



A group of street children enjoy a splash in the rain at a street corner yesterday. The rain yesterday brought a welcome relief in the hot humid weather that has been prevailing in the city for days. — Star photo

## Weather

### Thundershowers likely

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers with temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at many places over Dhaka, Chittagong, Barisal, Khulna and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi division with moderately heavy falls at places over Chittagong and Barisal divisions till 6 pm today, reports UNB. Day temperature may fall by 1-3 degree Celsius over the country during the period, Met Office said.

The country's highest temperature 36.7 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and the lowest 25 degrees at Chittagong and Cox's Bazar.

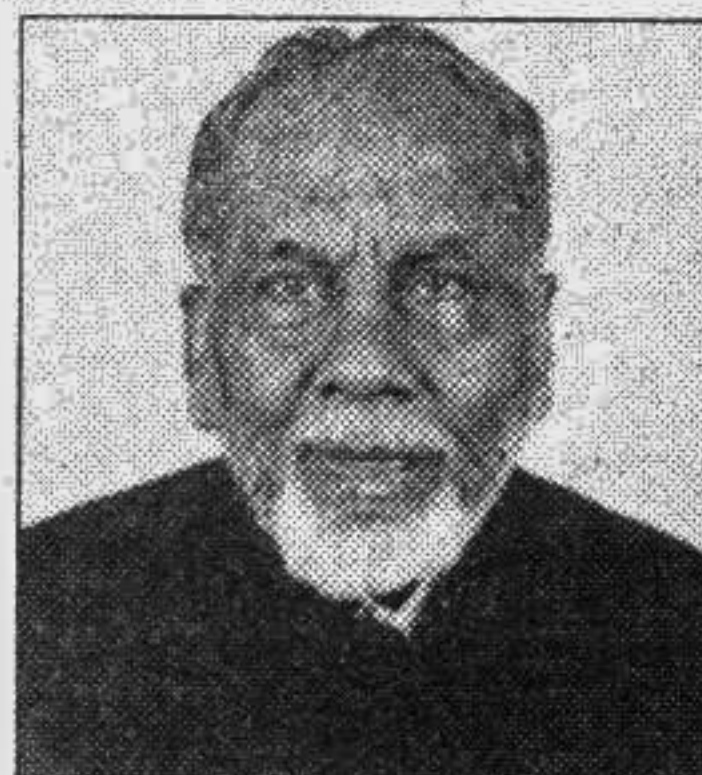
The sun sets today at 6:46 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:11 am. Maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage
	Max	Min
Dhaka	32.6	28.6
Chittagong	34.2	25.0
Rajshahi	36.7	29.0
Khulna	35.0	29.0
Barisal	34.0	26.1

### 11 hurt in clash over land in Narsingdi

NARSINGDI, June 9: Eleven people were injured in a clash between two groups of villagers over a land dispute at Kathalia village in Sadar thana early today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the clash took place when one Aminuddin along with his supporters tried to construct a house on a disputed land at about 6 am. The injured were admitted to sadar hospital.



### Obituary

By Staff Correspondent  
Eminent biochemist Dr Habibur Rahman died of heart failure at Gulshan Group Clinic in the city on Tuesday night. He was 77.

Rahman taught biochemistry at the Dhaka University for 37 years from 1948. He was also one of the founders of the Department of Pharmacy, DU. During his long teaching career, he was a Visiting Professor of the Royal Baghdad University and the University of Zambia, Lusaka.

Son of late Shafiuddin Ahmed, Rahman was born in August 22, 1922 at Sutakati village under Swarupkati thana in Pirojpur district.

He left behind one son, two daughters, nine grand children and a host of relatives, friends, colleagues, students, well-wishers and admirers to mourn his death. His wife Roushan Habib passed away on August 16, 1998 in California, USA.

The namaj-e-janaza of the Habibur Rahman will be held today at Gausul Azam Mosque at Mohakhali after the Zohr prayers. He will be buried at the Banani graveyard.

His quakhuani will be held at his son Mustaq Habib's residence at 13, South Avenue, Gulshan-1 tomorrow after Asr prayers. Relatives, friends, colleagues, students, admirers have been requested to attend.



A two-day long project launching workshop on Municipal Services Project of LGED began in the city yesterday. It was jointly organised by LGED and International Development Association.

### PM visits ASI Shahadat at CMH

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday visited Assistant Sub-inspector of police Shahadat Hossain who is undergoing treatment at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH), reports BSS.

ASI Shahadat was seriously injured in a bomb attack by the miscreants when he raided a house at Islambagh area under Lalbagh Police Station on April 25 where bombs were being made.

Shahadat received serious eye injuries.

Sheikh Hasina assured the relatives of the police officer that her government would provide the best possible treatment for him and look after the welfare of the family.

She also visited the ailing mother, sister and niece of Harunur Rashid MP. They are undergoing treatment there following a road accident. She enquired about their condition and wished them early recovery.

### Dacoity at a city house

By Staff Correspondent  
Robbers looted gold ornaments, cash money and other valuables worth about Taka two lakh from a house at Mirpur in the city in the early hours of yesterday.

Police said the gang of robbers entered the house of one Kabir Hossain at 1/B 5/7 at Mirpur cutting the grill of a window at about 2 am and confined the members of family in a room at gunpoint.

They took away 20 tolas of gold ornaments, Tk 35 thousand in cash and other valuables worth about Tk 2 lakh from the house.

A case has been filed with Mirpur thana in this connection but none was arrested till filing of this report.

### CU students withdraw strike

From CU Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 9: Students of Public Administration Department of Chittagong University has withdrawn their indefinite term strike at the Department after 24 days today as the academic committee has taken a decision against one of the teachers of the department.

Yesterday the academic committee in a meeting decided that Professor Abdun Nur would not be allowed to teach Islamic Administration subject at Masters classes anymore.

The students declared agitation programme against Professor Abdun Nur, a Jamaat backed white panel teacher as he submitted a legal notice against 66 Masters students of the Department due to their absence in his classes. The students alleged that Professor Nur tried to compel them to take Islamic Administration as their subject. He also made poor comments on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Rabindranath Tagore in his classes.

### Press confce date changed

The press conference of the National Handicrafts Exhibition '99 will be held tomorrow at 12 noon at Hotel Sheraton instead of today, says a press release.

Export Promotion Bureau and Bangladesh have jointly organised the exhibition for third time at Sheraton Hotel's Winter Garden. The 3-day exhibition will begin on June 13.

### Photo journalists barred entry to secretariat to collect passes

By Special Correspondent

Photo journalists were prevented from entering the Secretariat yesterday by police when they went to collect passes to cover the presentation of budget for fiscal 1999-2000.

Police neither gave an explanation nor showed any written order for the restrictions to bar accredited photojournalists.

Home Ministry officials told them they could go inside the secretariat leaving their cameras behind.

The sudden restriction follows recent spurt in demonstrations by secretariat employees. One group led by Shah Alam on Monday staged a demonstration ignoring police attempts to stop their march that spilled out of the secretariat and ended in front of the Press Club.

Their rivals led by Nurul Alam staged their rally on Tuesday, also ignoring police attempts to stop them. Demonstrations are prohibited inside the seat of the government.

But the two groups who have been rivals and have often been involved in fracas have recently geared up their campaign to realise 9 and 15 point demands respectively. This includes common demands like change in office timings, dearness allowance, full implementation of the pay scale, promotions etc.

They are now awaiting the next move by the government, particularly the budgetary allocations before embarking on their next course of action.

The group headed by Nurul Alam has given a ten day ultimatum to the government to fulfil their demands on Tuesday.

## Beyond the boundary

From Page 1  
finesse. He had Lord's for his stage, and he made everyone sit up and take notice of him, all over again. With the ball coming on to the bat, a hundred was there for the taking. He had lost at the races the previous day, but here he did not, for once, look the gift horse in the mouth.

### JS tidbits

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"Well said, Mr Speaker, that age does not matter in love has been proved once again," said Post and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim in an oblique reference to the 74-year-old Foreign Minister Abdul Samad Azad's second marriage the other day.

A prompt Hamid shifted the subject of the discussion on Nasim who, he said, had recently advised the students of a university to use mobile phones to have constant contacts with their fiancées.

"Oh yes, I know Nasim Sahib has a lot of experience in this trade. He knows all the tricks for contacting a fiancée, no matter where she stays," disclosed Patal, once a close AL aide of Nasim.

But the Deputy Speaker's bid apparently to comfort the opposing MPs, who had tough time the day before, did not last long. Both the sides went back to their usual war of words as soon as talks on Tuesday's battle started.

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The "therapy" goes on  
Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina continued their practice of taking seats at 3.30 am, the schedule for resumption of the session, for the fourth consecutive day yesterday.

But unlike Tuesday, the Chair could not take up the day's agenda even after recitation from the holy Quran that started at 9.30 am. He had to wait for about five minutes for quorum in the House, and another minute for minister Nasim to come.

The first star-marked question was meant for Nasim. He was among those Treasury Bench members who dashed to the House where the Speaker and the Leader of the House were waiting. A gasping Nasim regretted his being late before answering the question.

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Is it 300?

BNP lawmakers started reacting to Home Minister Mohammad Nasim's lengthy statement on the recent police drive against terrorists. The minister made the statement under Rule 300 of the Rules of Procedure unusually lengthy touching issues other than the police drive.

As the minister dragged on, some of the BNP MPs started tossing up interesting comments. "Are you still under Rule 300?" asked Dr. Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain.

"He is no more under rule 300, he is going by 600!" retorted Abdul Wahab.

### BHBCUC demands repeal of 5th, 8th amendments

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian Unity Council (BHBCUC) at a rally in the city yesterday demanded repeal of the 5th and 8th amendments of the country's Constitution and to include the secular constitution of '72.

The council observed the day as "Black Day," on this day in 1988 when Islam was adopted as the state religion in the country's constitution through the 8th amendment.

The rally organised by the BHBCUC at the Central Shaheed Minar was addressed among others by Advocate Seril Sikder, Nirmol Dey, advocate Subrata Chowdhury, advocate Porimol Chandra Guha, Dipen Chatterji, Porimol Dey and advocate Proshanta Bhushan Barua, while Dr. Nim Chandra Bhoumik, chaired the meeting.

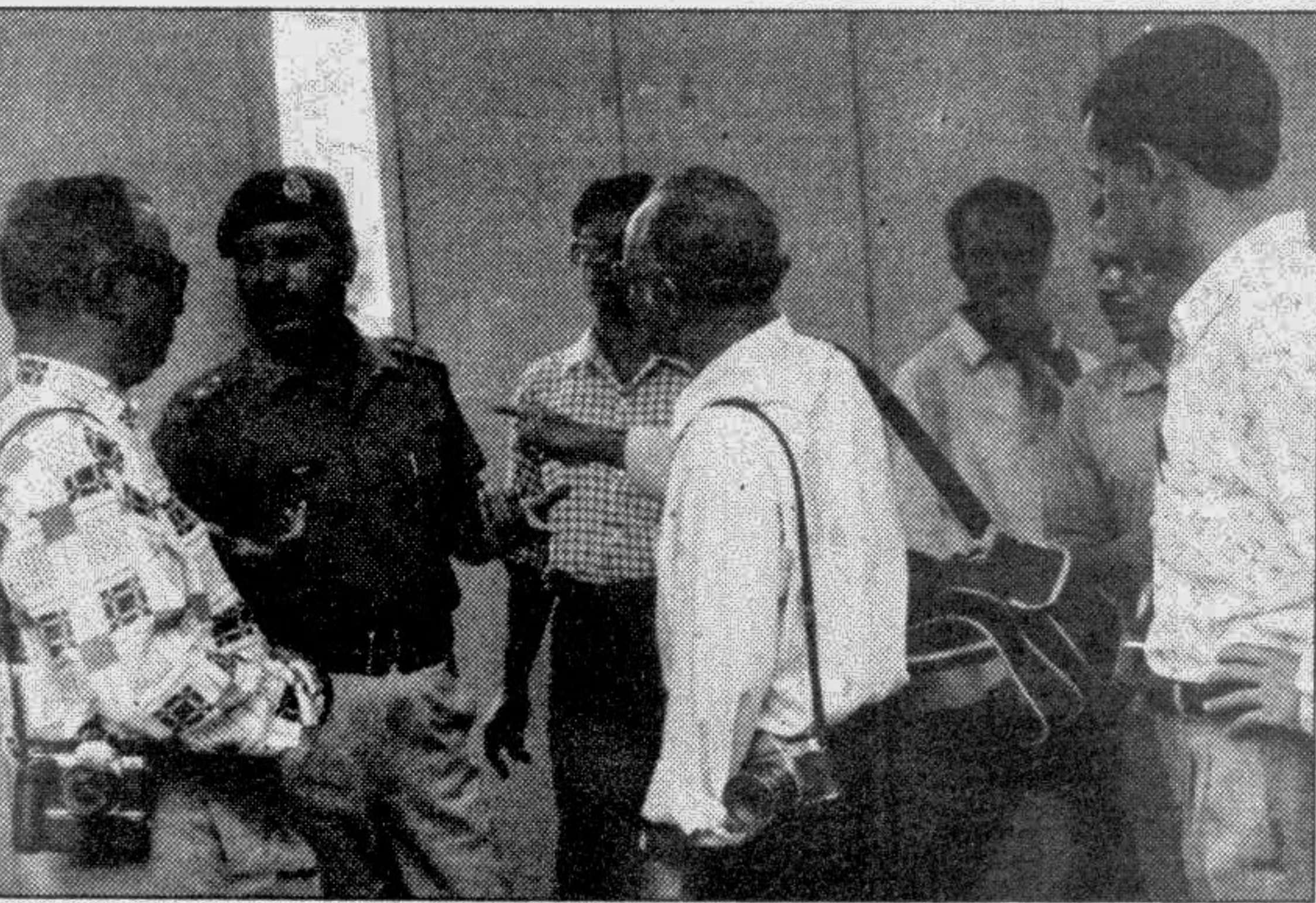
Speakers at the rally demanded for building a nation on the basis of equality and secularism.

Later, they brought out a procession, which ended at the Jatiya Press Club.

### Licence cancelled

The recruiting licence of Pushpa Trade International, a manpower export agency, has been cancelled, reports UNB.

Security money of the agency has partially been confiscated, said an official hand-out yesterday.



Police barred photo journalists from entering the Secretariat yesterday. — Star photo

### JS mood

From Page 1

like him (Tofail).

Patal also criticised Tofail for what he said speaking so much in the past about alleged corruption by the then minister Majid Ul Haque but failing to prove those now. "Had the corruption charges been true, the present government must have filed cases against the BNP leader," he commented.

In reply, Tofail repeated his allegations and said several cases had been filed against Majid. Corruption cases were also filed against many BNP MPs including Patal, he added.

Referring to Tuesday's incident, the minister said he did a 'strategic' mistake while defending the statement he had made for the Home Minister on the previous day.

"Yesterday's situation could have been different had I explained my position first and then come to protest the Opposition leader's remarks on the Speaker and ministers," he told the House.

The minister once again criticised Khaleda Zia for making 'untrue' statement at public rallies against the Speaker and ministers although she did not attend the Parliament sessions.

An angry Tofail alleged that BNP MPs Khairul Enam and Afzal H. Khan used "filthy words" against him on Tuesday. "By doing so, they have lowered themselves," he said.

Supporting the Opposition Leader's comment, BNP Whip Mashur Rahman claimed that the Chair was often guided by ministers.

### Tubewells

From Page 1

the tubewells in seven out of nine thanas in Rajshahi are inoperative now. The worst affected thanas are Baghmara, Mohonpur and Puthia.

In Nature 70 per cent of the tubewells installed by the NGO Forum are inoperative since last year. The situation in Pabna district is no better.

"This year we had to re-sink 525 and repair 1400 tubewells in the Barind region, better known as 'desert of the west'. We had to sink the tubewells deeper this year," said Md Abdul Karim, NGO Forum's Senior Regional Officer.

"We had to do boring at several places to test the layer before sinking a tubewell. It is very disappointing when we find after several months that the tubewell is not working."

Karim added, "As a solution, we are sinking 'deep-set' tubewells which goes up to 150 feet deep and lifts more water. We are already working to supply drinking water in the hardest hit areas."

### Transport strike in Bagerhat

BAGERHAT, June 9: Local Motor Sramik Union and Transport Owners Association today enforced an indefinite bus strike on different routes over an "untoward" incident with local police, reports UNB.

### BBCP

From Page 1

for conducting terrorism in the southwestern districts in the name of communist movement. The Sramajibi Mukti Andolon, that staged the surrender drama, was also founded under government design to mislead people about the Biplobi Communist Party," said the statement.

One Mir Ilyas alias Dilip who was expelled from the BBCP founded the Sramajibi Mukti Andolon and led the June 7 arms surrender to the Home Minister urging all to come back to normal life, it said.

### Manik's aide

From Page 1

during barricade programme. Police also recovered 11 crackers, four daggers and one iron rod from his possession. A case has been filed against Sohul under Explosives Act.

The MP-backed faction enforced road barricade programme demanding his release. Traffic movement on Sylhet-Sunamganj road was disrupted due to barricade.

Replying to Shamsuzaman Dudu (BNP-Kushtia), Nasim informed the House that during 1997-98 fiscal the government earned Tk 13,56,61,298 from mobile telephone service.

BSS adds: In reply to a supplementary question by opposition BNP lawmaker from Manikganj-3 Abdul Wahab Khan, Nasim said the government has plan to establish digital telephone exchanges in all thanas of the country. In this context, he hoped that 80 such digital exchanges will be operative by next year.

WB team calls on Speaker  
The visiting four-member World Bank delegation led by its former Country Director, Pierre Landell Mills, called on Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury at Sangsad Bhaban yesterday, reports UNB.

During the talks, they exchanged views on different aspects of National Parliament, especially transparency and accountability of the government.



Police seized unauthorised rickshaw from Baitul Mukarram National Mosque area in the city yesterday. — Star photo

## Budget today

From Page 1

to about 12 per cent in 1997-98. As a fallout, even after taking note of the rise in food prices because of the floods, inflation rate shot up this year.

The inflation rate has already hit 8.4 per cent in March, this year, compared to 6.46 per cent for the same period last year. This is the second consecutive year that the finance minister's vow to rein in inflation rate did not work.

The compulsion of the government to rationalise utility prices (this year because of power purchase agreements, gas purchase and sales agreements with foreign companies will further boost inflation).

The government's only hope, now, is the much acclaimed bumper boro production, which is expected to bring down food price and the price index, as well, but if that does not work because of heavy bank borrowing, the only other option left open will be to go for tighter monetary control.

On the other hand, one of the most important business bodies of the country, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) has warned, "grimmer days appear to be lying ahead for the country as increased government borrowing from the banking sector has pushed up the banks' lending rates, making equity borrowing, costly."

Any undue slowdown in the flow of resource to growth sectors would pose serious problem to macroeconomic stability and the development of a competitive economy exposed to the global market.

These arguments once again boils down to one single point — there is no option other than increasing revenue collection. Already revenue collection is Tk 958 or short of target. A major point to consider is that this year a very modest 10 per cent growth in revenue was envisaged and even that is going to be missed.

Executive director of an independent think-tank, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya giving his comment on the current situation said, the major areas that need government attention are revenue generation, financial sector reform and more effective implementation of the Annual Development Plan (ADP).

"Boro harvest which has boosted domestic demand needs to be further sustained through more quality public expenditure and support measure to the manufacturing sector," he said. In the backdrop of efforts to enforce discipline in the banking sector, broadening the tax

### Dialogue

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power installations. "We are planning to set up other gas-based industries and one day we will be able to set up petrochemical industries."

Stressing transparency of the government, he said, government would love to hear more debate and discussion on the issues like transit "although it is in Article 8 of the Bangladesh-India Trade Agreement in 1980 and in Article 12 of the SAPTA agreement in 1993."

He said a committee of experts has been formed at a recent bilateral meeting between the two countries to look into the concerns and opportunities of transit facility to India.

The committee will also look into the prospects of opening border trade with India.

Referring to the tariff and non-tariff barrier in regional trade, the minister said Bangladesh drew most of the restrictions during 1993-95 without global and regional compulsion.

"Due to proximity, India and Pakistan took the advantage and our importers prefer to import goods mainly from India," he said adding "But India and Pakistan did not reduce tariff or withdraw non-tariff barriers."

He said the government has been able to convince the Indian government to reduce import tariff and withdraw non-tariff barriers. They have now reduced tariff and withdrawn quantitative restriction on as many as 2000 items, he added.

base without enhancing the tax rate remains a major task. For that matter, a number of tax breaks, particularly, for the export-oriented sector would be welcome."

"This is possibly the last opportunity for the current regime to give the much awaited push to the stalled reform measures. It is high time to realise that the perception that reforms alienate voters is a myth. Rather, improvement of governance through targeted reforms may significantly broaden the constituency of a regime of a country looking for a breakthrough," he said.

The government has chalked out a number of steps, this year, to generate more revenue. According to sources, pre-shipping inspection (PSI) will be made compulsory to check duty leak. The government thinks it can earn about Tk 700 crore by introducing this system. On the other hand, some new systems, like the large taxpayers' unit will be introduced to monitor taxable individuals and companies. VAT is also likely to be imposed on different professions.

According to sources, the government has set a revenue expenditure of about Tk 17500 crore for the fiscal year and revenue income of Tk 23000 crore.

A major challenge for the government is to be on track with its Fifth Five Year Plan to raise tax-GDP ratio by 0.5 per cent, at any rate. But given the slide in the last few years, this in fact would need further acceleration. If that is to happen, the budget to be placed today will need many unpleasant decisions and an aversion to popular measures.

With national elections, only a year away, this would be a major challenge for the finance chief.

### BDR firing

From Page 1

spread in the area and local people barricaded the Panchbibi-Hilly road disrupting traffic for six hours.

The barricade was removed after Jaipurhat ADM, SP, additional SP, Panchbibi Thana TNO, Pourashava chairman and BDR battalion commander visited the spot and requested the protesters to lift the barricade.

Sources said acting on a tip-off a nine-member BDR squad led by habidar Abdul Gafur and was patrolling the Dargapara area since midnight and challenged the smugglers carrying contraband Indian goods by bicycle at about 5 am today.

The smugglers then ran away abandoning the smuggled goods. But, in a short while, they regrouped and attacked the BDR men with lethal weapons, compelling border guards to open fire," said an official.

Some 200-kg onions, 650-kg sugar, 88 bottles of phenisidyl, 18 saris and 165 packets of playing cards were seized from the group.

An autopsy of the body of Rustam was done and a case registered. Panchbibi police said.

### Boy in custody

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up Firoz from his shanty early Sunday morning and took him to the thana. Police, however, said that the boy was picked up early Monday morning.

The officer-in-charge of the thana while talking with this correspondent last night admitted that there were "irregularities" by police in the incident.

The OC said some family members of the engineer came to file a case accusing the boy. But as the boy was only seven years' old, the SI did not take the case but picked up Firoz for interrogation, the OC said.

SI Fazul Huq picked up Firoz thinking that he might be knowing about the stolen telephone set, the OC said.

The OC also said that initially, he was not informed about the matter. When he came to know about it, he called the father of the boy and handed him over to him.

When contacted, senior officials of DMP (South Zone) failed to give any explanation why the boy was forced to spend four days in custody. The SI was suspended last night, the DC South of DMP said.