

## BUETTA seeks meeting with PM, terms Sadek's comment venomous

**By Staff Correspondent**  
 The BUET Teachers Association on the second day of their indefinite strike yesterday sought an appointment with the Prime Minister and decided not to meet the education minister because of his 'objectionable' comments at his Tuesday's press conference.  
 President of BUETTA Prof. Abdur Razzak Akand said this while talking to The Daily Star.  
 The appointment with the PM, who is also the Chancellor of BUET, has been sought with the aim of ending the crisis at the university, Prof. Akand noted.

BUETTA called the indefinite strike today.

## Dhaka-Calcutta bus service from May 26 likely

**NEW DELHI, May 6:** The first passenger bus service between India and Bangladesh may begin this month across the border in the Bongaon area of West Bengal, The Indian Express reported today, says BSS.  
 The West Bengal government, the report said, is keen to start the bus service between the two countries on May 26 coinciding with the birth anniversary of Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam. But it is still awaiting the green signal from the Vajpayee government.

Quoting West Bengal Tourism Minister Subash Chakrabarti, he said.

## Biman's bid to sell 2 ATPs flounders

**By Shehab Ahmed**  
 Bangladesh Biman's effort to sell the two Advanced Turbo-prop (ATP) aircrafts floundered, when two interested buyers offered low prices.  
 When the bidding ended on April 30, quotations were too low for the two aircrafts, bought in late 1990 for Tk 50.58 crore each.  
 Biman has since floated the tenders on May 2, which closes on May 25, an airline official said yesterday.  
 The ATPs would be replaced by F-28 aircrafts. Biman operates its domestic fleet with two ATPs and two F-28s.  
 It had replaced an F-28 it lost in a crash landing in December with a leased aircraft. One ATP which skidded off the runway.

## Gandhi Award for Hasina

The Oslo-based Mahatma M K Gandhi Foundation has decided to confer Gandhi Award 1998 on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her remarkable contribution towards promotion of communal understanding, religious harmony and democracy at grassroots level in Bangladesh, reports BSS.  
 This was communicated to Sheikh Hasina by the Chairman of the evaluation committee Prof Dr Amalendu Guha, who called on her at the Jatiya Sangsad office yesterday evening.  
 The foundation which came into being in 1989 launched the award in 1993.

**Holiday**  
 The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed today on the occasion of 'Holy Ashura'. Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow.

**TOMORROW**  
 Read SWM's indepth cover story on Shazneen's gruesome murder. Since there is no newspaper on Friday SWM will be with Saturday's issue of The Daily Star.

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# Spl tribunals should be set up for loan recovery: President Banking sector will be strangled unless influential defaulters taken to task

President Shahabuddin Ahmed has said the banking sector will be strangled unless the government enables the bank authorities to take action against the influential and manipulative defaulters and their collaborators, report agencies.  
 He suggested setting up Special Tribunals manned by finance and banking experts for quick dispensation of justice in bank loan matters.  
 The President was delivering the first Nurul Matin Memorial Lecture on Ethics in Banking, sponsored by Nurul Matin Memorial Fund and organised by Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM) at a city hotel yesterday.  
 The Fund has been set up by the BIBM with the help of the family members of former deputy governor of the Bangladesh Bank and former Managing Director of the Shilpa Bank late Nurul Matin to arrange an annual lecture.  
 "To date, the amount of money borrowed by the defaulters is about fourteen thousand crore taka and its non-payment has been disrupting the banking system," said President Shahabuddin.  
 For this, he pointed out, the genuine businessmen and industrialists are being deprived of bank loans in time.  
 "Now, the persons borrowing 50 or even 500 crore taka not only avoid repayment, but walk tall, talk loud, influence public authorities and even threaten the bank if it presses for realisation of its dues."  
 As the court's procedure is cumbersome and time-consuming, the President suggested setting up special tribunals to deal with the defaulters.  
 Referring to the recently published defaulters' list, President Shahabuddin said it is undisputed that the big borrowers are the worst defaulters and it is they who pose threat to the national economy.  
 About objections made by

some of the persons included in the list alleging mistake in the figure, he said such figures may be easily corrected by the bank and in case of motivated mistake by bank officials, they should be dealt with severely.  
 Referring to media reports on bank loan defaulters in the political parties, President Shahabuddin reiterated that politics must be clean and fair. Bad elements including bank defaulters, whether they are MPs or not, should not be "admitted into any political party," he added.  
 He mentioned recent press reports that said 51 political leaders and their supporters including some Members of Parliament belonging to different political parties are bank loan defaulters.  
 The President referred to the "conduct" of the defaulting loanee, social appearance of political leaders with wilful and significant defaulters, of the controlling and supervising au-

## CHT Regional Council Bill passed

**By Staff Correspondent**  
 The Jatiya Sangsad last night passed the CHT Regional Council Bill, 1998 providing for setting up of a Regional Council to coordinate activities of three local government bodies in Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban hill districts.  
 Jatiya Party members voted against the bill titled while the lawmakers of the main opposition party, BNP, were absent from the House.  
 The parliament had earlier passed three other bills, seeking amendments to the district council acts for the three hill districts in three consecutive working days till Tuesday.  
 All the four bills are designed to implement the peace agreement the government signed with the Parbatyia Chhatragram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) in December last year to end decades-old armed insurgency in the CHT.  
 The Regional Council (RC) bill was passed with four minor amendments, suggested by Suranjit Sengupta of ruling Awami League. A number of amendment proposals by the JP

## Ashura today

The holy Ashura, commemorating the Karbala tragedy, will be observed in the country today, reports UNB.  
 On the 10th of Muharram, Hazrat Imam Hossain (R), son of Hazrat Ali (R) and Fatema (R) and grandson of great Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (SM), along with his associates were martyred at Karbala desert by the then ruler of Qufa city, Yazid.  
 President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have issued separate messages on the occasion.  
 Today is public holiday.  
 Various socio-cultural and religious organisations have chalked out programmes to observe the day. The programmes include Tazia procession, milad mahfil and discussions.  
 Newspapers will publish special supplement while Betar and TV will broadcast special programmes highlighting the significance of the day.

## Rehabilitation of JCD activists in DU halls today

**By DU Correspondent**  
 The displaced activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) will be rehabilitated today in four halls of Dhaka University.  
 The JCD activists were ousted from the halls by the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) on April 23 following a gunbattle between them which left a BCL leader killed.  
 The university authorities, after a series of discussion with the two feuding student organisations, reached the settlement for rehabilitation of the JCD activists.  
 The four DU halls — Jasimuddin, Ziaur Rahman, Bangabandhu and Surya Sen halls — will be vacated for some hours at 9 am today.  
 Residents of the halls will be allowed to enter those after checking their identity cards after noon.  
 A DU press release said that only 97 genuine residents of the four halls were displaced but JCD submitted a list showing

## Shibir launches armed attack on 3 CU halls

**CHITTAGONG, May 6:** Cadres of Islami Chhatra Shibir launched armed attack on Shahjalal Hall, Shah Amanat Hall and Shahid Abdur Rab Hall at about 9:30 pm today, police said, reports UNB.  
 Gunshots were fired by the attackers who took position in hill area behind the campus.  
 Casualty, if any, could not be ascertained till 11:30 pm.  
 The Shibir launched the attack to recapture the halls from where they were ousted last week.  
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## Woman raped, strangled in city

**By Staff Correspondent**  
 A 20-year-old woman was found dead inside a house at Kajla under Demra thana in the city on Tuesday.  
 After preliminary investigation police said the unidentified woman was raped before being strangled.  
 Jamal, who had claimed to be the husband of the woman, has been absconding since the incident police said.  
 Police said Jamal, tenant of one Kashem, brought the young woman with him a few days ago and claimed that she was his newly married wife.  
 The woman was found lying dead on the floor Tuesday afternoon. There were injury marks in her female organ and a black scar around her neck, police added.  
 The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy yesterday. A case was filed with Demra thana in this connection late Tuesday night.

## 4 get life-term for raping woman in Ctg

**CHITTAGONG, May 6:** The Special Court on Women and Child Repression here today convicted four people in a rape case and sentenced them to life-term in prison, reports UNB.  
 According to the prosecution case, Nurul Islam, a landlord, along with three accomplices, violated his tenant Shikha Rani Das at Mogatuly of Doublamooring thana on April 21, 1995.  
 In his verdict, Special Court Judge Moinul Islam found all the four accused — Nurul Islam, Eskander, Akbar and Jahangir — guilty and ordered them to suffer life imprisonment.  
 APF Khaled Newaz, advocate, Manzur Ansari and Lokman Hossain Chowdhury conducted the case for the state while advocates Ehsanul Haq Hena and Abdul Wahab defended the accused.



Police chasing pickets at Naya Bazar in the city during hartal hours yesterday.

## Sporadic clashes mark hartal: 50 hurt

**Star Report**  
 At least 50 people including three police officials were injured in sporadic clashes between pro and anti-hartal pickets during the half-day hartal called by the BNP-led seven-party alliance that disrupted life across the country.  
 The hartal was called to protest the Speaker's refusal to give floor to the Opposition MPs to speak on CHT bills in the Jatiya Sangsad.  
 Of the injured, 40 including three police personnel were injured in the city. Four of them were hit with bomb splinters. They were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.  
 The injured police personnel were admitted to Rajarbagh Police Hospital.  
 Ten others were injured in Chittagong and Bogra.  
 A total of 37 pro-hartal activists were picked up from various parts of the city during the hartal hours. Of them, five were picked up from Kotwali, 15 from Motijheel, seven from Mohammadpur thana, five from Tejgaon and five from Mirpur thana areas.  
 Sporadic clashes were reported from various areas of the city. But severe clashes took place at Motijheel, Ittefaq Crossing, Tanti Bazar, Naya Bazar, North-South Road and Bijoy Nagar, where gunshots were exchanged between pro and anti-hartal activists.  
 During the hartal hours, shops, business houses, banks and private offices in the city remained closed while attendance at government offices were thin. A small number of vehicles were seen plying on some roads in Farmgate, Jatra-bari, Mahakhal, Gulistan and Motijheel areas. A large number of rickshaws were, however, seen on the roads.  
 No long distance buses left the three terminals at Ghatbali, Sayedabad and Mahakhal.  
 Train services during the hartal hours were normal, except in some areas of Bogra, said Railway officials. All scheduled trains of the Eastern Zone which ply on Dhaka-Chittagong, Dhaka-Sylhet and Dhaka-Mymensingh routes moved as usual.  
 Train service between Bogra and its adjoining areas was disrupted.  
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## Gulshan Lake up for grabs-V 'Original owners' grabbing land thru' legal loopholes

**By Morshed Ali Khan**  
 A section of people have taken over 'huge' areas of the Gulshan Lake claiming its original ownership under cover of the Acquisition and Requisition of Immovable Property Ordinance 1982 which says that after acquisition, if the authorities fail to develop the land, it eventually goes back to its original owner.  
 In the process, these people, with the help of some unscrupulous Rajuk officials, have moved in to declare themselves as the original owners. They have occupied the lake area which Rajuk is yet to develop or demarcate as a lake.  
 Rajuk sources said, since acquisition of the area, there has never been a plan for a lake. But as the development continued, Rajuk felt the need for a lake and therefore 'roughly' earmarked an area to be kept for a lake. But, mysteriously, there has never been any initiative to demarcate the lake or to prepare a detailed area planning. Officials said this exposed the lake to some 'land hungry' people who are 'still eating it up'.  
 The tip-off was given to this section of people from inside the Rajuk. Investigation reveals that at least two top former Rajuk officials were involved in the latest land grabbing tactic.  
 After acquisition of the area about 40 years ago, the owners or the affected people were duly compensated with either plots or cash. One source, when asked to check the list of the affected people, said that the list was 'missing' from Rajuk archives.  
 Rajuk sources confirmed that one such 'occupier' at Road-23 in Gulshan Section-1 obtained a court order which directed Rajuk to hand over the plot to him. Mysteriously, Rajuk did not appeal against the court verdict.  
 They said that at present at least 30 such cases were pending with the court which involved more than 20 acres of the Gulshan Lake and its adjacent green areas.  
 An official source said every 'occupier' is now showing the precedence of the verdict in the Road-23 case and obtaining orders. Though the Rajuk Chairman recently asked for reviewing several cases, officials fear that if there is no government initiative to enact a legislation, Gulshan Lake cannot be saved.  
 In one case, an individual

## Aid Group meet in Dhaka May 12

A mid-term advisory meeting of the representatives of Bangladesh Aid Group will be held in Dhaka on May 12, reports UNB.  
 Bangladesh Country Director of the World Bank Pierre Landell Mills will be the chairperson of the meeting.  
 Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria will lead Bangladesh delegation to project the country's macro economic condition.  
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## Shazneen murder Shahid's confessional statement likely to be recorded today

**By Staff Correspondent**  
 CID investigators are now preparing to record a confessional statement of Shahid before a magistrate in connection with the Shazneen murder case. A CID official said yesterday that the statement may be recorded today under section 164 CrPc.  
 Shahid and five other servants at the Gulshan residence of Shazneen's father, Latifur Rahman, are likely to be produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court today. Their remand expired yesterday.  
 The five others are: Hemayetullah Humayun, Yasin, Shafiq and Faruq. A CID official, however, said Shahid's statement will be recorded only after they are satisfied with every details of the incident.  
 The CID is continuing investigation whether there was any abettor to Shahid in killing Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, youngest daughter of Latifur Rahman, Chairman of Transcom Ltd.  
 Shahid, within about 15 hours of arrest on April 27, confessed that he stabbed Shazneen to death at her bedroom.  
 Meanwhile, a CID team which took Shahid to Chittagong to verify his statement returned to Dhaka yesterday morning.  
 In Chittagong, Shahid showed the team the places at the railway station where he had passed two nights before surrendering to Kotwali police there at about 9 am on April 27.  
 CID sources said, Shahid's tale of kidnapping that he told Kotwali police has proved to be false.  
 CID investigators were yet to get any information from the arrested three persons who were involved in a renovation work.  
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## BNP MPs' token hunger strike on May 10

BNP MPs will observe a token hunger strike on May 10 protesting Speaker's denial to give floor to the opposition MPs to speak on CHT bills in Parliament, reports UNB.  
 The time and venue of the hunger strike will be announced later. BNP leader Haris Chowdhury told the newsmen shortly after a press conference at the party's central office yesterday afternoon.

# New credit scheme in Naogaon: A lifebuoy for the poor

**By Masud Arif, back from Naogaon**  
 Momena works as a maid at a businessman's house in her village, Paharpur, about 28-km from Naogaon town. With her meagre income, she finds it difficult to run her family and send her daughter to school.  
 Momena got divorced seven years ago and since then she has to run her three-member family.  
 Hundreds of women like Momena are facing the same difficulties in two thanas — Mohadevpur and Manda — of Naogaon district. They have been identified as 'vulnerable poor', living below poverty line. Many of them are divorced separated or widowed.  
 But a good number of those women are now seeing a ray of hope as a credit programme has been initiated for them. The initiators, the European Commission (EC) and the Government of Bangladesh, are experimenting with this new credit scheme dealing with the extreme poor who are rarely being served by the existing credit programmes.  
 About 3,600 women in Mohadevpur and Manda thanas and the target group of the newly-introduced scheme named Flexible Saving and Credit (FSC) of the EC — sponsored Integrated Food Assisted Development Project (IFADEP-1).  
 Unlike many other micro-credit programmes, the FSC pilot scheme has been designed to help poor women with financial assistance without being too strict on weekly savings and instalments.  
 IFADEP-1 experts hope that the pilot scheme in Mohadevpur and Manda thanas will also reveal whether people are more interested in saving facilities or credit.  
 The beneficiaries of the scheme are the cardholders of Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) programme of the government under which the extreme poor women get 30-kg of wheat per month.  
 Under the FSC scheme, a group of VGD cardholders meets weekly. They start to save during the training sessions on various income-generating activities and on other themes. However, there is no fixed amount of savings that has to be given each week.  
 Members of the groups can apply for a loan, the amount of which depends on savings over a three-month period. The repayment period will be fixed when the loan is disbursed but there are no fixed instalments. Interest is paid on the savings and a service fee is charged for the loans.  
 IFADEP-1 experts believe that the women living below poverty line can carry out good savings programme if they are brought into a system giving full freedom to determine the amount of savings.  
 In this case, the poor women will be much more motivated in repayment as they will have the scope to deposit any amount of money anytime within the fixed period.  
 "I need some money to buy a cow so that I will not have to go out to get milk for making curd," said Shahara, a beneficiary of the FSC pilot scheme. Wife of a hawkler in Dimjaon village of Mohadevpur, Shahara has already got training on how to make curd.  
 The FSC scheme is being implemented by an NGO, Assistance for Social Organisation and Development (ASOD). Besides, the experts of IFADEP-1, which is working with the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, have also planned a close monitoring of the flexible saving and credit scheme.  
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The Flexible Saving and Credit programme is holding out hopes for many women living below poverty line.

—Star photo