during the reign of King Fahd.

"The people of Bangladesh will ever recall his very kind attention and care for the service of the people of Bangladesh," she added.

She prayed for eternal peace of his departed soul and divine blessing for the bereaved family and the brotherly people of Saudi Arabia.

Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina expressed her profound shock at the death of King Fahd.

In her message, she recalled the late King's leadership in strengthening the Muslim Ummah as custodian of the two holiest places of the Muslim

### Khaleda

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Dhaka in November.

Manmohan stressed the need for strengthening the regional forum and hoped that the Saarc would be much stronger under the future leadership of Khaleda Zia.

The Indian prime minister hoped that the Saarc would emerge as a "more effective forum for ensuring socioeconomic welfare of the people of this region".

### 2 'robbers' die

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around 2:45am.

The law enforcers said accomplices of the robbers opened fire on them, forcing them to counter the attack.

During an attempt to flee, Benu and Dulu were bullet-hit and pronounced dead on arrival at Araihazar Health Complex, they added.

Four policemen were injured in the gunfight. Police seized a revolver and 14 bullets from the spot.

### Headmaster

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Following the incident, Shahabuddin's supporters put up barricades on the Dhaka-Dohar road, disrupting traffic for two hours. On information, police rushed to the spot and engaged in clashes with the agitating people that left several injured.

### Coal policy

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than 1.7 billion metric tons.

There are a number of laws and rules regarding coal exploration, coal mine development and leasing of the coal fields. These laws and regulations were formulated between 1910 and 2004.

The adviser to the energy ministry found all these existing rules and regulations more or less obsolete and inappropriate to deal with foreign companies in the new context of coal mine business in the country.

"The existing rules and laws are very old and insufficient to protect the interest of the country in dealing with the foreign companies who want to invest in our coal mine sector," he told journalists after the meeting.

Mahmudur Rahman said the worldwide focus on the use of coal as an energy source is growing following the recent rise in fuel price on the international market.

The coal reserve in Bangladesh also came to the focus in recent days, as many foreign companies are showing interest to invest in the country, he said.

"Actually, almost every day, we're receiving investment offers from different foreign companies to invest in coal exploration and mine development... These companies are based in the USA, Korea, Australia and other parts of the world," said Mahmud, who is also the executive chairman of the Board of Investment (BoI).

He said with this growing interest among the foreign companies, the country should revise the existing rules, regulations and laws related to the coal mine.

He mentioned that the present rules allow only 6 percent royalty for the government when a private company invests to develop coal mine.

Even the licence fee is remarkably low, as for any exploration activities a private company has to pay only Tk 3,000 for the first 100 hectares and Tk 100 for every additional hectare.

On the other hand, for mining purpose, a company has to take licence from the government by giving a fee of Tk 75,000 for the first 30 hectares and Tk 300 for each additional hectare.

"This is really too low compared to other countries," the adviser said, adding that this goes against the interest of the country.

He said the government has sought help of USAID to carry out a study to have a clear picture about the open-cut coal mining and deep coal mining in the country.

"Determining the negative and positive aspects of the two methods of coal mining is the main objective of the study," he added.

### Boy victim

**FROM PAGE 16**  
BHRH Sunday night filed a general diary (GD) with Shyampur police, who following the lead unchained the boy from the ground floor at 419 Nurpur of Dhania under the police station.

The washroom where police found the boy was only four feet by four feet. "It was dark, damp and stinky," Advocate Shajahan of BHRB described to The Daily Star Sunday night. "The washroom was so small that he had to stand all the time there," he added.

Abir said he lived there with his mother, Swapna Chowdhury, who, the locals said, claimed her profession alternatively as a journalist, a politician or sometimes an advocate. Abir also told newsmen that his father, Kabir, used to come to the house sometimes.

Rescuers at first could not get into the house as it was locked from the outside, and yelling through the ventilator they learnt that the boy was in the washroom.

The policemen then broke into the house and found Abir alone. Hiring an ironsmith, police released the left hand of the boy from the wall and brought him to the police station.

His mother only left some muri in a small bowl and some water in a bottle - his only meal for the whole day. As a result, he was suffering from malnutrition.

"Even if she was the mother of the child, she cannot do this to the boy. It is a violation of rights by any means," Advocate Shajahan told The Daily Star.

Police picked up Swapna at around 11:00pm Sunday night from the house when she reached home. "We still could not learn what she does or the whereabouts of her claimed husband," Officer-in-Charge of Shyampur Police Station told The Daily Star at zero-hours yesterday.

Yesterday police produced the boy to the court, requesting it to send him to safe custody. The boy's mother was also produced before the court under section 54 of the criminal procedure code.

## King Fahd passes away



New king: Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz

cessions to hard-liners in an effort to boost his Islamic credentials. But he also brought the kingdom closer to the United States and agreed to a step that enraged many conservatives: basing US troops on Saudi soil after the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

In his last years, the sickly Fahd was mostly a figurehead as the close relationship he nurtured with Washington deteriorated after the Sept. 11 terror attacks. Fifteen of the 19 hijackers were Saudis, and many in the United States blamed the kingdom's strict Wahhabi school of Islam for fuelling terrorism.

Fahd, born in Riyadh in 1923, was proclaimed the fifth king of Saudi Arabia on June 13, 1982 at the height of Saudi Arabia's petrodollar boom, but his 23-year reign was marked by three regional wars and al-Qaeda militancy in his final years.

He assumed the throne just three years after two events in 1979 that would fuel extremism in Saudi Arabia: Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini founded the strictly religious Islamic Republic in Iran just across the Persian Gulf, and radical

Muslims briefly took over the holy mosque in Makkah, proclaiming the Saudi royal family not Islamic enough to rule.

Those developments, coupled with Fahd's reputation as a former gambler and womaniser, made the liberal-leaning king move toward appeasing the powerful Saudi religious establishment, including the morals police who enforce strict social codes that oblige women to wear veils and ban men and women from mingling.

France's President Jacques Chirac expressed "profound sadness" at the news in a message of condolence to the Saudi government.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan on Monday paid tribute to Saudi monarch King Fahd and expressed sadness at his death.

"Under King Fahd's leadership, the country witnessed remarkable progress in areas ranging from industrial development to education," said Annan in a statement issued by his spokesman's office.

His death drew expressions of sadness from many Arab nations, with Jordan announcing a 40-day mourning period and officials jetting to Saudi Arabia to attend his funeral on Tuesday.

In Cairo, an Arab League official said this week's Arab summit in Egypt may be postponed following the death of King Fahd and consultations on the meeting will take place in the next few hours.

In a bid to reassure oil markets, where prices topped 61 dollars after Fahd's death was announced, a Saudi official said there would be no change in the oil policy of the world's top producer and exporter.

"Saudi Arabia will not change its oil policy and will work on providing the oil supplies needed by world markets and is keen on avoiding troubles," said the official. (Reuters, AFP, AP, BBC Online)

## AL demands JS body talks

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body has not had a meeting in last three months, ignoring the Rules of Procedure of parliament.

The AL deputies said the speaker's not asking the committee to hold meeting amounts to flouting the constitution.

According to the Rules of Procedure, parliamentary bodies are obliged to hold meeting at least once in a month and if a committee fails to do so, the speaker has the power to intervene to arrange such meetings.

The parliamentary standing committee on law, justice and parliamentary affairs at a meeting held in camera on July 21 blasted the law minister for not giving appropriate opinion on examining the documents on Jhantu for presidential pardon.

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed at the same meeting accused the home ministry of concealing facts in preparing the case summary.

Professor Mohammad Shahjahan Mia, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on home affairs, admitted that there was no meeting of the committee since April 28 and said, "It was not held due to various preoccupations of the committee members."

Besides, the state minister for home affairs was busy, Shahjahan, also a ruling BNP lawmaker, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He however said he would soon

convene a meeting in consultation with Lutfozzaman Babar, the state minister for home. "Though agenda of the next meeting has already been fixed, we will still consider the opposition lawmakers' demand for discussion on the pardon issue," he added.

Deteriorating law and order situation, coupled with the home ministry's 'shady role' in the presidential pardon to double-murder convict Jhantu, has made the ministry shy of holding the meeting, alleged the AL lawmakers.

"We will ask the home ministry to place before us the file that had been prepared for Jhantu's pardon and sent to the law ministry," AL lawmaker and former home minister Mohammad Nasim told the press briefing.

He said the government had appeared to be afraid of discussing also the August 21 grenade attacks, and the killing of former foreign minister Shah AMS Kibria in the parliamentary watchdog body.

"Despite repeated contacts with the chairman of the committee, I haven't yet got any response," Nasim said, adding the government skip the meeting because they do not want to be brought to account for the 'wrongs' they have done.

He also told the reporters that a letter has been sent to the speaker, calling for his intervention to hold meeting of the standing committee on home affairs.

## Perks of president

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Ministers' salary has been raised to Tk 29,000 from Tk 20,000, state ministers' to Tk 26,100 from Tk 18,000 and deputy ministers' to Tk 24,650 from Tk 17,000.

The cabinet secretary and the principal secretary to the prime minister will now get Tk 24,500 a month which was earlier around Tk 15,750.

Under the new pay scale, the secretaries get Tk 23,000 (previously Tk 15,000) while one in the lowest grade gets a basic pay of Tk 2,400 (previously Tk 1,500).

In the current budget, about Tk 9 crore has been allotted for the salaries and allowances of the ministers. The amount will increase in the revised budget due to the salary hike, said sources in the finance ministry.

In the seventh parliament, the PM's salary was increased, keeping unchanged other facilities while the salaries, allowances and other facilities of the ministers were increased.

### FACILITIES OF THE PM

The PM's salary was only Tk 2,000 a month in 1973. Other facilities included a block fund equivalent to the real expenditure, free government vehicles, a Tk 2 lakh optional fund, and house decoration at the government expenses if the PM stays at own house.

In 2003, the rent of the PM's house was fixed at Tk 50,000 and daily allowance Tk 1,000.

Other facilities were also revised: furniture worth Tk 1.5 lakh if the PM decides not to live in government allotted residence, Tk 14 lakh for insurance, an optional fund of Tk 50 lakh and public vehicles as required for the PM and her family.

### FACILITIES OF MINISTERS

A minister's salary was Tk 1,500 in 1973. Other facilities included a Tk 1,000 block fund, a Tk 25,000 optional fund, Tk 20,000 for furniture if a minister lived in his own house or Tk 1,000 as house rent a month, Tk 1 lakh for insurance and Tk 50 as daily allowance.

A state minister then used to receive Tk 1,300 as monthly salary, a block allocation of Tk 750, Tk 15,000 for furniture or Tk 750 as monthly house rent, Tk 1 lakh for insurance, Tk 25 as daily allowance and a Tk 10,000 optional fund.

During the same period, a deputy minister's salary was Tk 1,100 a month. Besides, he used to receive Tk 15,000 for furniture for his own house or Tk 750 as monthly house rent, a Tk 7,500 optional fund and some other facilities.

In 2003, the house rent of a minister was raised to Tk 25,000, that of a state minister to Tk 20,000 and of a deputy minister Tk 18,000. The optional fund was re-fixed at Tk 3 lakh, 2 lakh and 1.5 lakh for ministers, state minister and deputy ministers.

Daily allowance of the ministers was increased to Tk 750 while of the state and deputy ministers to Tk 600.

### Delhi sets Aug 8

**FROM PAGE 16**  
for presentation of credentials is normal as the ceremony takes place when several new ambassadors and high commissioners arrive, the foreign ministry source said, adding that two other foreign envoys to New Delhi will also present their credentials on August 8.

## 11 food shops, factories

**FROM PAGE 1**  
the expiry date on the label of the packets," said ABM Abdul Fattah.

The court then raided three small roadside restaurants, fining them a total of Tk 11,000 for preserving and preparing food in very unhygienic environment.

The second mobile court, led by magistrate Md. Rakanuddoulla, raided two bakeries in old Dhaka.

"In the Anando bakery we did not find any unsafe chemicals and the environment was not so bad," said Rakanuddoulla.

The court did not file any case against the owner of the Anando bakery.

The court then raided City Bakery, where they found a lot of unsafe chemicals in their factory, situated at Abul Hasnat road.

The court sent Sheikh Anwar Hossain, the owner of the bakery, to jail for one month and fined him Tk one thousand.

"They use oily chemicals to make the chanchur and Zilapi crispy," the magistrate said. They also use unknown chemicals in their products, he added.

The magistrate court of the City Corporation did not conduct any raids yesterday.

### BSTI makes a probe committee

The Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institution (BSTI) has instituted a three-member committee to investigate so-called fruit juices that lack fruit ingredients, exposed recently by a non-government watchdog of consumers rights.

The survey findings of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) showed that 'fruit juices' of different brands carrying a BSTI certification in the market contained various harmful chemical ingredients such as colouring, flavouring and preservatives beyond the permitted level, instead of fruit ingredients.

The probe committee, led by a BSTI Field Officer KM Hanif, has no time limit for submission of its findings in this regard.

### Drive in other districts

The special mobile court branch of the police has apprehended 360 bags full of rotten wheat intended for use in flourmills. The magistrate, checking the receipt of the wheat,

found they were officially cattle feed. But there is no cattle feed mill in that area. The dishonest traders were trying to release them in to a flourmill.

The police arrested a storage owner, Monirul Haq Titu, in this regard. Sources said a group of dishonest traders have been running this sort of business for a long time.

Our Chittagong office adds:

A mobile court here yesterday fined four renowned companies Tk three lakh and twenty-eight thousand for making sub-standard food products in a very unhygienic atmosphere in the port city.

Chittagong City Corporation Magistrate Shafiqur Rahman, with the help of BSTI representatives and police forces, conducted the mobile court raid at the food products factories of Panda Ice-cream, Dynasty - a bakery trusted for confectionery items - Daffodils Food Products and Purabi Sweets.

The factories of all the fined companies were located at the city centre under Kotoali thana. None had any BSTI certificate for their products.

Of them, Panda was fined Tk 1 lakh 80 thousand as the mobile court during the raid at Batali Road found expired milk powder and other raw materials left in a most unhygienic condition. Panda has been producing food items without a BSTI certificate since its establishment in 1991. The latest application for a BSTI certificate of Panda was rejected in 2003 for substandard products. However, the company continued its production.

The court fined Dynasty Tk 71 thousand for preparing substandard confectionery items in an unhygienic condition.

Daffodils Food Products - a company supplying products to the trains on the Chittagong-Dhaka and Chittagong-Sylhet section of Bangladesh Railway, was fined Tk 46 thousand. The court found slaughtered and undressed chickens and creams preserved together inside Daffodil's factory at Chaitanya Goli.

The court fined Purabi Sweets of Station Road for poor quality and unhygienic products.

## London braces

**FROM PAGE 16**  
at Finsbury Park mosque in North London, where some of the 7/7 terrorists are also known to have stayed, The Times reported.

Meanwhile, police are planning to pick out young Muslims for stop-and-searches as part of the security response to the bombings.

Hazel Blair, the Home Office Minister, defended the plan to the BBC yesterday, saying she believed the Muslim community would accept such searches as a necessary response.

The transport police also made it clear that it will target specific ethnic groups in its hunt for terrorists.

Ian Johnston, the chief constable of the British Transport Police, said: "We should not waste time searching old white ladies."

He said he was confident there was every sign that the Muslim community understood the predicament that officers faced and that it would continue to support the police even if young Asians become the focus of most searches.

But Shami Chakrabarti, the director of the civil rights group Liberty, said that "racial profiling" was a disaster and could play into the hands of those who wanted to recruit terrorists.

Meanwhile, police said yesterday's arrests of five suspected bombers in house raids in Birmingham, London and Rome has not ended the threat. Deputy Assistant Commissioner Peter Clarke, head of the anti-terrorist branch, said: "The threat remains and is very real."

Authorities are now worried about how long such a huge contingent of policemen - 6,000 strong can be mobilized for such intensive operations to "lock down London" while a threat remains. Police leave has been cancelled, costing Britain an additional 500,000 pounds to ensure security. Police are still on the hunt for the key persons behind organising and planning the terror

### Sudan

**FROM PAGE 16**  
were also killed, an official statement said. The crash site was found near the Uganda-Sudan border, a Ugandan official said.

Ugandan officials said Garang and the others were flying in one of President Yoweri Museveni's personal helicopters, but the Sudanese statement said it was a plane. The conflict could not be immediately reconciled. Ugandan and Sudanese forces had been searching for Garang's aircraft since Sunday.

"It has now been confirmed that the plane crashed after it hit a mountain range in southern Sudan because of poor visibility and this resulted in the death of Dr. John Garang DeMabior, six of his colleagues and seven other crew members of the Ugandan presidential plane," according to a statement released by the office of Sudanese President Omar el-Bashir.

The 60-year-old former rebel, who was sworn in as vice president just three weeks ago, left on a flight from Uganda for southern Sudan at 5:30 p.m. Ugandan time Saturday afternoon, Sudanese and Ugandan officials said. It was not clear when the last contact with his craft took place.

The disclosure that Hussain Osman, a suspected bomber in the botched July 21 attempt, had fled to Paris unchanged by using the Eurostar train at Waterloo has compelled Britain to think of reintroducing permanent passport checks at all British border points.

The government contends that Osman's slip from the country exposed that Britain's border is porous.

Outgoing British passport checks were abandoned at the Eurostar terminus last year. The Home Office said that checks by British immigration officials at embarkation points were reintroduced at the request of the police after the 7/7 bombings but lifted on July 17. They were introduced again after the July 21 attacks and were still in force.

Osman, also known as Hamdi Issac, apparently got through despite CCTV pictures of the bombing suspects being displayed prominently at Waterloo.