

## Farmer killed

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if there was any intruder. When he opened the kitchen door, the killers attacked him with sharp weapons and slashed him all over. The gang also held hostage other members of the family.

When Tapan fell on the ground bleeding profusely, one of the killers said to the terrified family members showing a bundle of Tk 500 notes, "See we came here to collect the head of Niranjan in exchange for one lakh taka. Since we haven't found Niranjan, we 'legitimised' this money by killing his younger brother. We are not leaving until he dies."

They then dragged the three women to another room and raped them in turn. "They confined me inside a room with my mouth tied with a piece of cloth and raped the women," said Swapan at the KMCH.

The killers left the house left the house after two hours. They looted some valuables including gold ornaments and money. The family members recovered Tapan's body lying in a pool of blood.

Swapan said before leaving the killers asked him to pay Tk 1 lakh to a 'killer' named Kamrul at the second culvert point on the Rupsha Chanmari Road.

During the incident, the neighbours heard screams and cries for help, but dared not to come to their rescue.

## 18 houses gutted in Magura

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura**

Eighteen houses were gutted in a fire at Shimulia village under Magura Sadar upazila yesterday afternoon.

The fire originated from an oven at a house at around 4 pm and soon engulfed the other houses, fire brigades sources said.

Fire fighting units from Magura rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze at around 6 pm.

## BNP leader murdered in Laxmipur

**BSS, Laxmipur**

A BNP leader was murdered by unidentified miscreants at Titarkandi village under sadar upazila Saturday night.

The victim was identified as Maulana Babar Miah, 30, secretary of BNP Titarkandi ward unit.

Police quoting villagers said the miscreants attacked Babar while he was returning home from nearby bazar at about 11:30 pm.

They took him to a place behind Titarkandi Senior Madrasah and stabbed him. He died on the spot.

Police recovered the body and sent it to sadar hospital for autopsy. Local BNP leaders blamed Awami League activists for the killing.

## 5 Padma staff

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the Myanmar ambassador. He left the country the following day.

The Myanmar ambassador informed foreign ministry officials about the incident at the airport. Without elaborating, the ambassador had said, "It was an attempted theft".

Later, Senior Assistant Secretary in the foreign ministry Yusuf Ali filed a case with Ramna police. Detectives were called to investigate the matter.

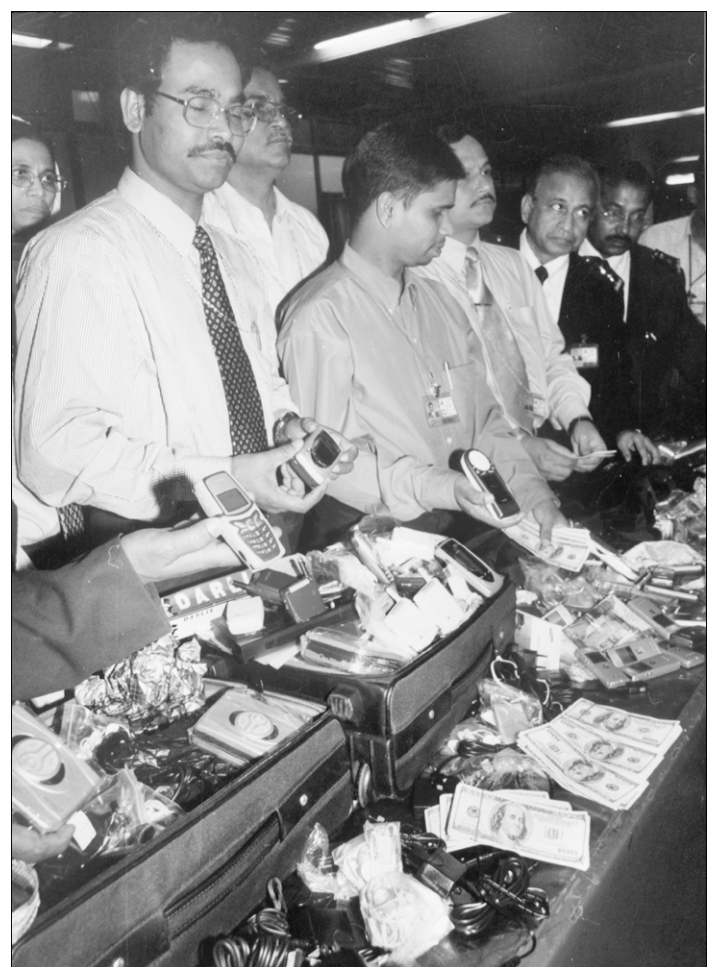


PHOTO: STAR

Customs officials seized US dollars and electronic goods worth Tk 92 lakh from a passenger at Zia International Airport yesterday before his departure by Singapore Airlines.

## JS debate on default loan

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday witnessed a debate on default loan when Finance Minister Saifur Rahman sought passage of three bills for reform in the banking sector.

The finance minister assured the House that he would disclose the list of loan defaulters if lawmakers give notice. "There is nothing to play dilly-dally with the list of bank loan defaulters," Saifur said.

To a comment by an opposition lawmaker, Saifur said the government has served notices on 158 directors of private banks for Tk 574 crore default loans. Of them, 53 were removed and 16 are retaining their positions following court orders.

He said the default loan culture must be stopped to restore financial order.

Suranjit Sengupta of Awami League raised the issue of default loan as the finance minister held the immediate past AL government responsible for mismanagement in the banking sector.

The minister mentioned closure of Sonali Exchange in London due to mismanagement.

In response, Suranjit branded Saifur as the 'founding father' of default loan culture. He said the root cause of default loan is the culture of default politics.

Without referring to anyone, Suranjit said military governments in the past lured persons to get their support and gave them loans without guarantee. He urged the finance minister to disclose regime-wise default loans and not to blame the Awami League.

## JS passes bill

**FROM PAGE 1**  
nor has been made accountable to the parliamentary standing committee on finance, empowering the JS body to gather information on bank loans and to impose restrictions in case of appointment of the governor, deputy governor and directors of the bank.

The Bangladesh Bank (Nationalization) (Amendment) Bill 2003 enhances the supervisory powers of Bangladesh Bank on nationalised commercial banks.

It also empowers the central bank to give recommendation regarding appointment of managing director and deputy managing director of nationalised banks.

The Bank Company (Amendment) Bill 2003 seeks to strengthen activities in the banking sector and enhance the supervisory authority of Bangladesh Bank over nationalised banks.

It proposes raising the paid-up capital of commercial banks from Tk 20 crore now to Tk 100 crore.

Replying to opposition's criticism, the finance minister said the amount of paid-up capital will not be imposed overnight. The central bank will review it.

Opposition lawmakers Abdul Jalil, Abdus Shahid, AKM Jahangir Hossain, Rahmat Ali, Suranjit Sengupta, Mohammad Nasim, Atiur Rahman, Dr Abdur Razzak and Shamsur Rahman Sahrif of Awami League and Golam Mohammad Qadir and Golam Habib Dulal of Jatiya Party took part in the debate on the bills.

## Walkway

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Chowdhury told The Daily Star recently. He said he had cancelled seven plots of land allotted after earth-filling on the western side of the lake.

He has also asked "influential stakeholders" who have expanded their plots along the side of the lake in recent years to return the land to the Rajuk or face legal action.

Chowdhury said the walkway construction was based on "a prime ministerial directive to save the lake" which has been under threat from greedy developers and corrupt officials for 20 years.

It follows cancellation of a Tk 120 crore plan drawn up under the previous government to stop encroachment and pollution of the lake. The plan was ditched after the present government came to power.

Work has already begun on the first 1,700-foot section of the walkway on the western side of the lake, from the Gulshan-Badda link road north to Road Nos. 120, 104 and 121. This first phase is scheduled for completion in three months.

As part of its efforts to save the lake, say officials, Rajuk recently submitted a plan to the Ministry of Housing and Public Works aimed at checking pollution of the lake water.

Sources said over last 20 years, Rajuk erected at least three rows of plots along the original edge of the lake in the name of constructing walkways and roads.

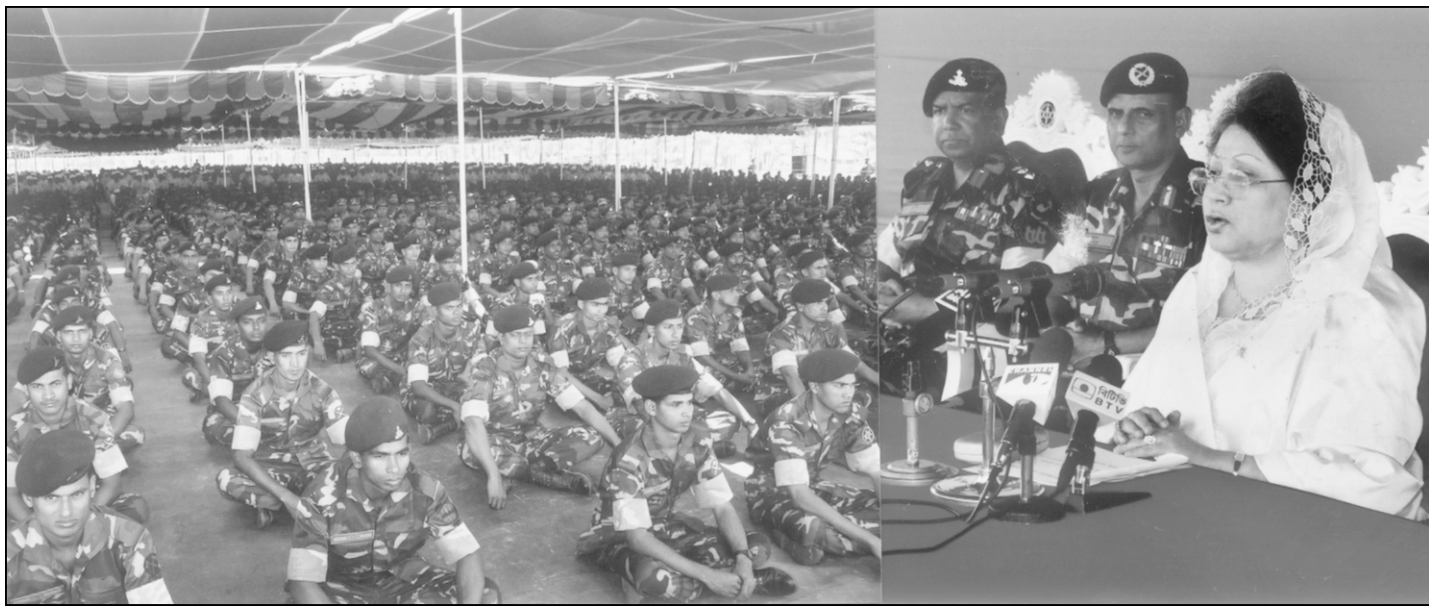


PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia addresses the third reunion of the Artillery Regiment at the Artillery Centre and School ground in Halishahar, Chittagong yesterday.

## 'Armed forces now capable of repelling any external attack'

**UNB, Chittagong**

Armed Forces of Bangladesh now have the capability to repel any incursion and effectively face any situation that may jeopardise national integrity, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia said yesterday.

"The government has already taken steps to build a stronger army by procuring modern war equipment and imparting standard training," she told her audience at the 3rd reunion of Artillery Regiment at the Artillery Centre and School (ACS) training ground at Halishahar here yesterday.

She said the nation deserves a military befitting the 21st century that would work unitedly to uphold the country's independence and sovereignty abreast of its development.

Terming the Artillery regiment as an important part of Bangladesh Army, Khaleda recalled the role of this regiment in the 1971 War of Liberation, which helped the Infantry regiment in the front-fight to free Sylhet region from the occupation forces.

Subsequently, the artillery also played a glorious role under the "Z" Force to free the Chittagong region apart from fighting in different warfields in Sector 2, she recalled.

Paying glowing tributes to the members of the Artillery regiment who sacrificed their lives for independence, she said now the regiment had been upgraded remarkably in conformity with the expansion of Army in respect of organisation, training and equipment.

"The Artillery regiment has

become the biggest core of the Army today as a well-organised and disciplined force," she said.

The prime minister listed the government's financial support and other facilities for the welfare of in-service and retired army personnel and their family members. These facilities include health insurance and healthcare facilities for injured army men both at home and abroad besides scholarships for higher education of their children.

Terming the Artillery Centre and School as the prime centre for training, she said the institution earned international recognition and the government has taken initiatives to expand its space to impart training to more foreign military officers, which would play a significant role in fostering international relations.

Commandant of Artillery Centre and School Brigadier-General Muhammad Tajul Islam also spoke. Earlier, Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury, GOC of Chittagong Area Major General Moeen U Ahmed and ACS commandant Brigadier-General Tajul Islam received the prime minister at the ACS helipad.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, Food Minister Abdullaah Al Noman, Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, Water Resources Minister I.K Siddiqui, State Minister for Civil Aviation Mir M o h a m m a d Nasiruddin and Jute Minister Major (ret) Hafizuddin Ahmed were among others who attended the function.

## Visa forgery

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two executive engineers of the maintenance circle of the LGED Bhaban -- John N Mondal and Giasuddin Ahmed -- to visit Canada.

But the high commission did not find anyone named Zafar Siddique at the LGRD ministry.

The supporting documents also say the ministry permitted the ten-day visit from February 17 under a 'technology and staff training transfer' programme of the Third Rural Infrastructure Development Project (RDP-21).

The foreign ministry also issued notes verbal on the official passports (Nos. R-0772610 of John N Mondal and R-0770003 of Giasuddin Ahmed) on February 10, requesting the commission to issue visa, say the documents.

The applicants also submitted invitation letters with the visa forms and other documents. But the commission discovered that the letters were false.

The foreign secretary wrote to the local government secretary to investigate the matter.

He said submission of visa applications by the two Bangladeshis with fake passports, notes verbal, government orders and official stamps and papers is of serious concern.

The LGED said it has no engineer named Giasuddin Ahmed or John N Mondal. The LGRD ministry did not find either until yesterday.

LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan ordered officials of his ministry to find leads to the incident.

The foreign ministry officials are also investigating how the applicants got official stationery.



PHOTO: STAR

A discussion meeting on portrayal of women in commercials was held at the CIRDP auditorium in Dhaka yesterday in observance of the International Women's Day.

## Unilateral Iraq strike

**FROM PAGE 12**  
"fair" and in return demanded the lifting of the embargo slapped on it for invading Kuwait in 1990, Iraqi television quoted an official as saying.

The latest draft resolution challenges the Security Council either to declare Iraq in full compliance with UN demands on disarmament by March 17 or to authorise war.

The resolution, amended at the last minute to give Iraq more time, was seen as a bid to turn the tables on France, Germany, Russia, China and Syria. They have locked horns with Britain, Spain and the United States, who are pushing the resolution authorising the use of force.

The amendment states that Baghdad will not have fulfilled its UN disarmament obligations unless "the Security Council concludes that Iraq has demonstrated full, unconditional, immediate and active cooperation" by March 17.

The impending war on Iraq also upstaged International Women's Day, with peace demonstrators marked the occasion at rallies across Europe, the United States and beyond.

Tens of thousands meanwhile took to the streets of European cities protesting against a military strike on Iraq, with Italians burning president Bush in effigy, and an English bishop insisting there was no moral justification for an attack.

European women from Yerevan to Lisbon protested against war on Iraq.

Tens of thousands protested

outside a US military base near Pisa in northern Italy, burning an unformed effigy of Bush.

Lefwing parliamentary deputies were among those who gathered outside US Camp Darby, with organisers estimating the crowd at 60,000 people and the police 20,000 people.

The Italian government has sided with the hardline camp in the Iraqi crisis, arguing that Baghdad should be disarmed by force if necessary, while polls show much of the country's population opposed to war.

Thousands across Germany called on Bush to respect the opinions of the hundreds of millions across the world who oppose a military solution to disarming Iraq of alleged weapons of mass destruction.

In Stuttgart some 300 people held a sit-in outside the US army's European Command.

Clad in pink and chanting peace songs, demonstrators marked International Women's Day outside the White House, where conservative counter-demonstrators urged them to find husbands and stop nagging.

"Get back in the kitchen," Pastor Mark Hines yelled at the women of the Codepink group, named as a spoof of the color-coding system the United States uses to describe the level of alert for terrorist threats.

"We are here because the world needs to know there are American voices that oppose the rush to war," said Shira Keyes, a gray-haired

woman clad in pink.

"If we continue to rely on wars to resolve our differences, we will never truly be a just society," said 23-year-old Anne Claire Marshall, wearing a pink wig.

## Delhi talks

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today to attend a two-day meeting with the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII).

The MCCI delegation led by its President Tapan Chowdhury will point out different obstacles standing in the way of Bangladesh exports to the Indian market at meetings with the Indian foreign minister, finance minister and commerce minister.

## Gas export

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killing and capturing Union Parishad election centres.

It criticised appointment of ruling party supporters as teachers in public universities and as doctors and nurses at government hospitals, recent leakage of questions of Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) examination and admission tests at Dhaka University.

The country's economy is "nearing collapse because of rampant corruption and nepotism by the family of Khaleda Zia and other ruling party leaders", the meeting observed.

## Robbers stab 30 bus passengers, loot Tk 5 lakh in Faridpur

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura**

Robbers stabbed 30 bus passengers on the Faridpur-Magura Highway and took away Tk 5 lakh from them in the early hours of yesterday.

The victims said a gang of six robbers boarded the Kushtia-bound bus in guise of passengers near Rajbari square in Faridpur Sadar upazila at around 1:00 am and swooped on the passengers.

As the passengers tried to resist the gang, they stabbed them and looted the money.

Nine of the injured passengers were admitted to Magura hospital.

They are Rupashi, 21, Kamruzzaman, 25, Seraj, 45, Mofiqul, 26, Mantu Mian, Rafique, 40, Rana, 26, Amirul, 35, and Waseem, 20, were admitted to Magura Sadar hospital.

## Playing for high stakes

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After the way they were swept aside by Australia, coach Dav Whatmore is aware his side face a real test of resolve.

"After this result it's another test for our boys," Whatmore said at Centurion. "The next one won't be easy either and we need to get some points on the board sooner rather than later -- this is a test of character."

"The Indian team have a couple of incredible match-winners. We've played them a bit and the boys know their strengths and weaknesses fairly well, but the main thing I want to see is everyone lift up a gear or two for that encounter."

"India have only lost the one game, so they're on top of their game at the moment."

The whole of Sri Lanka will be praying for the fitness of captain and influential batsman Sanath Jayasuriya, who suffered a chipped bone in his left thumb and a badly bruised left forearm after being struck twice in the second over of the innings on Friday by Australian fast bowler Brett Lee.

## Cancelled PSC test

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Besides, the PSC will extend help to the intelligence personnel to prevent leakage of questions when the tests are held.

PSC members are also considering some structural changes in the preliminary test question papers.

The PSC cancelled the preliminary test (held on February 28) on March 3.

Sheikh Mohammad Mobarak Hossain, deputy controller of the BG Press, yesterday said that the BG Press would not be able to print around one lakh and twenty thousand question papers for the test before May.

He said along with the regular works of the government press, it is now busy printing question papers for the HSC examinations, examinations under National University, ballot papers of Barisal and Sylhet city corporations, and in May a huge quantity of budget books will have to be printed.

"If the PSC contacts us we will do it in May or June," he said adding that at least one month was needed for printing the preliminary test question papers.

But, the PSC is a bit hesitant about printing the question papers for the next test at the BG Press. Some PSC members believe that employees of the BG Press might be the main culprits behind leak-

Jayasuriya is the rock on which his team's batting is built. It was still unclear the day after the Centurion defeat whether he would recover in time for India.

"It's still a case of wait and see," Sri Lanka manager Ajit Jayasekera told Reuters on Saturday. "The arm is more of a problem than the thumb. The swelling has gone down but it's still very sore."

The last World Cup match between the two sides ended in a 157-run thrashing handed out by India in 1999 at Taunton, when Ganguly and Rahul Dravid scored big hundreds.

India also have the historical upper hand, winning 39 games to the Sri Lankans' 29.

But Sri Lanka have one decisive memory to call upon, and one which surely continues to haunt India their semifinal triumph in the face of all that Calcutta could throw in their way en route to being crowned world champions in 1996.

In another case of unfinished business, that game was awarded to the Sri Lankans after the crowd rioted with India heading for certain defeat.

age of questions, if it really happened.

"We are considering other options like printing the question papers at PSC's own press instead of the BG Press," he said.

But, there is a legal problem in doing so, he said adding, "If it is not possible we will try to look after the printing process at the BG Press round the clock".

There is another problem standing in the way of holding the test shortly. Members of the commission will remain busy with the viva voce of the 22nd BCS that will begin from March 15. The viva voce will take about four months to complete.

Besides, the PSC has to contact schools and colleges in Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna and authorities in London for holding the examination.

## Death penalty

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slain UP member filed a case with Chuadanga Sadar Police Station on August 6 accusing 40 people.

Investigation Officer (IO) of the case submitted charge sheet against 15 people on August 31, 1997.

The court acquitted 13 people as charges brought against them were not proved.

## Taxpayers' money

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he can lodge a complaint to the member, VAT or the NBR chairman directly for action, Shobeed added.

The FBCCI president noted that economic recession was everywhere and businesses here may even incur loss, but tax collectors do not want to listen to this problem.

The NBR has introduced a participatory system in which a committee with representatives of associations, FBCCI and taxpayers would decide how much tax a particular market would pay. The tax officials would talk to the committee instead of going to the shop owners. If there is any problem, the committee would solve it, Harun said. He added that the participatory system would continue if it works well.

Member VAT of the NBR AK Reazul Karim said instead of the tax commissioner, the market committee would fix the amount of money to be paid in taxes. "This will help reduce corruption. If any tax official tries to harass anyone, the NBR would take action instantly," he informed the business leaders.

VAT Commissioner (South) Farid Uddin said transactions between Tk 20,000 and Tk 25,000 crore takes place at the retail market and the government should get at least Tk 300 crore to Tk 350 crore in VAT.

"But the government is getting only Tk 25 crore. If VAT is paid properly, it would create a level playing field for all."

President of the Shop Owners'

Association Amir Hossain Khan said they would cooperate with the tax officials provided the inspectors do not harass shop owners.

"Tax collection system should be easy and hassle free," he said and urged the NBR to take steps to increase the number of branches of Sonali Bank through which taxpayers can deposit treasury chalan.

## Shazneen case

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Following telephonic talks with the prosecution, the jail authorities sent Parvin's custody warrant (CW) to the court, saying she was sick.

Meanwhile, Atiur Rahman alias Masum, the 7th prosecution witness in the case and paternal uncle of the victim, appeared before the court yesterday but did not give his deposition as all the accused were not present. Five of the six accused in the case were at the dock.

Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, 15, the youngest daughter of Latifur Rahman, Chairman of Transcom, was raped and murdered at their Gulshan residence in the city on April 23, 1998.

Special Public Prosecutors (PPs) Arfan Uddin Khan and Mahub Ahmed and Assistant PP Amisur Rahman appeared for the state while advocates MA Kamrul Hasan Khan Aslam, Mizanur Rahman and Abdus Salam Bhuiyan appeared for the accused.