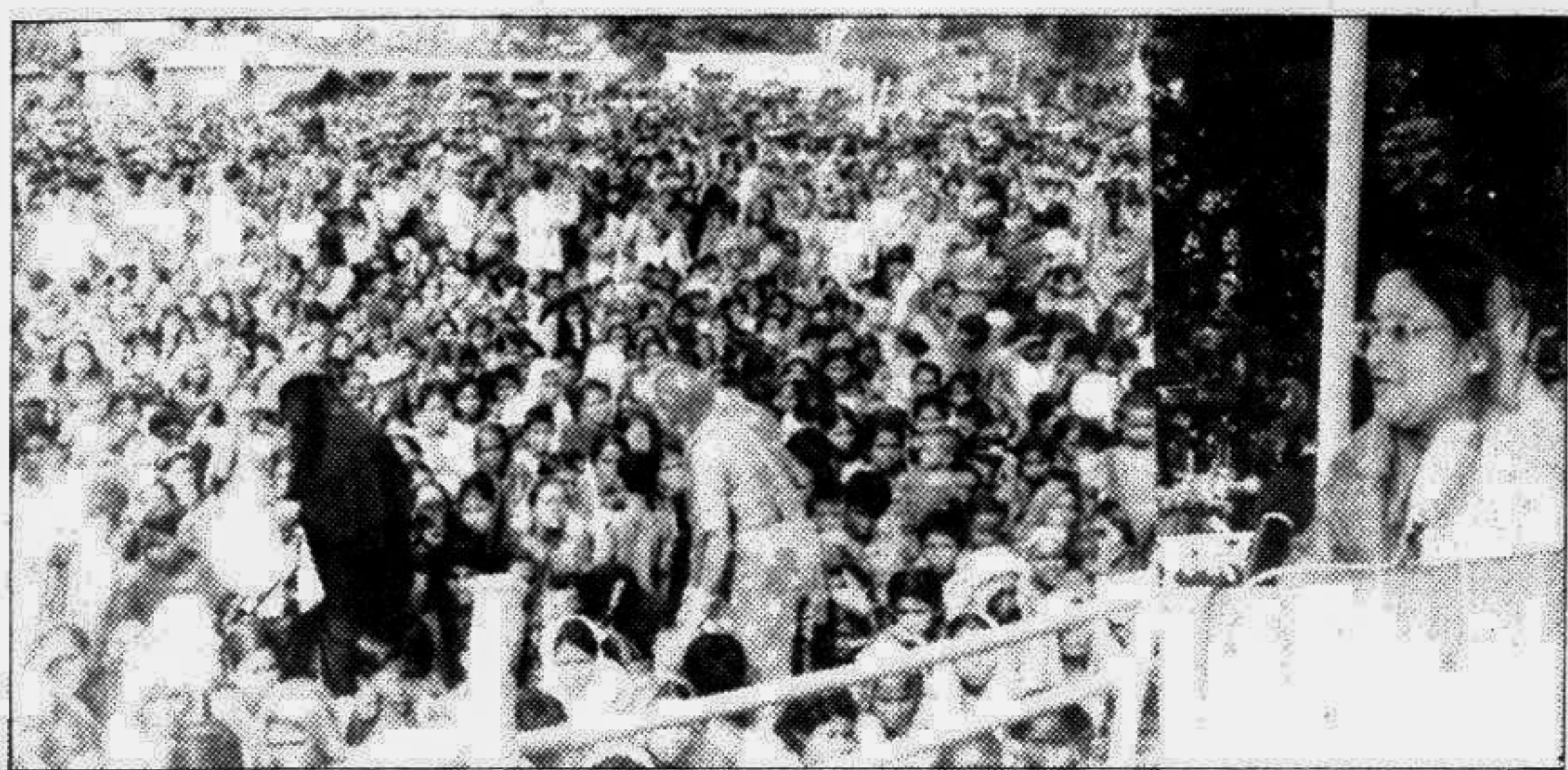


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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing a public meeting at AK Foyezul Haque Primary School ground at Chitalmari in Bagerhat yesterday. —PID photo

### Hasina

From Page 1  
Hasina said while BNP was in power, its leaders and workers had plundered crores of taka. Now they have lost their senses since they no longer have that chance.

## Free banking system

From Page 1  
employees are coming to the job market every year and the figure will rise to 35 lakh after a few years.

## CU tense Shibir's siege programme from May 22

From CU Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, May 18: Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS), Chittagong University unit, called a siege programme for an indefinite period on the campus from May 22 protesting killing of one of its partymen on the campus on May 15.

Shibir also gheraoed the office of Chittagong police super (SP) today and submitted a memorandum to him demanding arrest and punishment to the killers.

## BCL leader murder Hartal observed in Ishwarganj

From Page 1  
Mymensingh, May 18: A dawn-to-dusk hartal was observed in Ishwarganj thana today protesting the killing of BCL leader Sohel, reports UNB.

Local MP Abdus Sattar, district Awami League President Principal Matiar Rahman, Ishwarganj thana AL president Abul Hashim, among others, joined the funeral.

Identifying trade union as the 'real problem' in the banking sector, he said if reform is taking place in the banking sector it should also involve trade union activity. "It must be done to protect the interest of the highest stakeholders -- the depositors."

Managing Director of Sonali Bank Mahbubur Rahman said that bank officials are also responsible in many cases for loan default.

Former FBCCI president Yusuf Abdullah Haroon said: "We must free the banking sector from the influence of trade unions and political parties, and law must be enforced. Genuine businessmen are losing interest."

## Comparisons

From Page 1  
having the ability to do so as well, ensured that all of the fifty overs allotted to the batting side would be gainfully used up. For the second match in a row, Kenya romped past the 200 mark.

The batting revolved essentially around a very assured partnership between Ravindu Shah and Steve Tikolo. These two are classy players as good as any in this competition. Tikolo, who was going through a run drought until now, fancied the English bowling quite enough to hit sixty-odd. The fact that Kenya did not get another forty more runs was essentially because Darren Gough bowled a highly inspired second and third spell to knock over four wickets, just when the runs were likely to come along.

"But it should be applicable to borrowers and lenders in genuine cases," Professor Anisur Rahman of Economics Department of Dhaka University said differences between per capita income and highest income of an individual should be limited.

Referring to Khaleda's allegation of "non-enhancement of government salary," Hasina said her administration has announced new pay scale for government officials and employees even before they had raised any demand.

"We've increased the lowest salary of Tk 900 to Tk 1,200 and the entry level salary of Tk 2,850 to Tk 4,300 while the highest salary of Tk 10,000 has been raised to Tk 15,000."

After this, I can't understand why the BNP leader is telling all these lies," said the prime minister.

Dr Atiar Rahman, a director of Sonali Bank, said people would not deposit their money in the banks if they knew what had happened there in the past.

He said Sonali Bank has only three persons who understand international credit.

A former minister, AM Za-

hiruddin Khan of AK Khan Group said the central bank must be made an autonomous body and the office of governor must be a constitutional one.

Chairman of Beximco Group ASF Rahman said genuine businessmen can be identified by their track records and balance sheet analysis. "There are many ways to identify genuine businessmen."

About rescheduling, he said: "If I do not do rescheduling, what is the option? Contracts have to be renegotiated."

Managing Director of Sonali Bank Mahbubur Rahman said that bank officials are also responsible in many cases for loan default.

Lending process has been strengthened with the interference of the central bank and the borrowers have become more careful, Mazid said.

Managing Director of Bangladesh Shilpa Bank (BSB), M Enamul Haq Chowdhury suggested immediate action. "Bad bankers as well as bad borrowers should be punished."

BIBM Director General Muinul Islam pointed out there has been inside lending in the private banks and suggested for a financial sector ombudsman.

His first namaj-e-janaza was held at Mymensingh Town Hall ground, second at Ishwarganj College Ground and the last at his village.

Local MP Abdus Sattar, district Awami League President Principal Matiar Rahman, Ishwarganj thana AL president Abul Hashim, among others, joined the funeral.

Police arrested Shibir activist, Nur Mohammad Quayum Reza, from the town today. Ishwarganj thana general secretary of Shibir Saiful Haq was arrested on Monday.

Asma Ahmed, a class three student, made a passionate appeal to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to intervene to save the park so that the trees could survive and she could "take a fresh breathe". Her feelings were shared by Dr Naila Khan, a child specialist at the Dhaka Shishu Hospital, who said percentage of lead in bone marrow and blood lines among children in the city is eight times the WHO-permitted level because of air pollution. "We need the trees to reduce the pollution," she said.

Lt. Col (Rtd) Kazi Nuruzzaman, who commanded the freedom fighters in Sector 7 during the Liberation War, recalled that following his letter, the then Prime Minister Tajuddin



Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a rally at Birampur on the last day of 'road march' yesterday. —Star photo

## Khaleda: Hold early polls

From Page 1  
Our senior reporter Rezaul Karim reported from Panchagarh: Khaleda Zia requested people to vote for her party in the next general elections, promising them development.

"We demand immediate election. But the AL government is unwilling to go for polls now since it has lost public support," she told a public rally at the Chinnok Math in the frontier district town of Panchagarh. It was the last of 27 rallies she addressed during her three-day campaign.

Speaking at seven places in her 89-km journey from Dinajpur to Panchagarh yesterday, the Opposition leader also asked people to build up resistance against the government in their respective areas.

Khaleda repeated her allegations of misrule, repression and inefficiency of the government and accused it of failing to run affairs of the state and protect people's lives and property, ruining the national economy and putting the country's sovereignty in jeopardy.

The former prime minister also asked her audience to take to the streets in larger number to register their protests against

the AL misrule. She blasted the government for "unabated terrorism", power-water-gas crises, price hike of essentials, "political victimisation" and for acting against the interests of farmers, industrial workers and professionals.

The BNP called the rulers "thieves" and said, "the country will be destroyed if they continue in power".

She urged members of the Hindu community not to vote for Awami League any more since the party had "damaged temples".

Accompanied by party heavyweights, Khaleda Zia was greeted by thousands of cheering people at different points. The jubilant people, carrying her portraits and sheaf of paddy, BNP's election symbol, welcomed her with slogans, wished her success, and showered her with flowers. At places, she shook hands with women waiting for hours to see her.

According to UNB report from Kishoreganj, JP leader Ershad had to change the route of his road march yesterday in view of hartal enforced in Ishwarganj by the pro-government Bangladesh Chhatra League.

The deposed president entered Kishoreganj town via Gouripur and Netrokona. Addressing his concluding rally at Gouripur, Ershad alleged the AL government had failed to ensure security of property of the people who are made hostage to terrorists.

He also reiterated his demand for all elections under a caretaker administration. Our correspondent from Khulna said, Jamaat chief Golem Azam said the country's independence and people's lives were no more safe in the hands of the AL. He asked the government to resign immediately.

He also accused the government of destroying democracy in the country at a rally at Shib Bari where the road march ended.

Our staff correspondent from Sylhet reported. The IOJ road march ended at Poura Point in the district town. IOJ chief Azizul Haq, addressing the concluding rally, charged the ruling party with betraying people. He called upon people to join the agitation to oust the government.

"Any attempt to save (prime minister) Sheikh Hasina will result in a confrontation", he warned.

## Shift NAM site, save trees

From Page 1  
DCC officials declined to acknowledge receipt of our subsequent letter," he said.

"At last, one official put his initial on the application and we came to hold the rally," he said.

Police stayed outside the park but did not intervene. Welcoming the participants, Professor Sirajul Islam Chowdhury of Dhaka University explained the reasons behind holding the rally.

He said the citizens have a duty to save the Osmany Udyan and its trees. The NAM convention site can be shifted elsewhere saving the trees.

He also announced that there would be a "human chain" on May 23 at the park at 11 a.m. and a signature campaign would be launched to build public opinion to protect the Udyan.

Asma Ahmed, a class three student, made a passionate appeal to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to intervene to save the park so that the trees could survive and she could "take a fresh breathe".

Her feelings were shared by Dr Naila Khan, a child specialist at the Dhaka Shishu Hospital, who said percentage of lead in bone marrow and blood lines among children in the city is eight times the WHO-permitted level because of air pollution. "We need the trees to reduce the pollution," she said.

Lt. Col (Rtd) Kazi Nuruzzaman, who commanded the freedom fighters in Sector 7 during the Liberation War, recalled that following his letter, the then Prime Minister Tajuddin

Ahmed had intervened and saved the Shal forests in his sector during the war also.

He cited from a report in The Daily Star that there were 130 acres of land at Gulshan, opposite to the shooting range, where the NAM convention centre could be built.

Dr Anwar Hossain of Dhaka University proposed that letters should be written to the NAM Secretariat, embassies, UN and even to the Sultan of Brunei not to donate Mercedes limousines for the summit unless the site is shifted from Osmany Udyan.

Dr Ferduous Hossain, General Secretary of Dhaka University Teachers Association (DUTA) said benefit from a tree in 50 years is worth Tk 16,50,000 because of its different roles including providing oxygen and rain.

Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon, said the forest department had planted 11,000 trees at the park. If the trees are not there, the government must answer. He urged the citizens to come forward to save the park.

Manzurul Ahsan Khan, President of Communist Party of Bangladesh, said Dhaka city's air is so much polluted that it is becoming a gas chamber.

"Plunderers are occupying open spaces, canals, ponds and lakes. Even the Dhanmondi lake is being occupied" he said. The CPB leader urged the authorities not only to save the Osmany Udyan but also to prohibit felling of trees, filling up of ponds and canals in the city by law. He cited an example that felling of tree is banned in Delhi.

The rally was also addressed by, among others, Prof. Harunur Rashid, Chief Editor of Courier, writer Shawkat Ali, Prof. Abu Bakar, Kamruzzaman of FEJB, Dr Faziur Rahman of Doctors for Environment, Junaid Kazi, Prof. Aminur Rahman, Dr Ahmed Kamal, Paritosh Das of NAP, Ravi Shankar Chakma of UPDF and Bazur Rashid Firoze.

## Pvt jute mills workers' May 23 strike postponed

The private jute mills workers yesterday postponed their strike and barricade programmes scheduled for May 23 after a meeting with Labour and Employment Minister M A Mannan, reports BSS.

State Minister for Jute A K Faezul Huq also attended the meeting held at the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

The minister assured the labour leaders of continuing discussion for resolving their problems including the wages for the workers.

Labour and Employment secretary Muhammad Ahsan Ali Sarkar, president Jatiya Sramik League, Abdus Salam Khan, office secretary Z M Kamrul Anam and labour leaders Alhaj M A Aziz Chisti, Md Shahidul Islam Dulal, Mohammad Hedayatul Islam, Md Ali Hossain and Shishu Yunus Ali, among others, attended the meeting.

while rejecting their plea for dismissing the cases on grounds that the cases were filed by a person who was not authorised.

"It is true that in criminal matters the accused should get all protection under the law but it is also important that the law should not be stretched too far so that big companies against whom serious allegations of foul play concerning national economy is being made before the court by a statutory authority can themselves overtake the law by resourceful enterprise in raising ingenious contentions in order to frustrate the prosecution on the threshold. The court must strike a balance. We are of the view that learned Sessions Judge failed to maintain that balance which has been restored by the High Court Division." Barrister Zahir said quoting a section of the judgement by the Appellate Bench.

The Dhaka District Sessions Judge had made a reference for quashment to the High Court, which rejected it.

## Liquor: 3 die

From Page 1  
Police sent a bottle to the laboratory for chemical test. Police suspected that the incident might have occurred after taking the country made liquor.

Earlier, Nazim, along with Selim, Shamim and Aziz went to Chowdhurypara in the city's Malibagh area with a microbus and picked up Jesmin from there on Sunday evening. Then the gang came to the rented house of Nazim at Nikunja in Joarshahara, police said.

Nazim and his accomplices used the house as 'a hideout', police said.

A neighbour of Nazim yesterday said that a young man requested them to visit Nazim's house Monday morning saying that two people fell sick there.

The neighbour rushed to the house and found Nazim and Jesmin screaming on a bed. He, however, could not tell anything about Aziz.

Police said Swapon, a driver of Nazim, took the three to Metrological Hospital at Mokkhali where Nazim died at about 4 pm on Monday.

## WDB contractors

From Page 1  
The Chief Engineer assured the contractors that they will investigate the alleged irregularities.

The meeting, held at the conference room of the Chief Engineer was presided over by the Contractor's Association president Shaiful Alam Bulu. General secretary Jamaat Khan, Shaikhuddin Razu, Khondoker Mainul Islam and others were present.

## From the Gully

From Page 1  
Marsh and Wood, to 226 for 6. And then again in 1992 they beat the England side in Australia that eventually made the finals against Pakistan. Why, only in the last World Cup the Kenyans subdued the mighty West Indians.

So, instances are there, we only wish to set an example by ourselves. The big question is whether we are mentally upto it. Dreaming is one thing, achieving is another. Nothing will fall on our lap from the heavens unless we achieve it with our intelligence coupled with the sweat of the brow. The selection of the team has come up for some criticism which, we hope, will be answered by the team management in due course. But the so-called specialised batsmen must admit the responsibility for such a dismal performance by a team that has done well in the warm-up matches. The two most experienced batsmen Aminul and Akram displayed the kind of temperament and approach to the match which can be compared to the school backbenchers trying to sneak out of the class only to be caught by the teacher: They perished because of their impetuosity and took the team down with them. True, Allott and Nash were bowing well and the team was partially on top but we were plenty of overs left for consolidation. Instead both these batsmen played pompous shots and perished. If the seniors become restive without provocations what can the juniors do? Imagine, on a perfect wicket Gavin Larsen running away with 3 wickets for a palty 19 runs. With such a score to defend the bowlers, I must admit, had struck to their job valiantly and brought respectability to the defeat as well as to the score of Bangladesh.

The result of the match is not as important as the manner in which the top players committed themselves. There was hardly any drive to do well in the historic appearance.

But all is not over yet. Four more matches are still to be played and we will look forward to better days, hopefully.

Tikolo

From Page 1  
fied when Ian Ausfin removed Kennedy Otiemo for a duck in the third over.

But Alec Stewart's side had to wait another 24 overs before they celebrated their second success as Tikolo and Shah dominated England's bowling attack.

The pair, after a slow start, took the attack to the England bowlers with a string of boundaries, moving the scoring rate up to four an over.

Between the 10th and 25th overs the Africans put on 75 as England struggled with the damp ball and the slippery conditions.

Tikolo, who would walk into many World Cup sides, announced his attacking intentions with an early straight drive -- struck Caribbean-style on the up -- off Gough.

But his increasingly dangerous partnership with Shah was finally ended by some smart captaincy from Stewart who brought Gough back early.

His third ball of the second spell found Shah's inside edge and Stewart took an excellent catch diving down the leg side.

## Pressure mounts on Sonia to withdraw resignation

NEW DELHI, May 18: Riot police beat back hundreds of Congress party supporters today trying to force their way into Sonia Gandhi's home to persuade her to retract her resignation as party president, reports AP.

Sonia quit Monday, saying she would not stand for prime minister after a revolt by three party leaders who said her Italian birth was a political liability.

Police using bamboo staves pushed back surges of support-

ers from the gates of her home. The demonstrators then burned effigies of the dissident leaders and chanted "Sonia, we're behind you."

Party leaders mounted pressure on her to lead the campaign for elections four months away. Sonia received an avalanche of resignations from office holders who said they would quit unless she reversed her decision.

It was not clear whether the massive support for the 52-year-old Italian who married into India's foremost political dynasty was a genuine outpouring of affection or — as some analysts and editorial writers suggested — an orchestrated campaign to build support in a power struggle with her strongest party rivals.

Congress party leaders from four states met Sonia and gave letters seeking permission to resign from their positions as

chief minister — the highest elected state office — if she does not agree to continue as party chief. The chief ministers were from New Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Orissa.

In Bombay, Sharad Pawar, a powerful regional politician who triggered the crisis by demanding Sonia not run for prime minister, told reporters today that he and two colleagues "didn't ask for her resignation as party president. The issue was that someone born in India should occupy the prime minister's office. It's a question of national integrity, principle and country's prestige," Pawar said.

Editorial writers portrayed Sonia's resignation as a ploy to solidify her support in what they described as a power struggle between her and a faction led by Sharad Pawar, the veteran regional political boss from Bombay.

## Judges, when transferred

From Page 1  
He also said that none of the cases were "withdrawn" from the District Sessions court. They were just transferred to the Metropolitan Court.

Zahir said that hearing also took place in the new court, the Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge.

Zahir said that the Metro Court came into being on January 7, 1999, by operation of law and that all the cases of the Dhaka city were transferred to the Court of Metropolitan Sessions Judge who then distributed the cases to the courts of metropolitan judges.

"And if these three cases need to be transferred on ground of illegality then judgement of hundreds of cases may become void."

He also said that there were many other cases against whom charges have been framed in the Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge.

Metropolitan Sessions Judge on ground of illegal transfer then charges against the other cases would become void. Zahir said.

Zahir also said that the matter was of 'principle because the Judge did not carry his jurisdiction when he was transferred to Metro Court from the Sessions Court.'

He also pointed out that the cases would not have been transferred to Mymensingh if the Judge was transferred there.

He called the "demand" a ploy to delay the proceedings of the cases.

Zahir pointed out that the transfer arguments began in January and "it is May now". During the same period charges against many others, accused in similar cases, have been framed, but these three companies employing their usual tactic are trying to delay the proceedings since these are big companies and the others were "poor".

He also said that the Appellate Bench of the Supreme Court also gave similar observation

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