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VOL. IX NO. 117 REGD. NO. DA 781

INTERNET: http://www.dailystarnews.com

JAISTHA 9, 1406 BS

DHAKA SUNDAY MAY 23, 1999

SAFAR 7, 1420 HIJRI

16 PAGES : PRICE TAKA 6.00

## Narsingdi liquor probe fails to find 'specific' reasons

By Staff Correspondent

The three-member probe committee on the liquor tragedy that claimed over a hundred lives in Narsingdi early this month submitted its report to the DC of the district yesterday.

When contacted, DC Rafiqul Islam told The Daily Star over telephone that he would submit the report to "various ministries concerned in a couple of days". He, however, refused to disclose the findings.

The three-member committee, headed by Additional District Magistrate, was asked to find out the reasons behind the tragedy. The members of the probe body included Additional SP and Thana Health Adminis-

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## Voters' ID card: Stop politicisation, warns BNP

The BNP has asked the Election Commission to stop corruption, irregularities and politicisation in making and distributing voters' identity card or face tough consequences, reports UNB.

A joint meeting of party's central leaders at the Mintoo Road official residence of Leader of the Opposition in the city yesterday protested the process of making and distributing voters' ID cards.

The meeting held with BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in the chair observed that the EC had engaged the ruling partymen in making and distributing ID cards in Dhaka city and elsewhere in the country.

"In many places voters' ID See Page 12 Col 7

## Shibir enforces indefinite siege programme at CU

From CU Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 22: Islamic Chhatra Shibir (ICS) Chittagong University (CU) unit has enforced an indefinite siege programme at the university from today demanding arrest and punishment to the killers of its leader Jubayer Hossain.

Jubayer was killed in a clash with BCL on the campus on May 15.

The Shibir activists locked the main gate of the administrative building and took away keys of all buses.

A tense situation is prevailing on the campus as both the Shibir and anti-communal students forum announced separate agitation programme.

Meanwhile, the university authorities suspended all classes and examinations till May 31 and formed a probe body to investigate the killing.

## Inside Today

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## Pakistan's Security Perceptions and the Taliban Phenomenon

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## Business

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WTO leadership row hits launch of key talks  
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## Prayer Timings

	May 23	
Azan	4:15	Jamaat
Fajr	4:45	4:20
Zohr	12:45	1:30
Asr	4:45	4:55
Maghrib	6:40	6:43
Esha	7:40	8:10

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Liquor poisoning kills film maker, restaurant owner

By Staff Correspondent

Two persons — a film director and a city Chinese restaurant owner — died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) yesterday of "alcoholic poisoning", hospital officials said.

Yesterday's deaths brought the total to five, including a woman, in similar circumstances in the last five days.

Earlier this month, at least 118 people died in liquor poisoning in Narsingdi.

The latest victims were identified as Ali Hossain, 48, owner of Magdonals, a Chinese restaurant on Mirpur Road, and Awlad Hossain, 38, a film director, police and hospital sources said.

It could not be known exactly where Ali and Awlad died the partying and drank. Coincidentally, both of them returned home Thursday night after drinking apparently in separate places.

Both started feeling sick Friday afternoon after they had woken up from a long sleep, family members of both were quoted to have told doctors.

Based on symptoms Ali and Awlad had showed before they expired, a number of doctors said that impurity of the liquor might have been the cause. They however did not rule out the possibility of excessive drinking.

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The grief-stricken wife (left) of film director Awlad Hossain (inset) coming out of DMCH yesterday.

— Star photo

## BNP programme for demonstration by MPs finalised

By Staff Correspondent

BNP has finalised the programme for demonstration by its MPs in the city tomorrow despite a discord with allies over its negotiation with the government prior to the May 16 road march through the Bangabandhu Bridge.

The programme was finalised at a meeting of party leaders with party chief and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Begum Khaleda Zia last night at her official residence. BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and a number of senior leaders and party MPs and attended the meeting, sources said.

The BNP-led opposition alliance had earlier announced a programme for joint procession or separate but simultaneous processions by MPs of the alliance components in the city on May 13. It was aimed at protesting the government's "misrule", filing of "false" cases, "harassment and arrest" of opposition lawmakers, leaders and activists. The programme was shifted to May 24 in view of the opposition's May 16-18 road marches.

Alliance component Jatiya Party had first refused to observe the programme jointly but later decided not to observe it at all to protest BNP's negotiation with the government "ignoring" it.

Jamaat-e-Islami is yet to take any decision in view of the present situation, party leaders said.

Talking to newsmen after yesterday's meeting, BNP leader Maj. (Retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed MP said all BNP MPs, led by Begum Zia, will bring out a procession from the party's Naya-pattan central office at 11 am tomorrow. The processions will be terminated in front of Jatiya Press Club.

BNP sources said there was a move in the party to further shift the programme as most of the party MPs went to their respective constituencies after the Dhaka-Panchagarh road march.

Many MPs suggested shifting of the programme by a few days because it would be difficult for them to return to Dhaka.

See Page 12 Col 2

## S Africa humble hosts

LONDON, May 22: Pace bowler Allan Donald routed England here today as South Africa confirmed their status as World Cup favourites with a crushing 122-run triumph, reports AFP.

Donald took four wickets for 17 during a high-class exhibition of bowling as the tournament hosts were dismissed for 103 — their lowest one-day total against South Africa — with nine of their 50 overs remaining.

The win guaranteed South Africa a place in the second round.

England, however, were left cursing two controversial decisions by Indian umpire Srinivas Venkataraghavan.

Alec Stewart's side, cheered on by a capacity 18,500-strong

crowd at The Oval, appeared in control after restricting the impressive South Africans to 225 for seven off their 50 overs.

But Jacques Kallis took two wickets in his first two overs to leave England reeling on six for two.

If Stewart looked unhappy with his first-ball dismissal — leg before from a delivery which looked set to clear the top of the stumps — Nasser Hussain was clearly flabbergasted.

Kallis only joined the appeal after wicket-keeper Mark Boucher flung up his arms after claiming a leg-side catch.

Hussain even appeared to ask Venkat to confirm that he had given him out. Graeme Hick, meanwhile, standing at the non-striker's end, stared at the umpire in disbelief.

South Africa, however, took full advantage. Halfway through the 50 overs the game

See Page 12 Col 2

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GREAT GOAL! England paceman Darren Gough kicks the ball on to the stumps in a desperate attempt to run out South African all-rounder Lance Klusener during their Group A clash at the Oval yesterday.

— AFP photo

## SL keep WC hope alive

WORCESTER, May 22: Sri Lanka's young brigade sparked a World Cup revival for the reigning champions, fashioning a four-wicket victory over Zimbabwe here today, reports AFP.

The Sri Lankans, who would have been knocked out of the tournament had they lost, rode on seamer Pramodaya Wickremasinghe's three-wicket burst to keep Zimbabwe down to a modest 197 for nine after electing to field.

Then the up-and-coming Marvan Atapattu and Mahela Jayawardena combined to lay the batting foundations for the win.

Atapattu made 54 and Jayawardena 31 before the seventh-wicket pair of Chaminda

See Page 12 Col 5

## A view from the Gully

By Tawfiq Aziz Khan

Dublin's dubious love for cricket was on display on Friday as the qualifiers Bangladesh and two-time World Champions, the (not so-mighty) West Indies, created history in the Irish capital. The island state on the west of England has a history similar to Bangladesh — the only difference being that they staged their armed struggle in 1916 and we in 1971.

Though Eamon De Valera was the elected president of the republic, Michael Collins was the hero of the Irish struggle for independence from Britain. The Irish have definite characteristics of their own but their love for cricket may not be as strong as their nationalism. Even then they have organisation for managing and staging cricket tournaments. This is the first World Cup match they have organised and though a little amusing for our subcontinent,

See Page 12 Col 7

## Khulna's Ershad Shikder expelled from AL

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, May 22: Ershad Ali Shikder, 50, KCC commissioner and an accused in five murder and 21 other criminal cases has been expelled from the ruling party's primary membership to help KMP arrest him as per directive of the Home Ministry.

The final decision to expel him was taken on Friday night.

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## TODAY'S MATCHES

Australia vs Pakistan  
Venue: Headingley  
Live Coverage: BTV and Star Sports (3:45 pm)

India vs Kenya  
Venue: Bristol  
Live Coverage: ESPN (3:45 pm)

Bangladesh vs Scotland  
Venue: Edinburgh  
Live Coverage: BTV and ESPN (3:45 pm)

West Indies vs New Zealand  
Venue: Southampton  
Live Coverage: Star Sports (3:45 pm)

TOMORROW'S MATCHES

## Beyond the boundary

## The Plot Thickens

By Shakil Kasem

If England expected every man to do his duty she was sadly done by. The mediocrities of the England side were exposed embarrassingly as the batsmen failed to come to terms with the searching questions posed by the South Africans.

England did well to restrict the South African batting to a manageable 225. This was particularly significant because Gary Kirsten and Herschelle Gibbs had put on a rousing opening stand, by far the best of the tournament. Cronje's men then managed to lose their way giving England just that faint whiff of a chance to pull off the first upset of the English calendar. It was not meant to be.

England got off to the worst start imaginable. Kallis drew blood very early in the innings and the bloodletting continued unabated. Allan Donald, who does not think much of English

batsmen at the best of times, exposed English inadequacies in the otherwise suspect batting line-up. Predictable South Africa made a mockery of defending their moderate total, in much the same way as has been the norm so far. The conclusion was foregone and England, while licking their wounds would be the first to admit, nothing out of the ordinary had really taken place.

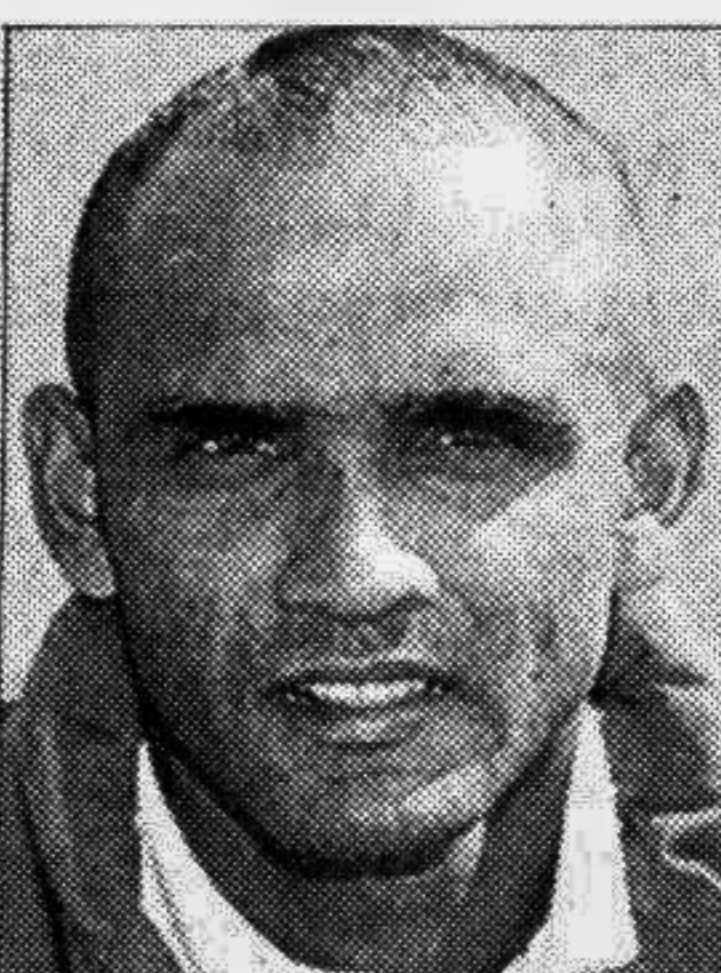
Meanwhile, Sri Lanka continued to prove to the world that they have become prisoners of their own shadows. Having won the previous World Cup in a manner never before dared by any side, the Lankans were always hard pressed since, to match their exploits every time they played a tournament. In England they are caught in the no-man's land. For some reason they feel that their ap-

See Page 12 Col 4

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South Africa vs England



MARVAN ATAPATTU  
(Sri Lanka)  
Man of the Match  
Sri Lanka vs Zimbabwe

## Police informer chopped to death

MYMENSINGH, May 22: An informer of police was chopped to death by miscreants at Char Dari Kushtia in Kotwali thana early today, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Abdus Sobhan alias Saltu, 40. Police said a gang of about 25 to 30 of terrorists attacked Saltu's residence at dawn, dragged him out of the house and chopped him. He died on the spot.

Witnesses said the terrorists also damaged Saltu's house and celebrated the killing by playing musical instruments.

Saltu was an informer of Kotwali police and recently he helped police to arrest some identified terrorists of Char Dari Kushtia village, police said.

## Misappropriation, gas connection to 8 industries

# BAPEX MD, 9 top Titas Gas officials face suspension

Star Report

The authorities have decided to suspend the Managing Director of BAPEX and nine high officials of Titas Gas for providing commercial gas connection to eight industries through misuse of power, sources concerned said.

The MD of BAPEX, who was MD of Titas earlier, and the nine others are allegedly involved in misappropriation of about Tk 20 crore in this connection.

They are likely get suspension orders today. The officials are BAPEX MD Maj (Retd) Mukhtar Ali, Titas general managers Delwar Bakht, MM Talukder, MA Mannan and AKM Rais Siddiqui and deputy general managers Khalid Hasan, Mohammad Asabuddin, Kawser Azizur Rahman, Manzurul Haq and Shafiq Azam.

The move for suspending them has been initiated by

State Minister for Energy Prof Rafiqul Islam following a probe body report.

Officials of the ministry, however, told the state minister that it might trigger strong resentment among Titas officials.

Earlier, a three-member probe body headed by a joint secretary of the energy ministry had found Mukhtar Ali and the nine other officials involved in providing costly gas connections through illegal means.

Following the probe report, the state minister instructed Petrobangla and Titas authorities to suspend the officials. He was, however, repeatedly advised by ministry officials about possible repercussions of this decision, the sources mentioned.

"The decision was well reviewed before it was taken," the state minister was quoted as saying.

BAPEX MD, meanwhile, served legal notice on the state minister and the energy secretary on Thursday.

Sources said the former Titas MD believes that he did not violate any government rule by providing gas connection under "cost sharing" system of the organisation as he was fully authorised by the Titas Board to do so. Besides, some of these connections were approved by the energy ministry itself.

Under the cost sharing system, Titas sets up pipeline and arranges other tools needed for gas supply at its own cost and the industries later pay back the cost.

The sources further said that all these connections were approved by the Titas Board at different meetings during July '96 - August '98.

"Even if the allegations are See Page 12 Col 3

## Upoban Express

## Three train robbers killed in police firing

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, May 22: Three dacoits were killed and three others received bullet injuries in police firing while they were committing dacoity in Dhaka-bound inter-city Upoban Express from Sylhet near Magur-chhara under Moulvibazar district at midnight last night.

Railway sources said a gang about 30 to 40 armed dacoits, who boarded the train from Sylhet station in the guise of passengers, stopped the train by pulling chain at a place between Bhanugachhai and Srimongal railway stations at around 11.58 pm.

They swooped on the passengers of two compartments and stabbed some of them. Hearing screaming of the passengers, railway policemen, who were on duty in other compartments, rushed to the scene and ringed the two compartments. Sensing presence of the policemen, the dacoits opened fire on them, leaving a GRP constable injured.

Police also returned fire

See Page 12 Col 1

## Package Forum's rally tomorrow

# Conspiracy against growing industry, allege producers

By Staff Correspondent

Producers of package programmes for BTV have warned of a "tough action programme" if the authorities fail to withdraw the decision not to allow peak hour slots such programmes.

Appearing at a press conference in the city yesterday under the banner of Package Forum, they demanded resumption of package programmes according to "specific" and "transparent" rules and regulations.

Rejecting the BTV employees' claim that the state-run television was losing revenue because of the package programmes, Forum leaders that their programmes rather increased BTV's revenue significantly.

They claimed that the BTV would lose a huge amount due to the government decision not to telecast these programmes between 7pm and 10pm.

Playwright and actor Mamunur Rashid read out the written statement at the briefing. Actor and producer Afzal Rahman, director Badal Rahman,

performer Hanif Sanket, vocalist Ayub Bachchu were among those present.

The Forum leaders said they would hold a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club at 10am tomorrow (Monday) to protest the government decision and announce their next course of action.

The Forum leaders alleged that a section of incompetent officers and non-gazetted BTV employees had been conspiring against a growing industry that has invested Tk 100 crore since its introduction on November 25, 1994.

They pointed out that after two and a half years of introducing package programmes, a set of regulations was framed and a specialist committee formed to decide whether or such programmes. "But the committee never previewed any programme," said the Package Forum statement.

Expressing concern over the deteriorating standard of BTV programmes, the Forum leaders

See Page 12 Col 4

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