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# The Daily Star

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## President's Miladunnabi function disrupted

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed had to abandon his scheduled Eid-e-Miladunnabi programme at the Baitul Mukarram Mosque premises yesterday evening amidst an awkward situation, reports UNB.

The President was invited by the Islamic Foundation to inaugurate its fortnight-long Miladunnabi programme.

A group of muslims raised shouts at about 7:45 pm when Religious Affairs Secretary Abdus Shakur was addressing the function.

Later, State Minister for Religious Affairs Moulana Nurul Islam took the microphone to deliver his speech at about 7:50 pm.

But Nurul Islam was also heckled by the troublemakers exhibiting shoes, witnesses said. One pair also dropped near

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## Miladunnabi today

Holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi will be observed today, the 12th of Rabiul Awal, with due solemnity, reports UNB.

Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM), the greatest and last Prophet of Islam, was born on this day in Makkah in 570 AD and also passed away the same day in 632 AD.

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia gave separate messages on the occasion.

The day is a public holiday. The government and different political, religious and socio-cultural organisations have drawn up elaborate programmes.

The day will be observed

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## Shima murder Attorney General's office examining case file

The Attorney General's office yesterday received the file of the Shima murder case from the solicitor's office at the Law Ministry to examine whether filing law appeal before the High Court is possible, reports UNB.

Attorney-General KS Nabi received the case file in the morning and immediately called three Deputy Attorneys General - ASM Shahid, Monsur UI Hoq Chowdhury and M Farook.

The AG handed over the copy of the case file to the three DAGs to scrutinise and give a joint report immediately as to whether

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## Indian chopper crosses into Bangladesh airspace

HABIGANJ, July 17: An Indian helicopter allegedly crossed into Bangladesh airspace in Habiganj district today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said a green-coloured helicopter flew low over a tea garden in Churnaghat thana of the district at about 8 am.

When contacted, Balla border BDR authorities confirmed the incident. Duty officer at BDR headquarters in Dhaka declined to make any comment.

This is the third airspace violation by the neighbouring country since last May.

## Holiday

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed today (Friday) on the occasion of holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi.

Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow (Saturday).

## Inside Today

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## Business

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## PW-3 narrates Aug 15 incidents in court Armymen took Russel, then gunshots and his groaning were heard

By Staff Correspondent

The third witness in the Bangabandhu murder case in his deposition to the court of District and Sessions Judge, Dhaka, yesterday said that four or five army personnel pulled Bangabandhu from his room and took him towards the staircase.

Selim alias Abdul, 43, the third witness, worked at the residence of Bangabandhu as a helping hand from 1967 and was present there during the time of the killing on August 15, 1975.

The proceedings in the court began at around 11:35 am and ended at about 4:30 pm when one of the defence lawyers reminded the court that the last

time for the court was fixed at 4:30 pm after which the court cannot sit without consensus of the parties concerned.

The judge then adjourned the days proceedings till Monday next.

Earlier, Sharfuddin Mukul had completed his cross-examination of the second prosecution witness Abdur Rahman alias Rama.

After recording the statement of the third prosecution witness, the judge asked the state defence to start their cross-examination. One lawyer on behalf of the 14 state defence counsels of the absconding accused pleaded before the court to let the defence lawyers for the

arrested accused to start the cross-examination.

Pleading before the court, Advocate Pran Nath, lawyer for the absconding accused Maj (relieved) Shariful Hossain, said that all the lawyers of the state defence were junior and not sufficiently experienced in the legal profession.

Khan Saifur Rahman, lawyer for accused Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Farookur Rahman, observed that when a case involving capital punishment was being tried the defence lawyers for absconding accused "should be of some standing".

The judge rejected the plea of the state defence and ordered then to begin the cross-exami-

nation of the third witness.

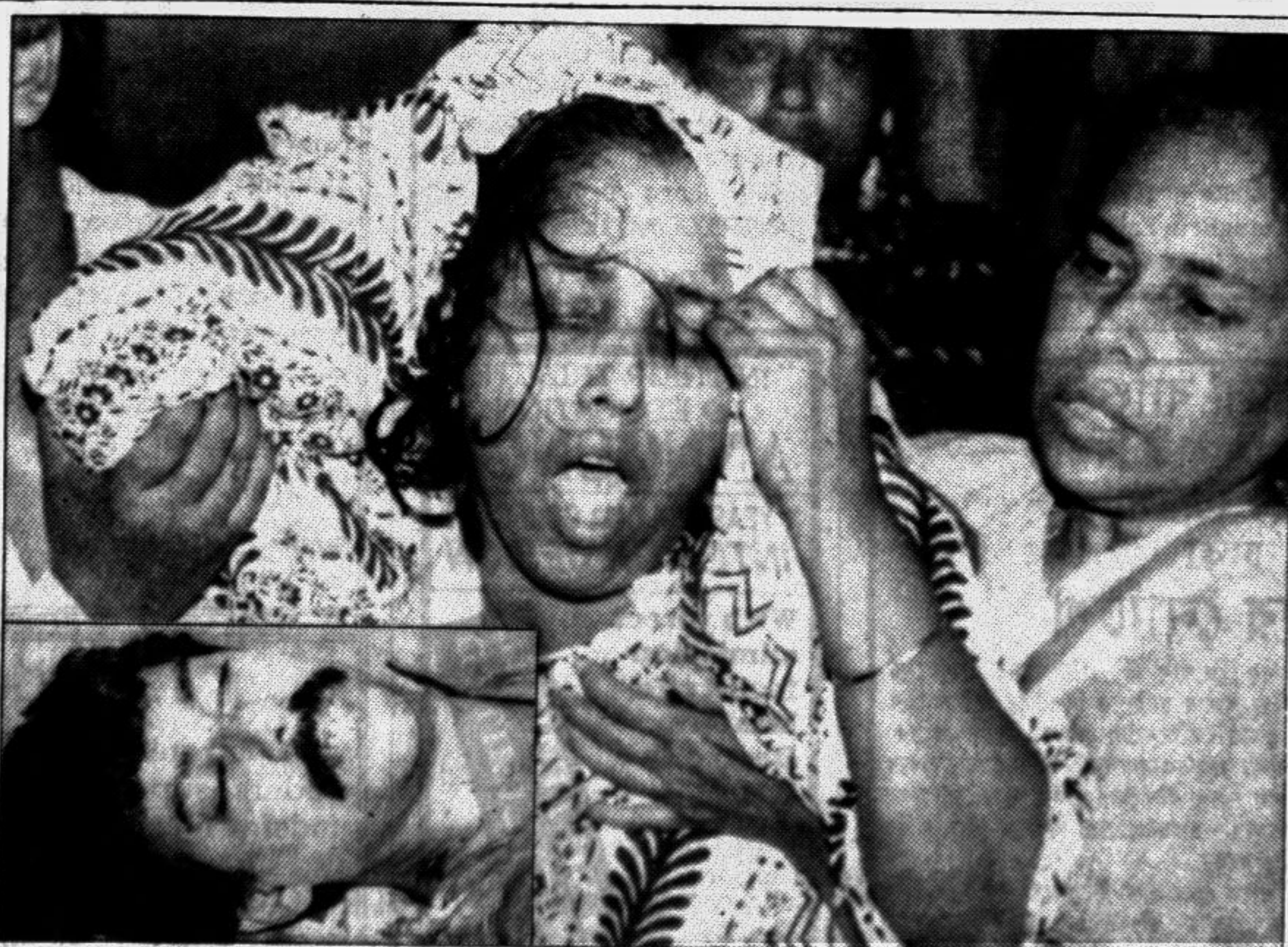
The third prosecution witness said, "Armymen receiving instruction from their officers took Russel bhai and afterwards I heard sounds of firing and groaning of Russel", according to UNB.

Selim, who now works at Bdgabhaban became emotional while narrating the episode of killings.

The PW-3 who was injured by gunshots on the day at one stage of his deposition showed the wound marks to the court during yesterday's trial proceedings.

Rama told the Dhaka District and Sessions Judge's Court

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Relatives of Saifuddin (Inset) waiting at the DMCH.

## WHO official shot dead in Siddhirganj

By Staff Correspondent

Unidentified gunmen shot dead a local official of WHO at Mizmizi in Siddhirganj, about 20 km from the city, last night.

Saifuddin Mahmud, 35, a programme support officer of WHO, was shot inside his car at about 8:30 pm. He was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead.

DMCH sources said Saifuddin was bullet-hit in his chest and succumbed to his injuries on way to the hospital.

The motive behind the killing could not be known immediately. Siddhirganj police said they had heard about the incident but could not give details till late last night.

DMCH sources, quoting the victim's family members, said he was attacked soon after he boarded his car to return to his residence at Malibagh in the city. Father of two, Saifuddin went to Mizmizi to attend a family function at his cousin's

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## Task Force suggests steps to improve Ctg port facilities

The task force on export suggested the government to take immediate steps for improving overall efficiency and service facilities of Chittagong Port to cope with increasing volume of exports, reports UNB.

In a meeting yesterday, it emphasised evolving a permanent system so that the seaport, country's commercial lifeline, could function smoothly.

The task force also stressed the improvement of bank credit facilities and enhancement of incentives to the exporters for rapid increase of exports which raise foreign exchange reserve and create more employment.

The members of the task force argued that most of the countries including neighbours are practising this strategy for improving their economic con-

dition.

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed presided over the meeting of the task force, formed to make suggestions for removing impediments to export and find ways and means of expanding export.

Commerce and Industries Minister is the convenor of the task force that comprises secretaries of ministries and divisions concerned, presidents of different chambers, trade bodies, exporters association and employers' association.

Addressing the meeting, the minister said the government is determined to remove all bottlenecks to ensure all sorts of facilities including port and bank credit for rapid increase of exports and necessary steps

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## Govt conspiring over CHT issue: BNP

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, MP, has alleged that the government is conspiring over the CHT issue, by keeping the people in the dark about the outcome of its on-going negotiations with the Parbatya Chhattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS).

The government is not letting anybody know what it has gained from the peace talks at a moment when the so-called Shantibahini, trained and armed by India, is killing our innocent people and the members of the army and the police. Why this secrecy?" Mannan Bhuiyan said.

The BNP Secretary General was addressing a gathering at the party central office in the city on the occasion of some Jamaat-e-Islami leaders' joining the BNP.

"Deep-rooted intrigues are on about the country's integral part - Chittagong Hill Tracts. People want to know what con-

spiracy the government is doing about the CHT issue keeping them in dark", he said.

Mannan Bhuiyan also warned the people to remain alert about, what he said, the conspiracy to withdraw the army from the CHT.

Jamaat central leader Abdul Kader and members Md Khalilur Rahman, Md Shaikh Farid and Md Khalilur Rahman joined the BNP.

Criticising the prime minister for her frequent foreign visits the BNP leader said she was leaving behind the people hit by floods and in the grip of unabated terrorism. This was nothing but a mockery with the people, he added.

BNP city unit chief Sadek Hossain Khoka, MP, addressing the gathering, called upon the new comers to join the party's struggle for protecting the national independence and sovereignty, democracy and people's rights.

## 17th BCS exams exempted from quota for FFs' wards

By Reaz Ahmad

The government decision to reserve 30 per cent quota for the wards of freedom fighters (FFs) would not be applicable in the case of recruitments through the 17th BCS Examinations, official sources said yesterday.

The 30 per cent quota which was earlier reserved for the wards of the FFs by a government order.

Government's decision to exempt the 17th BCS examinations from the new quota provision, however, was not yet communicated to the Public Service Commission (PSC).

Establishment Secretary Mahe Alam told The Daily Star that PSC would be informed about the decision within a couple of days. The new quota provision would not be applicable for 17th BCS Examinations.

## Abolish quota, demand BCS examinees

By Staff Correspondent

Seventeenth BCS Examinees have demanded abolition of the 30 per cent quota for the wards of freedom fighters and immediate publication of the results of their examinations.

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would be filled up. The provision did not exist when applications for the examinations were invited back in 1995.

Dr Jerin Zaman, a Member of the PSC, told The Daily Star yesterday that the Commission had been trying its best to ensure that results could be published soon. "We are working on weekly holidays also and I hope the results can be published by the end of current month".

A high powered committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary was earlier formed on June 23 to take measures to identify the wards of FFs so that they can avail the facility of 30 per cent reserved quota for them in the government, semi-government and autonomous organisations.

Under the existing system, 45 per cent appointments are

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## Zia murder case Court allows 30 more days for submitting probe report

CHITTAGONG, July 17: The court today allowed 30 more days for submission of investigation report on the murder of former President Ziaur Rahman, killed in a coup d'etat in 1981, reports UNB.

The CMM, AKM Kamaluddin, following a time-petition by investigation officer (IO) Fazlul Kabir, OC of Kotwali thana, fixed August 20 as next date of the case.

The CMM court earlier on May 28 this year gave the investigating officer 50 days to submit the report under Section 173/CrPC.

It then said: The commissioner of CMP will supervise or arrange to supervise the investigation.

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## Hydrocarbon exploration \$2b foreign investment in next 3 years likely

Bangladesh, offering its hydrocarbon blocks for exploration, will be able to attract at least two billion dollars in foreign investment by 2000, reports UNB.

Energy Minister Mohammad Noor Uddin Khan expressed the optimism in a press conference yesterday, following the closing of bids for 15 blocks offered for exploration of oil and gas with foreign private capital.

The future of Bangladesh economy depends on the energy sector," said the minister in presence of senior officials of his ministry and Petrobangla, and representatives of the bidding companies.

Khan said Bangladesh has a potential reserve of at least 50 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. "But as per my idea, the re-

serve can go up to as high as 80 trillion cubic feet," he said.

The international oil majors sharpened their focus on Bangladesh after Cairn Energy, a British company, struck a huge gas reserve in the Sangu gas field, located in block no 16 in the Bay of Bengal.

The Petrobangla invited international bids on March 15 for exploration of oil and gas under PSCs and promoted the bid through two international seminars in London and Houston, USA.

Twenty-one international oil majors have submitted 28 proposals for 12 blocks in the country, showing a tremendous response to the offer.

The biddings were closed in Dhaka on Tuesday. The compa-

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## Every garments factory must have fire-exits

The government has taken some decisions on fire-safety measures in the garments industries to prevent fire incidents, reports BSS.

The decisions were taken at an inter-ministerial meeting, held yesterday in the Conference Room of the Home Ministry with Home Minister Rafiqul Islam in the chair.

The meeting discussed different problems relating to fire-safety in the garments industries and necessary law reforms.

The Home Secretary, Law Secretary, Labour and Manpower Secretary, representatives of the ministries of commerce, industries, works, President of Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) Mostafa Golam Qudus and other BGMEA officials attended the

meeting.

The decisions are:

- 1) each garment industry must have arrangements for fire-safety, which will be monitored by a team comprising representatives from BGMEA, Fire Service and Civil Defence and Labour Ministry to ensure the application of fire-safety measures;
- 2) each industry must have provision for fire-exits and it will be ensured by BGMEA within the next three months;
- 3) the garments units should arrange fire-drill for the employees and workers of the industry every six months;
- 4) the garment industrial unit should not be set up in such a place, where fire fighting engines cannot enter;
- 5) every industry must have an automatic fire alarming system.

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## Fire: Case filed for 'carelessness'

By Staff Correspondent

Police were yet to identify seven of the nine people who died in a fire in two garments factories at Mirpur in the city Tuesday night.

Besides, a Sub-Inspector of Mirpur thana filed a case alleging that the fire broke out due to 'carelessness'.

The Managing Director of one of the garments factories, Rahman & Rahman Apparels Ltd, Zillur Rahman, said none of their workers informed the authorities about any missing person till last night.

The MD also said they were checking to find out the identities of the persons. It would take some time to find out the identities of the victims as all the documents were burnt in the fire.

Officials of the other garments factory, Maxborn Bangladesh Ltd, could not be contacted last night.



Samajtantrik Samik Front brought out a procession in the city yesterday demanding safety of garments workers in factories and compensation for nine garments' workers killed in fire in Mirpur Tuesday night.

## 'Political goodwill, trust needed for success of SAGQ'

Participants at a seminar in the city yesterday underlined the need for political goodwill and mutual trust among the member countries to make the South Asian Growth Quadrangle (SAGQ) successful, report UNB.

A national consensus in those countries is also necessary, they observed.

The speakers at the seminar on "South Asian Growth Quadrangle: Bangladesh Perspective" called for seeking expert opinion before drawing "any political line and physical planning".

The proposal in the shape of a sub-regional cooperation under the SAARC was mooted by

Dhaka at a Council of Ministers meeting in New Delhi last December.

The Sub Regional Cooperation, endorsed at the Secretary-level meeting in Kathmandu later as the South Asian Growth Quadrangle, groups Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and seven Indian states having geographical contiguity with Bangladesh.

"Formation of sub-regional group will put SAARC on a faster track to attain objectives of the SAARC charter on shortest possible time," said Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury while opening the seminar.

The seminar was organised by the International Studies

Association of Bangladesh (ISAB) at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS).

Chowdhury, a former foreign minister, said SAARC charter itself envisages sub-regional cooperation through establishment of action committees involving more than two but not all member states.

Chowdhury said formation of sub-regional group would have positive impact on the economies of the member states.

Speaking as the chief guest at the concluding session, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury gave a

brief resume of the ongoing process towards formation of the SAGQ.

"It will take at least one year to give a concrete shape to the Quadrangle. Now necessary approach and research papers are being studied," he said.

Making the government position clear on the matter, Abul Hasan Chowdhury said, "Nothing would be done jeopardising the interest, territorial integrity, national sovereignty and independence of the country."

He said the government obviously should seek the expert opinion in this respect and se-

curity question must be taken into consideration in determining the areas of cooperation with the partners. "The government is committed to seeing how much benefit the country could derive from the Quadrangle."

Noted economist Prof Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud urged the government to procure domestic resources for implementation of welfare projects instead of seeking assistance from international donors including the World Bank.

Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof A K Azad Chowdhury welcomed the move

for developing cooperation among the four South Asian nations.

Prof M Masum of Jahangirnagar University in an article said, "As India is not a land-locked country, no part of India, including its northeast can rightfully claim transit through Bangladesh to the sea."

The seminar was also addressed by ISAB President Prof Abul Kalam, General Secretary Dr Abdur Rob Khan and Joint Secretary Mosud Mannan, Dr Amena Mohsin, Dr Tareq Shamsur Rahman, Shahed Latif, Dr Mizanur Rahman and Prof M Shahiduzzaman.

## Asia Cup India-Sri Lanka tie today

COLOMBO, July 17: Indian captain Sachin Tendulkar, recently involved in controversy over team selection, said today he wanted to forget the past and start afresh with the Asia Cup competition, reports Reuter.

"I am going into this tournament with an open frame of mind. It's a new season for me," Tendulkar said ahead of tomorrow's match against world champions Sri Lanka.

"We are not thinking of what happened in the past. Neither are we thinking about what is going to happen in the future," Tendulkar said.

He had been quoted by Indian newspaper Aajkal as saying that he had been given a B-team, but Tendulkar has denied saying that "Everybody knows Sri Lanka is playing top cricket. To beat them we have to get big runs, to score as many as possible. That's what one-day cricket is becoming like. We have a team to do that," Tendulkar said.

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## CHT talks No briefing: PCJSS team may leave today

By Special Correspondent

Talks between the National Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts (NCCHT) and the Parbatya Chhattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) continued for the fourth day yesterday.

Both sides were trying late last night to iron out their differences to finalise the draft of an agreement to end decades of insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

The PCJSS delegation, led by its Chairman Jyotirindriyo Bodhipriyo Lama alias Shantu Lama, extended its stay in the capital overnight to narrow down differences with the government side, represented by the NCCHT negotiators led by Chief Whip of Parliament Abul Hasnat Abdullah, according to sources.

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## Young man stabbed to death by dacoits in Uttara

By Staff Correspondent

A gang of dacoits stabbed a young man to death at Dakshinkhan under Uttara thana in the city early yesterday.

The victim was identified as Towhidul Alam alias Arzu, 24, son of Dewan Ali Akbar of Nogarabari in Dakshinkhan. Police said the gang stabbed Alam in his abdomen and left him in an open space near a kindergarten, 300 yards from his house at about 3 am.

Uttara police recovered the body at 5:30 am and sent it to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Police said the gang attacked Alam's house at about 2:30 am. Then he and some other family members went out of the house and started chasing the dacoits. After sometime, they returned to their house except Alam who did not come back even two hours after the incident.

Alam was found dead in the morning.

## DCC to post armed guards in 3 underpasses

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has decided to post armed guards at the three underpasses built in the city recently following threats from terrorists, sources concerned said.

Some terrorists entered the underpasses at Gabtoli, Gullistan and Kawan Bazar a few days ago and asked the security guards of the construction firm to leave the places immediately.

"They beat up some guards and asked them to go away in a bid to take control of the underpasses," said a DCC official.

The DCC is now posting 40 armed Ansars in the three underpasses and this will cost the tax payers Tk 2,80,436 annually.

The acting chief engineer of DCC Shaiful Islam said that eventually, the security of the underpasses would be entrusted to the shopowners there.

## 8 photo journalists hurt in attack by hoodlums

Eight photo journalists of different national dailies were injured in an attack by hoodlums hired by a city restaurant owner, reports UNB.

The photo journalists came under attack after they complained about the serving of low-standard food in the restaurant.

Of the injured, Anaul Haq of Independent and Sakul Mohsin, Chief photographer of The Daily Star, were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospi-

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