

## West Bengal ex-CM's house named after Kazi Nazrul

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The Mamata Banerjee government in West Bengal has decided to rename the official residence here of former chief minister Jyoti Basu after poet Kazi Nazrul Islam and to establish a museum.

The decision to rename the Indira Bhavan, where Basu had stayed from 1989 till his death on January 17, 2010, sees discontent from not only the state's main opposition Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M), but also from the Congress, a junior partner of the coalition government with Mamata's Trinamool Congress.

The sprawling Indira Bhavan, named after former Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi, was built in 1972 as Gandhi's temporary residence during a Congress session.

In 1989, the erstwhile Left Front government decided to allot the house at the upscale Salt Lake locality on eastern Kolkata, to Basu. Even after his retirement in 2000, Basu continued to stay at the bungalow for a rent of Rs 8800, paid by the CPI-M leadership.

Defending the move, Mamata told media persons in Kolkata on Wednesday evening that the decision has been taken in public interest and to promote research work on the great rebel poet.

"The Nazrul Bhavan would comprise a museum and a research centre on the great poet who had a memorable association with the country's freedom movement," she said. It would also showcase the items used by the poet.

Kazi Nazrul Islam is the national poet of Bangladesh.

In line with the December 31 deadline of the state Urban Development Department, the CPI-M state leadership has already removed all the belongings of Basu from the house.

In protest, senior CPI-M leader and West Bengal Left Front Chairman Biman Bose said it was not proper on the part of the state government to change the name of Indira Bhavan without any consultation.

He said CPI-M does not want a controversy involving Kazi Nazrul Islam who is respected by all. But a museum named after the rebel poet could have come up somewhere else.

CPI-M central committee member Gautam Deb questioned whether Mamata followed proper procedures changing the name.

## Rally held

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have also foiled several opposition processions on the ground that they had not obtained permission for the rallies from the DMP.

Sources in the police department confirmed to The Daily Star that the ruling alliance did not even seek permission for the rally. Members of the grand alliance acknowledged as much, but would not talk on the record.

Contacted for comments last night, police officers and alliance members pointed at one another without giving any specific explanation on their own.

Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, AL city unit general secretary, said he had no knowledge about taking permission for the rally.

"Central members of the party can talk about it," he said.

Asked, a top AL leader on condition of anonymity said, "I don't know anything about it."

Habibur Rahman, deputy commissioner (HQ), and Krishna Pada Roy, deputy commissioner (Ramna), said they were unaware as to whether or not the grand alliance had taken permission to hold the rally.

While Krishna suggested that the office of the DMP commissioner be contacted on the matter, Habib said, "It was the deputy commissioner of Ramna who should know this."

## Rabindra Utsav

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Amartya Sen unveiled the DVDs titled 'Shruti Geetabitan'.

The programme was followed by a stirring rendition of one thousand singers of Tagore songs at a single stage.

The rendition titled "Shahashro Kanthey Rabindranath" (Rabindranath in the voice of thousand) was directed by Indian music director and composer Dev Jyoti Mishra.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the gala event, the premier said that her government has taken an initiative to establish a Rabindra University for expansion of Rabindra thoughts and ideals.

"It is a great satisfaction for us that now we can sing the songs of Rabindranath and practise his literary works in a free atmosphere for which the Bengali nation had to struggle for a long time," the premier said.

Hasina said Kobiguru Rabindranath and Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman dreamt of such a society

where Bengalis would live with dignity keeping their heads high.

The government would also preserve the poet's memories in Patisar and Shahzadpur, she said, adding, "As long as Bangladesh is alive, Bangla language and its culture will remain, and Rabindranath will live in the hearts of all Bangladeshis."

Unveiling the Shruti Geetabitan, Amartya Sen said, "Nothing can be more creative and outstanding than the work Rezwana has done".

The collection of songs will uphold the spirit of Tagore's literary works, especially while practising his songs authentically, he hoped.

Noted poet of India Shanka Ghosh, noted citizens of the country and thousands of Rabindra admirers attended the inaugural function at the open space in front of the convention centre.

Professor Emeritus Dr Anisuzzaman, Rezwana Chowdhury Banya, among others, spoke on the occasion.

## Commuters suffer

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who suffered a lot due to our programme," Mahbubul Alam Hanif, AL acting general secretary, said last night.

The rally was called to intensify the demand for the immediate trial of war criminals and to resist the main

opposition BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami's "move to protect the war criminals by creating anarchy in the country".

Thousands of activists of the ruling party took to the streets from Kataban square to the Jatiya Press Club via

Shahbagh to attend the rally held in front of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, bringing traffic almost to a halt from 2:30pm to 5:30pm.

Many people had to walk, leaving public buses or their vehicles, to reach their destinations while many others were seen waiting desperately at different bus stops.

Rokshana Yasmin, a resident of Gandaria, said, "I had to spend around three hours to reach Dhanmondi Road-2 from Doyaganj, which usually takes about an hour."

Sheuli Khondokar, a private job holder, said it had taken her more than two hours to reach Shahbagh from Banani, a trip which usually takes 45 minutes.

Another private job holder, Mohammad Shaheen from Farmgate said, "I had to walk from Chandrima Udyan to Farmgate at 4:00pm leaving a bus to avoid the severe traffic congestion."

The buses had to wait for more than 30 minutes at the Bijoy Sarani crossing, which usually takes about 10 minutes, he added.

A bike rider said it took him more than an hour to cross the Mohakhali flyover. He was stuck at the Chairmanbari end of the flyover around 5:00pm and

## Celebrating

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The event is set to begin at 10:00am at the main auditorium of National Museum, a CPD press release said yesterday.

Planning Minister Air Vice-Marshal (retd) AK Khandker Bir Uttam, the deputy chief of staff of the Bangladesh Armed Forces during the Liberation War, will be present as the chief guest.

Nobel laureate Prof Amartya Sen, an eminent supporter of the war, will grace the discussion as a special guest while Prof Rehman Sobhan, founding chairman of CPD, will also be present. One of the visionaries of the economic philosophy of the Liberation War, Sobhan will share his thoughts as the keynote speaker.

Prof Anisuzzaman, a member of the CPD Board of Trustees, will chair the event that will begin with rendition of songs and recitation of poems from the Liberation War period, the statement said.

## BNP, allies

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Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, BNP acting secretary general, said after the meeting that started at 9:30pm yesterday.

Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP) Chairman Andaleev Rahman Partha said the new alliance would be the largest one in the country's political arena.

"We have placed a number of names for the new alliance. Khaleda Zia will fix it in consultation with her party's standing committee members."

Meeting sources said the new alliance would be something like the ruling Awami League-led grand alliance.

"The ruling grand alliance was formed keeping the Awami League led-14 party alliance intact, and hopefully we will form an alliance keeping the BNP-led four-party alliance untouched," said a leader who did not wish to be named.

Sources also said the Jamaat-e-Islami and BJP opposed the idea of an expansion of the alliance. They want to form a new alliance keeping the four-party alliance as it is.

But talking to reporters, Foyez Ullah, Islami Oikya Jote joint secretary general, said the four-party alliance would be dissolved. "The new alliance will be formed based on the four-party alliance."

## Narsingdi AL

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10 days' remand.

According to the first information report (FIR) Montaz is one of the 10 culprits who plotted the murder.

Advocate Asaduzzaman, district AL president and also the newly-appointed district administrator, advocate SA Hadi, also vice president of district AL, and several other lawyers appeared for Montaz before the court seeking his bail. They said their client was not involved in the murder.

Talking to reporters on the court premises, Montaz denied that he was involved in the murder and termed the inclusion of his name in the case a "conspiracy". He was accompanied by several hundred party men.

Lokman, a two-time gold medalist as the best mayor, was shot dead by masked criminals inside the district AL office on Sadar Road on the night of November 1.

His brother filed a case against 14 people naming Posts and Telecommunications Minister Rajiuddin Ahmed Raju's brother Salauddin Ahmed as prime accused.

Police have so far arrested 13 people, some of whom were not named in the first information report, but Salauddin still remains at large.

With the surrender of Montaz, the number of arrestees in connection with the case stands at 14.

## Final report

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vessels and other vehicles use Bangladesh territory from one side to the other, especially to the northeastern regions of India, he said.

He, however, declined to disclose the rates of revised fees and charges for transit and transshipment, but said those would vary depending on the routes and modes of vehicles.

According to him, Bangladesh will benefit from transshipment as it would create employment for the people of the country.

He added all goods transported through waterways would use the transshipment system.

In April, the committee handed over a report to the commerce ministry, recommending a charge between \$4 and \$50 for a tonne of goods in transit fees, depending on the routes chosen by the user. The rate may equally be applicable to India, Nepal and Bhutan, the primary report had said.

In the revised report, the committee has recommended the accession clause, meaning, in the near future, other neighbouring countries, like Myanmar, China, Bhutan and Nepal, could also be linked through transit and transshipment.

According to the witness,

## Rejoinder, our reply

FROM PAGE 1  
Rejoinder was signed by the ministry's information officer. The following is the entire rejoinder followed by our reply.

Our attention has been drawn to the news item published in your esteemed daily on 25 December 2011 captioned "Energy Sector Review: Short-term achievements; hope for long-term gains". We think that the observations on the progress made in the natural gas and coal production in the last three years as well as prognosis for the next few years are not based on facts and devoid of happenings on the ground. We would deeply appreciate if you take steps to publish the following rejoinder to the report mentioned earlier.

To put the current gas situation in right perspective, it should be noted that making use of the natural gas as a fuel source requires a number of steps starting from field survey to exploration and development of wells to laying of pipelines for evacuation. This process naturally needs a minimum of 2/3 years time. Moreover, natural gas prospecting and exploration and development activities along with provisions for evacuation should be done on a continuous basis to increase reserves of natural gas so that no sudden imbalance in the demand for and supply of natural gas occurs. While in the last 3 years 12 exploratory/development drilling was done by Bapex, only 4 drillings were done in the 7 years prior to 2009 by Bapex.

The government in the last three years has taken a number of steps to augment gas production and some of the outcomes are there for all to see. Activities have been undertaken on a number of fronts to improve the supply situation:

- Mechanical interventions;
- Work-over of wells to resume production in abandoned wells;
- 3D surveys in Rasidpur, Kailashitla, Sylhet, Titas and Bakhrabad fields which are expected to significantly increase gas reserve;
- New drilling programmes -- both exploratory and development;
- Construction of new pipelines to overcome the pipeline capacity constraints;

## Tribunal told of brutal torture

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Earlier, the tribunal started the day's proceedings at 10:41 am in the absence of Delwar Hossain Sayedee, who was at the hospital for his scheduled physiotherapy for back pain.

Sayedee entered the court at 10:51 am. He was in the dock for the rest of the proceedings. He spent much of his time reading a small book.

Mofizuddin began his deposition by saying that there were freedom fighters, peace committee members and collaborators in Parerhaat and he knew many of them.

He said he and Kutti used to look after Manik Poshari's buffaloes. Around 11:00am on May 8, 1971, Mofizuddin and Kutti were looking after Manik's buffaloes in the field when they saw fire and smoke in the north.

They heard from passers by that the Pakistani soldiers had gone to the village. The two then decided to return to Manik's house with the buffaloes.

"Later, we saw many, 12-14 Pakistani soldiers and another 20-22 razakars, [collaborators] including Dilu Sikder [he kept referring Sayedee as Dilu Sikder], coming towards Manik Poshari's house."

They tried to escape towards the river to the south of Manik's house, Mofiz said.

"Suddenly, two Pakistani soldiers grabbed me," he said, adding that Sayedee grabbed Ibrahim Kutti by his hair.

The two were tied up with ropes used for tying the buffaloes and the collaborators, including one Mobin, entered the house.

After they looted the house, Danesh Mollah, Sayedee, Sekander Sikder, Mobin, Razzaq and other collaborators poured kerosene on the houses of Manik and torched them.

Procurement of new drilling and work-over rigs for Bapex along with a strengthened human resource base;

As a result of these steps in the energy sector, gas production has increased from 1750mmcf in January 2009 to 2065mmcf in December 2011, a net increase of 315mmcf in last three years. Bapex has identified a new structure in Sundulpur from where about 20mmcf gas will start to flow soon. A new development well in Saldaha already added about 20mmcf to the national grid. Another new well at Fenchuganj-Akhaura structure is expected to add another 50 million cubic feet of gas per day to the system very soon. Drilling rigs of Bapex have started moving to three new prospects in Kapasia, Srikail and Sunamganj-Netrokona (Sunetra) to hit new gas reserves. Altogether by 2015 programmes have been taken for drilling of 54 new wells (exploratory and development) by Bapex, BGFLC, and IOC's. It is expected that about 2000mmcf additional volume of gas will be available in the country within this period. A new compressor station in Muchai will be in operation from April 2012 that will add 60/70mmcf additional gas into the system. Two more compressor stations will come into operation in 2013. These three compressors in combination will add an additional amount of 250mmcf gas in 2013. Three cross-country pipelines are under construction which will help to evacuate this additional 2000mmcf from different fields.

While it is desirable that we avoid extreme dependence on a single source of fuel, i.e. natural gas, for power generation, commitment for supply of 350mmcf gas to new gas-based power plants has already been made based on the expected new production of natural gas in the country by both Bapex and international companies. These new power plants are expected to produce about 1600 MW of electricity.

The observation that the current government has decided not to develop our own coal fields is not true. Given the unique geological, environmental, underground aquifer and socio-economic conditions that surround coal

fields in Bangladesh it is highly imperative that informed decisions are taken before this valuable resource is extracted to the benefit of all stakeholders. In particular, detailed studies are needed to identify appropriate mining methods for different coal fields depending on the geological, socio-economic, technological, environmental and other related facts. To this end, a high-powered technical committee is working and soon they will come up with appropriate recommendations. Based on the suggestion of the technical committee government will finalise a coal policy for the country.

OUR REPLY:  
Our report gave out a summary of Bapex's activities which covered various detailed points made in the rejoinder. The overview report also mentioned that Petrobranga and its affiliates have added a small amount of gas. But there is still a supply shortfall of 500 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) gas. This remains as a contrast to the achievements in the power sector.

The rejoinder claimed that between January 2009 and December 2011, there was a net increase of 315 mmcf gas because of the government's initiatives. But the fact is, out of this increase, 250 mmcf was added by December 2009 and it was possible because of initiatives taken during the caretaker government. The rejoinder itself mentions that to get the results of an initiative in this sector, it takes two to three years.

The rejoinder talked about gas compressors to be installed within the next two years. The fact is, the installation of these compressors was delayed due to decisions taken by Petrobranga. These would have come into operation by early next year, if Petrobranga had not arbitrarily cancelled a tender in early 2009.

When the government came in power, it was initially enthusiastic about developing the coal resources. Three years after, as the rejoinder itself mentions the government still feels the need for "further detailed studies".

The rejoinder only adds some details of information already mentioned in our report, and does not contradict it in any substantial way.

## Fuel oil prices

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litre each. Earlier in September, the price of furnace oil went up by Tk 8 a litre while the prices of kerosene, diesel, petrol and octane by Tk 5 per litre each.

The ministry made the decision to reduce subsidies on imports of petroleum products, experts said.

At present, the government spends Tk 20,000 crore every year on fuel subsidy.

Before last night's hike, the government was counting subsidies of Tk 16.39 for diesel per litre, Tk 16.31 for kerosene and Tk 4.97 for furnace oil.

The latest hike in prices will have a bad impact on people's daily spending.

The hike comes at a time when the government is under pressure to meet the cost of energy subsidy through heavy bank borrowing.

Following the November 10 hike, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on November 21 recommended that the government increase fuel and power prices further.

"I think the trade-off that we have reached at this moment is because of the fast increasing subsidy cost. To contain these subsidies, I think the only way is a gradual adjustment of prices," said Eteri Kvintradze, resident representative of IMF, at a press briefing in her Dhaka office.

Demand for fuel oil rose to 68 lakh tonnes in the current fiscal year, which was 48 lakh tonnes in the last fiscal year, as Bangladesh is importing a huge amount of oil to feed its rental and quick rental power plants.

In the last fiscal year, Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation counted a loss of Tk 8,200 crore on fuel subsidy.

## Yunus seeks

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bench of the Appellate Division, headed by the then chief justice ABM Khairul Haque, on May 5 this year dismissed two petitions filed on March 8 by the Grameen Bank founder and its nine elected directors seeking permission to appeal against the High Court order.

The High Court on March 8 summarily rejected the two writ petitions filed by Yunus and the directors challenging the central bank's March 2 decision to remove Yunus, who is above 70, from his position on the ground that he had crossed the retirement age.

Following the orders, Yunus resigned as managing director of Grameen Bank on May 12.

## Demand

FROM PAGE 1  
the parties also suggested holding the next parliamentary polls under an interim government.

Leaders of the two parties opposed restoration of caretaker government system for which the BNP-led four-party alliance and some other parties are in a movement.

At the talks, the president sought the names of persons who could be considered for appointment as CEC and ECs.

In response, the front submitted the names of 12 dignitaries. They include Justice Abdul Wahab and Justice Najmun Ara Sultana of the Supreme Court, AT Ahmedul Huq Choudhury, chairman of the Public Service Commission; Nasir Uddin Ahmed, chairman of the National Board of Revenue and Mizanur Rahman, chairman of the National Human Rights Commission.

Shamyabadi Dal however said they will discuss the issue at the party forum and then submit names to the president.

An 11-member delegation of the party was led by its General Secretary Dilip Barua, also industries minister.

"We called upon the president to form a search committee under a new law for constituting an independent election commission," he told journalists later.

Earlier, a delegation of the front led by its Chairman Sayed Bahadur Shah Mujaddedi participated in the dialogue. It expressed views similar to that of Shamyabadi Dal.

The talks with different political parties initiated by the president began on December 22.

The tenure of the present Election Commission expires in February.

him with food and medicines. Later, Mofiz left Parerhaat for the Sundarbans and stayed there until Bangladesh was liberated.

After the witness finished his deposition at 11:44am, defence counsel Mizanul Islam began the cross-examination.

Mofizuddin told the counsel that although he did not take part in the war, he requested to be enlisted as a freedom fighter as he helped the fighters by doing their chores, including "cutting vegetables" for them.

The counsel later claimed that Ibrahim Kutti was not killed on that day as Mofiz had said in his statement. The Pakistani soldiers picked up Kutti and his brother-in-law Saheb Ali from Ali's house on October 1, 1971, he claimed.

The lawyer claimed that the soldiers killed the two and tortured Ali's mother Setara Begum.

Mofizuddin said it was not true. Mizanul Islam claimed that Ibrahim's wife Momtaj Begum filed a case with Pirojpur police in this regard, and the complaint does not mention anything about Delwar Hossain Sayedee.

Mofiz said he did not know anything about the case.

Later, defence counsel Kafil Uddin Chowdhury took over and claimed that Mofiz did not have an occupation and he gave a false statement against Sayedee because the local lawmaker had asked him to do so.

The counsel said the local lawmaker had convinced Mofiz to testify falsely against Sayedee in exchange for old-age allowance.

Mofizuddin said it was not true.

The 72-year-old, however, admitted that he started getting old-age benefits two months ago and that he qualified for the benefit due to his age.