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HC suggests 'Anti Anti-corruption Bureau'

By M Shamsur Rahman
A Division Bench of the High Court in a judgement has suggested formation of an 'Anti Anti-Corruption Bureau' to check 'corruption within the Anti-Corruption Bureau.'

The bureau should be constituted by the President and it should be answerable to him, it said.

The suggestion by Justice Golam Rabbani and Justice Latifur Rahman came while delivering a judgement in a case filed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a construction firm praying for quashment of a case filed by the Gazipur district anti-corruption officer with local police. The judgement was delivered on June 3.

The anti-corruption officer had lodged an FIR with the local police against Lailun Nahar Ekram, CEO of Engineer and Consultants (Bangladesh) Ltd (ECBL) alleging misappropriation of Tk 11.80 lakh by her.

In the FIR, the officer complained...

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Industrial workers begin 48-hr strike in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, June 14: The first day of the 48-hour strike by industrial workers was observed in six industrial areas here today, reports UNB.

CBA and non-CBA Coordination Council of private sector jute, yarn and textiles mills called the countrywide strike demanding declaration of wage commission.

The strikers put up a barricade at Alankar crossing at Paharali, Kadamrasul and Shitalpur in Sitakunda and at Fouzdarhat on Dhaka-Chittagong highway, Kalurghat on Chittagong-Cox's Bazar road, and at Patenga suspending road communication on the routes from 6 am to 5 pm.

The workers took to the street when police tried to remove the barricades at Paharali and Kalurghat. Police resorted to baton charge on them leaving 20 workers injured.

The agitated workers held rallies at all points and threatened a greater movement if their demand is not fulfilled immediately.

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by Harun ur Rashid
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Business

Budget to raise prices of electronic goods.

FAO urges Asians to reduce population growth, improve land use to meet food crisis

DSE, CSE price quotations

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Supplement

Today's issue of The Daily Star contains two special supplements, one on Milk and Milk Products on Page-5 and the other on National Tree Plantation Drive on Page-10

Prayer Timings

	June 15		
	Azan	Jamaat	
Fajr	4:20	4:25	
Zohr	12:45	1:30	
Asr	4:50	5:00	
Maghrib	7:00	7:05	
Esha	7:55	8:15	

Source: Islamic Foundation



No match today. The first semifinal between Pakistan and New Zealand will take place at Old Trafford tomorrow. Bangladesh Television and Star Sports will telecast the match live from 3:45 pm.

Budget reaction

Claim of no fresh tax a travesty of truth: BNP

By Staff Correspondent

Former finance minister M Saifur Rahman has said the government claim of no new tax in the proposed national budget for fiscal 1999-2000 is a travesty of truth to deceive the people.

"This is hoodwinking the people," said the BNP stalwart. "Any tax, which did not exist before and is now collected through the legislative method under the provision of the finance act, is new tax. The specific tax provisions and taxes to be collected through the PSI system are all new taxes."

He also noted that the proposed budget has violated the rationality of different types of taxation because of 'fiscal and monetary illiteracy' of the government.

Saifur was giving BNP's reaction on the proposed budget at a press briefing at the official residence of Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and party chief Khaleda Zia in the city yesterday.

He said there are different types of taxes used for various purposes. Customs duty is used to protect local industries, supplementary duty to bring equity and discourage luxury items.



Saifur Rahman

VAT is for revenue collection and income tax is the fundamental tax on income.

"But the government is using these for other purposes. For example, VAT has been imposed on imported ballpoint pen to protect local industry. Investment on cars has been subjected to income tax. This shows that instead of promoting investment, this is being discouraged. On the other hand, supplementary duty has been imposed on almost all items instead of luxury items only. At the same time, import can not be subjected to advance income tax since import does not mean income."

He also alleged that the finance minister had placed the figures in wrong context and made 'concocted analysis'.

Saifur, however, praised some measures including reduction of duties on raw materials and giving 'machinery' status to some items.

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BNP plans to punish Akhteruzzaman

By Rezaul Karim

BNP plans to take punitive action against party MP Akhteruzzaman on charge of public statement against the June 13 hartal.

"A process has already started within the party for taking punitive action against the MP as demand for this has been raised from all levels in the party," said a top BNP leader.

Akhter opposed the hartal called by the BNP-led opposition alliance to protest the proposed budget for fiscal 1999-2000. He told the press "we can't observe the hartal imposed on BNP's shoulders by Jamaat and Jatiya Party." He also urged the people not to respond to the call for "so-called" shutdown.

Sources said the statement evoked sharp reaction within BNP and top leaders of the party.

and its front organisations have demanded disciplinary action against the MP.

Leaders of different front organisations at a joint meeting on Saturday strongly demanded of party Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, who chaired the meeting, to take disciplinary action against Akhter. Bhuiyan told the meeting that he would convey the sentiment of the meeting to party chief Begum Khaleda Zia and discuss the matter with her, the sources added.

"Almost all senior leaders and policy makers of BNP have shown tough attitude toward Akhter and all are in favour of taking disciplinary measure against him," said the BNP leader, who wanted not to be

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BNP MPs resent enforcement of hartal

Some BNP lawmakers have expressed resentment over enforcement of countrywide hartal on Sunday protesting the national budget, reports UNB.

The resentment came at the parliamentary party meeting of BNP at the Sangsad Bhaban last night.

"It was necessary to consult with senior leaders and party lawmakers before calling the hartal. Enforcement of general strike on the instant decision of the liaison committee of opposition alliance was not appropriate," a senior lawmaker was quoted to have told the meeting.

His voice was echoed by a number of other members.

Sources close to the meeting told UNB last night that the statement of Kishoreganj BNP lawmaker Maj (rtd) Akhteruzzaman also came up during the 3-hour meeting that was presided over by party chairperson Khaleda Zia.

The former Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman briefed the party legislators on the merits and demerits of the budget presented in Parliament on Thursday. He spoke of the party strategy of deliberations on the budget.

Sources said Begum Zia asked the members to focus on corruptions of the government leaders that affected the administration and national economy.

The meeting also decided to take action against Akhteruzzaman in accordance with the party constitution.

Fazlur Rahman Patal, Syed Mehdi Rumi, Shamsuzzaman Dudu and Ziaul Haq Zia were, among others, who took part in the discussion.

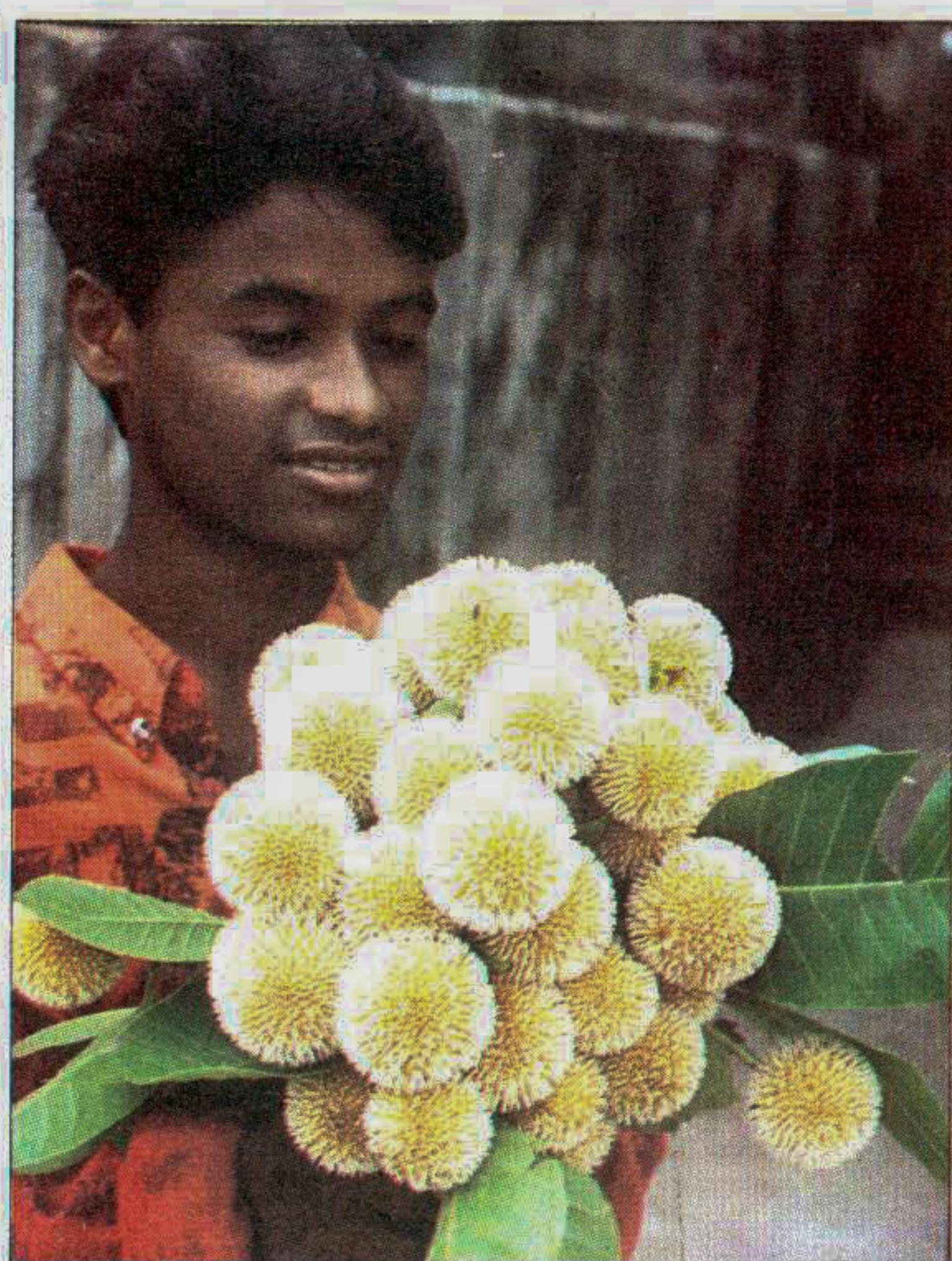
Road accident kills five in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, June 14: Five persons were killed and 35 others injured in a road accident on Sylhet-Tamabil Road this morning.

Of the injured, 25 were admitted to the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital with serious injuries.

Police and witnesses said, the accident took place when a minibus on its way to the Sylhet town from Jaipur tried to overtake another vehicle at Thakurermati and crushed a

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A boy sells Kadam flowers, the seasonal beauty that blooms with the rains. The Bengali month of Ashar began today.

—Star photo

Purchasers, developers both hit VAT may flatten flat market

By Morshed Ali Khan

Prospective buyers of flats as well as real estate developers are coming under the hammer with the proposed increase in taxes on purchase of flats and houses in the national budget for 1999-2000.

Developers said the tax hike will greatly affect the already sluggish market of flats and houses. The government has proposed imposition of an 'unreasonable' income tax, payable before any transaction, they claimed.

The budget has proposed raising the Value Added Tax (VAT) on buildings and flats, constructed by real estate developers, from 1.98 per cent of

the total value to 4.5 per cent.

Real estate developers will now have to pay advance income tax before submitting building plans to the authorities concerned for approval.

The tax rate has been fixed at Tk 200 per square metre for both residential and commercial buildings in Dhaka and Chittagong and Tk 50 in municipal areas in districts.

When contacted, officials of the Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB) said they are not happy with it.

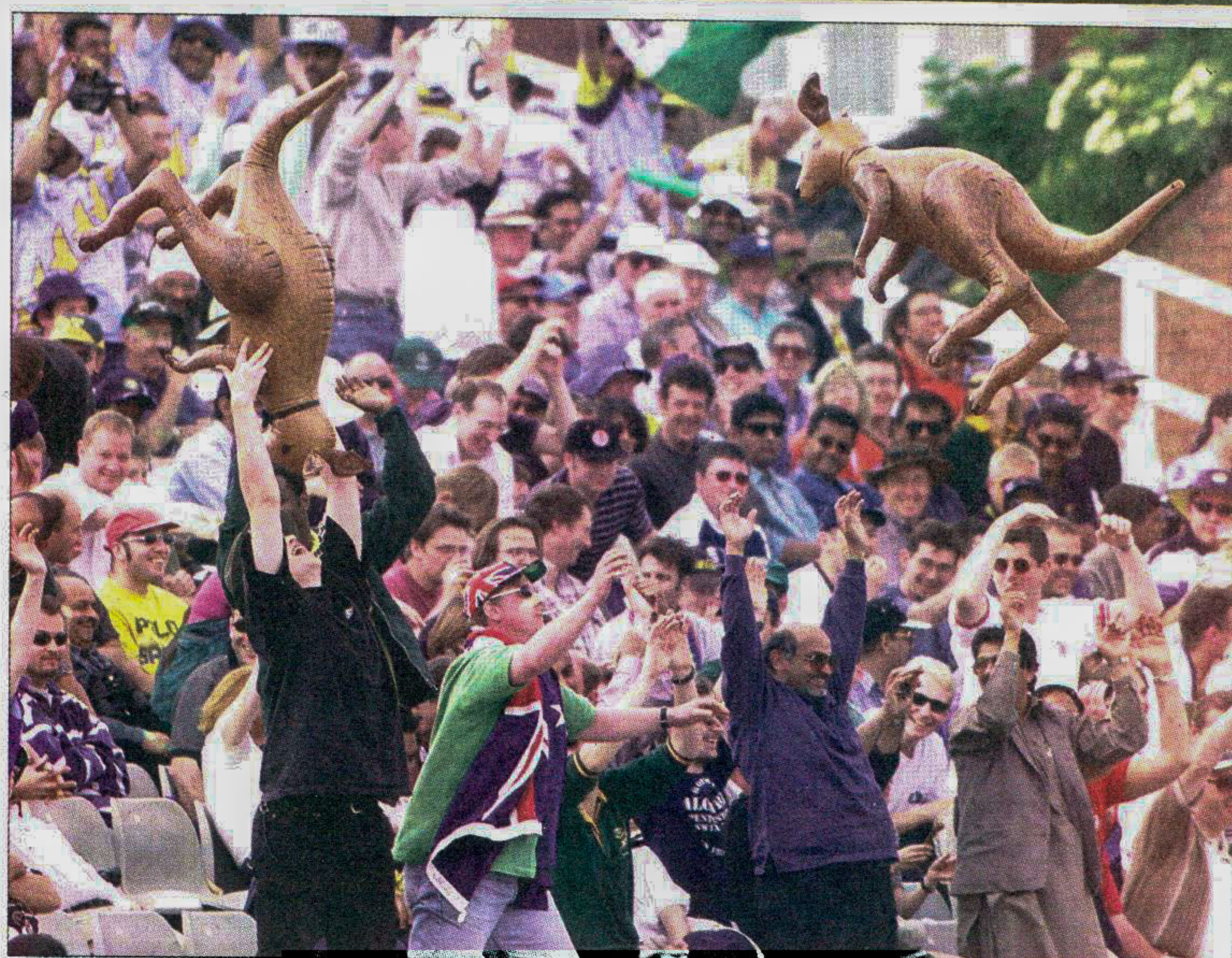
REHAB President AHM Abdul Momen said, now a buyer of a flat will have to pay VAT more

than double the amount he paid earlier. He said this might reduce the sale of flats.

Earlier, any one buying a flat for Tk 20 lakh had to pay a VAT of about Tk 40,000. With the proposed increase, the same buyer will have to pay Tk 95,000 as VAT, Momen explained.

"After extensive discussion between the real estate developers and the National Board of Revenue (NBR) prior to the budget in 1992, the base on which the VAT was calculated was narrowed down to 1.9 per cent. With the increase, the already shy market will be badly af-

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KANGAROOS BOBBLE: Ecstatic Australian fans rejoice with stuffed kangaroos during the Super Six match against South Africa at Headingley on June 13.

— AFP photo

Semifinals scenario

LONDON, July 14: Cricket, more than most other sports, reveals both individual character and national characteristics, says Reuters.

Appropriately, this week's World Cup semifinals promise an engrossing contrast of personalities and cultures.

Wasim Akram's Pakistan side open the final stage of the Cup against outsiders New Zealand at Manchester's Old Trafford on Wednesday. The following day South Africa play Australia at Edgbaston in Birmingham for the second time in five days.

A dream final at Lord's next Sunday would probably pit the glorious if often fallible Pakistani side against the ruthlessly professional South African outfit.

An alternate scenario could be another trans-Tasman clash between Australia and their cousins New Zealand.

Pakistan, a team for all seasons, had little trouble in the opening round against New Zealand, emphasising the gap between class and competence.

Akram has developed into the elder statesman of the side while still retaining his breathtaking ability to make the ball swerve late at extreme speed.

He captains the fastest bowler in the world in Shoaib Akhtar, the most beguiling spinner in Saqlain Mushtaq and a master improviser in wicketkeeper Moin Khan. A hint of scandal is never far away when Pakistan play but

the bribery probe hanging over some of their leading players and renewed accusations of ball-tampering have, if anything, reinforced team unity.

Pakistan produce world class cricketers on an annual basis, precocious talents who mature early in a harsh environment where making an adequate living is a daily battle.

New Zealand, with a tiny pool of talent to draw on, rely on native shrewdness and an essential pragmatism. They have fought their way to the semifinals through the lively

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For Long Lasting Fresh Breath and Sparkling White Teeth

One hacked to death in city

By Staff Correspondent

A young man was hacked to death by a gang of miscreants at city's Tejgaon area in the early hours of yesterday.

The dead was identified as Awal alias Khokon, 21, son of Akbar Ali, a resident of North Begunbari area, police said. The motive behind the killing could not be known immediately.

According to police and hospital sources, the gang led by one Chanchal, called Awal out of his residence at about 1 am yesterday. His body was later found in a jheel near his residence at about 2 am.

On the basis of the injury marks that Awal's body bore, police suspected that the gang had hacked him with a Chinese axe.

None, however, was arrested in this connection till filing of this report. The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Mother of the victim, Razia Akhter, filed a case with Tejgaon thana.

Cabinet okays changes in UZ Act '98

The Cabinet has approved in principle the Upazila Parishad Act 1998 amendment proposal, reports BSS.

It was decided at a Cabinet meeting at the Prime Minister's Secretariat yesterday with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The Cabinet also approved the proposal for amendment of the Inland Shipping Ordinance 1976.

Ministers and state ministers in charge of different ministries attended the meeting.

Eid-e-Miladunnabi on June 27

The Moon Sighting Committee at a meeting yesterday decided to count the holy month of Rabiul Awal from June 16 and holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi will be observed on June 27, reports BSS.

The committee chairman and State Minister for Religious Affairs Maulana Nurul Islam presided over the meeting.

Mobil withdraws from second round bidding

By Sharier Khan

American oil giant Mobil yesterday formally communicated its decision to the government to withdraw from the Second Round Block Bidding and from any oil and gas exploration programme in the country.

Mobil had submitted proposals jointly with Malaysian company Petronas and BAPEX of Petrobranga for blocks 9 and 11.

Though its offer included a 20 per cent share for BAPEX — the highest ever offered to a Bangladeshi company in the Second Round Bidding — the government took no interest in its proposals in the two blocks.

In a brief message yesterday evening, Mobil said that it would no longer pursue exploration and production activities in Bangladesh. It added that its partnership understanding with BAPEX would no longer remain valid.

However, Petronas-BAPEX still remains in the show.

The government had kept its decision on blocks 9 and 11 pending as it 'failed to find a big partner' for Tullow.

"This is clearly a negative signal to the government's poor dealing with the oil and gas sector," commented a source. "The government did not reciprocate the interest shown by good investors. As a result, companies like Mobil feel that it is wastage of time to seek any block or deal in Bangladesh."

A very innovative and reputed oil company, Mobil had earlier provided free financial and technical assistance to the government to 'bring the endangered Bakhrabad Gas Field under control' back in '96-97. The gas field was suddenly spewing sand and water along with gas and was 'on the verge of a total premature collapse', the source said.

Unlike many oil companies, Mobil had joined hands with Petronas and BAPEX before

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A view from the Gully

By Tawfiq Aziz Khan

Stephen Rodger Waugh, the belligerent Australian captain, put the South African attack to the sword and led his team's charge to the semifinal of 1999 World Cup. The 34-year-old skipper of the sinking Australian schooner, dropped at 56, steered his boat successfully through rough waters without batting an eyelid. This was one of his finest hours as captain of a team that has come under criticism in recent times for not performing to its full potential under his leadership.

Australia's precarious passage to the Super Six belied all expectations about this highly competent outfit. They did not carry with them any points from the first round matches and that made their task enormously difficult. They had to win all three of the Super Six matches, two of them against India and their traditional rivals South Africa. This was a fight unto finish for them because if they did not win they would start their journey back home. Alistair Douglas Ross Campbell, the Zimbabwean captain, was waiting in the wings with his heart in his mouth for a South African win to take them to the semis. But that was no concern for Steve Waugh. Dave Houghton, their

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Liquor poisoning

Death toll rises to 7 in Rajshahi

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, June 14: The death toll from consumption of spurious liquor rose to seven in Chapainawabganj and Rajshahi districts today.

Mohammad Ali, a mango trader who fell sick after taking liquor on Saturday, died on the way to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital this morning.

Sources said, Mohammad Ali of Kushtia who came to Rohanpur of Chapainawabganj took rectified spirit at a local homeo medicine shop on Saturday evening. Ali was admitted to Rohanpur health complex. But his condition deteriorated. He died while being shifted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital today.

His body was sent to Chhatrak Haripur village of Kushtia district without autopsy.

Liaquat murder

Photo of accused to be sent to border posts

CHITTAGONG, June 14: A magistrate's court today in order that photographs with details of the four main absconding accused in Liaquat Murder Case, be sent to all the border outposts to guard against their fleeing the country in a bid to escape trial, reports UNB.

The accused are contractor Gani, Mohammad Sajjad, five star Jasim and Liaquat Ali Jasim. Three of the 10 accused in the case were already taken to custody.

Liaquat Ali Khan, local Awami League leader, was

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Beyond the boundary Dreams, Torn And Tattered

By Shakil Kasem

It has been a long month. Four teams have now finally reached the business end of England 99. They have braved the best opposition that the world had pitted against them, they withstood the miseries of a cold wet English summer, and they even managed to defeat the complicated points system. On the flip side, some of them have paid back the bookmakers' trust in them. Three more days remain, by the end of which the world will crown the new kings of cricket.

While the select four plot and plan for the morrow, consider the plight of some of the could-have-beens of this competition. Three erstwhile world champions fell by the wayside, unable to cope with the rigid demands of this day and age. There was an aura of mystique and romance surrounding their previous performances, and they were expected to live up to them all over again. In a harsh world, where results are more important than style and flair, Sri

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