

Former President Sayem passes away

By Staff Correspondent
Former President Abu Sadat Mohammad Sayem, passed away at his Dhanmondi residence in the city yesterday at the age of 81. He was suffering from old age complications.
The national flag flew at half-mast atop public buildings as a mark of respect to the late president.
The mortal remains of the former president were laid to rest at the Banani Graveyard after his namaj-e-janaza, held in the Supreme Court premises after Zohr prayers.
The cabinet in a meeting yesterday condoled the death of the country's first Chief Justice and former president ASM Sayem, an official press release said.
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chaired the meeting held at the cabinet room of the Jatiya Sangsad.
As soon as the news of his death came in the morning.
See Page 12 Col 3

IPSA renamed Bangabandhu University

The cabinet yesterday approved, in principle, conversion of the Institute of Postgraduate Studies in Agriculture (IPSA) into a university, reports UNB.
The institute will now be renamed Bangabandhu University of Postgraduate Education in Agriculture as per cabinet's approval of a unanimous recommendation made by the board of directors of the IPSA.
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presided over the meeting in the Jatiya Sangsad cabinet room.
The meeting adopted a resolution condoling the death of former President Justice ASM Sayem.
Members of the cabinet, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, secretaries and officials of Cabinet Division were present at the meeting.

Cabinet okays proposal to induct 2 more members in SEC

Star Report
The cabinet yesterday approved a proposal to incorporate two more members in the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) by amending the SEC Act, 1993.
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presided over the cabinet meeting held at the Jatiya Sangsad cabinet room.
The amendment will be placed before parliament for ratification, according to highly-placed sources.
The SEC already has two members and a chairman.
But the SEC is limping with only 11 officials. The authorities are yet to strengthen its manpower on the basis of an organogram providing for 69 more people.
The Finance Ministry approved the organogram recently. But it is yet to be cleared by the Establishment Ministry.
Its chairman, Dr Harunur Rashid, tendered his resignation on June 29. But the Finance Ministry could not find out a suitable successor to Dr Harun.
A key official, an executive director of the SEC is also leaving the Commission in September.

Inside Today

Article

Prospects of Growth in Agriculture Sector

Column : Window on Asia
by Shahed Latif

Recast Bureaucratic Leviathan or Risk Failure of Everything Else

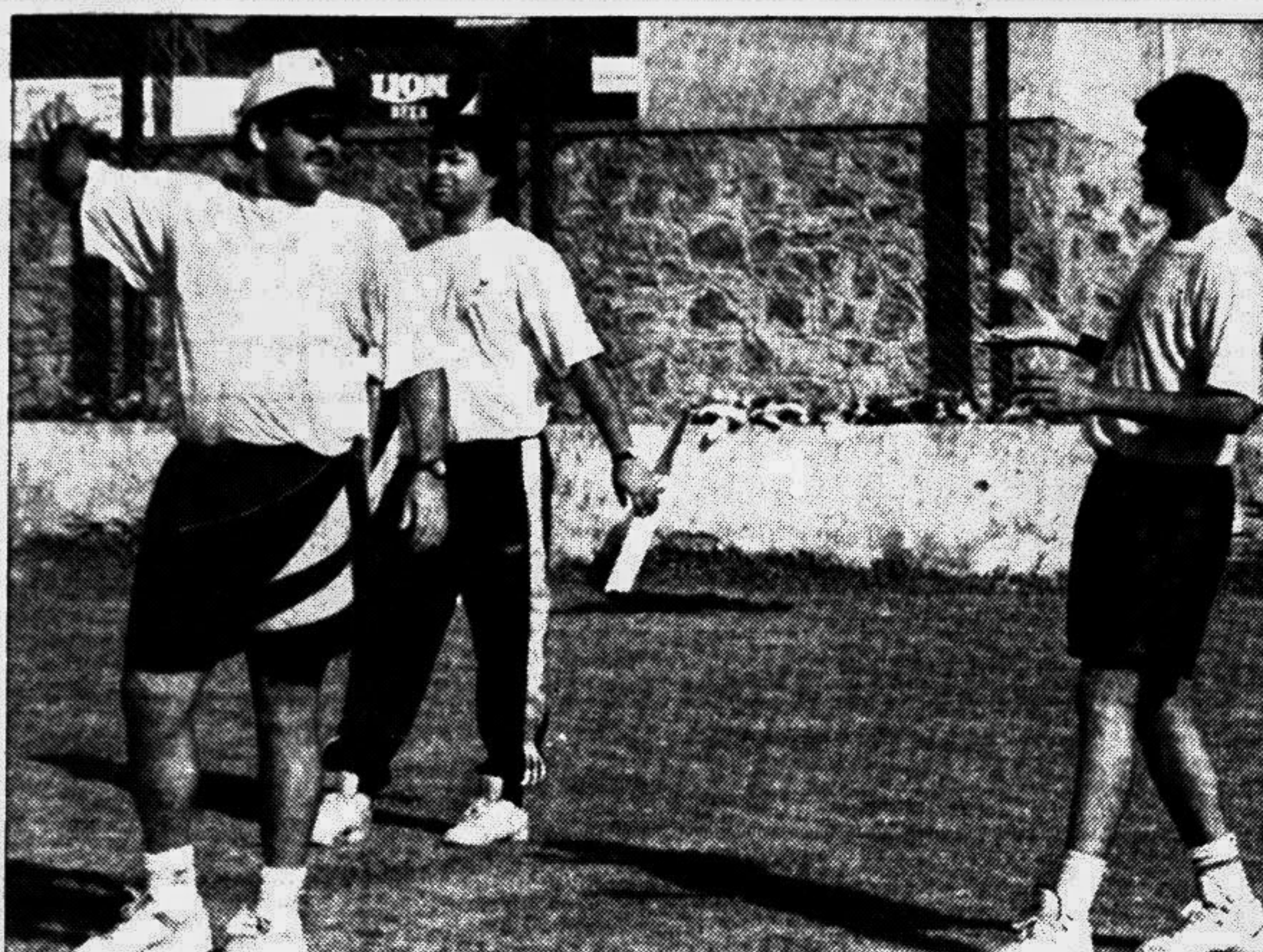
Column : Crosscurrents
by CAF Dowlah
Page 4

Focus

Law and Order: We can delay only at our own peril
Page 5

Business

Tofael assures better investment climate for Filipino investors
DSE index edges higher on better volume
Pages 6, 7



Skipper Akram Khan (L) at the net practice session yesterday in Sri Lanka where the four-nation Asia Cup cricket tournament begins on July 14. — AFP/UNB photo

Bangladesh play first warm-up match today

Sports Reporter
Bangladesh cricket team will play their first warm-up match against the Sri Lankan President's Eleven at P Sara ground in Colombo today.
The national team arrived in Colombo on Monday to take part in the four-nation sixth Asia Cup tourney, which includes world champions Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan. The regional cricket carnival will kick off on July 14.
The home team will play their next warm-up match Thursday before appearing in their Cup-opener against Pakistan on July 16.
Bangladesh will finalise their line-up for Asia Cup after the two warm-ups. However, the probable eleven for today's limited-over match could not be known till filing this report last night.

52pc pass SSC exams under 5 education boards

By Staff Correspondent

Results of Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations, 1997, held under all the five education boards in the country were published yesterday.
This was the first time that all the education boards conducted the SSC examinations under a common set of questions.

A total of 7,16,865 students appeared at the examinations this year, of whom, 3,73,784 came out successful. The pass percentage is 52.14.
Of the successful candidates, 2,24,021 were male and 1,49,763 female. A total of

1,28,759 students got first division, 2,34,342 second division and 10,683 third division.
Among those placed in the first division 86,511 were male and 42,284 female.
Under the Dhaka Board, a total of 2,15,604 students appeared.

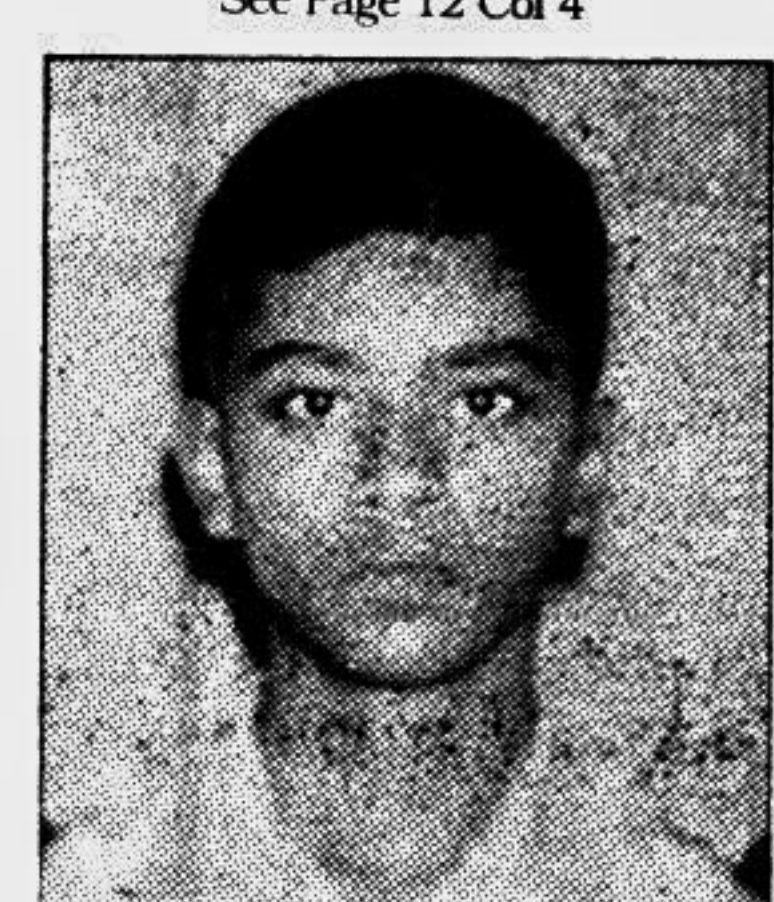
See Page 12 Col 4



Shamim Al-Mamun



Aparajita Goswami



Abdullah Al-Reza

'Nothing wrong in appointing competent relatives' Zia rewarded self-confessed killers thru' diplomatic postings: PM

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said yesterday that her government, soon after taking over, had directed Bangladesh missions abroad to make all-out efforts to draw foreign investment in the country as part of the government's 'economic diplomacy'.
The missions are sending regular reports in this regard and the envoys' performances are by and large satisfactory, she said while replying to questions in the Jatiya Sangsad during the Prime Minister's question-time yesterday.
Responding to a question by BNP lawmaker Zafrul Islam Chowdhury, the Prime Minister said that there were ample

scopes for gearing up the envoys' activities and expanding the sphere of 'economic diplomacy'.
She, however, said, "It will take some time to streamline the diplomatic sector and remove the legacy of stagnation created by the previous BNP government through politicising the administration."
Answering to a supplementary by Awami League deputy Abul Kalam Azad, the Prime Minister said, steps will be taken soon against 'appointment of incompetent people as envoys by the previous government'.
She said that president Ziaur Rahman rewarded self-

confessed killers like Dalim, Pasha, Huda, Noor and Shahrier by giving them diplomatic assignments. Some countries including Poland did not accept those killers. Bangladesh was represented in other countries by 'a gang of killers during that time', Sheikh Hasina said.
The BNP legislator wanted to know the identity of the newly-appointed High Commissioner to Canada and enquired whether he was a kin of the premier. Sheikh Hasina replied that the High Commissioner was her daughter's father-in-law and also the son of Bangabandhu's cousin.
See Page 12 Col 1

Farooq's appeal rejected

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday rejected Col (ret'd) Farooq Rahman's appeal petition against the judgement of the High Court Division rejecting the writ petition regarding constitution of the court for trial of the Bangabandhu murder case in a two-storied building opposite the Central Jail gate, in place of the Sessions Judge Court at Jhonson Road, reports BSS.
The acting Chief Justice, Mustafa Kamal, was in the chair. The other judges were Justice Abdur Rouf and Justice Bimalendu Bikash Roy Chowdhury.

A High Court Division bench on April 30, 1997 had rejected a writ petition filed by accused in Bangabandhu murder case Col (ret'd) Farooq Rahman challenging the gazette notification of March 3 for holding the trial of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman murder case in two storied BMD building at

All 5 accused granted div in jail None instigated me to file case: Complainant

By Staff Correspondent

One of the defence lawyers of the accused, during cross-examination of Mahitul Islam yesterday, asked him whether the name of Henry Kissinger, former US Secretary of State, should have been in the FIR (first information report) of the Bangabandhu murder case.
"I do not think so," Mahitul Islam, principal witness and complainant in the case, replied in the court of District and Sessions Judge, Dhaka.

Mahitul was cross-examined by advocate Nazrul Islam, lawyer of accused Shahriar Rashid Khan, and advocate Razzak Khan, lawyer of Wahab Joarder, till about 2 pm. The proceedings began again after a recess of about 45 minutes when

Khan Saifur Rahman, lawyer of Syed Farooq Rahman began his cross-examination.

Judge Kazi Golam Rasul adjourned the proceedings at around 4:30 pm, when Khan Saifur Rahman informed the court that he was not feeling well. Proceedings of the court will resume at 10 am today.

During the proceedings of the court, the judge also ordered for giving division in jail to all the five accused and allowed Farooq to sign papers to transfer his share certificates in the name of his mother.

During the cross-examination, lawyers of the accused in custody said that the names of their clients were implicated in

Percentage of pass rises

By Staff Correspondent

The percentage of pass in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations under all five boards this year has increased by about 10 compared to that of the last year.

The overall pass percentage this year is 52.14 while that of the previous year was 42.16.

Of the five education boards, the Chittagong Board had the highest 17 percentage point increase in the pass percentage as against the increase of two percentage points recorded by the Rajshahi Board this year.

In Dhaka Board, the pass percentage this year is 49.97 compared to last year's 42.20. In Comilla Board, 61.18 per

See Page 12 Col 1

Rajshahi Board

Rangpur Cadet

College captures

19 top places

By Staff Correspondent

The Rangpur Cadet College has captured all but one position in the combined Science Group merit list of the SSC examination under Rajshahi Board, according to an official announcement.

Nineteen students of the college got places in 12 different positions. Two examinees jointly secured the 1st position. They are: Khairuzzaman and Anwarul Abedin. Then the third position was secured by Ashrafur Islam and fourth by Mamunuzzaman.

Touhidul and Rashed Iqbal secured the fifth position. Shohel and Mannan sixth. Abu Naser, Osman Gani and Ahmed Ishraq the 7th position.

The 10th position went to Monjor Morshed and the 11th to Abu Rubayat. The 13th position went to Bahlul Haidar and Obaidur Rahman.

Faridul Islam stood 15th and Mahbub Hassan 19th in the merit list.

Arson attack

Another Bangladeshi

dies in Bahrain

MANAMA, July 8: A Bangladeshi died in hospital today raising the death toll in an arson attack this week in Bahrain. The man, a government official said.

A Bangladeshi worker died when a group of people set a store ablaze on Saturday in Sitra, linked with the capital Manama by a three km causeway.

Four Bahraini suspects were arrested.

The fire was one of several recent arson attacks in Bahrain, the Gulf's main financial and banking centre and

See Page 12 Col 5

Jubo League

worker shot

dead in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, July 8: A Jubo League activist, Asaduzzaman Khokon, was killed by unidentified gunmen at west Tootpara under Kotwali thana on Monday night.

Police recovered the body from the bank of a pond near the house where he was shot dead.

An accused in four murder cases, Khokon was absconding for the last one month to avoid arrest by police.

Meanwhile, as the news of the killing spread in the city, the supporters of the deceased looted some houses and shops and also set two houses on fire this afternoon.

Police fired blank shots to disperse the unruly supporters of the deceased Jubo League activist.

JS standing committees Dialogue to continue

By Nurul Kabir

Contrary to media reports, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will not unilaterally announce the Jatiya Sangsad (JS) standing committees on ministries, sources close to the PM told The Daily Star last night.
The Prime Minister will wait for a negotiation with the Opposition on this issue till the next session of Parliament, the sources added.
Sheikh Hasina, who is also the leader of the House, told the press on Monday that she would unilaterally announce the committees, if the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) failed to submit the list of its members before prorogation of the current session of Parliament. The current session of parliament is scheduled to be prorogued tomorrow.

But she changed her mind after a second thought and abandoned the idea of unilaterally announcing the parliamentary committees, sources in the ruling party caucus said yesterday.
"The Premier has changed her mind following a cabinet meeting held yesterday afternoon", a top ranking leader of the ruling party, who is also considered to be the Premier's most important counsellor on Parliamentary affairs, told this correspondent last night.
Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim who is negotiating with the BNP on this issue told this correspondent late last night: "The Treasury Bench will continue negotiations with the Opposition on the subject until the next session of Parliament."

See Page 12 Col 7

JS snippets

By Nazmul Ashraf

"I deem all the people of Bangladesh to be my relatives. As daughter of the Father of the Nation, all countrymen are my relatives. Ours is a large family having relations in many families spreading all over the country. If I start counting from this House, I'll find many members, from the Treasury Bench to the Opposition Bench, who are my relations."

This is how the Leader of the House and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina started while replying to a question in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday amid laughter by all the members.

During the Prime Minister's question-answer hour, BNP deputy Shahidul Islam asked her whether Bangladesh's High Commissioner designate to Canada was her relative.
See Page 12 Col 8

PM's remarks baseless: BNP

Opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) protested remarks by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on conclusion of her visit to Japan, describing those as 'false and motivated', reports UNB.

In a statement yesterday, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said the Prime Minister was now trying to confuse the countrymen by propagating 'untrue and motivated' statements.
"She is doing this after returning from Japan as she went there to hide self-imprudence while she created some odd scenario during the visit," Bhuiyan remarked.

The Prime Minister's visit to Japan was not a state-level or

See Page 12 Col 7

33 killed as train blown up in Punjab

AMRITSAR, July 8: A bomb ripped apart a passenger coach on a moving express train in the northern Indian state of Punjab today, killing at least 33 passengers and wounding 67 others, police and doctors said, reports AP.

The blast occurred soon after the five-car Ganganagar-Amritsar commuter train with 500 people on board left the railroad station of Bhatinda, 197 kilometers West of Amritsar, police constable Parshna Singh said by the telephone.

Among the dead were six women and four children. Press Trust of India news agency said.

"We do not have very much details, but the blast was so powerful that it ripped one car in which the bomb was kept," Singh said.

Bomb experts searched through the debris of the destroyed coach and strewn shoes, luggage and even human body parts for clues that could help them determine the kind of bomb used.

The bomb, with a timed detonator, appeared to have been placed beneath the floor of the coach, said a police official, speaking on condition of anonymity. The floor and the

See Page 12 Col 3

Rajuk set to hand over Gulshan Lake to private developers

By Shehab Ahmed

A hatchery, built in 1981 at a cost of Tk 50 lakh by the Fisheries Directorate in the Gulshan Lake, has been left to ruin as the wetland is set to be handed over to private developers by the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (RAJUK), according to sources concerned.

Pending the development work on the vast lake to house a string of apartment buildings, condominiums and five-star hotels, the lake was leased to a private fishery last year.

Meanwhile, the sub-projects — three of the integrated fisheries project of the Fisheries Directorate — have been put into hibernation.

Three rusting vehicles, including a land-rover, a deep tubewell and nine idle employ-

ees are all that remain of the project.

It started as part of a city-wide project to help meet the capital's ever increasing demand for fish.

But the building boom in the Eighties and Nineties saw the shrinking project losing its crown jewels. The lakes in Dhanmondi, Banani, Gano Bhaban, Sangsad Bhaban and its surrounding areas, the ponds at Bangabhaban, Minto Road, Suhrawardy Uddyan and Azampur were part of that project.

But Banani Lake has been taken over by the Rajuk. The lake now faces extinction to meet demands of city's land. Only the Dhanmondi, Gano

Bhaban and Sangsad Bhaban lakes remain under the project. The ponds have also disappeared fast.

The lease of the 55-acre Banani Lake was cancelled only one year after it was signed in 1994. But the investments in fish fries and lease money of Tk 91,666.76 were lost.

The sub-project at Gulshan awaits its final disposal as the Rajuk has cancelled the lease to its 10 katha land. It has ignored repeated pleas by the Fisheries Directorate to renew the lease which expired in December, 1991.

The Rajuk has threatened to demolish the project office reportedly to allot the project to a highly influential person.

Foundation of nat'l cultural complex laid

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called upon cultural organisers and activists to co-operate with the government, helping the country step into the 21st century with an enriched cultural heritage, reports UNB.

"We want to enter into the 21st century with the glory of national culture closely linked with the thousand years' cultural heritage of the Bangladesh," she said while laying the foundation of the National Cultural Complex yesterday morning.

The government has decided to build the cultural complex in and around Suhrawardy Uddyan, Ramna Park, Shilpakala Academy, Bangla Academy, Arts Institute and the National Museum during next five years.

In the first phase of the Tk 170 crore project, national art

See Page 12 Col 2

Strike at Ctg port called off

From Staff Correspondent

labourers and coaster hatch workers — signed an agreement.

As per agreement the hatch workers after completion of their running work in four ships now, will refrain from doing work in any other vessels, he added.

Besides, the meeting agreed that the Ministry of Port and Shipping will give a decision within two weeks on the jurisdiction of work of the merchant workers and coaster hatch workers, he said.

The Deputy Minister for Port and Shipping and the secretary of the ministry arrived in the port city yesterday evening to

hold the talks for breaking the five-day stalemate in the country's main port.

The Mayor of Chittagong City Corporation Mohiuddin Chowdhury, port officials and leaders of the workers also attended the meeting.

The merchant workers went on a wildcat strike at Chittagong Port from Thursday afternoon to protest engagement of hatch workers in lighterage of cargo from ships anchored at the outer-anchorage.

Meanwhile, port officials said work resumed in full swing at the port's jetties, sheds and anchored vessels.



The Gulshan Lake is set for handover to private property developers. — Star photo by Amran Hossain