



# The Daily Star

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**Betar cancels time slot contract with a pvt co**

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Betar has cancelled a recent contract giving a time slot to a private company, Metro Wave, according to official sources.

The Director General of Bangladesh Betar had awarded the contract for six hours' time slot daily to the company from Betar's 10 kw transmitter. It was scheduled to go on air on a trial basis for three months with effect from July 1.

Officials of the ministry of information had raised questions on the authority of the DG of Betar to award such a contract.

When the DG wrote to the ministry for a decision on the time-slot award, the ministry advised him to take decision as per the 'delegation of powers' to his office. The ministry, however, refrained from giving a decision on the issue, the sources said.

On June 28, the DG, however, wrote to the secretary, ministry of information: "The Bangladesh Betar has decided

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## The Daily Star Roundtable

# TUs blamed for most problems at ports

**Star Business Report**

Call for "positive trade unionism and positive politics" was at the core of The Daily Star Roundtable on port problems when most participants portrayed union muscle as the main barrier to keeping the country's "economic lifeline" functioning.

In addition, they said, the ports were not properly equipped to handle a galloping external trade and resources at their disposal were not being utilised at optimal level.

Modernisation, corporatisation of port management and immediate increase in facilities were some of the key recommendations coming out of the four-hour dialogue.

When it came to dealing with trade unions, the authorities' failure to enforce laws, rules and policy decisions was also highlighted.

The participants — the minister in charge, the head of the parliamentary committee on ports and shipping, users, bureaucrats and donor representatives — mainly discussed ways of "unblocking the ports".

The roundtable titled "How to make our ports function better" also saw officials of Asian Development Bank, now identifying the "route to modernisation" of ports at the request of the government, and World Bank commit support to efforts for improvement. Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam facilitated the lively discussions and debate.

An exporters' representative demanded a ban on trade unions in ports but others spoke of a non-confrontational approach.

"We cannot stop trade union activity but what kind of trade union [we want is important]," said Ports and Shipping Minister A S M Abdur Rob.

Chittagong Chamber chief and head of the Port Users Forum Kamaluddin Ahmed and BGMEA vice president Nurul Huq Sikder recounted stories of how exports and imports suffered at the hands of the port workers.

In 1997, the Chittagong Port was closed for 26 days for no reasons without any notice whatsoever," said Sikder. "Trade unions should be banned in ports," he demanded, "they recklessly use their union strength... they should be dealt with properly."

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**Container port TUs warn CPA against accord with SSA**

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, July 11: The Chattogram Dock Bandar Sramik Karmachari Parishad, a group of 22 trade union bodies related to Chittagong Port, demanded cancellation of permission given to the Stevedoring Service of America (SSA) (BD) Ltd to build a container port at Patenga.

Addressing a press conference today held at the Chittagong Press Club, Joint Coordinator of the Parishad Mahfuzur Rahman urged the port authority not to sign any agreement with SSA (BD) Ltd on leasing out of any portion of land belonging to the port.

"If any deadlock is created following any such agreement, the Chittagong Port Authority will have to shoulder the responsibility," said Rahman. He said that if the private container port is allowed to be set up, 50,000 workers and employees involved with the port will lose their job, as all container vessels will be handled by that port.

Moreover, two lakh people including dependents of the

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BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a huge public meeting at Shoratoil near the BJMB yesterday. —Star photo

**Garments worker gangraped in city**

By Staff Correspondent

A teenage garments employee was gangraped at a slum in city's Mirpur area Friday night.

Police said, about five youngmen intercepted the victim on Mazar Road while she was returning home about 8:30 pm.

They forcibly took the 17-year-old girl to a makeshift house at the Beribandh slum and raped her.

The victim is undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

None, however, was arrested in connection with the incident till filing of this report late last night. Mirpur police was preparing to file a case under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 1995.

## Pakistan seeks SAARC help for reducing tension in S Asia

By Staff Correspondent

Akram Zaki, the visiting special envoy of the Pakistan Prime Minister, yesterday said that his country sought cooperation of SAARC states in reaching arrangements with India so that South Asia is freed of tension and there remains no fear of nuclear conflict.

"Let us make the Sub-continent free from nuclear conflict and even conventional conflict so that the energies of the region could be directed for progress and development."

Zaki said, Pakistan's door is always open for mediation by the international community including its SAARC neighbours.

He however stated that the root cause of the conflict between India and Pakistan was inherent in the Jammu and Kashmir issue which should be removed to ensure a permanent resolution of conflict between the two neighbours.

Senator Akram Zaki, a former career diplomat who served as his country's envoy to Beijing and Washington and is now Chairman of Pakistan's Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs was delivering a talk on 'Nuclear Proliferation in South Asia: A Pakistani Perspective' at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies in the city yesterday.

Referring to India as the biggest country in the region 'harbouring leadership role,' he said, "There are two approaches in seeking regional leadership. One is the hegemonic approach and the other was the cooperative approach."

It was unfortunate that India as the largest neighbour aspired for higher status and profile and its approach was always hegemonic, he observed.

As members of SAARC we rather could emulate the example of Indonesia, which, as the largest country in the ASEAN group, opted for cooperative approach instead of hegemonic approach, instilling confidence among all neighbours.

The visiting Senator gave a catalogue of details highlighting the overtures made by Pakistan to India and the international community in making South Asia a zone of peace.

Even we introduced a resolution every year at the UN calling for making South Asia a zone of peace. Although this was supported by several countries including Bangladesh, it was opposed by India itself and Bhutan and Mauritius.

Akram Zaki felt that it was indeed incredible that western spy satellites which can even pick up the making of a tiny golf ball failed to detect any trace of the massive preparation involved in India's nuclear detonations. They claimed that they were taken by total surprise by the first Indian detonation on May 13 and even failed to detect any trace on the successive occasion only two days later, when two more tests were carried out, Zaki said.

The international community, instead of pressuring India after its nuclear blasts, started exerting undue pressure on Pakistan, he said. "It was a classic example of things working in the opposite direction. Instead of focussing on the culprit, they focussed on us."

Pakistan, he said, "had been under one or another type of sanctions since 1974 while the

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## Flood situation in four districts worsens

By Staff Correspondent

Ganges and Gorai has recorded over one foot rise.

According to Flood Control Cell of the government, water level of the river Ganges was recorded yesterday morning at 12.11 metre at Hardinge Bridge point while Gorai at Gorai Railway Bridge point was flowing at 11.45 metres.

Our Correspondent from Gaibandha reports, more areas including a portion of Gaibandha Sadar thana were submerged by flood water overflowing river Brahmaputra and Ghagol.

Water level in all points of three rivers continued to increase till Friday last and as such, fresh areas went under water submerging many at the sadar thana.

Meanwhile, UNB reports from Sirajganj, incessant rainfall and onrush of hilly waters from across the border have increased the water level at the river Jamuna and its eight tributaries causing flood in more than 100 villages of five thanas of the district.

Nearly 10,000 people of Kazipur, Belkuchi, Chouhali and Shahjapur including the Sadar thana have been marooned.

Chairmen of Gala and Sonatall unions told the news agency that a total of 420 families have been rendered homeless by the river erosion in the two unions during the last three days.

They have taken shelter on the dam and passing their days in great hardships.

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## WC final today

From Nizamuddin Ahmed

PARIS, July 11: The stage is set for tomorrow's final of World Cup '98 albeit without the razzmatazz befitting the focus of global fervour.

Although the toast of Paris, the Stade de France, is ever dressed for the occasion, the city wears a sombre mood and Parisians in general are indifferent to football's biggest show.

The Brazilians, a band of plus 20,000 noisy fans, are expected to literally drum up enough excitement before the kick-off at 9 pm.

Curtains will be drawn on France '98 after tomorrow's final, the 64th match of the 33-day event. While the experts and novices alike predicted a slot in the final for the Latin American 'Samba' footballers even before they played the inaugural match against Scotland on June 10, few considered France a safe bet beyond the group matches.

In Group A, Brazil emerged

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Dunga Deschamps

## Four members of family chopped to death in Khulna

From Quazi Amanullah

KHULNA, July 11: Four out of five members of a family were chopped to death by some miscreants on Friday night at their house at Rajoir village under Swarankhola thana in Bagerhat district, police said today.

The victims were Abdul Latif Hawlader 52, his wife Samira Khatun, 45, son Kamruzzaman Khokon, 26, and daughter Shurma, 18.

The only survivor is Hawlader's son Ziaur Rahman, 30, who was at Bagerhat town on the night of the sensational killing.

Swarankhola police suspected that they were killed due to a previous enmity.

Ziaur Rahman filed a case with Swarankhola thana accusing nine persons.

Police have so far arrested three FIR-named accused. They are UP member Siddique Gharami, 30, Imdadul Huq, 36 and Momin Farazi, 32. Other accused persons are absconding, police said.

The dead bodies were buried at Rajoir today after autopsy at Bagerhat Sadar Hospital morgue.

Four platoons of riot police have been sent there apprehending violence following the murders.

All high officials of Bagerhat district administration and police while visiting the place of occurrence on Friday and today appealed to the people to remain calm and help detect the killers at any cost. Tension remained high at Rajoir till writing this report this evening.

## BNP built most portion of bridge, but AL taking credit: Khaleda

By Nazmul Ashraf, back from Bhuapur

BNP chief and former prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia has accused the Awami League government of 'hijacking' her party's credit for constructing the Jamuna bridge.

"It was the BNP government that made the construction of the dream bridge possible by mobilising necessary funds from the donors. Also, it was our government that laid the foundation of the bridge and completed most of its construction. BNP deserves 100 per cent credit for the bridge," she told a public meeting near the Bangabandhu Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge (BJMB) yesterday afternoon.

The meeting was held at Shoratoil under Bhuapur thana, five kilometre away from the bridge's east end of the bridge. Tight security was maintained around the BJMB for the meeting.

Referring to the ruling party's claim that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman dream of the bridge, Begum Zia, also Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad, said, "All the people of the country had dreamt of a bridge over the river Jamuna. But the bridge could never come into being had the BNP government not managed Tk 3,500 crore for its construction."

The government took tight security measures around the bridge in view of the meeting. Since noon yesterday, barbed-wire fence was put up on the eastern approach road and traffic movement through the road was stopped till the meeting was over in the evening. Long-distance buses and trucks crossing the bridge were diverted to the Bhuapur by-pass road. BNP workers from Sirajganj and other districts across the river also used the by-pass road to attend the meeting. People from villages adjacent to the east approach road were allowed to walk to the meeting

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**WORLD CUP '98**

**KICK-OFF**

**Final match**

BTV will provide live coverage of the World Cup final including the closing ceremony from Stade de France beginning at 11:30 pm BST.

**Inside Today**

**Article**

**Nigeria at crossroads**  
by Barrister Harun-ur Rashid  
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**Business**

**Workshop on poverty adopts declaration: Extend financial services to all poor families**

**7-point rise in DSE index**  
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**Supplement**

A special supplement on World Population Day '98 is being published in today's issue of the newspaper on Page 10

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