

## Model PSC to undermine country's interest

### Say energy experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday said provisions in the model production sharing contract (MPSC) 2008, including cost recovery, compensation, export and arbitration, will undermine the country's interest.

Speakers urged the government to identify sea area of the country before floating bidding for oil and gas exploration in offshore blocks.

Titled 'Salient features of Model PSC 2008', the seminar was organised by the Bangladesh Geological Society at the auditorium of Geology Department of Dhaka University.

Speakers urged the government to review the provisions keeping the country's interest at the top.

They criticised the government for not discussing with the concerned professionals before unveiling the MPSC.

The interim caretaker government does not have any right to prepare such contract, they added.

Responding to speakers, Petrobangla Chairman Jalal Ahmed said they will try to get rid of the weak sides of MPSC and improve it.

The government on February 6

unveiled the MPSC for the third round bidding for offshore blocks with a provision to realise compensation from international oil companies for any accident in gas fields.

Third round block bidding has become very important as Petrobangla's forecast shows a grim picture of gas supply shortfall beginning from 2011. With energy demand rapidly increasing, the country has no option but to tap all its potentials immediately.

The bidding will offer eight shallow water blocks and 20 deep sea blocks -- each having exploration area between 3,000 square km and 7,000 square km.

Petrobangla Director (mines and minerals) Magbul-e-Elahi presented the keynote paper on MPSC-2008.

Addressing the seminar, Petrobangla chairman said tender for offshore bidding will be opened on May 7 and the date will not be extended. He hoped that major companies will participate in the bidding.

Talking to reporters, he said prices of gas supplied by Petrobangla should be adjusted.

It would not be possible for Petrobangla to run in this way -- selling gas at a reduced level.

Responding to criticism by the speakers, Petrobangla chairman

said, "We will try to improve the MPSC, specially on the provisions of tax, arbitration by taking your suggestion into consideration."

Petrobangla chairman gave assurance that he will peruse the government so that energy experts could be involved with MPSC.

He observed that the amount of government subsidy will be increased more if the government signs oil and gas exploration treaties under the MPSC-2008.

He urged the government to fix sea area of the country before floating bidding for oil and gas exploration in offshore blocks.

Prof Muhammad Hossein Munzir, former Petrobangla chairman, said the government should consider suggestion of energy expert before making deals with the foreign companies for oil and gas exploration.

Prof M M Akash in his speech alleged that the government did not talk to energy experts before preparing the MPSC-2008.

"Though MPSC is available in website, only four/five pages of the 145-page MPSC can be downloaded," he said.

The Observer Editor Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury and Prof M Shamsul Islam also spoke at the seminar.

## HC allows 25 students to take part in HSC exams

### COURT CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed Comilla Education Board chairman and its secretary to give permission to 25 students of Duttapara Degree College in Laxmipur for taking part in the forthcoming HSC examination.

The bench comprising Justice Mohammad Iman Ali and Justice Mohammad Emdadul Haque passed the order following a writ petition filed by Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman and 24 others challenging the legality of the decision of the college authorities.

The students filed the writ after they were disqualified for taking part in the examination.

There is a provision that if any student does not take part in one or two subjects or fails in one or two subjects in the test examination, he or she will be given permission for taking part in the final examination.

But the college authorities did not give permission to 25 students to fill up their forms.

Advocate Helal Uddin Mollah moved the writ petition on behalf of the students.

## Soroptimist int'l confce

### Aug 15-16

A two-day Soroptimist South Asian International Conference will be held on August 15-16 to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> year of the club's charter, says a press release.

SI Club Dhaka President Dr Arifa Rahman said this at the 25th annual general meeting (AGM) at a city hotel on Saturday.

Arifa said a variety of activities were planned to mark the 25th year of the club's charter. All the activities evoked human rights and the status of women and girls in the country.

SI Club Dhaka Secretary Hasina Zaman presented her annual report of the activities and ongoing projects of the club, while Treasurer Nargis Mannan presented her report.

Vice President of Soroptimist Club of Chittagong Ferdowsi and Federation Councillor from Bangladesh Khaleda Awral took part in the AGM.

Soroptimist International Club of Dhaka has been involved in community welfare activities since receiving the charter from the federation club, Soroptimist International Club of Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI) in 1981.

The Literacy Centre in Nayatola, Moghbazar, TB Follow-up Program in collaboration with Shishu Hospital and Pre-primary Education Programme of 'Nijera Shikhi' for the less privileged children at Shyamoli, Adabar are some of SI Club, Dhaka's activities.

## Janaza held

The namaz-e-janaza of Md Noor Alam Talukdar, UN peacekeeper of Bangladesh Army, was held at Dhaka Cantonment yesterday, says an ISPR press release.

Chief of Army Staff Gen Moeen U Ahmed, Chief of Naval Staff Vice Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam, Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal M Ziaur Rahman, senior army officials and relatives of the deceased attended the namaz-e-janaza.

He will be buried at his village home in Jhalakati with full military honour.

Noor Alam died on April 17 at Level III Hospital, Abidjan, Ivory Coast due to leukaemia.



Family members of Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq offer fateha after placing wreaths at his mazar on the occasion of his 46th death anniversary in the city yesterday.

## Tribute paid to Sher-e-Bangla

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 46th death anniversary of Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq was observed yesterday with due solemnity.

Paying tribute to the great leader Sher-e-Bangla Jatiya Smriti Sangshad, Bangladesh National Personality Research Centre and World Bengali Conference jointly placed wreaths at his graveyard and prayed for his departed soul.

Sher-e-Bangla Jatiya Smriti Sangshad organised a discussion and awarded Sher-e-Bangla

National Award to language veteran and former secretary Bahauddin Chowdhury, journalist Toab Khan, Editor of the weekly Begum Nurjahan Begum, former finance minister Abul Mal Abdul Muhit, Brig (ret) Prof MA Malik and Prof Dr Abdul Mannan Chowdhury.

Freedom fighter Dr Matiur Rahman, Dr Mohammad Abdus Salam Khan, Prof Dr AKM Mohibullah, industrialist Zafar Iqbal Siddique, Principal Abul Kashem Mridha, Dr Mohammad Shajahan Kabir, Baul artiste Narayan Chandra Odhikari,

literatureur Dr Mohammad Shahjahan Kabir, artiste Gouranga Biswas, Nur un Nahar Meri and President of Nilphamari Chamber of Commerce Sohel Parvez also received the award.

Speakers at the discussion demanded the government for establishing a university at Barisal and to name the Padma multipurpose bridge after the name of Sher-e-Bangla.

Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote and Bangladesh Kalyan Party also paid tribute to the great leader.

## Pro-Saifur BNP suggests

FROM PAGE 1

Now, Saifur-led faction of the party, the leader of which later became the country's finance minister, and which claims to be the new mainstream of BNP wants to change all that.

The 15-member delegation of the faction that sat with the EC, without their rival party colleagues, to discuss electoral reform proposals, however suggested increasing the law enforcing power and engagement of the army at the grassroots level during the next parliamentary election.

"The patriotic army is the guarantor and custodian of the country's democracy. We are proposing to empower the army with magistracy power and to increase its engagement at grassroots level to make the next parliamentary election free and fair," Lt Gen (ret) Mahbubur Rahman, who led the so-called 'reformist' delegation of BNP, told the EC.

But talking to this correspondent after the dialogue, Mahbubur, also a former chief of army staff, however said he did not mean 'magisterial power' with the word 'magistracy'. "Actually, I referred to the existing provision in the electoral laws that provides the defence forces with the power to arrest," Mahbubur later said.

He said the law and order situation will be under control through active involvement of the army. Maintaining law and order will become a challenge during the election. "Plans for taking help from law enforcement agencies at grassroots level should be readied now," Mahbubur added.

Awami League, which opposed the provisions for over two and half a years prior to 1/11, however on November 4 last year at an electoral reform talk with the EC agreed with the provisions empowering the defence forces including the army with the power to arrest anyone without a warrant during the polling day.

Like the police and other regular law enforcement agencies, the defence forces are also currently authorised to enforce election laws and rules and to compel candidates and their supporters to abide by the electoral code of conduct during electoral campaigns.

The BNP faction also urged the

government through the EC to enact laws banning hartals, street agitations, parliament boycotts, etc.

The delegation however opposed the EC's proposal for introducing a 'no vote' system under which a voter will have an option to say 'no' to all candidates in a constituency, and also opposed another EC proposal for posting all documents submitted by candidates on its website.

The BNP faction also strongly suggested imposing a ban on printing and pasting posters for election campaigns arguing that if posters are banned then the election expenditure will be reduced. They suggested that the EC only allows distribution of handbills during election campaigns.

The delegation however did not submit any written version of the proposals to the EC saying it would send a copy to the EC Secretariat today. The leaders of Saifur loyalists in BNP however said they support 80 percent of the reform proposals drafted by the EC including its plan to introduce transparent ballot boxes.

During the talk, both sides expressed their satisfaction over the discussion on electoral reform proposals.

With yesterday's talk with Saifur-led faction of BNP, the EC yesterday supposedly wrapped up its electoral reform dialogues with political parties, while Khandaker Delwar Hossain-led faction of BNP loyal to detained party chief Khaleda Zia still remains out of the parley.

The commission will now send finalised electoral reform proposals to the caretaker government for making them into law.

"We've been waiting for you since last November and now we are satisfied," Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda told the BNP delegation of Saifur loyalists after the talk.

Emerging from the meeting, Mahbubur Rahman said they are also satisfied with the talk with EC, held in the conference room of the commission's secretariat.

In response to the BNP faction's demand for announcing a schedule for the election, the CEC said the field level work of voter registration will be completed by the end of June

or by the first week of July. "Then we will be able to have an assessment about it [specific time for polls]. We will have to specify a time carefully as we don't want to deviate from the announced date," the CEC said.

Accompanied by the two other election commissioners, Muhammed Sohel Hussain and Brig Gen (ret) M Sakawat Hussain, the CEC however assured Saifur loyalists of announcing a specific time for the poll well ahead of the deadline for holding it.

The CEC said the commission hopes that it will be able to hold a free and fair parliamentary election with participation of all political parties. "We hope, a united BNP will contest in the next parliamentary election," said CEC Huda, who recently failed to reunite the two factions of the party in a bid to hold yesterday's talk with a united BNP.

About BNP's reunification process, Mahbubur Rahman however told reporters that the party will be united to contest in the parliamentary election.

He said leaders of his faction wanted Khandaker Delwar Hossain, BNP chairperson appointed secretary general, to lead yesterday's delegation to the talk.

About the demand for Khaleda Zia's release, Mahbubur said Khaleda would have led the delegation had she been released. "The dialogue would have been more fruitful had our chairperson joined it," he added.

Acting Secretary General Maj (ret) Hafizuddin Ahmed of Saifur loyalists, nominated by a much disputed so-called meeting of the party standing committee, also a member of yesterday's BNP faction delegation, said they want a neutral civil administration during and before the election.

"A fair civil administration is required to hold a free and fair election. But all administrations during tenures of successive caretaker governments worked for a particular political party," Hafiz said without naming the favoured party.

Even, the current administration is under the influence of a particular party. There are people of Jonotar Moncho holding the top most positions in the administration," Hafiz alleged.

## Global Action Week ends with call for ensuring quality edn

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Global Action Week ended yesterday with a call for ensuring quality education for all and ending exclusion from literacy arena.

Every year the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) marks the week in April.

This year GCE with the help of different local organisations held the 'World Biggest Lesson' where a lesson was taught at the same time highlighting the theme of the week 'Quality Education to End Exclusion'.

## Licenses of 24 travel agencies cancelled

UNB, Dhaka

The government has cancelled licenses of 24 travel agencies for not renewing those timely.

The Ministry for Civil Aviation and Tourism has taken the decision as the agency authorities did not renew their licenses on time even after serving notices to them several times, a handout said yesterday.

The agencies are M/s Arab Bangla Traveling Agency (certificate no 1927), M/s Bengal Aviation Services Ltd (no-12343), M/s Bari Tours and Travels (no-2389), M/s Al Rabeta International (no-2462), M/s Basem Trade International (no-2644), M/s Expect Aviation (no-2772), M/s Barkat Dynamic Travels and Tour (no-2456), M/s Bangladesh Travels and Tour (no-9567), M/s Azad Aviation Tours and Travels (no-2186), M/s Brothers Tours and Travels (no-2235), M/s Al Aksa Air Services Ltd (no-8242), M/s Al Din International Travels (no-1946), M/s Al Foysal Travels Agency (no-1309), M/s AN Travels International (no-9783), M/s Air Jannat Aviation (no-2210), M/s Ashraf Tours and Travels (no-2092), M/s Embassy Tours and Travels (pvt) Ltd (no-7243), M/s A&A Travels Ltd (no-11381), M/s Bithi Air Travels (pvt) Ltd (no-10670), M/s Akai Overseas (no-1312), M/s Baladil Amin Travels and Traders (no-11831), M/s Ekta Air Travels (pvt) Ltd (no-7908), M/s Al Ittehad Travels and Tours (no-2332) and M/s AM Travels International (no-2087).

## Simon Adhikary YMCA president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Simon P Adhikary has been elected president of National Council of Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) of Bangladesh.

Patrick Sarkar and Raymond Areng have been elected vice presidents while DR Nirvoy Das has been elected treasurer.

The election of YMCA National Council was held after its 30th annual general meeting at YMCA's training institute at Savar on April 25 with Simon P Adhikary in the chair, says a press release.

The newly elected office was accorded a reception on that day where World Alliance of YMCA delegation William Heart was present as the chief guest while Bangladesh Christian Association Secretary General Nirmal Rozario and Christian leader Stephen Baroi were present as special guests.

World Alliance of YMCA's former director Babu Marcos Gomes also spoke at the programme attended by over 200 observers, including 50 delegates of regional YMCAs.



Namaz-e-janaza of UN Peacekeeper in Ivory Coast Sainik Md Noor Alam Talukdar of Bangladesh Army was held at Choooper's Den (Dhaka Cantonment) in the city yesterday.

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

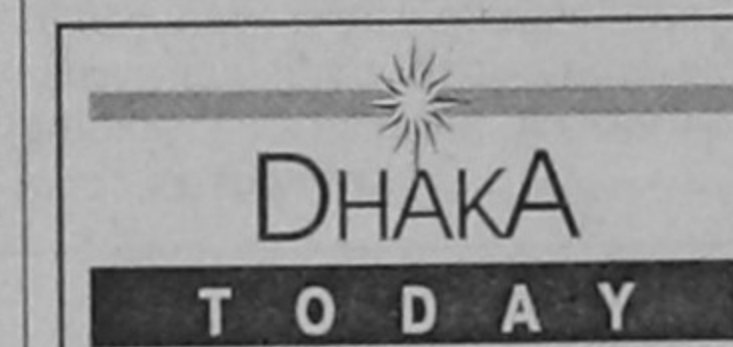
Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is also likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Jessore, Kushtia and Comilla, Met Office said predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 38.3 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 23.7 degrees Celsius at Teknaf.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:26pm today and rises at 5:25am 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
Dhaka	34.3	26.8
Chittagong	31.5	26.0
Rajshahi	38.3	25.5
Khulna	34.5	27.0
Barisal	33.2	26.5
Sylhet	34.6	25.5
Cox's Bazar	34.1	25.5



## Seminar

Old Faujians' Association (OFA) organises a seminar on '50 years of Cadet College Education: A Legacy of Learning' on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee Founding Anniversary of Faujdahat Cadet College. Venue: Ballroom, Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 11:30am.

## PKSF seminar

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) organises a seminar on services for sustainable business. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 10:00am.

## Seminar

Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environmental Foundation organises a seminar to mark the World Occupational Health and Safety Day. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 9:30am.

## Workshop

Oxfam GB and PRIP Trust jointly organise a national workshop on 'Women's economic empowerment in the light of PRSP'. Venue: Cirdap Auditorium. Time: 9:30am.

## Seminar

Centre for Advanced Research in Humanities organises a seminar on 'Kurukh Language: Its origin and characteristics'. Venue: 435, Lecture Theatre, DU. Time: 4:00pm.

## 2 shot in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people were shot in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

The injured were identified as Wahidur Rahman Apu, 35 an official of a developer company and a construction worker Mohammad Rafiq 20. They were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

The miscreants numbering five to six shot Wahidur Rahman, a resident of Maghbazar T&T colony, in front of his house at around 5:30pm and taken away his mobile phone set and Tk 5,000 in cash. He was shot in his chest and abdomen.

His family sources said local criminals attacked Wahidur as he had refused to give them their toll. They said Mithu, Zakir, Nadim and two or three other youths attacked Wahidur.

Meanwhile, a gang of criminals shot Rafiq in his chest and right leg at East Rampura Bhuiyan Gali at around 4:30pm.

Family sources said he was attacked while he was going to a pharmacy to buy medicine for his friend. But, they could not elaborate.

## Obituary



Umme Salma Khatun, mother of Shalauddin Badal, vice chairman of Silverdale Preparatory and Girls' High School, passed away due to old age complications at her residence at Wari in the city yesterday at the age of 80, says a press release.

She left behind her two sons, three daughters, grand sons and grand daughters to mourn her death.

Members of the Silverdale school management committee, teachers and students of the school expressed deep shock at her death and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

## Rashni Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Rashni Rahman, wife of Khaledur Rahman Tito, a veteran Awami League leader of Jessore and former state minister, passed away due to heart attack at Jessore Queens Hospital yesterday at the age of 58.

She was buried at Jessore Karbala graveyard after Zohr prayers yesterday.

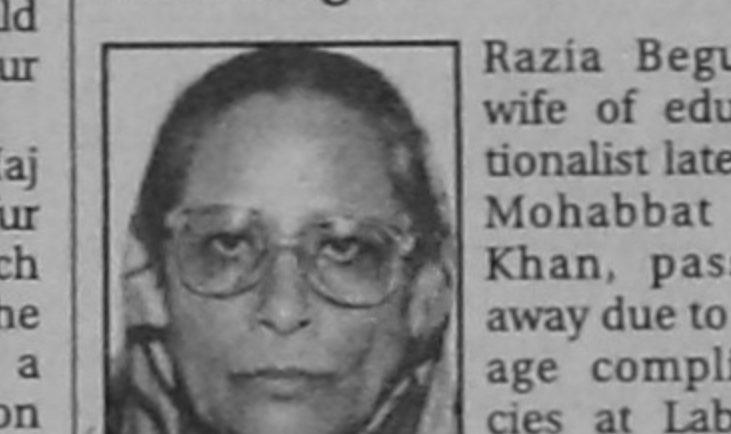
## Nargis Rahman



Nargis Rahman, a social activist and daughter of late AKM Mujibur Rahman, a banker and one of the organisers of the Liberation War, passed away due to cardio respiratory failure at Dhaka Medical College Hospital on Thursday, says a press release.

She left behind a host of relatives and admirers to mourn her death.

## Razia Begum



She left behind her four sons and one daughter to mourn her death.

Her first namaz-e-janaza will be held tomorrow at Science Laboratory Staff Quarter Mosque and later will be sent for burial at her village home in Noakhali.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haque Inu and General Secretary Syed Zafar Sazzad expressed shock at her death.

## Review body failed to pinpoint

FROM PAGE 16

approved the policy. If it were really necessary, the committee should have been formed with Islamic scholars from a broad spectrum of the society.

The Quran has made equal social rights of both men and women the basis for their inheritance rights and it never says that women as human beings cannot have rights as men, he said.

"Rather, women can own more properties than men," Ziaul said, adding that Hazrat Khadiza (SM) had more properties than the prophet himself.

The Quranic rule ensuring women's rights to inheritance was revolutionary at the time when women did not have any dignity in the then Arab society and a man's status was determined by the number of their wives and maids.

"So, it is proved that the Quran is progressive in establishing women's rights. Although it is said that a woman will inherit half of what her brother does, there is no bar in the Quran to women getting properties more than that," Ziaul said.

Increase of share of inheritance for women therefore does not directly contradict the Quran, he observed.

"There is no contradiction

between the women development policy and the Quran," he said, noting that checking women's progress by misinterpreting the Quran is against the teachings of Islam.

"We have bitter experiences of abuse of religion by the so-called Islamic forces during the Pakistan period, the Liberation War in 1971 and after 1975. People of this country have not forgotten instances of women's repression and mass killing in the name of religion," Ziaul told The Daily Star.

The forces that are opposing the National Women Development Policy are linked to those who looted the dignity of over two lakh women and killed 30 lakh Bangladeshis during the Liberation War, he said, adding that these forces are now misinterpreting the women development policy to divert the issue of trial of war criminals.

Internationally acclaimed Islamic thinker Allama Hafez Ruhul Amin Madani said the National Women Development Policy does not address women's property inheritance rights and these so-called ulema are opposing the policy without going through it.

The government can consider putting in the policy interpretations of phrases like "equal rights in every sphere" and the UN Convention on the Elimination of

All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its applicability in women's lives, Ruhul Amin said.

"These interpretations are needed because the so-called ulema can misuse these words and phrases and influence their followers," he said.

Ruhul Amin also agreed that the review committee could not pinpoint any verse in the Quran that is contradicted by the provisions of the women development policy. "The committee gave recommendations as per their own judgement," he added.

Woman and man are naturally different and cannot substitute each other, but as human beings they all should have equal rights and this is well enshrined in the Quran, he said.

The so-called Islamic forces once opposed woman leadership in the name of religion but later accepted it. When they were sworn in as members of parliament, they promised to uphold the dignity of the country's constitution that provides equal rights of men and women, but they are now opposing equal rights of women, he noted.

"The women development policy declared by the present government is actually the result of initiatives of the previous govern-

ments. These Islamic forces could have opposed it then in parliament," Ruhul Amin said.

These forces emphasise that a daughter is entitled to half of what a son inherits. "So, why don't they support proportionate share of seats for women in parliament and inclusion of proportionate number of women members in the peace-keeping missions?" he said.

The Islamic scholar said different religions have their own rules on inheritance and if there are any contradictions in the policy, those should be corrected through dialogues, not anarchies on the streets.

Another Islamic thinker Allama Mohammad Sadek Noori said the ulema committee recommended cancelling a few provisions of the National Women Development Policy but it could not say exactly how these provisions contradict the