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## Tornado hits Maheshkhali: Six killed

The coastal island, Maheshkhali, of the Cox's Bazar district was hit by an unusual Tornado early today, within six hours after being battered by the severe cyclonic storm, reports UNB.

Six people were killed and 25 others wounded in the tornado that swept over three villages of the Maheshkhali thana at 3:20 am.

According to a source at the Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) here, the tornado lashed the villages of Gorkhghada, Kutubzum and Bormoheshkhali, razing to the ground the 20pc houses and uprooting the trees.

The source said the death was believed to have been due to house collapse as the villagers had come back from the cyclone shelters after the cyclone crossed over.

## 7 killed as nor'westers hit Pabna, Naogaon

At least seven people were killed and 28 others injured as nor'westers lashed three thanas of Pabna yesterday and eight thanas of Naogaon the day before, reports UNB.

In Pabna, two people were killed and 10 others injured as nor'westers hit Atgharia, Chatmohor and Faridpur thanas yesterday evening.

Witnesses said Amzad Hossain, 35, of Kushtia Para in Atgharia thana was killed when a tree fell on him during the storm while Matjan Beowa, 55, of Sohagbari in Chatmohor thana died in a house collapse.

They said about 200 thatched houses and standing crops on a vast track of farm-

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## Buddha Purnima today

Buddha Purnima, the biggest religious festival of Buddhist community, will be observed throughout the country today, reports UNB.

To mark the day, different Buddhist organisations have drawn up various programmes. The programmes include hosting of religious flag, discussion and blood donation.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages on the occasion.

In a separate message, the chief Buddhist Guru (religious leader) Sangharaj Shilalankar Mahasthvir called for unity of all to lead the country towards prosperity.

Bangladesh Buddhist Federation

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## Hearing of 3 cases against Ershad rescheduled

The dates of hearing of three cases against deposed president HM Ershad were rescheduled yesterday by the Divisional Special Judge, Dhaka as both the prosecution and the defence prayed for time.

The prosecution said they needed time as the Divisional Special Public Prosecutor was out of the country. Ershad's counsel said their client could not attend the court yesterday for 'unavoidable' reasons.

The cases relate to purchase of ENG cameras for BTV, evasion of income tax and making illegal appointments. The new dates for hearing the ENG camera case is May 26 and June 25 for the other two cases.

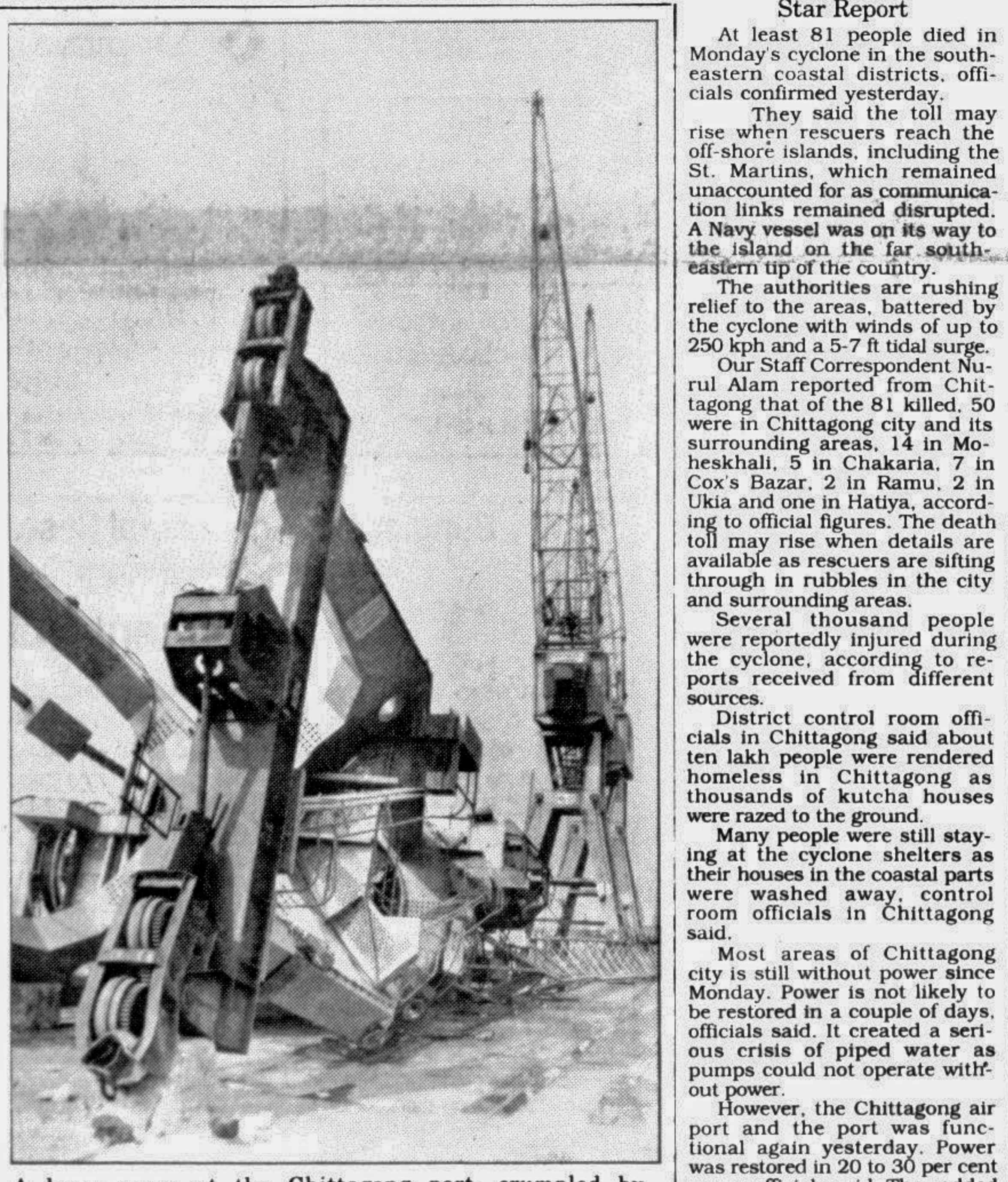
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A housewife of Shikalbaha village of Chittagong stands on the debris of her house, razed to the ground by Monday's cyclone. —Star photo by AKM Mohsin

## 81 deaths confirmed: No report yet from islands



A huge crane at the Chittagong port, crumpled by Monday's cyclone. —Star photo

## Cyclone causes damage to Ctg port, CUFL

CHITTAGONG, May 20: The Chittagong Port incurred a loss of several crore taka due to damage caused by yesterday's severe cyclonic storm, reports BSS.

Shipping Minister ASM Abdur Rob who flew in here today to have a on the spot assessment said that the loss of Bangladesh Shipping Corporation, the National flag carrier on account of cyclone is Tk two crore while BIWTC suffered a loss of Tk 1.5 crore.

However, the navigational channel of the port was normal and berthing facilities were unharmed. The ship operation and cargo handling resumed this afternoon.

Giving an account of the loss of the port, the minister said one shore crane, with a containing capacity of three tons has been damaged. About 300 loaded containers were displaced and boundary walls of several shed were also damaged, he said.

The anchor of the Banglar Sourav tore loose into the deep sea, a barge of BIWTC has been missing and another tanker was damaged, Rob said.

Four ships of BIWTC were grounded on chars during the cyclone.

According to the control room of the Ministry of Shipping, the ships were Monirul Huq, Kutubdia, Abdul Matin and Hurasagar.

UNB adds: Chittagong Urea Fertilizer factory at Rangadia on the east bank of Karnaphuli river was heavily damaged in Monday's cyclone, officials said today.

Managing Director of the Chittagong Urea Fertilizer Ltd (CUFL) Zahurul Islam said the damages could run up to Tk 8 crore. "The loss may increase after final assessment," he told UNB.

According to him, 10 out of 13 cells of ammonia-cooling tower system and utility system were totally damaged. Without the cells production is not possible.

The MD of CUFL said it would take about one month to go in production even if gas supply to the factory starts at this moment.

Production at the factory remained suspended since last December due to shortage in supply of gas which is a raw material of urea fertilizer.

## Ctg city after the cyclone

Mizan Ali, back from Chittagong

The Chittagong city wore a devastated look with electric and telephone poles and trees uprooted and roadside billboards pulped by the cyclone that hit the port city Monday.

Roadside trees were seen uprooted along the Dhaka-Chittagong highway, the Chittagong-Cox's Bazar high way and other roads connecting the port city with different thanas.

The Daily Star's staff correspondent and photo journalist visited the city and suburban areas of Anwara, Shitakund, Patia and Banskhali.

In Anwara thana, 26 kilometres south east of the port city, most of the kutcha houses have been blown away and crops damaged. Trees uprooted by the cyclone have disrupted road links.

People were seen coming out of cyclone shelters early in the morning when The Daily Star

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## Low tide during cyclone saved lives

By Staff Correspondent

The casualties and devastations caused by Monday's cyclone were less compared to previous similar calamities because it hit during low tide at day time and the preparedness was good, according to the Meteorological Department here.

Intensity of Monday's cyclone was similar to the one that swept the south-eastern coastal areas including Urrichar in 1985.

Officials in the Met Office said, the early warning system has also improved along with the disaster management system in the country.

Under the impact of the cyclone, the country also experienced slight rainfall in some areas, they said. The rainfall recorded in Dhaka was 9 mm, in Chittagong 4 mm and in Sylhet 3 mm.

## Man commits suicide after killing wife, 3 children

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, May 20: A man committed suicide allegedly after killing his wife and three children in the Dholoi Tea Estate of Komolganj thana Sunday night. The autopsies of the bodies were done in the Moulvibazar District Hospital today.

According to police, Laxmi Narayan, 35, a labourer of the tea estate went to bed along with his family members Sunday night. He first beheaded his wife, Enkama Kurmi, 35, and then his daughters Iqkahui Kurmi, 12 and Surashmati Kurmi, 5 and the only son Ganesh Kurmi, 2. Finally, he committed suicide by hanging from the roof of his house.

Laxmi Narayan's younger brother Laxmi Proshad found the thatched house under lock and key from inside in the morning yesterday. He with the help of other labourers, broke the door and found the four bodies.

According to source, Laxmi was suffering from depression.

## Affected areas visited Cyclone shelters not adequate, says PM

By Reaz Ahmad, back from cyclone-hit areas

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday visited the cyclone-hit areas of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar and the coastal islands of Maheshkhali and Kutubdia to see the devastation caused by Monday's hurricane.

She flew over the affected areas in an Army helicopter.

"Unlike the 1991 cyclone, casualties are remarkably lower this time. Credit goes to the timely precautionary measures," she said while addressing the district administration officials at Chittagong Circuit House yesterday afternoon.

Earlier, she had a similar meeting with district administration officials of Cox's Bazar.

Noting that the present number of 700 cyclone shelters in the coastal area was inadequate, the Prime Minister said, "we need at least 2,000 cyclone shelters."

She said that steps would be taken soon to distribute khatas (land) among the landless people of Kutubdia, while noting that the island was affected severely by Monday's cyclone. She also said that the cross-dam damaged by the storm at Kutubdia, would be repaired soon.

She expressed her deep shock at the death of two infants due to suffocation inside an over-crowded cyclone shelter at Kutubdia.

The Prime Minister said that she had asked some of her cabinet colleagues to monitor and supervise relief activities in the affected areas. Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru and State Minister for Planning Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, who

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## Khaleda visits cyclone-hit areas of Ctg

CHITTAGONG, May 20: BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia visited the cyclone-hit areas of the district and distributed relief materials among the victims, reports UNB.

She went to the port city by car at noon and visited the cyclone-ravaged areas of Bandar, Patenga, Anwara, Banskhali, Chakoria and Patiya till this evening before leaving for Cox's Bazar, the worst-hit district.

Begum Zia talked to the hapless people and appealed them to face the situation with

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## Delhi urged to remove all trade barriers

By Staff Correspondent

The Indian government is actively considering narrowing down Bangladesh's huge trade gap with India.

"India is aware of the concern in Bangladesh about the trade gap between the countries," said Parbati Sen Vyas, Acting High Commissioner of India in Dhaka.

Accord on action plan

Private sector businessmen of Bangladesh and India yesterday agreed on a proposed action plan aimed at expanding bilateral trade and investment cooperation between the two countries, reports UNB.

A joint statement issued in the city at the end of the fourth meeting of the Bangladesh-India Joint Business Council also

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## Japanese investment Dhaka needs to remove four impediments

From Nurul Kabir

TOKYO, May 20: Japanese investors are developing an interest in investing in Bangladesh and the government has high regards about the potential for investing in the country, said Hiroshi Hashimoto, Director General of the Press and Publication Department of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Hashimoto made the observation while briefing newsmen from home and abroad this afternoon at his office.

Replying to a question from this correspondent, Hashimoto, who is considered to be very close to the Japanese Prime Minister, however, said that Bangladesh needed to make progress on four specific fronts to attract more Japanese investments.

"Although you have made reasonable investments in the service sector, you need to create a congenial environment to attract investment in the manufacturing sector," Hashimoto said adding that if the government of Bangladesh decides to widen its manufacturing sector, the foreign investors would have no reason to sit idle.

"But you have to make progress in the field of infrastructural development," Hashimoto asserted. In this regard, he specifically underlined the problems of 'inadequate' supply of electricity.

The third impediment to further Japanese investments, Hashimoto pointed out, was 'the domestic instability.' "Political instability does not inspire the foreign investors to set up economic establishments in the

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## Privatise profit-making units alongside sick SOEs: WB

A World Bank officials yesterday advocated the privatisation of profit-making industries, alongside loss-incurring state-owned enterprises (SOEs), to make them more profitable, reports UNB.

"Enterprises like Biman, which is not a loss-making unit, can be made highly efficient and profitable, if it is run by skilled private sector people," said the Bank's resident mission chief in Bangladesh, Pierre Landell-Mills.

Newly appointed Chairman of the Privatisation Board Kazi Zafarullah described the privatisation process as a difficult task, but expressed his optimism that the government's disinvestment effort would be a success.

"It's a very difficult process. The old idea of socialism is creating sabotage to the privatisation process," he said at a discussion on privatisation policy, organised by Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI) at its board room.

He stressed the need for a media campaign to make the people aware of the positive aspects of privatisation.

Participating in the discussion, Landell-Mills lauded the government's move towards disinvestment, saying it is an internationally recognised idea to privatise the industries making misuse of tax payer's money by incurring huge losses.

He said if the private sector people can set an example of running sick industries efficiently and profitably, more and more private sector investors would be attracted, even the flow of foreign direct investment (FDI) would be increased.

Strongly opposing the idea of rehabilitating the loss-making SOEs, the World Bank representative laid emphasis on a general law for private operation, a basic framework, policy statement and specific modalities for privatisation.

He advised members of the business community to establish more credibility, honesty, integrity in discharging their duties efficiently to support the government steps towards selling out loss-incurring SOEs.

The chairman of the privatisation board said the present government, which so far did not disinvest any of the loss-making SOEs, would privatise 8 to 10 enterprises within the next few weeks.

He also supported the idea of privatising profit-making enterprises. "The private sector should have the chance to prove how efficiently they can run an organisation, how better and profitable they can make an SOE."

The government has brought Biman or such enterprises, and water and power sector under its purview of privatisation, but everything would be implemented in phases, he said.

"We are moving forward slowly," said Zafarullah, who joined the privatisation board as its chairman three weeks ago with the status of a state minister.

He said the past government had successfully privatised 64 SOEs and the present government floated open tender to sell out 12 industries. The process of tender is being simplified, he said.

Terminating the huge burden of loss-incurring SOEs a "cancer" to the society, he said those

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## BSB filed 274 cases against defaulters

Top officials of the Bangladesh Shilpa Bank (BSB), which has overdue loans of crore of taka, had a meeting with lawyers on Monday to find ways for early disposal of cases against defaulters, reports UNB.

Some 274 cases were filed against the defaulters who owe Tk 555 crore, or 32 per cent of the total recoverable loans, to the development financial institution, said a BSB press release yesterday.

The bank sanctioned loans for 625 projects, but most of them turned loan defaulters.

At the meeting, BSB Managing Director Shamsuzzaman Chowdhury sought cooperation from the bank's legal advisers and listed lawyers in disposing of the cases.

The meeting viewed that the authorities concerned could be requested to from a separate bench in the High Court for early disposal of cases of financial establishments, give priority to cases filed by banks and increase the number of judges.

## 'Most wanted' terrorist nabbed in city

By Staff Correspondent

The Detective Branch (DB) police arrested Aslam, one of the 'most wanted' terrorists in the city, from the Old DOHS area under Cantonment thana early yesterday morning.

Eight accomplices of Aslam alias Sweden Aslam were also arrested from Razabaza, Indira Road and Begunbari areas in the city during the police drive that began at about 3 am.

The DB squad recovered from Aslam and his associates a pistol, an SMG, a six-shooter gun, 25 different types of bullets, a mobile phone, a pager, two walkie-talkies and a bullet-proof jacket.

Aslam, who is wanted in several cases relating to murder, extortion and terrorism, was mainly active for long in

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## Star Weekend Magazine



On the occasion of the first anniversary of The Star Weekend Magazine, we will bring out a special issue titled 'Humour in Our Lives', on 23 May.

This 48-page issue has been devoted to the lighter side of life such as the quirks of bureaucrats, journalists, developmental project workers, politicians etc. Other subjects of leg pulling include: Our notions of what constitutes the ideal man or ideal woman, what it means to be a jamaai (bride groom), the pains of parenthood, our obsession with staying young and of course our dearly beloved BTV.

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