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## KIBRIA KILLING PROBE 15 Congressmen express concern to PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fifteen Congressmen of the United States sent a letter to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia expressing concern about the adequacy of the progress made in the investigation and prosecution in the murder case of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria.

Besides, a separate letter was sent to the Bangladesh Ambassador to the US Shamsher M Chowdhury on June 26 by 11 other senators that also dealt with the killing of the senior Awami League leader.

In the letter sent to the prime minister on June 30, the congressmen said prosecuting the case without further inquiry under the time limits imposed by the Speedy Trial Court would go contrary to the public interest, to the interest of justice and to the assurances of the government.

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## Anwarul Iqbal new IGP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Government yesterday replaced the current Inspector General of Police (IGP) MA Quayyum and appointed Additional Inspector General of Police Anwarul Iqbal as the new IGP.

Iqbal will take charge today noon from the outgoing IGP Quayyum. Quayyum has been placed with the Ministry of Establishment. Quayyum was appointed IGP on May 7 last year.

The new IGP, Anwarul Iqbal will be the 25th inspector general of police.

"I have received the order today [Wednesday] and supposed to take charge tomorrow noon," Iqbal confirmed The Daily Star last night.

Iqbal also worked as the director general of Rapid Action Battalion before.



PHOTO: AFP

**STILL OUT OF HIS REACH:** An airborne Portuguese goalkeeper Ricardo makes an abortive attempt to thwart an unstoppable penalty shot from France's mercurial midfielder Zinedine Zidane (not in picture) during their World Cup semifinal at Munich's Allianz Arena yesterday.

## Zizou fires France into final

AFP, Munich

Zinedine Zidane fired France into their second World Cup final appearance in eight years here on Wednesday, scoring the only goal in a 1-0 semifinal victory over Portugal.

The French captain shattered Portugal's dreams of a first ever appearance in the final after coolly converting a hotly disputed penalty midway through the first half at the Allianz Arena.

Zidane's goal was a repeat of his spot-kick winner against the Portuguese in the semi-finals of Euro 2000 and sent France into a final on Sunday against Italy - just as it had done six years ago.

But the decider was shrouded in controversy, with Portugal protesting Uruguayan referee Jorge Larrión's decision to point to the spot after Chelsea defender

Ricardo Carvalho brought down Thierry Henry just inside the area.

A clever touch by Henry wrong-footed Carvalho who fell but stuck his leg out, and although the Arsenal star reacted theatrically to clear contact, Larrión had no hesitation in pointing to the spot.

Portuguese goalkeeper Ricardo had saved three penalties in his side's shoot-out victory over England in the quarterfinals on Saturday but though he dived the right way Zidane's 33rd-minute spot kick gave him no chance.

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## Opposition wants to meet 'ailing' Iajuddin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling BNP and opposition lawmakers once again locked in an unscheduled debate on the state of presidency in parliament yesterday when the members of the main opposition demanded to meet 'ailing' Iajuddin Ahmed at the Bangabhaban.

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed told the House that Iajuddin Ahmed would take over the charge of the president after recovering from illness. But, opposition Awami League (AL) lawmakers apprehended that the ruling alliance is looking for a "loyal" person as president to get benefit in the next election and to create trouble for the next government.

"Bangabhaban version about the health condition of the president is correct," Moudud said reacting to opposition statements.

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## Non-govt teachers start fresh strike today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Teachers and employees of non-government high schools, colleges and madrasas will go for indefinite strike from today demanding realisation of their 10-point demand including 100 per cent basic salary from the government exchequer.

At present the non-government teachers receive 90 per cent basic salary from the government.

Shikkhak Karmachari Oikya Jote, a platform of ruling BNP-backed teachers and employees' organisations of non-government

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## Double standard for bridge contracts

### Purchase body also okays tariff rates for 3 costly skid-mount power projects

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet purchase committee yesterday approved awarding of a contract for a bridge construction to the second lowest bidder, while it asked the authorities to investigate whether there was any irregularity in a similar selection of the second lowest bidder for construction of another bridge.

The purchase committee at a meeting headed by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday approved tariff rates for three costly skid-mount power projects,

and three schemes of the communications ministry including awarding of a contract to the second lowest bidder for Teesta bridge construction.

The lowest bidder for Teesta bridge construction quoted Tk 80 crore while the second lowest quoted Tk 87 crore. The communications ministry justified selecting the second lowest bidder by saying the lowest bidder is non-responsive as it provided wrong information to the authorities in another tender.

Although the purchase commit-

tee approved awarding the contract to the second lowest bidder, some of its members raised objections. They said the lowest bidder was never black-listed and the ministry cannot punish a company in a bid for its mistake in another bid.

Representatives of the communications ministry then requested the committee to approve the project as it is, since it will be implemented under a grant from the Kuwait government.

In dealing with the tender for

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## PM assures EC secy of help for flawless list

### Newly appointed official favours door to door visit for voter listing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday assured newly appointed secretary of the Election Commission (EC) Secretariat Abdur Rashid Saikar of providing with all-out cooperation for preparing a flawless voter list, sources said.

Abdur Rashid said the voter list should be updated by visiting door to door for the sake of its flawlessness.

"I will suggest the Election Commission to reconsider its decision on not visiting door to door. I

personally believe that visiting door to door is essential for updating the voter list considering the reality," Rashid, who met the PM yesterday at her office, told The Daily Star.

"But the Election Commission has the authority to take any decision while the secretariat just implements those decisions," he said. He added that it is possible to complete updating of the existing voter list within the time remaining if the commission changes its decision.

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## Delivery of verdict starts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A High Court (HC) Death Reference Bench yesterday started delivering its judgment on the sensational Shazneen murder case.

On the first day, the bench comprising justices Ali Asgar Khan and Emdadul Haque analysed the first information report (FIR) and statements of three prosecution witnesses.

After the Second Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women

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## Tata, govt to sit again July 10

### Group debunks rumour of pullout

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Indian conglomerate giant Tata's Bangladesh Project Director Manzer Hossain yesterday ruled out the media reports about the group's intention to withdraw the proposal for investment in Bangladesh and said the government will sit with them on July 10 to make its position on the proposed \$3 billion investment clear.

A high-powered team from Tata Group headed by its Executive Director Alan Rosling will visit Bangladesh to meet government

officials. The Tata officials are expecting a positive response from the government at the meeting.

The group is still optimistic about the proposed investment project in Bangladesh despite the uncertainty that seems to be looming large due to the government's unusual delay in giving an approval.

Manzer Hossain said the media interprets things on its own while Tata Group and the government have yet to make their positions clear.

He expressed the group's con-

cern over the government's delay saying that nobody can wait an indefinite period of time to invest.

"The delay is definitely a cause of concern for Tata Group but we are still optimistic about the project," Manzer told the Daily Star yesterday.

Local news agency the UNB, quoting an Indian newspaper, said, "Tata Group has finally decided to withdraw an ambitious three billion dollar investment proposal for undertaking several big ventures in Bangladesh, following

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## 'Deprived' freedom fighters to be awarded

### PM tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said in parliament that gallantry title will be conferred upon the valiant freedom fighters who were 'deprived' due to political envy by the post independence Awami League government.

"The government must remove discrimination among the freedom fighters. The real valiant freedom fighters, who have been deprived due to discrimination, will be

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## Bill placed in JS to restrict use of chemical weapons

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Keeping provisions for stern punishment of up to 14 years' imprisonment and fine, the government placed a bill in parliament yesterday proposing imposition of a ban on the development, production,

stockpiling and use of chemical weapons.

The bill titled "Chemical Weapons (Prohibition) Act 2006" proposed that offences under the act will be non-bailable and cognizable, but no court can take any

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## SAFTA India issues tariff cut notices

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India has issued a series of specified tariff concession notifications to Bangladesh along with three other Least Developed Countries (LDC) on goods imported from the latter under the South Asian Free Trade Area (Safta), official sources said.

The concession rates under

Safta are higher for Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives than that of Pakistan and Sri Lanka, sources added.

The notifications were issued by the Indian Customs Department on June 30. A list of goods not eligible for benefits of Safta has also been notified.

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## Rejoinder and our reply

The home ministry in a rejoinder to The Daily Star report headlined Machine-Readable Passport Scheme: Home ministry seeks quick nod of purchase body" published on Wednesday has given its own version of the story.

On the issue of hurried approval, the ministry yesterday said the programme of introducing machine-readable passport (MRP) and ID card is late by a year since it was conceived and approved by the prime minister more than two years ago with the implementation date of July 1 last year. Despite having the urgency of introducing MRP and ID card immediately, the ministry took more than 18 months to work out its requirements based on foreign studies, approved programme strategy and government procurement regulations and procedures.

About non-clearance of the scheme by the finance ministry, the

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