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Family urge govt to take poet to Singapore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The family members of poet Shamsur Rahman urged the government to take the poet to Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore for better treatment.

Committing not to blame anyone for the risk involved in sending the ailing poet abroad, they requested the government authorities concerned to take the initiative in this regard.

"As the last effort to save the life of our father, we are ready to take the risk of sending him abroad," said the poet's elder daughter Sumaiya Rahman Sumi while talking to newsmen yesterday.

"We want to take him to Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore where he was treated in 1996," she said, adding, "We are making the request to the government through the media and we do not want to make any formal request."

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GRAFT CASE AGAINST ERSHAD BNP, JP meet as court delivers verdict today

SHAKHAWAT LITON and RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Leaders of the BNP and JP held meetings last night in a hectic move to pave the way for Ershad's joining the ruling alliance ahead of the judgement in a graft case against the deposed president today.

A BNP delegation of Deputy Minister Ruhul Quddus Talukder Dulu and Jatiyotabadi Jubo Dal General Secretary Moazzem Hossain Alal MP went to Ershad's Baridhara residence at 'President Park' to discuss issues as outlined by BNP's Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman.

Sources said they asked Ershad

to shun dilly-dallying and join the BNP-led coalition within this month.

Ershad also sent out three of his party lawmakers, led by Moshir Rahman Ranga, to talk out 'issues of his concern' with Tarique at his 'Hawa Bhaban' office.

Their meeting dragged on for over an hour, and the JP lawmakers reportedly assured Tarique of joining the alliance as soon as the former president safely sees-off a number of lawsuits against him.

Moshir however told The Daily Star that they talked with Tarique about some problems with the BNP in their constituencies.

"We are now very close to the ruling BNP, you know," quipped

Moshir, who was accompanied by Nur Mohammad Mondal and Tajul Islam Chowdhury.

Termining the latest meetings of the two parties interesting, political and legal analysts said the court verdict would determine whether Ershad would continue to be a factor in the politics of alliance.

If the court finds Ershad guilty, the BNP move to bring his party in the alliance fold may suffer a setback, they felt.

On the other hand, if the JP chief is acquitted of the charges, it will be easy for Ershad to join the alliance, and the question of withdrawal of other cases against him will then come.

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KILLING OF AL MAN Half-day hartal called in Mirpur today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami Swachhshabak League called a half-day hartal for today in Mirpur in the capital protesting the killing of its leader Monir Hussain Monu on Tuesday.

Unknown assailants killed Monir, a former vice president of Swachhshabak League's ward-12 unit, while he was supervising a feast for the destitute marking the death anniversary of Bangabandhu at Mirpur on Tuesday.

Hundreds of people brought out a procession yesterday afternoon in Mirpur condemning the killing. The procession started from Monir's residence and ended at Mirpur circle-1, where a protest rally was held stopping vehicular movements.

The protesters demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of the killers.

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JMB'S AUG 17 BLASTS Foreign link, patrons still in shadow

Militants also planned to attack army personnel

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Although investigators unearthed as startling information as the JMB's plan to attack army personnel and overthrow the government, they have done little to identify the political patrons and foreign links of the militants who banged to limelight by blasting near simultaneous 500 bombs across the country a year ago today.

One hundred and fifty-four cases were filed in connection with the August 17 blasts. A total of 698 people have been arrested so far in connection with the blasts. Police submitted charge-sheets in 183

cases while 56 are under investigation. Trial of 17 cases has been completed.

Sources said the investigators have played down the strength of the Islamist militants to the level that they feebly tried to force the government to establish Islamic rule through the bomb blasts that killed around 30 including judges, lawyers and policemen.

The police in the charge sheet of the Jhalakathi judges killing case said the Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) leaders had decided to attack the judges, magistrates, police and army.

Most of the investigators are of

the view that the JMB made attacks on judges, courts and different public places to create among people a distaste for the government so that it accepts their demand of establishing Islamic rule in the country fearing loss of popularity or failure to retain power.

The objective of attacking the army and police was also the same, they believe.

Another section of investigators, however, disagree, saying the militants have proved their strength and had the confidence to attack the army and that there is no

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Community pry teachers lay siege to PMO today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The community primary teachers who have been observing hunger strike at the Central Shaheed Minar demanding nationalisation of their jobs since August 6 will lay siege to the Prime Minister's Office today.

The teachers under the banner of Bangladesh Community Primary Teachers' Association submitted a memorandum to the finance minister instead of laying siege to the secretariat yesterday as it was a public holiday.

Meanwhile, the National Front of Teachers and Employees (NFTE), a platform of 11 organisations of teachers and employees of non-government high schools, colleges and madrasas, held a meeting at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

The NFTE leaders said at the

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Telecoms gives deal to 'blacklisted' company

Planning's recommendation not entertained as minister's son represents the Chinese vendor

ABU SAEED KHAN

The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications approved a \$3.5 million contract with Huawei Technologies, for installing an optical fibre transmission link between Dhaka and Rajshahi, sidestepping planning ministry's repeated recommendations for blacklisting the Chinese vendor on 'corrupt practices' in winning the contract.

Purchase proposal of this scandalous deal will be placed on Monday before a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Public

Procurement (CCPP), which will be chaired by Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman.

Since the youngest son of a very powerful minister from the north-eastern region represents Huawei, the telecoms ministry decided to close this unscrupulous deal brushing aside the planning ministry's recommendation.

According to official documents The Daily Star has obtained, the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) under Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) of the planning ministry in its directive to the telecoms ministry

said a former telecoms secretary along with BTB high officials concerned had received undue favours from Huawei.

In October 2005, BTTE's Member (Finance) Jamil Osman and its Director Nadir Shah Quraishi attended an exhibition titled PT/Wireless & Network Comm China 2005. While issuing a government order (GO) regarding the trip, the telecoms ministry wrote that Huawei Technologies of China will bear all expenses pertaining to these officers' trips to China.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

US-bound flight diverted over terror fear

AP, Boston

Fighter jets escorted a diverted London-to-Washington, DC, flight to Boston's Logan airport yesterday after a distraught passenger pulled out a screwdriver, matches, Vaseline and a note referencing al-Qaeda, an airport spokesman said.

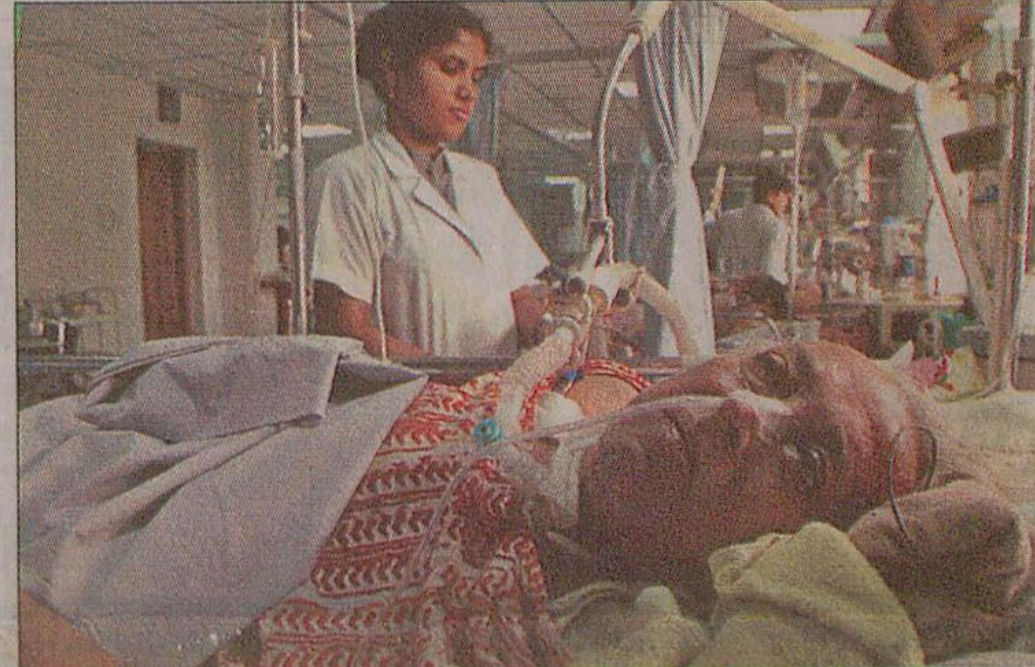
United Flight 923 landed safely, Logan airport spokesman Phil Orlandella said.

The flight, with 182 passengers and 12 crew members landed safely, UAL Corp. spokesman Brandon Borrmann said. Borrmann said a female passenger was spotted engaging in some 'suspicious' activity, but he could not immediately say what the activity was.

State Police and federal agencies took control of the plane after it landed.

Passengers were seen coming

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Poet Shamsur Rahman, lying at the intensive care unit of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital since August 6, shows literally no sign of a fightback to life.

North dates with drought in monsoon 60pc Aman lands lying fallow due to poor rainfall

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

A drought persisting in the northern region, especially Rajshahi and its adjoining districts, has badly affected Aman cultivation, jute and other crops in vast areas.

With only one and a half months of the four-month monsoon still to go, over 60 per cent Aman fields are lying fallow due to poor rainfall while Aman seedlings in the cultivated fields are drying up under the blazing sun.

While most areas in the region are usually flooded during monsoon, croplands have developed cracks this season.

As most water bodies are drying up, growers are facing problems in fermenting jute fibres. Besides, standing jute crops in many fields are withering due to scorching heat.

Abdus Salam, deputy director of Agricultural Extension Department, Rajshahi division, said, "The situation might improve only if it rained fairly heavy over the next two weeks."

The monsoon that lasts from June to September usually sees immense flooding every year but the Padma is now flowing around three metres below its danger level at different points, said hydrological experts of Water Development Board.

Water level in the river this season is the lowest since 2002.

Officials at Rajshahi Divisional Met Office said, rainfall was 189 mm in June this year against 396 mm in June last year. In July last year,

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An Aman field in Mahasthangarh area of Bogra turned dry due to prolonged drought.

PHOTO: STAR

Deep-sea port in Ctg must to be regional commercial hub

Nagorik Committee consultative meet told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh needs to establish a deep-sea port in Chittagong and utilise its strategic geographical location to become a regional economic and commercial hub -- leading economists, business leaders, and civil society members told a consultative meeting yesterday.

Stressing the need for improving the infrastructure, they said a mega



port along the Chittagong coastline serving Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, eastern India, Myanmar and south-western China should be built on a priority basis. Nagorik Committee 2006 organ-

ised the sixth expert group consultation meeting on 'Vision 2021 for Bangladesh: Goal 6: To be globally integrated and to be a regional hub' in the Cirdap auditorium in Dhaka.

Syed Manzur Elahi, former adviser to a caretaker government, and Latifur Rahman, president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) jointly chaired the meeting.

Speaking at the meeting,

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ADVERTORIAL

Sony Days - 2006 MEGA DISCOUNT OFFER

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Japan, a country of technology. As a maker of electronics and unbelievable imagination Japan has no competitor. Sony products launched by Sony Corporation Japan, because of its technology, quality and durability has won the hearts of billions of people.

Sony Days -2006 has brought a new offer for modern generation consumers. Countrywide SONY-RANGS showroom has been stocked with newly introduced models of Sony Color Television, LCD BRAVIA, DVD Player, Hi-Fi Sound Systems, Digital Video and Still Camera, LCD Projections and lots of other products. Three new attractive models of 21" Sparkling Wega Television are available as well as 29" Sony Sparkling TV is available for only @39,990/- BDT. On purchase of only 26", 32", 40" LCD TV, there is a special price. For reporters and professional user's there is a new model of HDV camera. There is no need to carry those heavy cameras to record important

moments anymore. HDR - HC3, the smallest and lightest professional camera in the world is what the professionals were waiting for.

Birthdays, parties and marriage ceremonies can be directly recorded on DVD with the help of Sony DVD camera - DCR - DVD705 and DCR - DVD755. There are also new models of Digital Video and Still cameras available at all SONY-RANGS showroom near you. Followed by Sony Days - 2006 there is a new festival going on at Rifles Square known as Digital Sound System Mela. New Models of VCD Hi-Fi and DVD Hi-Fi of both Sony and Japan based Aiba has created a huge headline among the new generation consumers. Because of Sony Days - 2006 consumers will enjoy special mega discount on purchase of every Sony product.

But everyone must make sure to purchase their product from the SONY-RANGS showroom only. Because recently lots of fake Sony Products has appeared in the Bangladesh market

polluting each and every corner. You can easily identify fake Sony Products if you just be a little careful.

1. When the television is turned on or off if you look at it very closely and carefully you will notice that at the right and left side of the vertical black portion of the television screen, in the middle there are two points, one at each side. These white dots clearly indicate fake Sony Television.

2. Genuine Sony DVD get its logo fixed by making holes on the body with an exact measurement so that the logo fixes within the holes and thus it becomes impossible to remove it. Whereas fake Sony DVD's has its logo fixed on it with the help of cheap local gum and it can be removed by anyone, anywhere.

Before purchasing any Sony product, make sure that your Sony-Rangs documents are in order.

SA GAMES

Booters make road to semis a tough task

AL MUSABBIR SADI from Colombo

Bangladesh will have to beat archrivals India in their last group match to make sure they reach the semifinals of the 10th South Asian Games football competition.

"Bangladesh wasted a few good

chances to share points with Afghanistan in a goalless draw in yesterday's first match here at the Sugathadasa Stadium.

With Group B yet to break out of the jinx of draws, all four teams were level on two points after Nepal

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

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The Daily Star Eid Fashion Album 2006

Attention

Designers, Boutiques & Fashion Houses

Welcome to The Daily Star Fashion Album 2006

As Eid approaches, The Daily Star prepares itself for the big occasion. This year as usual The Daily Star Fashion Catalogue 2006 will feature dresses and sarees of Eid collection plus write-ups describing the creative thinking behind the fashion wears & their creators. The Album represents itself as a source book for both buyers and sellers. Designers, boutiques and fashion houses are invited to participate in this fashion extravaganza.

For information regarding participation and placing advertisement please contact: Sasha Mansoor Chowdhury, Saptahik-2000, 96/97, New Eskaton Road, Dhaka-1000. Phone: 9350951-3, 01713015147 or Sher Ali, Advertisement Manager, The Daily Star, Phone: 9144332.

Rules and regulations

A. The dresses and sarees should express the mood of the festival. The materials used for the sarees and dresses should be locally produced. The design should be original and the fabrics should suit our weather and environment.

B. The dresses and sarees sent for the Album are returnable.

C. The dresses and sarees should be handed over to Saptahik-2000 by 21 to 23 August, 2006.

D. Per Entry Fee Tk 100.00 (Minimum three Entry).