

Nagorik Shakti denies report on Yunus' meeting with Sirajul Alam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus' political party Nagorik Shakti yesterday said reports carried by different dailies on a meeting between Muhammad Yunus and former politician Sirajul Alam Khan are baseless and imaginary.

"Nagorik Shakti has no link with Sirajul Alam Khan and no meeting was held between Prof Yunus and Khan so far," read a press release signed by Shaheen Muhammad of the party's media cell.

It said, "A book has been published recently compiling Yunus' seven-point and Khan's 14-point proposals without prior permission from Yunus. He even knew nothing about the book."

"So, Yunus had no role in publishing the book," stated the press release adding, "The seven-point proposal has no relevance anymore in the changed political scenario."

It also said Nagorik Shakti will unveil its political programmes in due time.

# BSC ship Gourab incurs Tk 7cr loss in 10 months

RAFIQ HASAN, from Chittagong

A cargo ship of Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) incurred losses of Tk 7 crore only in 10 months from April 2006 to January 2007.

The ship -- Banglar Gourab-- went for engine repair many times and remained idle for months together causing the huge loss and various other problems for the state-owned corporation.

This was revealed by a government inquiry committee that submitted its report to the director general of shipping recently.

Principal Officer of Mercantile Marine Department (POMMD) Captain Habibur Rahman headed the two-member probe body formed in November last year.

The report made a number of recommendations to prevent further damage to the BSC.

The recommendations include considering charter of ships for short voyages taking into count age of the vessels, appointment of a commercial director of the BSC having commercial background, avoiding contractual appointments of engineers and officers, and preference of BSC marine workshop for any repair of ships in the country.

The investigation found that the ship remained idle for long during the 10 months due to repeated repairs of its engine that cost Tk 1.3 crore. The vessel also caused financial loss of Tk 5.7 crore during the period as fixed operating cost (FOC).

During this period, the ship was chartered to a company to carry a consignment of bagged rice to Somalia from India at a freight of \$4,500 per day. But due to severe breakdown of its engine, the vessel was forced to call at Colombo and Cochin (India) for repair. The whole consignment was unloaded at Cochin, damaging the BSC's credibility.

According to probe report, Banglar Gourab went for docking in April last year in Chittagong port and remained at the repair berth for three months. On completion of repair, it sailed for Mongla port to load jute goods for Pakistan. But mysteriously its engine broke down at the entrance to Mongla. It was towed inside and remained

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## RAB MEN MURDER Suspect killed in 'crossfire'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged criminal arrested on Saturday in connection with the killing of two Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel in Savar was killed in Rab action yesterday.

Police sources said Mamun alias Killer Mamun actively took part in the killing of deputy assistant director (DAD) Humayun Kabir and constable Phool Mia of Rab-11 at a brick kiln at Salehpur.

Investigators, meanwhile, said they have identified the mastermind and all those who took part in the killing. "Capturing them is now a matter of time," an investigator said, seeking anonymity.

The Rab identified Mamun, 30, as a member of the killing squad of local criminal gang Gangchil that operates in Aminbazar area.

The law enforcers said Mamun, who has five criminal cases including four filed for murders, was arrested in Krishnanagar village in Savar at 5:30am Monday.

During interrogation at the Rab-4 office, Mamun disclosed detailed information about Gangchil

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PHOTO: STAR

Labourers dump rotten rice and wheat seized by the joint forces from different warehouses of Chittagong into West Kattali beach yesterday.

## Verdict in gold smuggling case against Ershad deferred again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The verdict of the gold smuggling case against former president and Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad was again deferred to March 27 by a Dhaka court yesterday.

Judge (In Charge) Mohammad Aman Ullah of the Fourth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court set the date.

The judgement was not delivered as Judge SM Mujibur Rahman of the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court was on leave yesterday.

The delivery of judgement on this case has been adjourned for the third time.

Ershad along with ABM Ruhul Amin Howlader and a large number of party leaders and activists appeared before the court at 10:30am.

Additional police forces were deployed in and around the court premises to avoid any untoward incident.

On February 6, the verdict was not given as the judge could not complete preparing the judgement while the court adjourned it till February 15 following a time petition submitted by Ershad's lawyers.

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# 82 killed in twin Indonesia quakes

AGENCIES, Padang/ Geneva

At least 82 people were killed yesterday in a 6.3 and 6.0-magnitude earthquakes that rocked Indonesia's Sumatra island, a spokesman for the UN children's agency, Unicef, said.

"The toll won't stop rising because the quake happened in a relatively populated region," said Unicef spokesman Damien Personnaz.

Two Unicef teams are in Sumatra monitoring the situation.

The tremors were felt as far away as Malaysia and Singapore, where several buildings were evacuated.

The first quake of magnitude 6.3 was felt in the West Sumatra provincial capital of Padang at around 11 am, sparking panic among seaside residents who feared it might trigger a tsunami.

A second 6.0 magnitude earthquake struck the same area two hours later, causing more panic.

However, there was no immediate tsunami warning after the quakes, which were on land.

Indonesia's cabinet secretary Sudi Silalahi said 70 people had

been killed.

The United States Geological Survey said the first quake's epicentre was around 420km from Singapore. The Indonesian national quake centre measured the quake at 5.8 on the Richter scale.

Some buildings collapsed and several homes and other buildings were badly damaged by the tremors that sent several people scrambling for safety, including 200-300 patients who ran out of a hospital in Padang, a Reuters witness said.

Citing reports from regencies the mayor of Padang, Fauzi Bahar, said 14 people had died in Solok town, 40km northeast of Padang, 16 in Batusangkar and one in Payakumbuh.

"Many have calmed down and are returning home, but we can still see some traffic jams around the city," Bahar told Reuters.

"The numbers may increase, not every area provided the report."

The mayor of Solok said hospitals were overwhelmed with dozens of injured.

"Our priority is to handle the injured ones, including their families. We have set up six tents at a

soccer field as emergency posts," Syamsu Rahim, the mayor of Solok, told Reuters.

Padang is one of the few Indonesian cities where a tsunami warning system is in place. A quake in the Indian Ocean off Sumatra island in December 2004 and the tsunami it caused left about 170,000 people dead or missing in Indonesia's northern Aceh province.

"It was really strong. I panicked. I ran out of the house just like the other neighbours," housewife Asmiarti, whose home is on the northern Padang shore, told Reuters by phone.

"When we got out, our bodies were still shaking and the trees were also shaking. We fear there would be a tsunami but there has been no announcement so far," she said.

Earthquakes are frequent in Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country. Its 17,000 islands sprawl along a belt of intense volcanic and seismic

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PHOTO: STAR

Rickshawpullers queue up to deposit documents for collecting licence from Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) yesterday. DCC has resumed issuance of licences after a long break.

## Huda denied bail in car registration case

Ex-MP Salahuddin shown arrested in similar case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected the bail petition of detained former communications minister barrister Nazmul Huda in a criminal case filed for using a fake registration number for his sport utility vehicle (SUV).

Metropolitan Magistrate Shafique Anwar passed the order after a lawyer filed a petition seeking bail for Huda.

The same court also directed the IO of the case to submit a report whether the documents of the car seized earlier from his Dhanmondi residence were valid or not.

The order came after Huda's wife Advocate Sigma Huda submitted a petition seeking the car in her custody.

On February 25, police had

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## Yunus for Saarc passport

UNB, Karachi

Nobel laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus yesterday urged the countries of the South Asian region to introduce Saarc passport to facilitate easy movement of people across the borders.

He said this will enhance cultural and other relations among the people of the Saarc nations which can immensely help poverty alleviation efforts as well.

"If people are allowed to move freely, they can share each other's experience and unlock their poten-

tials to remove poverty," he said during an interactive session organised by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) at its headquarters' auditorium.

"I believe people will feel proud of having Saarc passports as citizens of the South Asian region," he added.

Top executives of different private and public commercial banks, micro-finance institutions and senior government officials attended the session with the acting governor of the bank in the chair.

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## 5 pythons found on Ctg roads

Locals suspect owners abandoned snakes in fear of raid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Five pythons were retrieved from City Gate and Ambagan areas of the port city yesterday.

Chittagong Zoo authorities and local people suspect that the pythons might have been abandoned fearing stern action by the government, which recently launched drives against owning of wildlife for pleasure.

The pythons were later handed over to the Chittagong Zoo authority.

Local people caught two pythons weighing 80 and 60 kgs and 13 and 11 feet in length respectively from rail tracks at City Gate at about 9:00am.

Ambagan people also found two pythons, each 8 feet, on a road of the area yesterday morning.

Later, in the afternoon, they retrieved another python from the same area.

"We think the pythons were pets of individuals and released in secret fearing action of the joint forces," observed Monzur Morshed Chowdhury, a veterinary doctor of Chittagong Zoo.



PHOTO: STAR

Two of the five pythons caught from two Chittagong areas by locals yesterday.

## 12 deer seized from JP leader's house

A CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

The joint forces yesterday seized 12 deer from the house of a Jatiya Party leader in Lauhajang upazila of the district.

On information, the joint forces raided the house of Abul Basher, also an industrialist, at Kazir Pagla village under the upazila at around 1:15pm and seized the deer.

The deer were kept in that house for several months. The family members claimed they have licence for the deer. But army sources said the licence has been expired.

## Indo-Pak panel talks ways to fight terror

REUTERS, Islamabad

After decades of distrust and blaming each other for fuelling militancy, Indian and Pakistani officials began their first ever talks yesterday on how to fight terrorism together.

The panel meeting in Islamabad, was proposed by Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh when they met in Cuba last September to revive a three-year-old peace process, suspended after bomb attacks on the India city of Mumbai in July killed 186.

The meeting comes 15 days after fire-bombs on an Indian train bound for Pakistan killed 68

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## 5 JMB men held in Joypurhat

UNB, Joypurhat

Police arrested five members of outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) at two villages of Khetlal upazila early yesterday.

The arrestees are Monsur

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## Mashrafe burst reins in Kiwis

SPORTS REPORTER

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza bowled his heart out to give Bangladesh a dream start in their first big challenge in the West Indies as he led the attack to shatter the New Zealand top order in their first World Cup practice match yesterday.

They reduced New Zealand to 124-6 in 34 overs when the last report came in.

The right-arm leading Tigers

paceman started the carnage by removing Lou Vincent's stumps for only four after the Black Caps decided to bat first at the extended Three Ws Oval in Cave Hill, Barbados.

Mashrafe, dubbed 'Narail Express', then picked up two more wickets to ensure that the formidable New Zealand top order collapse. The 24-year old pacer had

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## Detention of MK Alamgir, Lotus Kamal declared illegal

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday declared illegal the detention of former state minister Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and former Awami League lawmaker AHM Mostafa Kamal alias Lotus Kamal.

A division bench comprising Justice MA Wahhab Mian and Justice M Emdadul Huq gave the verdict upon habeas corpus petitions.

The court also passed an order to release the two detainees if they are not wanted in any other criminal cases.

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