



Scientists of jute genome project working at the genomics lab at Bangladesh Jute Research Institute.



PHOTO: STAR

Salute to you all

FROM PAGE 1
These successes -- which even many developed countries envy -- indeed, come by default while globally famed Bangladeshi geneticist Dr Maqsood Alam and his team persistently pursued jute genomics.

While genome sequencing of jute and fungus rekindled hope for better yields of the world's second most important natural fibre after cotton, the research and development (R&D) facilities and team of IPR experts -- built up centring on this genomics project -- come as a bonus.

Maqsood, who is also credited with sequencing genome of papaya in the United States and that of rubber in Malaysia, yesterday invited journalists for the first time to visit the

modern and hi-tech lab facility built under the Basic & Applied Research on Jute (BARJ) Project at Bangladesh Jute Research Institute (BJRI) in the capital.

Addressing the media, a day after the prime minister had formally announced the success in decoding the genome of white jute, Maqsood proudly claimed that the government's right investment in genomics study helped develop such a world class R&D laboratory facility.

"We also did not have the expertise on patenting laws. Thanks to this project (BARJ) that we have been able to develop human capacity in dealing with IPR and patenting issues," he said.

To stop brain drain in the

form of scientists leaving the local research stations and pursuing science in foreign labs, Maqsood said they needed patronisation not only by the government but also by the private research organisations.

"And the private sector will only be attracted to frontier researches when we'll be able to exploit the patenting benefits," he said, adding that five patents have already been filed on jute genome.

He pointed out that any research on development of jute anywhere in the world would now require jute science know-how from Bangladesh.

Asked how long it would take to apply the scientific advancement in farmers' fields, the famed scientist and his team members said

it would take two to five years. But they also said confidently that once finer and stress-resistant varieties are developed, Bangladesh would be able to use more jute in clothing and lessen import dependency for cotton.

Bangladesh is the world's second largest producer of jute, after India, and the world's largest exporter of the fibre. Genome sequence represents a valuable shortcut, helping scientists find genes much more easily and quickly. A genome sequence allows scientists to identify and understand how genes work together for the plant's different features like growth, development and maintenance as an entire organism. This allows them to manipulate

the genes and enhance, reduce or add certain features of the plant.

Maqsood's colleagues in the lab showed the journalists some of the latest machinery like ultracentrifuge DNA separator, gene pulsar - capable of infusing foreign genes, and 3rd generation sequencing machine. Samiul Haque, programme manager, and Md Shahidul Islam, a senior biotechnologist, both of whom worked with Maqsood, told The Daily Star that the lab's machinery is as good and as latest as in any advanced genomics lab in Europe and America.

For the sake of not divulging secrets to Bangladesh's competitors in jute sector, Maqsood and his team refrained from mentioning

the amount of money spent on BARJ. "I can tell you this much that we spent only two percent of the fund that would have been required for such research in the EU and US."

Flanked by BJRI Director General Dr Kamal Uddin, Dr Alam introduced his team of scientists and patent lawyers to journalists, and they all honoured Bangladesh's first generation torch bearer in jute research Prof Ahmed Shamsul Islam by presenting him a bouquet.

Maqsood acknowledged the inspiration instilled in him by Ahmed Shamsul, now 89, who started his jute research career back in 1955 and was consulted by Maqsood when he had first moved to do the jute genome job in 2008.

Our comments

FROM PAGE 1
placement of the contested item.

This newspaper has covered the prime minister on numerous occasions. Never barring once have we received any contestation or clarification from the prime minister's office. The only time we had received a clarification was on her comment about Professor Muhammad Yunus. Then again this clarification did not explicitly say we distorted the prime minister's remarks, rather it said the newspaper report did not mention any source and was based on inadequate information.

Since the prime minister on Sunday brought a serious

allegation against this newspaper in an event telecast nationwide we would invite her office to provide us with instances when we distorted her comments. This exercise would help us both in our endeavour for better journalism.

But unless the PMO can point out our slips, our readers may be forced to conclude that the prime minister's comments were yet another example of media bashing and maligning a free and independent media that has always upheld the norms of democracy.

The PM's office owes this explanation to our readers as well as the wider public in general.

- Editor

Police now

FROM PAGE 1
reporters at the Dhaka Metropolitan Police media centre yesterday.

Police recovered the decomposing bodies of the couple from their apartment around 4:00pm on Friday. Their 17-year-old daughter the following day surrendered to the police and later admitted to committing the murders in the early hours of Thursday.

With information from Oishee, police arrested Khadiza Khatun Sumi, a minor house help, who had helped Oishee move the dead bodies to a bathroom in the house, and Oishee's friend Mizanur Rahman Rony, who helped Oishee stay at one of his aunt's place Friday night.

On Sunday, the trio were taken on remand for five days to find out if anyone else had planned the murder or had direct or indirect involvement in the killing.

The two security guards and the caretaker of the

Chamelibagh apartment building had told reporters that no one other than Mahfuzur's family members entered the apartment since Wednesday night. They also confirmed that guards had always been at the gate from Wednesday to Friday.

Monirul quoted Oishee to have told police that she had had her parents drink coffee mixed with 10 sleeping pills before she stabbed them to death.

The mystery still remains as to how Oishee got those sedatives and the knife she used to stab her parents.

Police are also trying to find out the two persons, who according to Oishee, assured her of a safe escape to India.

Police, however, did not disclose their names.

Quoting Sumi, the house help, a detective official told The Daily Star that Oishee about a month ago ran away from home and her father brought her back home at that time.

Khaleda seeks

FROM PAGE 16
The High Court will hear the petition after its reopening on September 15, Khokon told The Daily Star. The HC is now on annual vacation.

In her petition, Khaleda mentioned that there was no corruption in establishing the Zia Charitable Trust and said the lower court order should be quashed.

She is now on bail in the case.

On January 15, a Dhaka court accepted the charges against Khaleda, also the leader of the opposition in parliament.

The Anti-Corruption Commission on August 8, 2011, filed the case with Tejgaon Police Station, accusing Khaleda and three others of abusing power to raise funds for the Trust.

Among the accused, Khaleda's former political secretary Harris Chowdhury is on the run while the two others -- Harris' assistant private secretary (APS) Ziaul Islam Munna and former Dhaka City Corporation mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka's APS Monirul Islam Khan -- are on bail.

Another lower court, which is now dealing with the case, asked Khaleda on Sunday to appear before it on September 16.

Delhi fails again

FROM PAGE 1
However, this failed to impress Trinamool Congress members. Members of India's main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party also objected to the introduction of the bill.

Baishya sat on the floor carrying two placards and saying the bill was "an injustice to Assam".

Exasperated, Kurien told Baishya to go back to this seat, saying, "This is unbecoming of a member.... This is an injustice to the House, an injustice to the people of India."

Derek O'Brien of Trinamool Congress said what Baishya raised was a "serious issue" and he should be allowed to speak.

Kurien said rules did not permit it and he could only be allowed to speak when the bill was taken up.

As Baishya continued shouting slogans during the zero hour, Junior Parliamentary Affairs Minister Rajeev Shukla tried to persuade him, and so did some BJP members, but in vain.

At this, Shukla said, "The bill has been deferred."

This was the second time the government of Prime

Minister Manmohan Singh failed to table the bill after repeated stalling of the House proceedings had thwarted a similar move during the budget session of parliament in April.

A couple of days after Indian parliament's current monsoon session began on August 5, Singh met top BJP leaders, who conveyed that their party could not support the bill.

The LBA can only be ratified through a constitution amendment bill as it involves an exchange of land. The bill needs to be passed by Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha, with no less than two-thirds of the members present and voting.

The BJP and AGP oppose the agreement insisting that India is ceding too much territory to the neighbouring country.

The Indian government is concerned that if the agreement is not cleared by parliament in the next session, New Delhi's chances of settling the long-pending boundary issue will be ruined, as Bangladesh will soon go to polls.

The LBA envisages a transfer of 111 enclaves with a total area of 17,160.63 acres to

Bangladesh while Dhaka will transfer 51 enclaves with an area of 7,110.02 acres to India.

Indian government maintains that LBA's implementation through the exchange of enclaves will mitigate a major humanitarian issue as the residents of the enclaves have endured the absence of basic amenities for many decades.

Meanwhile, Khurshid is expected to meet leaders of Trinamool Congress in a bid to persuade them to support the amendment bill.

He is said to have talked to Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee by phone soon after party lawmakers yesterday opposed the introduction of the bill.

It was decided that Khurshid would meet Trinamool leaders including Derek O'Brien, sources said.

Contacted, O'Brien said the federal Indian government could not take any decision without the "consent" of states.

"It is not a vanilla ice-cream; it is the country's precious land that is at stake," he said, while justifying Trinamool's opposition to the bill.

25 cops killed

FROM PAGE 16
of complicity in the murder of protesters during the 2011 revolt.

SINAI AMBUSH
Sinai, a strategic region bordering the Gaza Strip and Israel, has witnessed almost daily attacks since the ousting of Morsi, leading many to link the militants there to the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamist group from which Morsi hailed.

Egyptian military and security forces have been engaged in a long-running battle against militants in the northern half of the peninsula.

Al-Qaeda-linked fighters, some of whom consider Morsi's Brotherhood to be too moderate, and tribesmen have used the area for smuggling and other criminal activity for years, and have on occasion fired rockets into Israel and staged cross-border attacks.

Yesterday, the militants forced the two vehicles to stop, ordered the policemen out and forced them to lie on the ground before shooting them.

The policemen were in civilian clothes, officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Diplomats not convinced

FROM PAGE 1
Diplomatic sources said diplomats were not convinced by the government explanation about Adilur's arrest.

The diplomats also expressed their anxiety over a conflict in the coming days because of the government's firm stance over an election-time administration, added the sources.

The US, the UK, China, India, Japan, Italy, Netherlands, France, Australia, Pakistan, Switzerland, Germany and the EU sent their deputy chiefs of mission to the briefing.

Sources said some of the ambassadors were on vacation while some others could not attend the briefing because of their preoccupation.

However, ambassadors and high commissioners, including those of Russia, Canada, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Nepal and Indonesia, attended the briefing.

Foreign ministry sources said some ambassadors skipped yesterday's briefing as the ministry on

Sunday abruptly postponed the pre-scheduled briefing. But by that time, some diplomats had already reached the ministry and they then had to leave the secretariat.

At yesterday's briefing, diplomats from Canada, Korea, Switzerland, Norway and the EU asked questions on various issues.

On Adilur's arrest, Dipu Moni told diplomats that detectives had arrested him on specific allegations. The arrest was made in the interest of the safety of the country.

After the meeting, she told reporters that the diplomats were convinced by her explanation on the issue.

But a diplomat from a European country, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told The Daily Star that diplomats were not at all satisfied with the justification.

Another European diplomat told reporters that she had asked Dipu Moni to create an atmosphere where civil society organisations could operate freely, especially before the general

election.

The diplomat said the government must give enough space to civil society.

Meanwhile, several diplomats expressed their dissatisfaction over the postponement of Sunday's briefing.

Talking to this newspaper, they said the foreign ministry called the briefing at a short notice but then suddenly postponed it when most of them were half way or near the ministry while several diplomats had already reached the venue.

"I am very disturbed since my appointment in Bangladesh over the last two years," said the ambassador of an influential country, adding that his job was not to serve his country alone but also to serve Bangladesh.

But cancellation of a briefing called at such short notice was disturbing, he added.

He said he also knew from experience that he could not attend a foreign ministry programme in time due to the traffic jam.

Songs in the water

FROM PAGE 16
was certainly not the first to speak to us of the integrality of rootedness. There was Abbasuddin before him. And there was Sachin Dev Burman. And do not forget that there was Abdul Alim. All these men propagated, and then intensified, a tradition. Then they personified it.

Abdur Rahman Boyati was part of that tradition. His inner being lay embedded in the tradition. And yet it was tradition he sought to replenish, to build upon, in order to have it spread its wings beyond the geographical frontiers of Bangladesh. He brought rhythm into his songs, which rhythm was reflected in amplitude in the swaying of his body. Boyati's music was a charming journey through intoxication of the lyrical kind. You could close your eyes and imagine

an entire world of spirituality, in beautiful union with transcendental romance, open up before you as Boyati's rich voice rang out across the spaces around you, to touch -- nearly -- the spot where the worldly ended and life beyond death took off.

Life for Boyati began on January 1, 1939 in Dayaganj of Dhaka. And it began to acquire new dimensions through his initiation into the many modes of folk culture. It was a job he did well; and he had the poet Alauddin Boyati to thank for it. The journey, of course, was a long one. Boyati's singing in the public arena commenced in the heady days of 1956, to reach a culmination in 1982, when his own group folk music makers took to the stage. The Eighties were perhaps the most productive phase

in Abdur Rahman Boyati's career, for suddenly he was being seen nearly everywhere -- on television and at public invocations to heritage-related songs. There is, despite the passage of the long years, the deep, infinite resonance of mon amar deho ghorhi we associate not just with Boyati but with the entirety of our cultural history. And there is more. Boyati speaks to you of the mysterious Beyond, of Creation and its ramifications in manush banaiya khelcho jaa re loiya. The end might be close and yet the day will pass into night in deep reflection, as in din thakite bhabe re.

Folk music was Boyati's world. It was melody he meant to disseminate across the world outside him, to those who he thought needed to understand the ancient quality of

Bangladeshi culture. Boyati stamped Bangladesh's glory, indeed its pristine charm of magic and music, on the nations he came in touch with. There were forty of them. Every song he sang abroad was a bit of Bangladesh's history on offer for those who needed to know about the country. Those songs reverberated in his five hundred solo albums.

Boyati's songs led us into Sufi-like trance. As he closed his eyes, as his mane swayed in the fire and fury of poetic liberality, the voice boomed out, as if to have us wrap ourselves in the silken softness of a fleeting evening.

That softness is what promises to live on. The evening will go by. In silence, the river will flow and, with it, the songs Abdur Rahman Boyati sang in the gleam of the water.

You'd better budge

FROM PAGE 1
Strongly criticising the government for "killings and incidents of disappearance", she said people did not believe that the AL-led government would hold a free and fair election.

She said the Jatiya Party, a key component of the AL-led grand alliance, had already announced that it would not participate in the election if it was held under a political government. "If that happens, with which party will you [the AL] go to the polls?" she asked.

"The government will not be allowed to hold a one-party election," said Khaleda.

"You try to frighten us every now and then. You try to scare us with the minus-two formula and imprisonment. We are not scared of any of these, as we were not involved in any corruption."

"But you have to suffer

KHALEDA ZIA TO ADDRESS

VENUE	DATE
Narsingdi	September 8
Rajshahi	September 15
Rangpur	September 16
Khulna	September 22
Barisal	September 28
Sylhet	October 5
Chittagong	After Eid-ul-Azha
Dhaka	After Eid-ul-Azha

because your people have looted public property," she said.

Khaleda said the AL had included many things in its election manifesto, but it failed to deliver on its commitments. "That is why people have lost trust in the Awami League."

She also demanded the immediate release of acting

leaders, who spoke at the rally, also urged party leaders and workers to prepare for street agitations.

PROGRAMMES
The BNP-led 18-party alliance has decided to hold rallies at all divisional headquarters in September and early October to revitalise its grassroots leaders and activists.

Khaleda will address all those rallies to drum up public support for the opposition's main demand for the restoration of the caretaker government system. It will then intensify street agitation at the end of October to force the government to amend the constitution for restoring the provision.

Acting BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir announced the schedules for the rallies at a press conference at the party's central office in Nayapalton around 12:00noon.