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5 city schools capture most positions in merit list

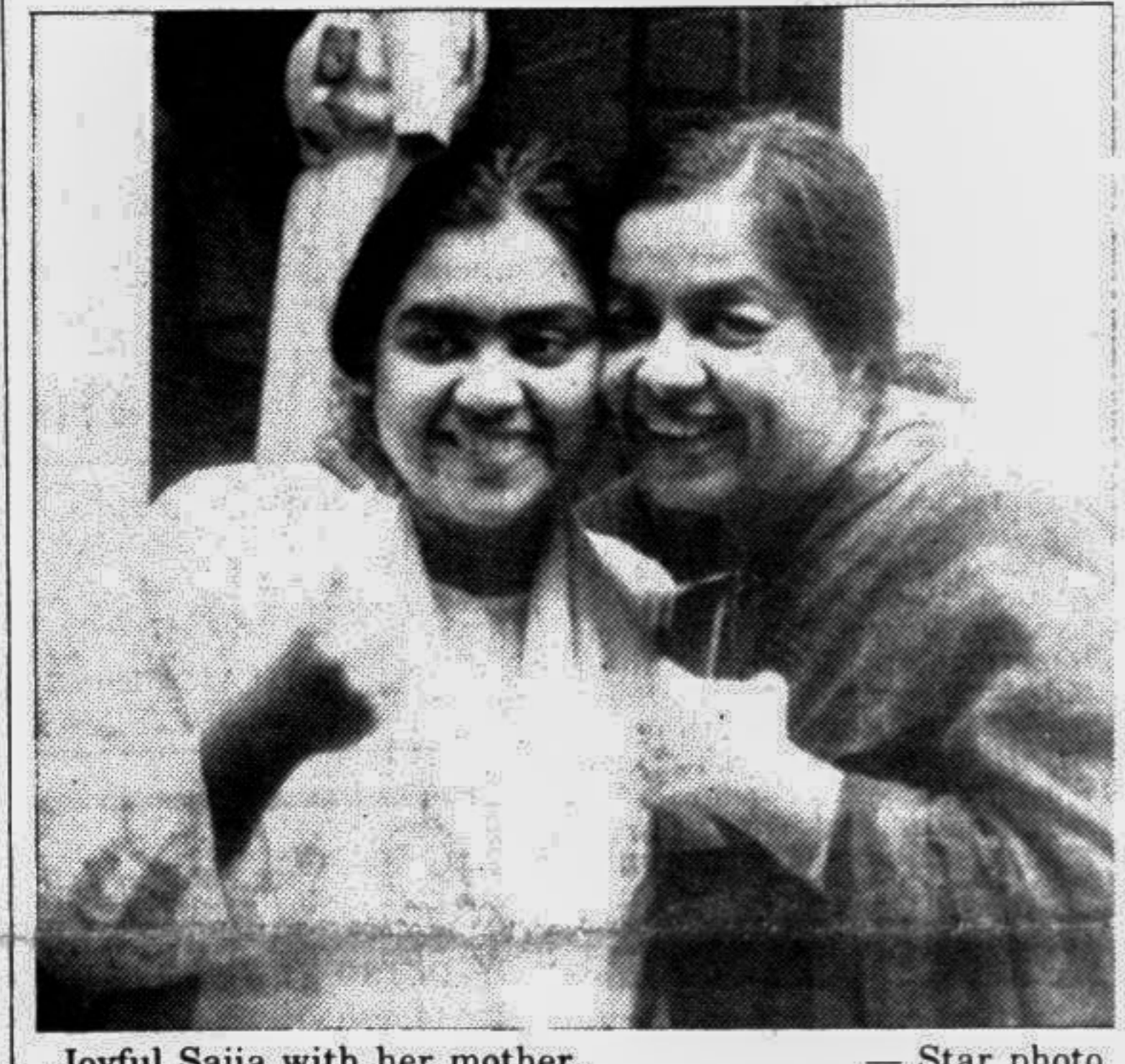
Five schools in the capital did excellent results in the SSC examinations this year under Dhaka Board securing brilliant positions in the combined merit list, reports UNB. Govt Laboratory High School clinched the highest 14 positions, followed by Viharunna Noon School with 11 in the combined merit list of Science, Humanities and Business Studies groups.

48pc pass SSC exams, down from 52 last yr

Results of the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations 1998, held under the five education boards in the country were announced yesterday. A total of 7,22,300 students appeared at the examinations. Of them, 3,46,435 came out successful. The average pass percentage is 47.96, which was 52.14 last year.

Girls secure top 3 positions in Ctg Board

CHITTAGONG, Aug 2: Girl candidates secured top three positions of three groups in this year's SSC examinations under the Chittagong Board, reports UNB. They are Devjani Barua of Khastagir Govt Girls' High School in Science Group, Nishat Sultana of Nabahini High School in Humanities and Social Sciences Group and Monwara Begum of Agrabad Govt Colony High School in Business Studies Group.



Joyful Sajia with her mother. — Star photo

Sajia against 50 marks in objective type questions

By Staff Correspondent Sajia Sadeque, 15, of Viharunna Noon School stood first in the Science group and topped the merit list of female students of Dhaka Board securing 955 marks. Daughter of Abdus Sadeque, Executive Engineer of PWD and Yasmin Akter, Sajia studied for at least 10 hours every day.

Case against Chetia Next hearing on Aug 20 as PW fails to turn up

By Court Correspondent Recording of evidence in the cases against ULFA leader Anup Chetia and his two associates for illegal possession of satellite telephone and foreign currency could not be started yesterday in the court of Additional District and Session Judge, Dhaka, due to absence of the prosecution witnesses.

5 DB men examined by judicial probe body

By Staff Correspondent The one-man judicial commission probing the Rubel murder incident yesterday recorded statements of the five DB policemen accused in the case, sources close to the commission said. The five accused DB policemen were examined by the commission for about five hours from 3:30 pm, the sources said. They were placed before the commission individually. The commission comprises Justice Habibur Rahman Khan.

Report on Bagha incident false: Handout

A government handout last night termed as 'concocted, distorted and exaggerated' a report published in the daily Janakantha on the stripping of clothes of two young women in public in Bagha thana under Rajshahi district, reports BSS. The handout said, 'attention of the government has been drawn to two reports of the said daily published on August 1 and August 2 concerning stripping of clothes of two women by terrorists and non-acceptance of FIR by the police station on the same incident.'



Flood-hit Basabo area in the city still under knee-deep water. — Star photo

Flood situation in Dhaka improves, rivers fall

The flood situation in all the 37 affected districts across the country has improved with three more deaths yesterday, reports UNB. However, according to the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC), the situation may deteriorate again in the northern districts due to anticipated rainfall. Flood situation in the Brahmaputra and Ganges basins may remain unchanged, but the situation in the central part of the country, especially in and around Dhaka city, may improve further, the centre said.

Corruption case Court allows lawyer to represent Khaleda

The District and Sessions Judge's Court yesterday allowed Chairperson of BNP Begum Khaleda Zia, to be represented in the court by her lawyer in a corruption case, reports UNB. The Bureau of Anti-corruption had filed a case against the former Prime Minister and the former Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury for appointing some 287 police sub-inspectors allegedly by abusing official powers. They are now on bail.

5 beheaded bodies recovered in Kushtia

From Our Correspondent KUSHTIA, Aug 2: Police recovered five beheaded bodies from village Kalabaria under Mirpur thana this morning. The bodies were identified as those of Sarwar, 28, of village Baliapara in Mirpur thana, Ali Bakar, 30, of village Teghoria in Nurpur thana, Golap, 32 of Patikabari union under Sadar thana, Akbar, 28, and Mukul, 40, both from village Khallia Kandi under Daulatpur thana. Local people said they belonged to Biplobi Communist Party (Mofiz group). They were victims of an inter-party conflict, police said.

Agreement signed with BOE SB to become Sonali Finance Company

By Inam Ahmed The Sonali Bank operations in the United Kingdom will be transformed into a representative office from January 1, 1999, under a restructuring plan signed with the Bank of England (BOE), according to official sources. SB UK will be registered under British law as Sonali Finance Company and all its six branches in the UK will act as subsidiaries. However, the BOE has imposed a number of embargoes on SB about the functions of the new company. The new entity will not be able to take deposits from individual customers and will also not be allowed to give loans to individuals.

Health Ministry's officials involved in financial scandal to face legal action

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare Ministry has decided to take legal action against the ministry's officials involved in financial irregularities, reports UNB. The decision was taken at a meeting of the committee yesterday after a discussion on the press report regarding the ministry's financial scandal. The issues relating to the transfer of NIPORT officials to the Revenue Sector also came up at the meeting for discussion. Presided over by committee Chairman Dr Kazi Yusuf, the meeting was attended, among others by its members Health Minister Salahuddin Yusuf, State Minister Prof Dr M Amanullah, Begum Aleya Afroz, Alhaj Muhammad Tajul Islam Chowdhury, Dr Dewan Muhammad Salahuddin and Syed Mehdi. Health Secretary Muhammad Ali and senior officials concerned were also present.

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\$23b productivity loss in next ten years due to malnutrition

By Naimul Haq Bangladesh will lose 22.9 billion US dollars in productivity in ten years if the present state of malnutrition among children and mothers continues, a health ministry document says. The document on economic cost of malnutrition says the country will lose 11.4 billion dollars in productivity due to 'stunting' caused because of protein deficiency, 6.8 billion dollars due to anaemia and iron deficiency among mothers and 4.7 billion dollars due to iodine deficiency among both. The 'unacceptably high rate' of malnutrition in the country is one of the highest in the world which is reducing the country's development potential, the document says. About 50 percent of the babies are born underweight and 51 per cent of the children suffer from 'under-height for age' due to 'stunting' caused by malnutrition. More than 70 per cent of pregnant women are still anaemic. It is estimated that about 600 children die every day due to malnutrition (2,19,000 a year) and 25 per cent of maternal deaths are related to hemorrhage and anaemia. 'Stunting significantly affects children's physical and mental capacity and their productivity when they become adults,' an expert said. 'Undernourishment leads to many diseases. Indirectly, malnutrition is the biggest killer of human beings in Bangladesh,' he said. A World Bank review, completed last June, said, 'Overall prevalence of malnutrition in childhood remained at 91 per cent.' It also said that night blindness among children over five and pregnant and lactating women increased to over three per cent. A 1996 Child Nutrition Survey said 56.3 per cent of babies in the age group of six months to six years were 'moderate to severely stunted.' 'Nutrition received little attention in national development till recent days. The government allocated very limited funds for nutrition,' said an official of the health ministry. According to official sources, the first community-level integrated nutrition programme, the Bangladesh Integrated Nutrition Project (BINP), has been introduced in six thanas only. Growth monitoring, supplementary feeding and health education are the main features of the programme. Malnutrition among babies upto 23 months can be reduced substantially in a very short time through such community-level programmes, the sources said quoting from studies conducted in the project area. The government has prepared a ten-year programme to reduce malnutrition to the extent that it does not cause a public health problem, the sources said. Implementation of the proposed one billion dollar programme will be completed by 2008, the sources said.

Muggers stab old man to death in city

By Staff Correspondent A former inspector of BRTC was stabbed to death in the city's Kachukhet area Saturday night. Police identified the dead as Habibur Rahman, 60, a resident of West Kazipara. Two snatchers intercepted Habib's rickshaw at Kachukhet while he was returning home at about 8 pm, police said. The muggers asked him to hand over the money. But when Habib refused to do so, they stabbed him at his chest and back. Seriously wounded Habib was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the doctors declared him dead, police added.

India bringing region to brink of war: Sharif

LAHORE, Aug 2: Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif accused India of bringing the region to the brink of war with its barrage of artillery fire in Kashmir in recent days, reports AP. In its nine-volume final report the one-man panel has raised a large number of questions and pointed out various aspects in this regard even though there was no direct evidence to prove it. However, there were several pointers in this direction, the commission felt and suggested further probe in the matter. The government has accepted the recommendation and asked the proposed Multi-disciplinary Monitoring Agency (MDMA) in CBI to investigate. Among major indicators towards a foreign hand behind the LTTE were the warnings by Yasser Arafat to Rajiv Gandhi and the Palestinian leader's reiteration after the assassination, notes prepared by the then chief of the Research and Analysis Wing of cabinet secretariat, GS Bajpai, and the then foreign secretary, Mukund Dubey. Arafat's warning about a plot to kill Rajiv Gandhi was corroborated by Sonia Gandhi in her affidavit to the panel to which she said she had been told so by Rajiv himself. Arafat had told Sonia and then premier Chandrashekar when the PLO leader had come to attend the funeral in Delhi. During his deposition, Bajpai said, 'a fortnight after Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, Chandrashekar told me that he had been told by Arafat that the CIA/Mossad/LTTE were behind the plot to kill Gandhi.' The former premier asked the RAW chief to get in touch with Mukund Dubey requesting him to call the then Palestinian ambassador to seek further details on the matter. See Page 12 Col 1

Jain Commission report Foreign hand in Rajiv killing not ruled out

NEW DELHI, Aug 2: The possibility of existence of foreign hand behind the LTTE in the conspiracy to murder of Rajiv Gandhi cannot be ruled out, rather it is strengthened in view of the evidence and materials studied by the Jain Commission, reports PTI. In its nine-volume final report the one-man panel has raised a large number of questions and pointed out various aspects in this regard even though there was no direct evidence to prove it. However, there were several pointers in this direction, the commission felt and suggested further probe in the matter. The government has accepted the recommendation and asked the proposed Multi-disciplinary Monitoring Agency (MDMA) in CBI to investigate. Among major indicators towards a foreign hand behind the LTTE were the warnings by Yasser Arafat to Rajiv Gandhi and the Palestinian leader's reiteration after the assassination, notes prepared by the then chief of the Research and Analysis Wing of cabinet secretariat, GS Bajpai, and the then foreign secretary, Mukund Dubey. Arafat's warning about a plot to kill Rajiv Gandhi was corroborated by Sonia Gandhi in her affidavit to the panel to which she said she had been told so by Rajiv himself. Arafat had told Sonia and then premier Chandrashekar when the PLO leader had come to attend the funeral in Delhi. During his deposition, Bajpai said, 'a fortnight after Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, Chandrashekar told me that he had been told by Arafat that the CIA/Mossad/LTTE were behind the plot to kill Gandhi.' The former premier asked the RAW chief to get in touch with Mukund Dubey requesting him to call the then Palestinian ambassador to seek further details on the matter. See Page 12 Col 1

UP member shot dead in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent JHENIDAH, Aug 2: A union parishad member of Sardarpur union under Kotchandpur thana was shot dead last night allegedly by members of an outlawed party. The dead person was identified as Alauddin, 30. According to police, armed men belonging to the Biplobi Communist Party called Alauddin out of his house and shot him dead. A case was filed in this connection with Kotchandpur thana. Visa seekers will be treated with respect: US embassy The US embassy in the city yesterday assured the government that it would look into the report of discourteous behaviour of its employees 'very seriously,' reports UNB. The assurance came after the Foreign Ministry handed over a 'note verbal' to US Charge d'Affaires Theodore Nist on July 23 on harassment of Bangladeshi nationals seeking American visa by visa and consular officers. In reply the US embassy officially informed the Foreign Ministry that it would make every effort so that all applicants seeking visas and other consular services are treated with courtesy and respect, an official of the Foreign Office said.