

## Concern over death threat to Prof Barakat

Eminent citizens in a statement yesterday expressed grave concern over the death threat issued to economist Prof Abul Barakat of Dhaka University on February 6, says a press release.

They said Prof Barakat is one of the rare researchers and intellectuals who raise their voice against fundamentalism, corruption, terrorism and political and social discrimination through research and intellectual practices.

The threat is not only against Barakat, rather it is a threat against all the good souls who raise their voice against injustice, they said.

They demanded proper investigation into the incident and exemplary punishment to the culprits who issued the threat.

They also demanded full security of Barakat and his family.

Signatories to the statement are Lt Gen (ret'd) M Harun-Ar-Rashid Bir Pratik, Justice Ghulam Rabbani, former adviser Sultana Kamal, Khushi Kabir of Nijera Kori, Hameeda Hossain, Syeda Rizwana Hasan of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), Taslimur Rahman of Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust (BLAST) and Shamsul Huda of Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD).

## Death anniversary

Today is the 31st death anniversary of Abdus Salam, former editor of The Bangladesh Observer and founding director general of the Press Institute of Bangladesh, says a press release.

On the occasion, wreaths will be placed at his grave at Banani graveyard at 8:00am and a milad mahfil will be held at his Dhanmondi residence after Asr prayers.

Abdus Salam Smirti Sangsad will hold a memorial meeting at the Press Institute auditorium at 3:00pm on February 17, with Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz as the chief guest.

## Obituary

Syed Shahidul Islam, former general manager of Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board, former general secretary of Bangladesh Institute of Engineers and founder general secretary of Bangladesh Amateur Athletics Federation, passed away due to old age complications at a local clinic on Monday at the age of 75, says a press release.

He left behind his one son, five brothers, five sisters, grand children and a host of admirers to mourn his death.

His first namaz-e-janaza was held at Telecommunication Bhavan after Asr prayers and second namaz-e-janaza was held at Banani Jame Mosque after Esha prayers.

He was buried at Banani graveyard.

## Ashraf Alam Tutu

Ashraf Alam Tutu, director of Costal Development Partnership (CDP) and one of the pioneers of the leftist movement in the southern region of Bangladesh, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at his residence in Khulna yesterday at the age of 56, says a press release.

He left behind his wife and a host of admirers to mourn his death.

Bangladesh Workers' Party, Peoples Empowerment Trust (PET), ActionAid Bangladesh, BELA, Shabolombi Unnayan Samity (SUS), Voice, Speed Trust, Ubining, CDP, INCIDIN Bangladesh expressed their shock at the death of Tutu.

They also prayed for salvation of his departed soul and conveyed sympathy to his bereaved family members.

## Nazrul Sangeet Shilpi Parishad executives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ferdousi Rahman and MA Mannan were re-elected as president and general secretary of the Nazrul Sangeet Shilpi Parishad for the year 2008-10.

The election of the 43-member executive committee of Nazrul Sangeet Shilpi Parishad was held at Nazrul Institute at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday.

Other officer bearers are: Latifa Chowdhury, Rebeka Sultana, Fatema Tuz Zohra, Shaheen Samad, and Bulbul Mahalanabish-vice president, Shujit Mostofa, and Nashid Kamal-joint secretary, Murshid Jahan, Yasmin Mushtari-organising secretary, Uttam Kumar Roy, and Ferdousi Parveen-publicity secretary, Muntarin Mahal, treasurer, Lina Tapashi Khan, social welfare secretary and Rashidunnabi-publishing secretary.

Ferdous Ara and Khilki kazi were elected as members.

# OFFSHORE EXPLORATION OF OIL, GAS 'Make public production sharing contract model'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing doubts about the transparency in recently approved Production Sharing Contract (PSC) model for offshore exploration of oil and gas, academics yesterday called on the government to make it public and consult local experts before inviting tenders from foreign companies.

The people would not take any responsibility for the contracts if signed with foreign companies without the PSC model being made public, they said at a press conference organised by the Campaign for Citizens' Right to Information at the National Press Club.

Prof M Shamsul Alam of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology, Prof Anu Muhammad of Jahangirnagar University, Prof Dr Hossain Mansur of Dhaka University and Campaign for Citizens' Right to Information Member Secretary Zakir Hossain were present at the press conference.

Referring to the recent remarks of Chief Adviser's Special Assistant

for Energy Ministry Prof M Tamim that allocation of 28 gas-oil blocks will be completed by October, the academics said such remarks suggest he still sticks to his previous position in favour of gas export.

The caretaker government, which took over only for a short period, should not take any policy decision, they said, adding that its important task is to frame a guideline for the future development of power and energy sector and reveal corruption in the gas deals signed during the previous government.

Prof M Tamim took a strong position in favour of gas export in 2001, claiming that there is a huge gas reserve in the country, but his own words that gas crisis may turn serious by 2011 proves his previous claim wrong, Prof Shamsul Alam said in a written statement.

Each previous PSC model had provision allowing the export of LNG (liquid natural gas), he said and demanded incorporation of a provision banning export of gas or oil in any form into the PSC model.

"In the latest PSC model, the highest price of each unit gas has

been fixed at \$ 4.7, but the investor will pay corporate tax. It is not clear who is going to benefit from such arrangement. It is also not clear if tax holiday is applicable in the case of foreign investment," he said.

Prof Anu Muhammad said there is a huge resource potential of gas and oil in the Bay of Bengal. The people of Bangladesh, therefore, need to keep a close watch so that none can deceive them in collusion with the local vested quarters.

He alleged that there are some vested quarters in the government agencies who act as agents of foreign companies. "We must explore and extract gas, but not for the benefit of the foreign companies," he added.

The present government should focus on digging out corruption in the previous gas deals instead of considering the foreign investments, he said.

Prof Hossain Mansur said the government should never sign any contracts on the gas or oil fields having the highest reserve. "We should develop our expertise and develop such fields," he added.

## Justice seeks help for treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Justice M Bazlur Rahman Talukdar, 71, who has fought against all kinds of injustice throughout his life, is now broke and seeking financial assistance from affluent people for his treatment.

In his career as a lawyer in the High Court from 1966 to 1994, Justice Rahman always stood by the oppressed to establish their legal rights. From 1994 to 1997, he served as a justice in the Supreme Court.

Justice Rahman, a lifelong bachelor, has long been suffering from various diseases, including diabetes. Misfortune befell him in 2000 when he suffered a brain stroke. A few days later, he underwent a brain operation. While he was recovering from his illness, he suffered a massive cardiac arrest.

As his health has deteriorated since then, Justice Rahman could not go back to normal life to earn a living.

He is now almost paralysed and has spent his small savings on treatment. He now even cannot afford to buy medicines.

Justice Rahman is also suffering from kidney ailments. He now appeals to the president, chief adviser and generous people to extend a helping hand.

Contributions can be sent to the following account: Justice M Bazlur Rahman Talukdar, Savings Account No.-34001002, Sonali Bank, Bangladesh Supreme Court Branch.

Interested persons can also contact him at 134 West Rampura, Wapda Road. Mobile phone No. 01552363613.

## Appeal for help

Romana Akter, a student of Master's preliminary course at Chittagong Government College, has been suffering from renal failure, says a press release.

According to doctors, Romana needs an urgent kidney transplant as both of her kidneys are almost damaged. But it is not possible for her parents to bear the huge cost of the kidney transplant.

Her father Md Faiz Meah has appealed to the generous people to extend a helping hand to save the life of his daughter.

Contributions can be sent to Rasel Ahmed, Savings Account No. 113.101.11302, Dutch Bangla Bank, Muradpur Branch, Chittagong.

For further information, interested persons can also call at 01711-730808, 01819-625017, 01819-636467, 01716-890670, 01819-025991.

## Ahmad Sharif's anniversary of birth today

Today is the 87th birth anniversary of Dr Ahmad Sharif, an eminent writer and scholar and former professor at Bangla

department of Dhaka University, says a press release.

On the occasion, a memorial lecture will be organised on February 24.

Swadesh Chintia Sangha will also give away Dr Ahmad Sharif Memorial Award 2008 at RC Majumdar Auditorium at Dhaka University on the day.

This year Dr T Hossain, the first health secretary of Bangladesh government, and Comrade Aziz Meher have been nominated for the award.



Executive Vice Chancellor of The City University of New York Dr Selma Botman presents the Chancellor's Medal to Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus at the launching ceremony of 'Muhammad Yunus Scholarship' in New York on Monday.

## Release ailing Hasina Zillur urges CG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Acting Awami League President Zillur Rahman yesterday urged the government to release party President Sheikh Hasina immediately on humanitarian grounds, saying that her condition is deteriorating day by day.

Expressing concern over the worsening condition of Hasina, he said that the caretaker government would be held responsible if anything happens to her.

Hasina has deteriorated both physically and mentally, Zillur told reporters at his Gulshan residence.

He also said the AL chief has not received proper treatment in the

jail. Even her personal physicians were not allowed to see her, he added.

AL presidium member Suranjit Sengupta, talking to reporters at his Jhigatola residence, also called on the government to send Hasina abroad for better treatment.

However, DIG (Prisons) Maj Shamsul Haider Siddiqui told reporters that Sheikh Hasina's condition is quite good and that doctors have been put on round-the-clock duty for her treatment.

Sheikh Hasina collapsed at the sub-jail on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan premises due to high blood pressure on Monday. However, her condition improved after a while.

## Hasina verdict not stayed by SC

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Amin, however, did not dispose of the government's provisional leave petition filed an hour into the HC verdict.

The court said the government petition would stand over till February 19. "The petitioner is directed to file civil petition for leave to appeal by then by collecting the certified copy of the High Court judgment," the court ordered the government in a packed courtroom.

The HC bench of Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman and Justice Shahidul Islam on February 6 declared brining the case under EPR illegal and quashed the case following hearing on a rule. The case was filed by businessman Azam J Chowdhury last year.

Following Hasina's writ, the HC bench of Justice Nayeem and Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury issued the rule on July 30 asking the government to reply why its approval for bringing the case under EPR should not be declared illegal.

As the hearing on the government petition resumed yesterday at 9:25am, Attorney General Fida M Kamal made his argument for 20 minutes. He said the HC rule was issued in terms of the prayer in the writ petition.

He argued that the HC in the judgment not only made the rule absolute but also quashed the proceedings of the case, which was not in the writ petitioner's prayer.

At one stage the AG citing HC judgment made the comment 'it's all right' to say inclusion of EPR in the case was made with unlawful authority as the verdict was given in accordance with the prayer. But he vehemently opposed the HC decision of quashing the case as it was not prayed by Hasina in the

petition. Fida M Kamal also argued that it would be decided by the trial court whether Hasina is guilty or not. But if the HC stops trial quashing the case, it would not be known whether she has committed the crime or not.

He further argued that the first information report (FIR) was filed with Gulshan Police Station on June 13 last year, while the case was brought under EPR on July 16.

The writ petitioner (Hasina) is one of the accused in the case but there are two other accused.

He also mentioned that another HC bench judgment on the same issue is contrary to the latest verdict following Hasina's writ.

Emphasising "public importance" of the matter the AG told the court the HC judgment has far-reaching impact on several other cases.

He said 600 cases have been brought under EPR and many of these are under investigation and on trial, while judgment in many cases has also been delivered.

All these would be stalled if the Supreme Court doesn't stay the HC verdict, he argued.

The AG repeatedly told the court that the verdict has "far-reaching consequences and impact on the judicial system" and on the other cases under EPR.

During his submission, the court told him the HC has not given any interim order, "it is an exhausted judgment after thorough detailed hearing."

As the copy of the HC judgment was not available, the court did not want to pass an order following the government appeal seeking a stay on the verdict.

When the crowd thronged the courtroom expecting order after Hasina's chief counsel Barrister Rafique-ul Huq finished his short

## US university launches Yunus Scholarship

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The City University of New York launched 'Muhammad Yunus Scholarship' programme on Monday.

Under the programme, the institution will provide scholarships every year to 10 brightest students from families who have taken loans from Grameen Bank. The students will undertake four-year courses there.

Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus, the founder of the Grameen Bank, inaugurated the scholarship programme on the university campus. The university also honoured him with the Chancellor's Medal, according to reports from US-based news agencies ANA and NewsWorld.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof Yunus said Grameen Bank families are seeking to educate their children at the highest level and that a number of them are already PhD candidates at various universities.

"None of the 7.5 million mothers who take Grameen Bank loans think that primary level education is enough. Most of their children are going or want to go to universities," he added.

He said 51,000 scholarships were given to Grameen Bank family members for secondary and tertiary education last year, with 21,000 going to either medical colleges, engineering institutes or universities.

He also reiterated his view that poverty is not inherent and it should be eradicated through social business, not through charity and aid.

Lauding the caretaker government's anti-corruption drive, Prof Yunus said the drive has left no scope for returning to corrupt and crippled governance of the past.

Asked whether he would agree to become the president of Bangladesh if such offer is made, Prof Yunus declined to reply.

submission opposing the government petition at 9:50am, the chief justice decided to pass their decision at 11:30am.

The court however sat again at noon and delivered its decision in a jam-packed courtroom where more than 500 lawyers, Awami League leaders and workers waited for half an hour in a breathtaking situation.

Additional Attorney General Salahuddin Ahmad was also present with the AG during the hearing, while Barrister Shafique Ahmed and other counsels for Hasina were present.

The additional AG told the press: "I can think personally that Sheikh Hasina is not guilty but it is personal thinking; the trial court judgment would decide whether she is guilty or not. So it wasn't right to quash the case."

He also said if they get a copy of the judgment the government will file regular leave to appeal by February 19.

Expressing satisfaction and gratitude over the judgment of the Appellate Division, Rafique said: "We are satisfied at the Appellate Division's judgment. The judgment would uphold human rights, constitution and the rule of law."

Hasina, who was arrested on July 16 last year, has been detained at the sub jail on National Parliament premises. Azam J Chowdhury filed the case against Hasina and her cousin former state minister Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, while her sister Sheikh Rehana was included in the case in the charge sheet.

Earlier last year, the HC granted bail to Hasina and stayed proceedings of the case following the writ, but the SC stayed the HC's interim order following a petition by the government.



Ferdous Ahmed Quarishi, convenor of Progressive Democratic Party, speaks at a discussion on 'Problems of the newspaper industry' at Cirdap Auditorium in the city yesterday. On his left is Naimul Islam Khan, editor of the Amader Somoy, and on his right is Motiur Rahman Chowdhury, editor-in-chief of the Manabzamin.

## Newspaper industry going thru' tough times Senior journalists tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Senior journalists of different national and local dailies yesterday urged the government to take steps, including selling newspaper at a fair price, to save the newspaper industry which is going through tough times.

They were addressing a discussion meeting titled "Problems of the newspaper industry" at the CIRDAP Auditorium in the city organised by Progressive Democratic Party.

Editors of four national dailies--Amar Desh, Amader Shomoy, Manabzamin, Bhorer Kagoj--and about 30 editors and publishers of local dailies were present at the discussion presided over by Ferdous Ahmed Quarishi, convenor of Progressive Democratic Party.

They urged the government to prepare a proper policy in line with the present situation of the newspaper industry.

The editors urged journalists and employees of all newspapers to unite and form a common platform.

They said newspapers are facing difficulties as their production costs are increasing and flow rate of advertisements is slow.

Speakers at the meeting said newspapers had a significant role in bringing the changes that took place on January 11, 2007 but the caretaker government did not pay attention to the industry's problems.

They urged the government to provide bank loans to potent but small newspapers to help them

survive. Motiur Rahman Chowdhury, editor-in-chief of Dainik Manabzamin, in the keynote speech said, "When the existence of a newspaper is at stake, one cannot expect freedom of editors or journalists. 1/11 [January 11, 2007] has presented us with a tragedy like this."

He alleged that corruption and irregularities take place in allocating government advertisement to newspapers.

Motiur accused the caretaker government of suppressing the newspaper industry instead of standing by its side.

"Newspapers had a great role in bringing about 1/11 but the fact is newspapers have been suffering after 1/11," he said adding that the caretaker government did not show any sympathy or have interest in talks in this regard.

The Manabzamin editor-in-chief urged the government to prepare a proper policy in line with the present situation of newspaper industry.

Most editors and publishers of local dailies urged the government to allocate them government advertisements. They also urged the government to raise the rate of advertisements.

Describing the faulty advertisement distribution by Department of Films and Publications (DFP), the editors of local dailies said a proper system should be developed for distribution of the DFP advertisements.

## DU Basanta Utsab celebration begins today

BSS, Dhaka

Two-day Basanta Utsab celebration of Dhaka University (DU) will begin at TSC today.

Students, teachers, officials of the university and guest artists will take part in the celebration, a press release of DU said yesterday.

The function will start at 11:00am today and continue till evening.

## 7th reunion of REMIANS Feb 22

REMIANS, the ex-students of Dhaka Residential Model School and College, organise the REMIANS 7th REUNION on the college premises on February 22, says a press release.

The daylong programme, which begins at 8:00am, includes art competition, treasure hunt, raffle draw, cultural show and concert.

Arrangements have been made for a round-the-clock food court, welcome breakfast, afternoon mezhban and grand dinner.

To avail registration at 50% concession rates, all interested REMIANS have been requested to register by 5:00pm on February 20 at REMIANS office, CNS Tower, 43/R/5A West Panthapath, Dhaka.

Interested people are asked to contact Dr Nizam (01711534290), SM Babar (01199868782), Karim (01711530509), Nasrul Hamid (01713011330), Sarafat (01711521251), Shahed Kamal (01711595676), Hitler (01552341012) and Mufti (01815419661) or DRMC Principal Col Md Kamruzzaman Khan (01726832953).



## No change in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Mild cold wave that is sweeping over Rajshahi division and region of Srimongal may continue, Met office said.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during early morning, Met Office said, predicting nearly unchanged night temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 26.5 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 9.2 degrees Celsius at Srimongal and Sayedpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:52pm today and rises at 6:33am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	24.0	12.0	50	36
Chittagong	24.1	15.5	72	44
Rajshahi	23.7	09.4	62	48
Khulna	24.7	13.0	73	57
Barisal	25.0	11.8	69	61
Sylhet	25.2	11.3	73	50
Cox's Bazar	26.5	16.5	56	50



## Conference

Dhaka Community Hospital organises the 7th international conference on arsenic poisoning and its effect on health, soil and food chain. Venue: Dhaka Community Hospital auditorium. Time: 8:30am.

## Talk

German artist Peter Kustermann will talk on art for peace. Asiatic Society of Bangladesh organises the talk. Venue: Asiatic Society auditorium. Time: 4:00pm.

## Publication ceremony

The publication ceremony of the indigenous community customary laws will be held. Manusher Jonno Foundation organises the event. Venue: Shaheed Zia Auditorium, National Museum. Time: 3:30pm.