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Bus service: Trial run tomorrow

By M Anwarul Haq

The Dhaka-Calcutta bus service finally starts tomorrow with a trial run.

A private air-conditioned bus, belonging to Shamoli Paribahan, will carry around 30 passengers including a number of government officials and journalists.

The bus will start from BRTC's Kamalpur Depot in the city at 7.30 am and is expected to reach Calcutta by 5 pm, opening direct surface communications between the two countries.

It is a 360 kilometre journey including the Aricha-Daulatdia ferry route.

The ground-breaking ceremony is being kept at a low key. The first passengers will comprise representatives of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation

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Chhatak blast CID team likely to visit spot today

From Staff Correspondent SYLHET, Apr 4: A CID team will soon start investigating the incident of bomb blast in the house of ruling party MP Muhibur Rahman Manik.

The team is headed by Comilla Zone in-charge of the CID - ASP Aminul Islam. He will be assisted by Inspector Gopal of Sylhet and the Inspector in-charge of Sunamganj district, an official source said tonight.

The team is likely to visit the spot at Chhatak tomorrow, the source added.

Two young men were killed while another sustained critical wounds in the incident that occurred on March 15 afternoon. Later, a team of explosive experts from the Comilla Cantonment searched the house and recovered huge bomb-making materials, live and inoperative bombs, revolver and other weapons from the house. The team also detonated some bombs.

Following the blast the MP himself also lodged a case with the Chhatak police.

Transplant of Human Organs Bill '99 passed

Parliament yesterday passed a Bill providing for transplant of human organs, reports UNB.

Piloting the Transplant of Human Organs Bill, 1999, Health and Family Welfare Minister Salahuddin Yusuf said the Bill would bring about a landmark change in the country's medical system.

Deputy Opposition Leader Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury welcomed the very spirit of the Bill but cited some clauses and sub-clauses as its lapses.

He urged the Health Minister to consult relevant laws of different countries to enrich the Bill.

However, amendments to the Bill were rejected by voice vote.

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Prayer Timings
April 5

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	5-35
Zohr	12-45	1-20
Asr	4-30	4-35
Maghrib	6-20	6-23
Esha	7-30	7-35

Source: Islamic Foundation

Diplomats tell PM Economy calls for halt to political confrontation

By Staff Correspondent

Ambassadors of aid-giving countries and top officials of multilateral lenders have told Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina that they would expect politics to take a non-confrontational course for the sake of economic emancipation of the country.

They met Hasina for three hours last evening over a dinner at her official residence.

A senior minister, who attended the Ganobhavan feast, quoted the western diplomats as saying that there was 'no alternative to holding dialogues among the actors of democracy in any civil society as far as political stability is concerned.'

'The state of the economy and the challenges for the country demand that the political forces stop fighting each other,' a prime ministerial aide said quoting from the diplomats' remarks.

The meeting, in the wake of the Western diplomats' efforts to bring the two conflicting political groups to the negotiating table, followed a similar exchange of views with Opposition leader Khaleda Zia on March 25.

Government sources however described the meeting as the one long overdue, planned last year but suspended due to the prolonged flooding from July through September.

The prime minister was flanked by senior Cabinet colleagues including foreign minister Abdus Samad Azad, commerce and industries minister Tofail Ahmed, finance minister

'96 share market scam Charges framed against former DSE chief

By M Shamsur Rahman

The court of Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge yesterday framed charges against former Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) chairman Imtiaz Husain and his securities firm for manipulating the country's share market in 1996.

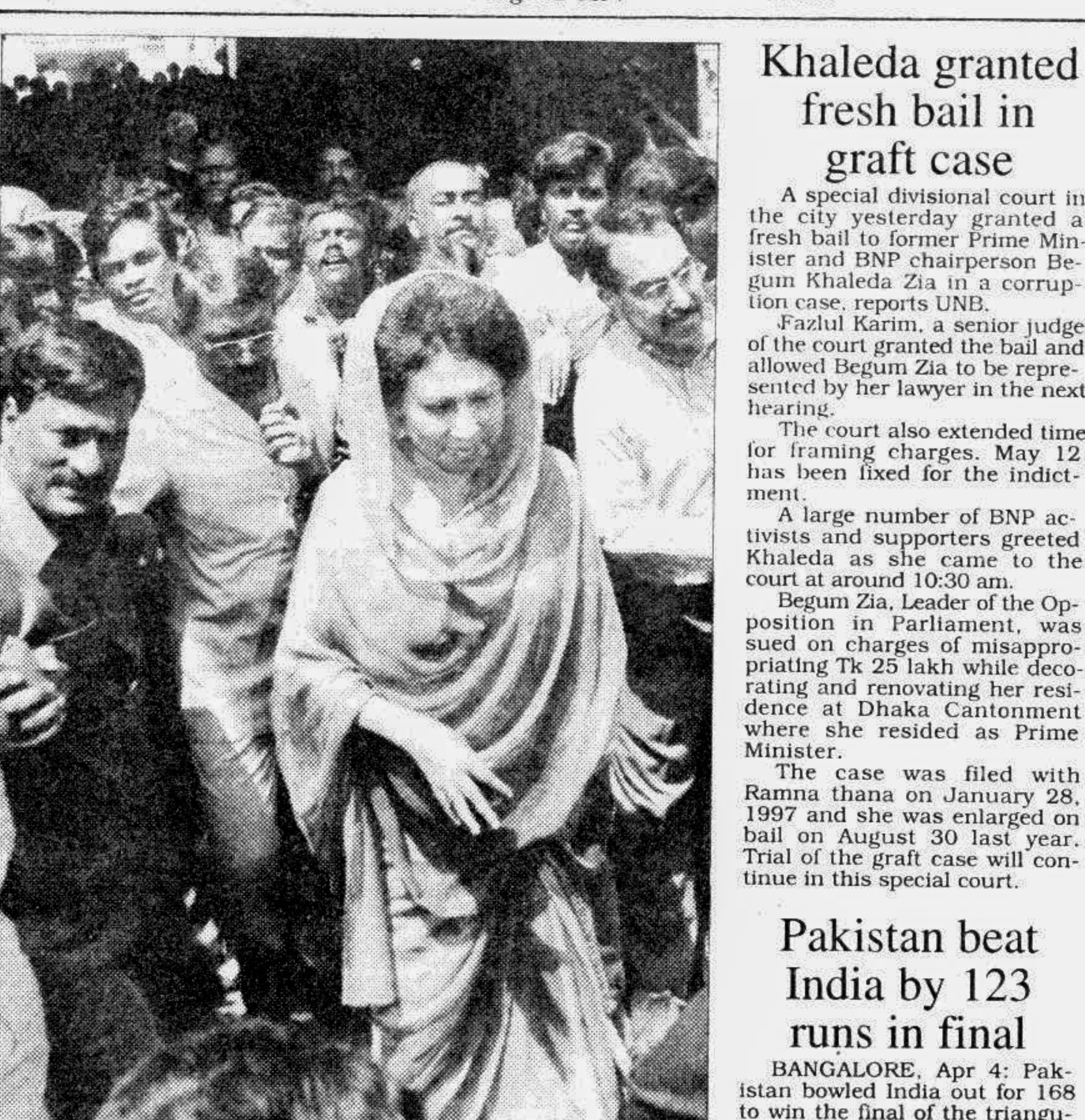
This is one of the 15 complaint cases the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filed accusing 15 companies and their 42 directors of manipulating the share market during July-December 1996 period.

Defence lawyer Barrister Akhtar Imam prayed for time on the ground that the defence was not ready for the case.

But the judge turned down the request following objection from the prosecution.

'You are trying to delay it intentionally, the judge said. "You were given sufficient time earlier."

Special Public Prosecutor Dr



BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia appearing before a court in a corruption case yesterday. — Star photo

BNP's reply to BTV 9-pt allegation and 5 preconditions

By Staff Correspondent

BNP has replied to the BTV invitation to Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia to appear on the *Deshbhashi Mukhomukhi* programme, reiterating its nine-point allegation against the state-run medium and setting five preconditions for her participation.

The reply from BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan was given to the office of BTV Director General yesterday.

BNP leaders Emran Saleh Prince and Ahmed Musa handed over the reply to an official at the DG's office in the absence of DG Syed Salahuddin Zaki.

'Being in the opposition, BNP has nothing to be accountable to the people, rather the government itself needs accountability,' Bhuiyan said. 'But we are still willing to participate in the programme to prove our sincerity and for the sake of free flow of information,' he said and demanded creation of a congenial atmosphere for participation.

BNP set five pre-conditions for Khaleda's appearance on the BTV live programme in which a panel of experts and others from the audience in its auditorium and watchers across the country ask questions on a wide range of issues.

The party asked for apology from the BTV for what it said the practice of motivated, unjust and immoral propaganda

See page 12 Col 3

By-election to Meherpur-2 seat May 4

By-election to Meherpur-2 seat of the Jatiya Sangsad will be held on May 4, an official announcement said in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

The Election Commission appointed Meherpur DC as Returning Officer while Thana Nirbahi Officer of Meherpur Sadar Assistant Returning Officer.

The Parliament seat fell vacant following the death of BNP MP Ahmad Ali on February 13.

April 11 has been fixed as the last date for submitting nomination papers to the Returning or Assistant Returning Officer. Scrutiny of nomination papers will be held the following day while the last date for withdrawal of candidature is April 18.

Meanwhile, elections in remaining seven municipalities will now be held on April 12. The pourasavas are Kalapara, Amtali, Mehendiganj, Bohla, Islampur, Shahrashti and Raazan.

Khaleda granted fresh bail in graft case

A special divisional court in the city yesterday granted a fresh bail to former Prime Minister and BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia in a corruption case, reports UNB.

Fazlul Karim, a senior judge of the court granted the bail and allowed Begum Zia to be represented by her lawyer in the next hearing.

The court also extended time for framing charges. May 12 has been fixed for the indictment.

A large number of BNP activists and supporters greeted Khaleda as she came to the court at around 10:30 am.

Begum Zia, Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, was sued on charges of misappropriating Tk 25 lakh while decorating and renovating her residence at Dhaka Cantonment where she resided as Prime Minister.

The case was filed with Ramna thana on January 28, 1997 and she was enlarged on bail on August 30 last year. Trial of the graft case will continue in this special court.

Pakistan beat India by 123 runs in final

BANGALORE, Apr 4: Pakistan bowled India out for 168 to win the final of the triangular series by 123 runs today, reports Reuters.

Scores: Pakistan 291-8 innings closed, India 168 all out in 42.1 overs.

Outlaws rampage entire village Over 100 houses looted, set afire in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Apr 4: Security measures have been beefed up to restore normalcy at Kachnapara village where hundreds fled their homes for safer shelters after heavy gunfight by armed cadres of the rival groups of the outlawed organisations.

Over 100 houses were looted, damaged and then set on fire during an armed attack by outlaws at Kachnapara under Dumuria thana on April 2.

The attack on the entire village was a sequel to the murder of Nayan, 28, an armed cadre of the outlawed Biplobi Communist Party.

He was shot-dead on April 1 at a fish enclosure at Kachnapara village by armed cadres of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party.

The attackers also kidnapped three youngmen of the village who were later identified by police as Dulal, Rajendra and Shukumar. They are yet to be traced out.

The rampage began from the early morning of April 2 during gunfights between two groups of armed cadres.

The armed cadres resorted to violence to such an extent that hundreds of men and women and their children started crying out at the top of their voice. But none dared to help them in the face of shower of bullets fired by the rival groups of outlaws, said Khan Mujibar Rahman, Chairman of Gutudia Union.

The SP, Khulna, also failed to convince the scared people of Kachnapara to return their homes. Even none has dared to file any case, the UP chairman said.

Law & order Some AL MPs allege police non-cooperation

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League MPs have expressed concern at the deteriorating law and order in the country and resolved to help the government curb terrorism.

The Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP) that sat yesterday at Sangsad Bhaban with its chief Sheikh Hasina in the chair virtually echoed the concern expressed the day before by the party's central working committee.

Responding to a number of AL legislators' complaints about non-cooperation in various districts including Dinajpur, Mymensingh and Sakthira, the prime minister said that home ministry would look into any written complaints in this regard.

Assuring the party MPs of her government's firm commitment to maintain peace in

See page 12 Col 8

Hand over power to caretaker govt for polls: Khaleda

Opposition leader Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday asked the government to immediately hand over power to caretaker administration for holding general election, reports UNB.

'The government should quit just now and hand over power to a nonpartisan caretaker government for holding election,' said a statement of the BNP Chairperson.

Citing examples of killings, including in police custody, terrorism, violation of women's chastity, Begum Zia said law and order has collapsed. Frequent power failures, scarcity of drinking water, inflation, unemployment have multiplied miseries of the people during the 32-month old Awami League government.

The government has no moral right to remain in power she added.

BNP walks out for 'not getting' floor in House

By Staff Correspondent

BNP yesterday walked out of the parliament as Home Minister Mohammad Nasim made a statement about the attack on a BNP public meeting at Durgapur in Rajshahi on March 27.

Nasim was given the floor to reply to BNP MP Kabir Hossain who was one of those injured in the attack.

Rising on a Point of Order, Kabir Hossain accused the ruling party activists and the police of attacking the public meeting where, he said, another BNP MP Nadim Mostafa was also injured. He also alleged that the police did not come up to rescue and send him to hospital.

No sooner had the home minister started speaking, all the BNP lawmakers jumped on their feet and started shouting. They were demanding that some other BNP MPs be allowed to speak before the minister.

But Nasim told the shouting

See page 12 Col 1

BNP to boycott PM's weekly question hour tomorrow

BNP lawmakers have decided to boycott the Prime Minister's weekly question hour on Tuesday, reports UNB.

'This is a token boycott, if she continues to use the hour to undermine BNP and its leaders, it would be a permanent boycott,' Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury told newsmen.

Briefing the press after the walkout, he said the BNP members staged the walkout as they were not allowed to talk on the burning issues facing the country.

Replying to a question on whether the decision to boycott the PM's question hour was taken by the Parliamentary Party of BNP, he said, 'It's not me alone, we have taken the decision.'

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PM at odds with Deputy Speaker

By Nazmul Ashraf

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday lost a battle with Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid over the timing of *Magreb* prayers.

And it was the impatience of the prime minister that handed her the defeat. She was too intent to see the home minister take a swipe at an opposition lawmaker who until then was blasting the government all over.

BNP MP Kabir Hossain generated much heat in the House when he spoke about a recent attack on him at a public meeting in Rajshahi. His deliberation over, the Deputy Speaker was about to adjourn the House for *Magreb* prayers and accordingly, advised Home Minister Mohammad Nasim to speak after the recess.

But the premier preferred Nasim take on the opposition MP before the *Magreb* break. She insisted that the Chair allow the home minister to speak, claiming that the time for *Magreb* prayers did not come as yet.

A baffled Deputy Speaker

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Rajuk drive underway yesterday to demolish unauthorised structures near the lake at Gulshan Section-I in the city. — Star photo

Businessman murdered in city

By Staff Correspondent

A young businessman was stabbed to death by unidentified miscreants near his house at Larmini Street under Sutrapur thana in the city yesterday noon.

The dead was identified as Sarwar Hossain alias Rinku, 25, son of Salimullah of South Moushidi under Sutrapur police station.

Sarwar was stabbed indiscriminately by a group of youths when he along with his brother Sayed was returning home from their lathe machine shop at Narinda by a rickshaw.

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Road barricade near Occidental's new gasfield

From Staff Correspondent SYLHET, Apr 4: A two-hour road barricade was observed here today on the under-construction approach road of a gasfield to be developed by the US company, Occidental.

Several hundred people from the nearby areas assembled on the road at 10 am. They withdrew the barricade after two hours. The programme was observed peacefully.

Later, a rally was also held there with Ahaj Shabbir Ahmed, president, Brihattar Janta Juba Sangha in the chair.

The speakers at the rally called upon the authorities to

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Killers of Shafi may be arrested in a couple of days

Star Report

The killers of Jalal Ahmed Shafi have 'almost been detected and the culprits are likely to be arrested within a day or two', CID investigators said yesterday.

Three or four DB officials will be arrested within two days after getting permission from the authorities, they added.

An Assistant Commissioner (AC) who was recently transferred to Chittagong Metropolitan Police from the DB office in Dhaka might be called for interrogation. But when contacted over telephone, he said he does not know anything about this.

Abul Kashem Hawlader, Chairman of the probe committee formed in this regard, said they have asked for another seven days' time to submit the report.

Shafi's decomposed body was found in the rooftop water tank at the Mintoo Road DB office on March 25. The body was identified on March 31.

Meanwhile, investigators collected vehicle log books of all DB cars involved in operational activities. But DB officials failed to supply Personnel Diary (PD) recording the movement of people.

Sources in the probe committee said they have already detected the persons involved in the murder but are still investigating for further confirmation.

'The killers are among those who have already been interviewed'

See page 12 Col 6

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