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## Taka devalued by 80 poisa

**By Staff Correspondent**

On the second day of fiscal 1998-99, the Bangladesh Bank (BB) has devalued the taka by another 80 poisa against the US dollar with effect from Sunday.

With the devaluation, BB's buying and selling rates for the dollar with authorised dealer banks will be Tk 46.95 and Tk 47.25 per dollar respectively, according to a BB press release.

The revised buying-selling middle rate will stand at Tk 47.10 from the earlier Tk 46.30 per dollar.

This is the first devaluation of the new financial year, 1998-99, that began from July 1, and the second biggest since February, 1998 when the taka was devalued by 85 poisa.

The BB said the devaluation has been done in line with the policy objective of providing incentive for exports and encouraging inflows from expatriate Bangladeshis, keeping in view the unfolding trends of currency values of trading partners and competitors of Bangladesh.

Many think this is a regional fallout of the nuclear tests by India and Pakistan.

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## Gazi, 2 other vessels gutted at N'ganj dockyard

**From Our Correspondent**

**NARAYANGANJ, July 2:** At least seven persons, suffered burn injuries when a devastating fire broke out in three off-service passenger vessels at Sonachara dockyard in Bandar thana of the district last night.

All the three vessels, belonging to the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC), were brought to the dockyard for repairs. Of them, the 632-seater PS Kiwi and the 532-seater PS Gazi operated in the Dhaka-Khulna-Barisal route while MV Lama was used for carrying the staff members of BIWTC.

The fire, believed to have originated from an electric short-circuit, broke out at about 11:45 pm last night and was put out at about 4 am today, police and dockyard sources said.

BIWTC Chairman M Shahidul Islam, while visiting the spot, told The Daily Star that the loss incurred due to the fire is preliminarily estimated at Tk one crore.

In the fire, the timber fittings and plywood and hard-board materials were burnt but the engines and other equipment were partially damaged, he said.

The cost of repairing PS Gazi and PS Kiwi was earlier estimated at Tk 56 crore but now the cost will go up," he said.

While visiting the spot, this correspondent found the vessels in a dilapidated state with their interior wooden structures completely burned up and the engines and other machinery badly damaged.

N K Poddar, DGM of the BIWTC's Ship Repairing Unit, told The Daily Star that three fire units from Bandar, Hajiganj and Demra thanas reached the spot two hours after the fire broke out and it took them two hours to extinguish the fire.

The fire spread fast as the interior wooden structures of the ships were painted with bitu-

min, an easily burning material," Poddar explained.

As the fire was spreading fast, the dockyard workers cut the iron anchor ropes of another 15 vessels docked nearby to prevent the fire from spreading, he said.

The vessels floated to the other side of the river where some people reportedly looted valuables from them, he added.

Oli Ahmed, an assistant to the captain, who was sleeping in one of the burning ships, said: "As I woke up, I found fire all around. The entire river was lit. I then rushed to protect my two months' salary amounting to Tk 7,500 but I fainted."

At least six other dockyard workers also received burn injuries while trying to put out the fire before the fire brigade units had reached the spot.

The extent of damage could be much less had the river fire units been active, said a dock-

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**A BIGGER HURDLE COMING:** Alessandro del Piero (front) leads his Italian teammates through a short hurdles routine during practice at Senlis on June 30. Italy face hosts France in a tough quarterfinal today.

## Quarterfinals kick off today Hosts take on Italy, Danes face world champions

**PARIS, July 2:** The quarterfinals of the World Cup '98 kicks off today with host France taking on Italy in the first match at the Stade de France here and defending champions Brazil playing minnows Denmark at the Stade de la Beaujoire at Nantes in the other match, report agencies.

This year's tournament has shown once again that the main European and South American soccer powers still remain supreme. Six European teams have joined Brazil and Argentina in the quarterfinal line-up.

Apart from Denmark and Croatia, who have reached the last eight for the first time, the six others are all back in familiar territory.

Germany have reached the last eight for the fifth successive competition. Brazil are there for the 11th time in 13 tournaments and Argentina, coming through a heart-stopping penalty shootout with England, have made it for the sixth time in the last eight World Cups for which they have qualified.

Italy have reached this stage for the sixth time since 1970 while the Dutch are there for the fourth time. Hosts France are also no strangers to the last eight having made it through in each of their last three tournaments.

In today's first match, both France and Italy are evenly poised with the hosts getting the home-turf advantage. France made it through the first round without losing a match but scrapped through a tough second round tie against Paraguay with a golden goal in extra time. On the other hand, Italy also had a smooth sail except for the 2-2 draw in their opening match against Chile.

Two friends and former teammates, Italian striker Christian Vieri and French midfielder Zinedine Zidane, will meet as bitter rivals when their teams meet for a place in the World Cup semifinals today. Both men will be carrying the hopes of their respective nations squarely on their shoulders.

Vieri is the joint top scorer of the tournament with five goals from four matches while Zidane, worshipped in France as the rightful heir to Michel Platini, returns from a two-match suspension.

The atmosphere is bound to be electric. About 80,000 mainly French fans will be roaring on the host nation, and a place in the last four is at stake. Vieri and the rest of the Italian camp are convinced they can pull off a win."

The Atletico Madrid ace

See Page 12 Col 3

## Shazneen murder 3 involved, says maid Minu

**By Staff Correspondent**

In a major breakthrough in the investigation into Shazneen murder case, maid Minu gave a confessional statement before the CMM's Court on Wednesday accusing three persons of involvement in the killing at Gulshan in the city on April 23.

Minu, a domestic help at the Gulshan residence of Shazneen's father Latifur Rahman, said contractor Hasan was the conspirator and confessed killer Shahid and guard Humayun Kabir were directly involved in the brutal killing.

The investigating CID team arrested Minu Wednesday morning produced her before the CMM's Court at about 2 pm. Later, she gave a statement before a metropolitan magistrate under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, sources concerned said.

Minu, who had been working at Rahman's residence for quite some time, was not placed on remand before she made the

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## 15 tribal people arrested in Rangamati

**From Staff Correspondent**

CHITTAGONG, July 2: Police arrested 15 tribal people in the last two days from Rangamati hill district for their alleged involvement in anti-peace accord campaign, possession of illegal arms and for assaulting a police official.

Among them, four were rounded up by army patrol team from Kaokali thana area under Rangamati yesterday.

Two LGs, one toy pistol and a bayonet were recovered from their possession.

They were handed over to police.

Six tribals were arrested from Rangamati town last night on a charge of assaulting a sub-inspector of Kotwali thana.

Five others were rounded up by army patrol team from Kaokali thana area along with arms and leaflets on Tuesday. They were also handed over to police.

## Aminullah reappointed law Secy

**By Staff Correspondent**

Aminullah has been reappointed as the Secretary, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, with effect from July 1, officials said yesterday.

He went on LPR on June 23, but resumed his duties from Wednesday last. Earlier, the law ministry had sent a proposal to the Prime Minister's Secre-

See Page 12 Col 8

## Cabinet okays draft UZ Parishad Bill

The cabinet at a meeting yesterday approved the draft of UZ Parishad Bill, 1998, reports UNB.

It also approved in principle a proposal for enacting the Paribesh Adalat Ain (environment court act).

Chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the cabinet meeting decided to sign or ratify six international covenants and conventions relating to human rights, said an official hand out.

These are: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Convention on the Political Rights of Women, Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for and Registration of Marriage, Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and Convention on the Rights of Migrant Worker and the Members of their Families.

Besides, the Cabinet decided to ratify Bangladesh's agreement with Indonesia on expansion of investment.

## Mother slaughters son, tries to kill herself

**By Staff Correspondent**

A mother allegedly slaughtered her seven-year-old son and then tried to commit suicide at their flat in the city's Kamalapur area yesterday.

The boy, Naim, was stabbed by her mother, Nargis, several times and then slaughtered with a kitchen knife at the third floor flat in a four-storey building at North Kamalapur at about 1:30 pm, police said.

Nargis was arrested and taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

She had deep cut marks in her throat and was in a critical



**Husband breaks down** as his wife allegedly killed their seven-year-old son (inset) at Kamalapur in the city yesterday.

## Stabbed young man dies at DMCH

**By Staff Correspondent**

A young man, who was stabbed allegedly by his cousin on Saturday at his residence in city's Bashaboo area, succumbed to his injuries at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) yesterday.

Hospital sources identified the dead as Shahadat Hossain, 25, son of Afzal Hossain, a resident of Modhya Bashaboo. Shahadat was a private car driver.

Hospital sources, quoting family members said, Babu, cousin of the victim, came from Sirajganj and was staying at Shahadat's house on Friday night.

On hearing Shahadat's screaming, his neighbours and

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## Experts from Dept of Explosives visit 2 wells of Occidental

**From Staff Correspondent**

SYLHET, July 2: A team of experts from the Department of Explosives visited the two exploratory wells of US company Occidental in Sylhet.

Official sources said that the two-member team comprising M A Rashid, Chief Inspector of Explosives and Shamsul Alam, Divisional Inspector of Explosives, visited the sites yesterday and today.

The officials visited the safety arrangements in and

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## Barisal by-polls Three out of 11 withdraw candidature

**From Staff Correspondent**

BARISAL, July 2: Three out of 11 candidates, who submitted nomination papers for Jatitya Sangsad by-election to Barisal-5, have withdrawn their candidature today.

They are: A A A Sobhan Masud (Awami League), Enayet Pir Khan (Independent) and Labulul Haq Dulal (Muktijoddha Sanghati Parishad).

Of the 11 candidates who submitted their nomination papers on June 24, two belong to Awami League and two from

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**Notice**

Star Literature could not be published this week due to unavoidable reasons. The inconvenience caused to our readers is regretted.

## Inside Today Article

**Getting Together and Going Ahead**

Column: Do I Dare!  
by A Z M Obaidullah Khan Page 4

**Focus**

Congress to form alternative government?  
Page 5

**Business**

Importers are paying for negligence of Bangladesh authorities  
Losers outnumber gainers on DSE  
Pages 6, 7

## Secrets of diagnostic centres 'Give-and-take' deal with docs

**By Naimul Haq**

A large number of the doctors doing private practice take 'commission' offered by the owners of diagnostic centres for referring patients.

There are too many doctors in town who are engaged in this business, owners of a number of diagnostic centres told this correspondent.

They said, one cannot think of doing diagnostic business without collaboration from physicians. It is an established practice.

About two years ago, three senior physicians had started a diagnostic centre at Dhanmandi in the city, determined to avoid paying 'referral fee'. It turned out to be very frustrating for them—the diagnostic centre had to be shut down due to lack of adequate 'service buyers'. There were hardly any tests done at the centre during its short period of operation.

The 'referral fees', as they call it, range from 20 per cent to as high as 70 per cent, depending on the type of investigation. "The higher amount of fee you offer, the more the patients you get. It is a mutual understanding," said Habibur Rahman, owner of a pathological laboratory.

There are doctors who are paid as high as Tk one lakh in advance. "Diagnostic centre owners term it developing 'business tie'." "We offer benefit to the doctors and in return they send patients to us. It is a give-and-take business," said the owner of another diagnostic centre.

A doctor practising for over 30 years pointed out that the ultimate sufferers are patients.

Doctors and owners of diagnostic centres are doing business at the cost of patients. "It's a profit sharing business."

He said, "Doctors would ask patients to have multiple tests, instead of advising genuine tests to determine the cause of the disease. Because it has developed into a business and that patients themselves do not understand the purpose of the tests, both take advantage of the situation."

A histopathologist, requesting anonymity said, "From my experience I can say which investigations are genuine and which are not. Patients are fooled in such circumstances as they never realise the under-hand deals involved."

For the convenience of both the doctors and the owners of

See Page 12 Col 2

## Dhanmondi lake dev continues No step yet to recover encroached land

**By Morshed Ali Khan**

The Dhanmondi Lake Development Project is nearing its halfway mark without the authorities knowing how to recover chunks of lakeside land illegally occupied by residents living nearby.

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), custodian of the lake and the adjacent green area, is yet to take any step to recover the encroached land which, if combined, would stand over ten bighas (3 acres), according to a PWD survey.

The consultants and designers of the lake development project, Vitti Shapatti Brindo Ltd, said the encroachment would definitely hamper several components of the on-going schemes including walkways, fences and plantations.

Although the matter was discussed at several coordination meetings of the project, DCC sources said they were hesitant to take any action because originally the lake and its adjacent area belonged to the PWD.

The LGRD secretary, at a recent meeting with a section of residents from Dhanmondi, said it is not the responsibility of the ministry to recover the encroached area.

"The land belongs to PWD and it is upto them to recover it," the LGRD secretary said.

In a survey in 1994, PWD identified 32 residents who encroached upon the public land.

The Daily Star obtained the official document of the survey that lists all the residents with

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## Komolganj-Srimangal Rd reopens for traffic

**From Iqbal Siddiquee**

SYLHET, July 2: After being closed for more than a year following the severe explosion at the Magurchara well, the adjacent Komolganj-Srimangal road would be opened for vehicular traffic from Monday, official sources said today.

Occidental officials today held a meeting with Roads & Highways Department officials in Moulivazar and handed over the reconstructed road to the department.

Ruling party Whip Abus Sahid will formally inaugurate the reconstructed road.

More than one kilometre of the road along with several bridges and culverts were severely damaged following the explosion in the early hours of June 15 last year forcing immediate closure of the road.

Occidental, which was drilling an exploratory well at the site, reconstructed the road. The Roads and Highways Department claimed an amount of Tk 2.5 crore as compensation for the damages.

Three months after the explosion, Occidental constructed a temporary bypass road from Bhanugachh to Srimangal via Padmasri Tea Garden and Noorjahan Tea Garden. Later,

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## 'Police, people should join hands to root out terrorism'

**By Staff Correspondent**

Home Minister Rafiqul Islam yesterday urged the people to form 'anti-terrorism committees' in co-operation with the police to root out crimes from every locality.

The minister, during a surprise visit to the city's Shabubagh thana area, also instructed the policemen to help people in organising the committees to eliminate violence from every locality.

Most of the dwellers in Shabubagh complained to the minister about frequent incidents of snatching while young girls alleged, they were often teased and disturbed by local youngsters especially at Kadamtola crossing.

"There are some young men in the locality who regularly annoy us on our way to work-places," alleged a teenage garments worker.

Managers of two restaurants on Shabubagh Road complained that some local youngsters often refuse to pay them bills after having foods.

However, the local people, including some shopowners, grocers and political activists of different ages, said that incidents of toll collection by terrorists had decreased in the area.

The home minister walked through the roads of Kadamtola, Bashabo, Biswa Road and other adjoining areas to get clear idea about the prevailing law and order situation at Shabubagh, one of the city's trouble-torn areas.

Jahangir Alam, a student of Jagannath College and a resident of Kadamtola, told the home minister how a gang of four armed men in two motor-bikes injured him and snatched his motorcycle on Atish Dipankar Road at about 7:30 pm Friday. The miscreants hit his head with a cut-rifle and then

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**গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার**  
**জাতীয় রাজস্ব বোর্ড**  
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**জাতীয় রাজস্ব বোর্ড**