

Ministers' picture

From Page 1

about change in the growth figure. Alamgir admitted that the figure was wrongly put in the May 26 meeting of the National Economic Council (NEC). "It was a printing mistake that you saw 3.3 per cent growth in agriculture. The real figure would be five per cent".

About allegation of tempering with figures to match government's claim of achieving 5.2 per cent growth rate, Alamgir said he was "ready to take a challenge if any one can prove it".

Referring to a donor representatives' remark that the GDP growth rate was a miracle, the bureaucrats-in-minister said, "It is miraculous but, not unrealistic. Our victory over Pakistan in cricket is miraculous but not unrealistic".

He explained that since the last Paris Consortium meeting, GDP target was revised twice, from 3.8 per cent in December 1998 to 4.9 per cent in January 1999 and again to 5.2 per cent in May. "Such revision is a normal process depending on change in economic indica-

tors."

Distributing figures of the Bureau of Statistics among newsmen, Alamgir said, growth rate in industrial sector was curtailed to 2.5 per cent from 4.7 per cent in last December. In the water-power-gas sector, the December estimate of 4.5 per cent growth rate has now been scaled down to 2.4 per cent, he said.

On the other hand, growth in agriculture hit 5 per cent compared to last December's projection of 0.03 per cent. Similarly, in trade services, the rate of growth has been 5.7 per cent now over December's 5.2 per cent.

The agriculture minister said as per the latest estimate, crop production in fiscal 1998-99 reached 216.52 lakh tonnes, which was largely due to a bumper Boro yield of 105 lakh tonnes.

Motia Chowdhury said despite last year's worst deluge, agricultural production registered 5 per cent growth in fiscal 1998-99 compared to that of 1997-98. She gave credit to the farmers and added that gov-

ernment's policy and price support came as blessings.

She quoted from figures of the Bureau of Statistics to say that Boro acreage rose to 35 lakh hectares from 29 lakh hectares in the previous season. The acreage could be as high as 45 lakh hectares according to the Space and Atmospheric Research and Scientific Organisation (SPARSO), she said.

The minister said in view of decreasing foreign assistance for the sector, the government increased ADP allocations for it to Tk. 484.32 crore in 1998-99 from the previous fiscal's 423.89 crore.

Both Motia and Alamgir several times said that the growth figure was estimated conservatively. Motia said she put the total crop production in the year at 215 lakh tonnes although all indications suggest more. Going one step further, Alamgir said government has calculated GDP growth rate at 5.2 per cent considering total crop production at 213 lakh tonnes.

Hills

From Page 1

at this hour", one CDA official preferring anonymity, said.

CDA sources said that despite a ban on levelling of hills, exceptions could be made in emergencies, public and national interests or for development needs. The Public Works Ministry can only give permission after vetting by a 12-member committee headed by the chairman, CDA.

The high-powered committee has representation from the police, civil administration, department of environment, Chittagong WASA and Chittagong City Corporation.

As the hills are disappearing in huge numbers in Chittagong City officials are finding it difficult to cope with the clogged drains and canals during the monsoon as the silt washing down the remains of the hills fill the natural drainage channels.

Every monsoon during heavy rains the poor always pay the price when collapsing hills and landslides bury their homes at the foot of the hills.

12 killed in road mishaps

At least 12 people were killed and 21 injured in separate road accidents in Sherpur, Bogra and Sirajganj yesterday, report agencies.

Of them, seven people were killed in Sherpur, three in Bogra and two in Sirajganj.

UNB adds: Seven people, including a woman, were killed and 15 others injured when a truck overturned on Dhaka-Sherpur highway in Sadak Thana yesterday.

Of the dead, two were identified as Rahima Begum, 30, and Abdul Mannan, 25. The identity of others could not be known.

Police said the accident occurred at Kanashakhola when driver of the cement-laden truck coming from Sherpur tried to give passage to a passenger coach.

The cement bags rolled down on the victims when the truck overturned leaving six of them dead on the spot. Another died on way to hospital.

Eight of the injured were admitted to Sadar Hospital in critical condition.

The truck driver fled the scene. A case was filed.

A Correspondent from Bogra writes: Three people were killed and three others injured in a car accident on Bogra-Rangpur Highway at about 11 am yesterday.

The dead were identified as Lutfar Rahman, 50, Mansur Rahman, 25 and Lal Mia, 28.

The accident occurred when the driver of a Kutigram-bound car lost its control over the vehicle and hit a road side tree.

Lal Mia, driver of the car, died on the spot while two others — Mansur and Lutfar — succumbed to their injuries at Bogra Mohammed Ali Hospital. The three other injured are undergoing treatment at the same hospital.

In Sirajganj, two persons were killed and three others injured in two road accidents on Dhaka-Bogra and Bogra-Nagarbari Highways yesterday, according to APB.

Police said Bhulu Mia, a helper of a Syedpur-bound truck, died on the spot when the truck collided with another one coming from opposite direction at Nalka in the morning.

In another accident, Asma, 56, was crushed under the wheels of a speeding truck while she was crossing road at Sholo Mile in Raiganj at about 8 am.

Two separate cases were filed with respective police stations.

Shazneen murder trial

Proceedings halted till June 21

By Court Correspondent

The First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court yesterday adjourned the proceedings of Shazneen Murder Case till June 21 following a time prayer by a defence lawyer.

Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, 15, the youngest daughter of industrialist Latifur Rahman, was raped and murdered at her Gulshan residence on April 23 last year. A murder case and another case under the Woman and Children Repression Prevention Act 1995 were filed with Gulshan thana in this connection.

Police submitted charge sheets against seven people — domestic help Shahid, contractor Hasan, supervisor Badal, carpenter Shani Ram, guard Humayun Kabir, maids Parveen and Minu. Of the accused, guard Humayun Kabir died of cardiac arrest on January 11.

All the six accused were produced before the court yesterday.

During yesterday's proceedings Advocate Saika Ferdous, assistant of Mosarraf Hossain Kajal — the lawyer for maids Parveen and Minu, submitted the time prayer before the judge, AK Roy, saying the hearing of the criminal appeal in the High Court is likely to be held on June 15.

On April 13, Advocate Kajal filed a criminal appeal with the High Court Division praying for setting aside the order of the Special Court for Women and Children Repression, Dhaka, that framed charges against his clients in the Shazneen Rape Case.

Saifur

From page 1



BNP chairperson and Leader of Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia addressing the 7th conference of Engineers Association of Bangladesh (EAB) at its auditorium in the city yesterday.

Khaleda renews snap poll call

Opposition leader Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday urged the government to quit 'just now' and call a midterm election to prove that it respects democratic norms.

"The government should announce a midterm election just now handing over power in a democratic manner," she said, claiming that it was a popular demand.

Addressing the 7th conference of the Association of Engineers, Bangladesh (AEB) in the evening at the Engineers Institution auditorium, the BNP chairperson said the ruling party did never abide by democratic norms.

"The government has resorted to signing agreements against national interest in a bid to cling to power," Begum Zia, who is leading an anti-government movement, told the function.

BNP leaders Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, Saifur Rahman, Dr Engineer R A Gani, Manjurul Ahsan Munshi and Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahubur Rahman also spoke.

Accusing the government of patronising terrorists for capturing polling booths and stuffing

ballots in "farical" polls, Begum Zia said the Prime Minister even then could not rest assured about victory in general elections.

"So the Prime Minister, sensing their shaky foundations and popularity, openly says she will call elections only when she will be confirmed of her party's victory," said the Leader of the Opposition.

Too many missed deadlines

From Page 1

held within 180 days thereafter. The elections, therefore, must be held by July 30.

Meanwhile, the EC found a number of provisions of the law rather "vague and faulty". For example, the law says that one-third of members of an Upajila Parishad will be female, but does not specify whether they will come from different Union Parishads under the Upajila, or whether the option for one Union Parishad to send all the female members exists.

When brought to its attention, the ministry admitted to the vagueness of certain provisions and resolved to introduce certain rules to make the law fool-proof. It took a lot of time to make the rules.

Besides, the government did not pay attention to some administrative responsibilities necessary to prepare for the polls. While making the legislation, the government created three new Upajilas — Muihnagar under Meherpur district, Dumki under Patuakhali and Meghna under Comilla district — and said that polls to all 463 upajilas have to be held simultaneously. But the government started delimitation of the newly created local bodies only the other day, thanks once again to EC insistence. Gazette notification in this regard is yet to come out.

In another development, the EC has recently pointed out to the Prime Minister that July is not a "good time" for holding polls due to inclement weather. The Commission also communicated to the PMO that it would prefer well-contested Upajila elections, participated by mainstream opposition parties that had earlier boycotted municipal polls. It also suggested that the law be amended to hold the polls in January next year, paving the way for a political negotiation with the opposition.

term of a municipality."

Inspired by the Union Parishad elections under the changed law, the Paurashava Chairman Forum suggested that every ward of a municipality should have the scope for sending a commissioner to the local government body. Besides, the female commissioners should be elected directly by the people.

Until the last week of March 1998, the government neither did anything about the PCF suggestions, nor made any decision about fresh elections to the Habiganj municipality — the tenure of which had expired on March 6.

The government got the Paurashava Ordinance amended, accommodating PCF suggestions on March 24, 1998. While amending the law, it changed a couple of vital provisions. According to one amendment, elections could now be held within "180 days after the expiry of the tenure". Previously, elections had to be held within "180 days before the expiry of the tenure".

Another amendment said that the government would enjoy the right to appoint an administrator in a municipality, in case elections were not held on schedule. The administrator would serve as chief of the municipality for the period between expiry of the term of a municipality and the first meeting of the newly-elected

body.

However, under the changed law, the deadline for municipal elections was September 2, 1998. Once again, an unfavorable climate for holding polls.

Meantime, Secretary General of the UP Chairmen Forum filed a writ petition with the High Court, challenging the newly-adopted provision for appointing government administrators in the municipal bodies that are supposed to be run by elected representatives of the people. Forum got a stay order from the High Court in June.

Later, the writ petitioner and the prosecution reached a negotiated settlement that they would pray for an HC verdict for holding the elections, pending the constitutional debate over the scope for appointing administrators in the municipal bodies. When it so happened, the HC ruled on September 19, 1998 that the municipal polls had to be held within six months from the date of delivery of the verdict. So the fresh deadline for the municipal polls was March 19, 1999. The elections were eventually held in February.

City Corporation Polls were no exception.

The term of Khulna City Corporation expired on April 4 last. Rajshahi on April 6, Chittagong on April 11 and Dhaka City Corporation on May 4, 1999.

Under the City Corporation Act(s), elections to the

Corporations were to be held — to hold the polls of all the Corporations at a time — by April 3.

The LGRD ministry requested the cabinet on January 15, 1999 for an amendment of the city corporations laws in line with those of the UPS and Municipalities, i.e. provisions be made for one commissioner each from the wards and direct election of the female commissioners. But the cabinet rejected the idea.

But on March 8, it was a change of heart on the cabinet's part. It resolved that the laws concerned should be changed in the light of the LGRD ministry proposal.

Meantime, there were two separate cases in connection with the delimitation of certain wards of Dhaka City Corporation and Chittagong City Corporation. The cases could not be settled on time, due to the LGRD ministry's clumsy handling of affairs.

The government later got the City Corporation Laws amended in parliament on March 15. There was an amendment that replaced the word "before" with "after" in the law as regards holding of elections.

According to the amended law, elections have to be held 180 days after the expiry of the term of the Corporations. The elections are, therefore, now due to be held on October 27 this year.

Menacing or meek?

From Page 1

the top five individual scores of the tournament so far.

Ganguly's 183 against Sri Lanka is 18 more than what Ricky Ponting, Australia's leading scorer in the tournament, has made in five matches. Mark Waugh's 146 from five, is only one more than Dravid's 145 against the Sri Lankans.

Dravid, who also made 104 against Kenya, leads the batting charts with 369 runs with Ganguly following close behind on 342.

Tendulkar, looking to renew his intriguing battle with leg-spinner Shane Warne, is sixth on 190.

Australian captain Steve

Waugh, whose side was on the verge of elimination after losing to New Zealand and Pakistan, believes he can keep the Indian run machine in check.

"It's working for us. The plan we have started to come off," Waugh said.

Vice-captain Warne too is exuding confidence. "Now that we've reached the next stage of the World Cup I think we have got to be considered among the favourites again," he wrote in the Times.

Indian coach Anshuman Gaekwad was equally optimistic: "We have battled well in the tournament and the bowling was pretty keen against

England.

"I can't see any weak points, but everything must click together to beat a competitive side like Australia."

Gaekwad hinted that Tendulkar, who has batted at number four in the last three matches, may revert back to his opening slot if the conditions were right at the Oval.

"It's an option we are considering, but we will wait to see the wicket before making a decision," he said. "He will certainly open if it looks good."

Tendulkar, who has made a record 21 one-day centuries as opener, dropped down the order against Kenya and came up with his 22nd ton.

Tendulkar goes into the key match with a huge psychological advantage over Australia. He has scored centuries in each of his last three one-dayers against Steve Waugh's men.

The first, 143 off 131 balls, helped India reach the Sharjah Cup final in April. Two days later, on his 25th birthday, Tendulkar made 134 to win the final. He followed that with 141 at the mini World Cup in Bangladesh in October.

"He had Australia for breakfast, lunch and dinner," Gaekwad said. "We hope he can do it again."

Australia have won four of their six World Cup matches against India, including the last two in 1992 and 1996.

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Australia lost an away Test series 2-1 in March last year. They won a tri-nations tournament there, beating India in the final after losing both their qualifiers against them. The result was reversed in the Sharjah Cup a month later when Sachin Tendulkar scored a 134 on his 25th birthday. It was India's first win against Australia in a one-day tournament since 1983. India also beat Australia in the mini World Cup in Dhaka in October. India have won four of the last seven one-dayers between them.

AUSTRALIA: Coach - Geoff Marsh. Captain - Steve Waugh
INDIA: Coach - Anshuman Gaekwad. Captain - Mohammad Azharuddin

1999 WORLD CUP RESULTS

Australia - bt Scotland by six wickets, lost to Pakistan by 10 runs, lost to New Zealand by five wickets, bt Bangladesh by seven wickets, bt West Indies by 6 wks.

India - lost to South Africa by four wickets, lost to Zimbabwe by three runs, bt Kenya by 94 runs, bt Sri Lanka by 157 runs, bt England by 63 runs.

PREVIOUS WORLD CUPS

Australia have the edge, with four wins out of six. They have also won the last two games, including the 1996 clash, when 126 runs from Mark Waugh and five wickets from Damien Fleming saw their side home by 16 runs. Tendulkar made 90.

THE VENUE

The Oval, London. The ground has become synonymous with the landmark pale-blue gas tank which overlooks the north-east side of the ground. Steeped in history — it was used as a prisoner-of-war camp during the second world war — the Oval has seen Len Hutton's 364 and Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan's 16-wicket haul last year. Capacity: 18,000 (AFP)

JU honours admission tests begin July 12

By JU Correspondent

First year honours admission tests under the academic session 1998-99 at Jahangirnagar University will be held from July 12 to 20 this year, official sources said.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Central Admission Committee of the university yesterday. Though the period to begin the admission tests has been finalised, the authorities are yet to decide the different schedules of admission tests of 24 departments under a total four units. Some of the concerned officials said that admission tests of different departments under the Science Faculty will begin from July 12 while tests of the departments under Life Science Faculty, Social Science Faculty and Arts Faculty will be held respectively after completion of Science Faculty tests.

A total of 35784 students will vie for 809 seats into 24 departments. Out of this, 445 male students and 217 female students will be enrolled from the merit list, 12 under players' quota, 15 under tribals' quota, 48 under freedom fighters' ward quota and 72 under the quota for teachers, officers and employees' wards.

54 candidates are vying for each of the merit listed 662 seats this year. Of them, 9950 candidates will vie for 206 seats under 'Ka' unit, 10270 candidates for 178 seats under 'Kha' unit, 6137 candidates for 193 seats under 'Ga' unit and 9427 candidates for 83 seats under 'Gha' unit.

The university is introducing four new departments this year.

The departments are 'International Relations' under Arts Faculty, 'Environmental Science' under Science Faculty, 'Urban and Regional Planning' under Social Science Faculty and 'Bio-Chemistry and Molecular Biology' under Life Science Institute.

Meanwhile, with a bid to reduce the time to complete the admission procedure, the authorities have abolished the customary viva voce examination for all departments except for the admission into Drama and Dramatics Department. Earlier, the viva voce exam possessed no marks except that of Drama and Dramatics Department. Candidates for that department alone will have to attend a viva voce exam of 10 marks.

What's on today . . .

- Exhibition:** A week-long solo painting exhibition by Minakshi De will begin. Rafting, Nabli, Professor of Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka University, will inaugurate the exhibition. Venue: Divine Art Gallery, Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 5:30 pm. The exhibition will remain open from 10 am to 9 pm till June 10.
- Drawing competition:** Bangladesh Society for Conservation of Environment (BSCE) has taken up a 3-day programme to mark the World Environment Day. A painting competition for children will be held on the inaugural day. Chief guest: State Minister for Social Welfare Dr Mozammel Hossain. Venue: Bangladesh Shishu Academy premise. Time: 4 pm.
- Seminar:** A seminar on Tofazzal Hossain Manik Mia and Contemporary Journalism, organised by newly formed Manik Mia Smriti Sangsad, will be held to mark his 30th death anniversary. Chief guest: Barrister Istiaq Ahmed. Venue: VIP Lounge, National Press Club. Time: 4 pm.
- Reunion:** The opening ceremony of the day-long reunion '99, organised by the Executive Committee of the Marketing Alumni Association, will be held. Chief guest: DU VC Prof A K Azad Chowdhury. Venue: TSC auditorium, DU campus. Time: 9:30 am.

Govt firm to foil bid to create anarchy: Zillur

NARSINGDI, June 3: LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman said here today that the government was determined to foil any bid to create anarchy and in the social life with an iron hand, reports BSS.

Addressing a big public meeting organised by Raipura Thana Awami League at the local playground, he said that the government would not hesitate to take stern action against the terrorists disturbing public security.

The Minister criticised the Leader of Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia and said by threatening to drag the present government from power, she (Begum Zia) has demonstrated her autocratic character.

He said Begum Zia was trying to mislead the people in the name of mid-term elections.

Listing the achievements of the government during the last three years, Rahman said, we have fulfilled our election pledges one by one and found

out solutions to the outstanding problems of Chittagong Hill Tracts and water sharing of the Ganges water with India.

He pointed out that opposition members are getting maximum time and opportunity to speak in the Jatiya Sangsad than any time in the past.

Rahman described the opposition allegations of harassment to their leaders and workers as baseless.

Science and Technology Affairs Minister General (Ret'd) Nooruddin Khan and Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid Advocate addressed the meeting as the special guests.

Presided over by Raipura Thana Awami League president Afzal Hossain, the meeting was addressed by Rajuddin Ahmed Raju, MP, district Awami League president Advocate Asaduzzaman, general secretary Mahubur Rahman and Jubo League leader ABM Rezaul Kabir Kawsar.

Return

From Page 1

reception that is being organised by the Dhaka City Corporation as chief guest.

With city Mayor Mohammad Hanif in the chair, Obaidul Quader, BCB president Saber Hossain Choudhury and captain of the national cricket team Aminul Islam Bulbul will speak on the occasion.

The prime minister will distribute her promised gifts among the team members there.

Representatives of political parties and former national cricketers will be given seats on the podium. They will also be allowed to greet the victorious cricketers with bouquets.

Ministers, ruling party leaders including MP and representatives of small parties are expected to attend the programme.

Popular actor Asaduzzaman Noor will anchor the show.

Bangladesh Television will telecast, live, the grand reception, expected to be attended by numerous cricket fans and citizens proud of the national achievement.

Meanwhile, major opposition parties such as BNP, Jatiya Party (Ershad) and Jamaat-e-Islami have decided to boycott today's reception. However, a 15-member BNP delegation led by party's sports secretary Hafizuddin Ahmed, MP will greet the cricketers with bouquets on behalf of party chief and Opposition leader Khaleda Zia on their arrival at the airport.

The BNP team will also include former state minister for sports Sadek Hossain Khoka, MP, Mohamedan Sporting Club general secretary Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan and footballer Zakaria Hossain. The BNP team will be backed by a group of party activists who will wait outside the lounge.

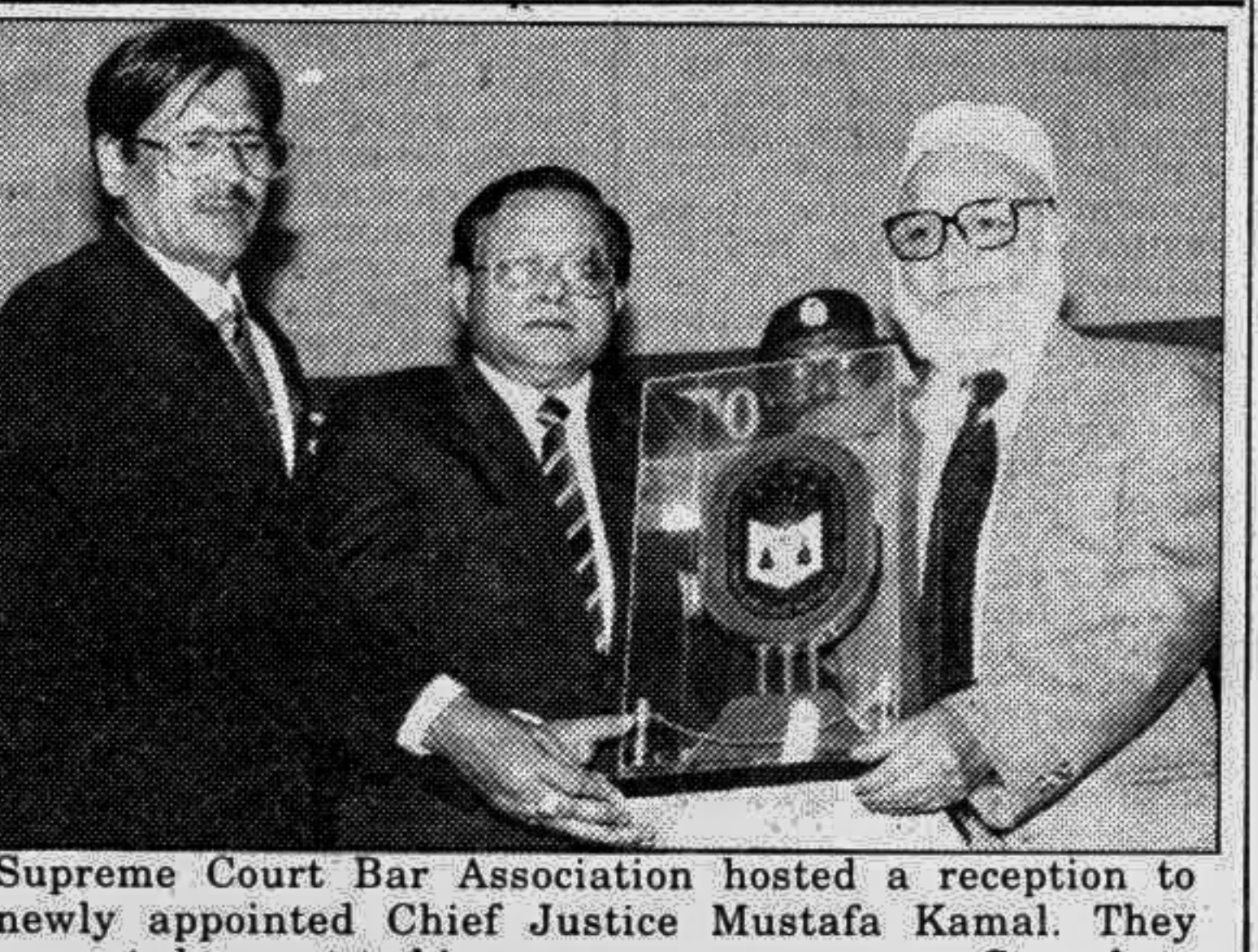
The party also plans to organise a separate reception for the cricket heroes, later Hafizuddin will write to the BCB president seeking a date for their planned reception before the team goes back to England on June 8, BNP sources said.

If the reception is not possible by June 8, the BNP will seek a date when the team will be back home after the World Cup cricket final on June 20. Opposition leader's official residence at Minto Road has been chosen for the BNP reception.

The Dhaka University has made special arrangement to transport its students, who have turned the university campus into a centre of ecstatic celebration of the victory, to the reception venue.

The university buses will operate on all regular routes and carry the students from the campus to the reception.

Tomorrow, the BCB will organise a victory procession with the cricket heroes. Starting at 10am from the BCB office, the procession will parade through the streets through Fakirpool, Kakrail, Malibagh, Magbazar, Bangla Motor, Kalabagan and New Market areas and finally coverage at the Central Shaheed Minar.



Supreme Court Bar Association hosted a reception to newly appointed Chief Justice Mustafa Kamal. They presented a crest to him. — Star photo