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**DHAKA MONDAY JUNE 1, 1998** 

### Belgian embassy closed down

By M Anwarul Haq

The Belgian embassy in Bangladesh was formally closed down yesterday. Today is our last working

day. The embassy is fully closed as of today - May 31, said Benoit Labrique, Charge de Affaires of the mission ,while talking to The Daily Star an hour before its clo-

The consular section dealing with issuance of visa had earlier ceased operation from

Despite optimism by senior foreign ministry officials. Dhaka could not prevent the closure of one of the most important foreign missions. A high level delegation which was supposed to visit Brussels did not go in the last few months after Dhaka was informed of the Belgian government's intention to close or downgrade its mission.

The Belgian embassy was headed by a resident ambassador from 1974 to 1996 when See Page 12 Col 5

#### Old-age allowance programme launched

TUNGIPARA, May 31: In a noble move to help the elderly people and remove poverty from rural areas of the country. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today launched the old-age allowance programme, reports

"We are determined to remove all sorts of discrimination, exploitation, poverty and hunger from the society," she said before handing over the pass books of the allowance programme to the elderly people of Tungipara thana.

The government has undertaken the country-wide programme to help the old distressed people as per political commitment of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Under the programme, 10 See Page 12 Col 4

#### National Wages, Productivity

Commission formed Government has formed the "National Wage and Productiv-

ity Commission 98" with representatives from the government, owners and workers, reports UNB. The commission, headed by

a former Secretary, has been constituted with an economist and an accountant as full-time members and 16 other parttime members.

According to an official handout issued in the city yesterday Joint Secretary (Admin and Labour) of the Labour and Manpower Ministry will act as member secretary of the Commission.

The formation of the Commission followed a recent agreement between the government and leaders of the trade unions.

### Red Crescent lottery draw

The draw for Bangladesh Red Crescent Society lottery was held in the city yesterday, and the ticket bearing the number 'Ka-460368' won the first prize of Tk 40 lakh, reports UNB. The second prize of Tk 10

lakh went to ticket No 'Kha-Ticket number 'Gha-089171' bagged the third prize of Tk five

lakh while 'Ga-592501' won the fourth prize of Tk one lakh. Besides, 10 winners will get the fifth prize of Tk 10,000 each while 300 winners will receive

#### -Inside Today-

the sixth prize of Tk 1,000 each.

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## Quake in Afghanistan kills 5000

KABUL, May 31: International aid workers scrambled today to reach a remote northern region of Afghanistan where a powerful earthquake is believed to have killed as many as 5,000 people, report agencies.

The earthquake, with a preliminary magnitude of 6.9 rocked the mountainous region of Badakshan in northern Afghanistan, triggering landslides and burying entire vil-

lages. The United Nations office in neighbouring Pakistan says initial reports say around 3,000 people have been killed, 2,000 more people have been injured, 30 villages affected and more than 4,100 homes destroyed.

The hardest hit area is around Shari Basurkh, a village that borders Afghanistan's two northern provinces of Badakshan and Takhar, said Sarah Russell, a UN

The Deputy Foreign Minister of Afghanistan's government-in-exile Abdullah Abdullah, who is in London, told BBC Radio 5 live, that the earthquake had killed over

5,000 people and he feared the death toll could go higher. Aid workers in the area said a total fifty villages had been destroyed by the quake.

"Now we have confirmed information from our colleagues and other aid workers in Takhar that 3,000 people have died in yesterday's quake," Chris Teirlinck of the Medecines Sans Frontieres told Reuters from the northern

It was thought to be the first reliable assessment of the scale of devastation. Other aid agencies said they were initially skeptical of claims by the anti-Taliban opposition which controls much of the region of up to 5,000 dead.

Takhar province had now reached the quake-hit region. "Over 36 villages have been destroyed in Takhar province and relief workers now said that 21 villages have been destroyed in Badakshan (province) too," he said

quoting aid workers from the scene of the disaster.

not land in Khoja Ghar airport south of Rostag, a main town in the region, because of bad weather and a muddy

air strip. Relief workers said low cloud, rain and mist were hampering assessment operations in the region, which lies along the Afghan border with Turkmenistan and Tajik-

istan. It was the second major disaster in the area since a February quake killed around 4,000 people and prompted an international emergency relief operation.

The relief exercise was also dogged by poor weather which prevented planes from landing and forced the use of helicopters from neighbouring former Soviet republics. More tremors were felt today in Takhar province, aid

workers and residents said. Tierlinck said that the biggest problem now in the re-

gion was lack of medicine. Both the Red Cross and the United Nations were scram-

See Page 12 Col 1

### Long after expiry of deadline

## No progress yet in disposing of 'political cases'

By Nazmul Ashraf and Reaz Ahmad

The government is yet to dispose of the "political cases" against the leaders and workers of opposition BNP, even two months after expiry of the deadline agreed upon between the

two sides. The deadline expired on March 31 but no fresh time -frame was set for resolution of the crucial political matter by either side.

"Political cases" against BNP leaders and workers remained as one of the major impediments to better relationship between the ruling Awami League and the BNP. The two parties signed their second agreement on March 2 to resolve the political stand-off arising out of BNP's abstension from attending the Jatiya Sangsad session.

The accord provided, among other things, withdrawal of political cases against BNP leaders and workers after proper investigation. Following the agreement, BNP submitted a list of 750 po-

litical cases implicating some 25,000 partymen to home minister Rafigul Islam on March 15. A copy of the list was also given to telecommunications minister Mohammad Nasim who had played a key-role in the negotiations and signing of the agreement.

The government had earlier planned to shortlist the 'genuine cases' worthy of withdrawal after a thorough scrutiny.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday Mohammad Nasim said there was not "much progress" so far as the cases were concerned. "As the opposition party engaged itself in picking up newer issues and putting all its strength against the CHT peace accord, the old issues like the so-called political cases did not come up for discussion for quite a long time

now". he said. He, however, said that the Home Ministry was examining the list of cases and "I can say See Page 12 Col 5

### Land grabbing in Uttara-II

# Rajuk secretly sold out entire stretch

cording to an investigation.

The lake, which begins from Road 20 and 2A of Sector-3 and 5 respectively of Uttara Model Town, no longer has any green space left on its right side stretching up to Sector-9 in the north. At several places, plots have been extracted from the lake, narrowing the waterbody.

through Sector-7 up to Sector-9 across the Sonargaon Janapath, both sides of the lake are now being filled up to extract plots for Sector-13, a new one. Local residents said all the people who claimed ownership

were massive irregularities in the allocation, in which 'sev-See Page 12 Col 4



Part of Uttara Lake being filled up to develop more residential plots.

- Star photo

## Non-govt primary teachers stage sit-in, threaten hunger strike

Hundreds of non-government primary school teachers began a sit-in on the busy VIP road near Sonargaon Hotel in the city yesterday to press de-mands for nationalisation of the schools, better pay and al-

lowances. Steaming heat on the day was too much for at least nine teachers who fainted and were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). The teachers said if their

demands were not met, they would go for a 'fast unto death' from today. Earlier, the teachers set out from Osmany Uddyan in the

afternoon on way to the Prime

By Special Correspondent

planned to stage the fast. Some of them wore white shrouds in a symbolic gesture of 'protest until death' to highlight their de-

The demonstrators were intercepted by police near Sonargaon Hotel. Then they squatted on the VIP road, which continued till late last night. This led to a massive jam in and around the area.

Officials from primary education directorate were holding talks with leaders of the teachers. The talks continued till the filing of this report late last

The demands of the teachers include payment of salary and allowances from July 1996 and separate pay scale for head teachers.

As talks continued, police were trying to persuade the squatting teachers to shift to the park adjacent to the VIP

UNB adds: The primary school teachers withdrew from the VIP Road at 11-15 last night.

Osmany Uddyan. gramme until an assurance of meeting our demand comes from the Prime Minister," said Shamsul Alam, President of the non-government primary school teachers association.

### Shazneen murder Haşan, Badal on

By Staff Correspondent

Contractor Hasan and supervisor Badal were placed on a fresh two-day remand in connection with the Shazneen murder at Gulshan on April 23. CID investigators produced

contractor Hasan and supervisor Badal before the CMM's court vesterday and prayed for their fresh remand of three and

The court, however, granted two days remand for both of

Khandakar Bashir Ahmed, Hasan's lawyer, in a petition prayed for the cancellation of Hasan's remand. In a separate petition, the lawyer also prayed for Hasan's release on bail. The court rejected both the prayers.

#### Tri-nation finals India beat Kenya by 9 wkts

A superb century by Sachin Tendulkar enabled host India to clinch the Coca-Cola Triangular Cricket series title outplaying one-day debutant Kenya by nine wickets at Calcutta Eden Gardens last night, reports UNB.

This was 16th one-day 100 for the master batsman Sachin, who is now just one century behind world record holder Desmond Haynes, former West Indian opener.

Sachin hit an unbeaten 100 off 102 balls featuring 13 fours, including two to reach 100. He was adjudged man-of-thematch, according to ESPN live telecast monitored here. One-day debutant Kenya won

the toss to bat first in one of the best cricket venues of the world, Calcutta Eden Gardens, but were forced to fold their innings at 196 for all in 46.3 overs.

## Automated trading at **CSE** from tomorrow

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, May 31: The Chittagong Stock Exchange is poised to start computer screen-, based automated trading from "Gradually the floor trading Tuesday, CSE officials said.

a computer network is the first of its kind in the country. The brokers will be able to operate through the computer network from their respective offices to purchase or sell stocks in far-flung areas under three stations installed by CSE

Automated trading through

at Chittagong, Dhaka and Syl-The automated trading will eventually replace the floor trading done in a 'cry-out' sys-tem, the CSE officials said. They added that automated

trading would start from Tues-

day side by side with partial floor trading for the next one

> will be eliminated in phases and CSE will switch over to fully automated trading from July 2," said an official of CSE.

On Tuesday, only 30 scrips will be put up for floor trading and the rest 114 scrips for automated trading. In the second phase on June 15, only 20 scrips will be put up for floor trading and the rest 124 scrips for automated trading.

"In order to develop a practice as well as to adjust with automation, the floor trading will be eliminated in phases within one month," the CSE of-See Page 12 Col 5

### Maid instigated Samad to murder Rubi

By Staff Correspondent

Sharifa, a former maid at Rubi's flat, recorded a judicial statement yesterday confessing that she instigated Samad to kill Rubi as she had forced her to leave the flat about a month

Sharifa and Arif, one of the two arrested gatekeepers of the building where Rubi lived, were produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, our Court Correspondent reported.

Metropolitan Magistrate Abdus Salam Mia took about five hours to record the statement of Sharifa and Arif under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Later, both of them were sent to Dhaka Central Jail.

Rubina Aktar Rubi, mother of a three-year-old girl, was stabbed to death at her flat at Shantinagar in the city allegedly by Samad, a domestic servant of another flat of the building, with the cooperation of two gatekeepers. Arif and Emdad, early morning Friday.

Meanwhile, DB were interrogating Samad, prime accused in the killing and Emdad, another gatekeeper of the build-

Police sources said last night that after yesterday's investigation. DB officials became quite sure that the four accused were involved in the murder.

In her statement Sharifa said that she lost her job at See Page 12 Col 6

### Meterised taxi cabs in city in 2 weeks likely By Staff Correspondent

Office yesterday to press their demands.

Meterised taxi cab service is likely to be introduced in Dhaka city within the next two weeks following issuance of an SRO by the National Board of Revenue (NBR), according to of-

ficial sources. Some 2000 taxi cabs having centrally controlled radio-telephonic links will ply in the city under a government initiated pilot project. The guideline for the service

was recently approved at a

meeting of an inter-ministerial

committee and sent it to the

NBR for issuance of SRO, the

sources said. The committee made some minor amendments to the guideline, prepared by the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) The meeting, held two weeks

back, also decided that the fleet of taxis for each of the companies interested in providing such service should be 20 instead of 50 suggested by the BRTA, the sources added. Some 20 companies have so far applied for registration.

Many of them have already im-

ported vehicles and are waiting

See Page 12 Col 8

### BNP ridicules Zillur's claim

— Star photo

BNP yesterday ridiculed LGRD Minister Zillur Rahman's claim that 50 more BNP MPs are now waiting to join the 'consensus government', reports

"It's just a wishful thinking", said BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan reacting to the statement of Zillur Rah-Mannan said it is not possible for Awami League to make

so many BNP MPs ministers. Two BNP MPs had joined the government on being appointed as state minister and deputy minister, he added. Zillur Rahman told a meeting of a cross-section of people in Pabna on Saturday that 50

See Page 12 Col 3

#### India must realise Kashmir is root cause of tension: Sharif mier told thousands of cheering ISLAMABAD, May 31: Pak-

istan stood defiant today against a furious backlash over its sixth nuclear test, insisting only direct talks with India on the thorny issue of Kashmir could defuse the escalating crisis, report agencies.

Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif rejected a new wave of international condemnation over the latest blast Saturday, saying there could be no turning back from the nuclear path. "We have no begun this

march and resolved to stand on

our own two feet. We will never

barter our security," the pre-

supporters in Lahore. Announcing Pakistan had

now completed its series of nuclear tests. Sharif again blasted India for pushing his country to act and reiterated an offer of a 'none-aggression' pact to soothe fears of a regional arms race. "We are open to dialogue with

India but India must realise that Kashmir was the root cause of differences," Sharif said. Pakistani foreign ministry spokesman Tariq Atalaf told AFP today the pact offer was

territorial dispute over Kash-

mir — the source of two wars in the past 50 years. "We want dialogue with India and we have taken the initiative on this issue," he said.

"But any non-aggression pact has to be on the basis of a just settlement on Kashmir. We have to get India to the negotiating table over Kashmir for any pact to make any sense at all," he said.

"It is up to the world community now to pressure India to come to the negotiating table. That is the only way to defuse conditional on India entering tension between the countries. talks on their long-running he said.

See Page 12 Col 7

### France '98 COUNTDOWN

### Days Away Heartbreak for Peruzzi

FLORENCE, Italy, May 31: In a major blow to Italy's World Cup aspirations, first-choice goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi will miss the tournament after suffering a leg injury in training Sunday, team officials said, re-

ports AP. Veteran Gianluca Pagliuca moves up from reserve to assume the starting role, while Francesco Toldo of Fiorentina was called up to take Peruzzi's place on the roster.

Peruzzi was warming up at the team's Coverciano training site outside Florence when he crumpled to the ground in pain. The Juventus goalkeeper suffered an injury to his left calf muscle, said team Dr Andrea Ferretti, according to the ANSA news agency.

See Page 12 Col 6

#### JCD President's detention declared illegal The High Court yesterday declared the detention of JCD

President Shaheed Uddin Chowdhury Anny as illegal, reports UNB Anny, leader of the opposition BNP-backed JCD, was

given detention order on April A division bench of High Court Division of the Supreme Court comprising Justice KM Hasan and Justice M Latifur Rahman gave the ruling following a writ petition moved on

behalf of Anny by Barrister Moudud Ahmed. Barrister Moudud was assisted by Barrister Mahbub Uddin Khokon, Advocate Ireen Mahbub and Advocate Anwarul Islam Shaheen, said a press re-

### Resignation of KS Nabi

accepted President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday accepted the resignation of Attorney General Barrister KS Nabi, reports UNB. Barrister Nabi submitted his resignation letter to the President on Friday following a government move to remove him

from the office. According to a source, Nabi alongwith Additional Attorney General Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan called on President Shahabuddin at Bangabhaban in the af-

While accepting the resignation of Barrister Nabi, the President was learnt to have asked Abdul Wadud Bhuyian to discharge the duty of Attorney General until the appointment of a new AG.

#### Tofael to launch **US-Bangladesh** Chamber in Washington June 3

By Staff Correspondent Commerce Minister Tofael Ahmed leaves for the US today to formally launch the US-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce (USBCC) at Washington DC on June 3.

He told The Daily Star last

night that he has been invited

to attend the inaugural function

as chief guest and launch the USBCC. Tofael will lead a team which will include Deputy Minister for Shipping Saber Hossain Chowdhury and some businessmen. The businessmen will include FBCCI president Yussuf Abdullah Harun, BG-MEA President Mostafa Golam

**Quddus**, Chairman of National

Bank Limited Abdul Awal Minto. During his visit Tofael will meet US Secretary of Commerce Madlline Albright. He will also hold talks with State Department officials, some Senators and Congressmen to raise the garment export quota for

Bangladesh. A total of 17 leading US companies have already joined the proposed USBCC, the Minister said.

### Nor'wester hits Kishoreganj: One killed

KISHOREGANJ, May 31: Nor'wester lashed six villages of Pakundia thana of the district this afternoon leaving an unidentified man killed and three others injured, reports The injured were admitted to

Pakundia Thana Health Com-The nor'wester at about 3 pm

lasted for about 20 minutes and swept over the villages of Thutarjangal, Ashutia, Charpalash, Biswanathpur, Kawalipara and Khalisakhandi.

spokesperson in Pakistan.

Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif.

Teirlinck said aid workers from parts of the afflicted

He said a plane belonging to the United Nations could

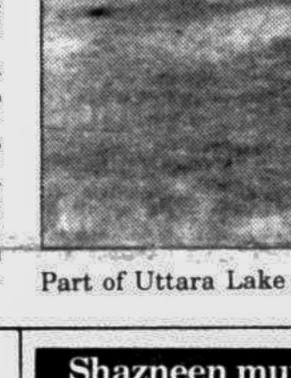
# of green space along the Lake

By Morshed Ali Khan

Taking advantage of remoteness of the area, Rajuk has secretly sold out as residential plots the entire stretch of green space along Uttara Lake, ac-

Further in the north,

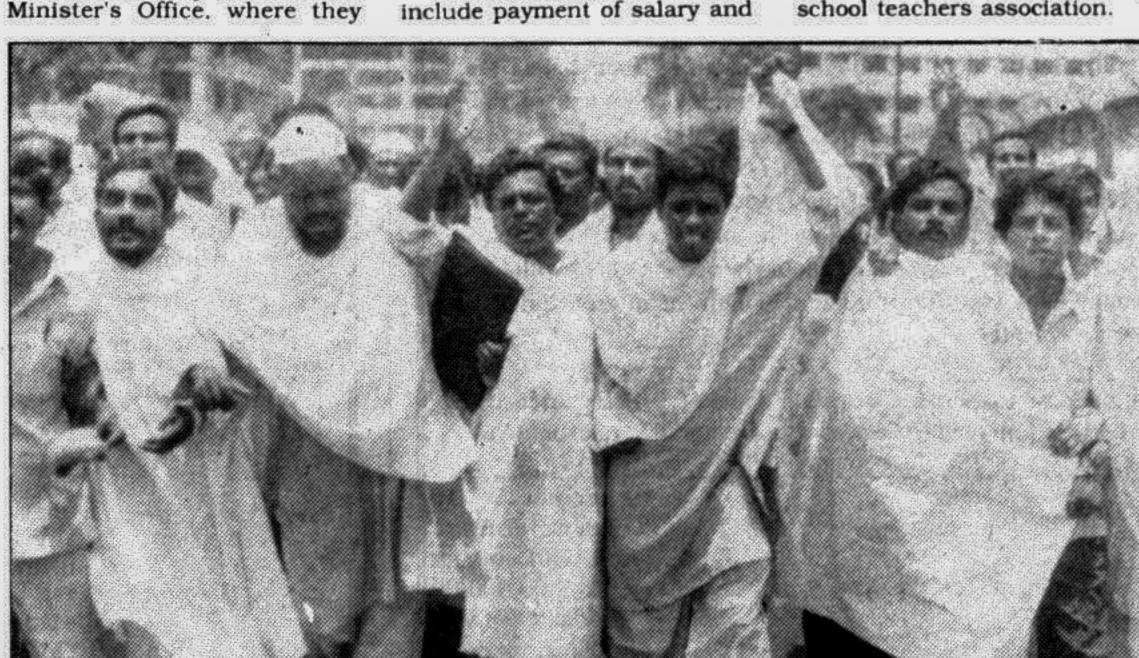
of these plots produced documents which showed the plots were bought from original Rajuk allottees - not directly from Rajuk. They alleged this clearly indicated that there



## fresh remand

five days respectively.

They were now staying at 'We will continue the pro-



Teachers of non-government primary schools proceeding towards the Prime Minister's