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## Toxic food import yet to be banned

Food ministry unconcerned, WHO unaware

By Naimul Haq

The government is yet to ban import of dairy and poultry products from Belgium, France and The Netherlands although cancer-causing dioxin has been detected in those food items there.

Detection of high level of dioxin in Belgian poultry and egg about two weeks ago has caused a food scare across the world and about 30 countries have withdrawn Belgian dairy and poultry products from markets.

Some Asian countries have banned import of these items from those countries.

Accord signed  
Bus run to  
start this  
month

By Special Correspondent  
Bangladesh and India yesterday signed an agreement on Dhaka and Calcutta bus service which is likely to start by the end of this month, officials said.

Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Communications Karar Mahmudul Hasan and his counterpart in the Surface Transport Ministry of India K R Bhatty signed the agreement at the Secretariat.

Earlier, the draft of the agreement was initialled in Delhi in February.

Bhatty said "Full load bus service will be started in foreseeable future." But Hasan said commercial run of the service is expected on or before June 29. The fare would be 22 dollars or Tk 1100 for the round trip by air-conditioned bus.

"We have agreed to complete customs' formalities at the starting points — Kamalapur terminal in Dhaka and Salt Lake in Calcutta — and expedite the immigration process at Benapole and Petrapole, by a maximum of one hour to save time for the 359 km trip under escort by two armed guards", Hasan said.

He told newsmen after the signing ceremony that it would be the beginning of the exercise to open up the Trans-Asian Highway from Istanbul to Singapore and the Trans Asian Railway in future. He, however, did not disclose the contents of the agreement.

He avoided a direct reply when asked whether the bus service would be extended to Ajmer as originally visualised. He said the issue whether commercial operators would use the Indian railway instead for the long journey would be examined.

Opposition's  
'protest day'  
today

By Staff Correspondent  
The BNP-led opposition alliance will observe "Protest Day" across the country today to protest the proposed national budget for 1999-2000.

The BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Oikya Jote and some smaller parties Jagra, Democratic League, Progressive Nationalist Party and Nationalist Democratic Alliance have termed the new budget "anti-people and against the interest of the country".

These parties had also called a nationwide dawn-to-dusk hartal on June 13 protesting the budget.

As part of the "Protest Day" programme, the opposition parties will hold public rallies and bring out processions in the cities and at the district and thana headquarters.

In capital, BNP, JP, Jamaat and IOJ will hold separate public rallies and bring out processions in the afternoon.

BNP will hold a rally at Paltan Maidan at 4.30 pm and bring out a procession. Leaders and activists of BNP and its different front organisations have been asked to join the rally to further strengthen the current movement.

JP will hold a rally at Muktagong at 4 pm and bring out a procession. Jamaat will hold a rally at Paltan and IOJ at Purna Paltan in the afternoon. Jamaat and IOJ will also bring out separate processions after the rally.

### Prayer Timings

June 18

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

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Economists doubt 5.2pc growth rate

By Staff Correspondent

Leading economists in the country have expressed doubt about the government's claim of 5.2 per cent GDP growth in the current financial year, as stated in the proposed national budget for the next financial year.

By any estimate, GDP growth rate can not go above five per cent, they said at a discussion organised by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) at its auditorium in the city yesterday.

Evaluating sectorwise growth, they said it is not possible to achieve many figures shown in the proposed budget.

They also mentioned that the government's claim of more than 10 million tons of Boro production in the last season

was not based on facts

Director General of BIDS, Abu Abdulla moderated the discussion. BIDS research fellow Omar Haider Chowdhury presented a keynote paper while a panel of BIDS economists including Asaduzzaman, Quazi Shahabuddin, Zaid Bokht, KAS Murhsid, Abdul Quasem, Mahmudul Alam, Rushidan Islam, Rahman, Altur Rahman, Sajid Zohir, and Binayek Sen took part in the discussion.

FBCCI president Abdul Awal Mintoo also participated in the discussion.

The available data on agricultural and industrial production do not support the projected GDP growth rate," said Asaduzzaman.

He said rice production in the current financial year would not be more than three per cent over last year's.

He however supported widening of the tax net but said the collection system should be improved.

Zaid Bokht said industrial growth would be around one per this financial year although the government showed a 2.2 per cent growth.

If the industrial sector grew as projected by the government, why import of raw materials did not grow accordingly? he asked.

Binayek Sen said that the massive damage caused to the economy by last year's flood

## Success rate goes up 55.48pc pass SSC exams in 5 boards

By Staff Correspondent

The percentage of pass in SSC examinations rose to 55.48 this year from last year's 47.96.

The results of SSC examinations held under the five education boards were announced yesterday.

A total of 20,83,640 candidates appeared at the examinations this year. Of them, 4,57,252 passed; 1,96,263 in first division, 2,24,814 in second division and 5,913 in third division.

Of the successful candidates, 2,62,767 were male with 1,25,394 of them getting first

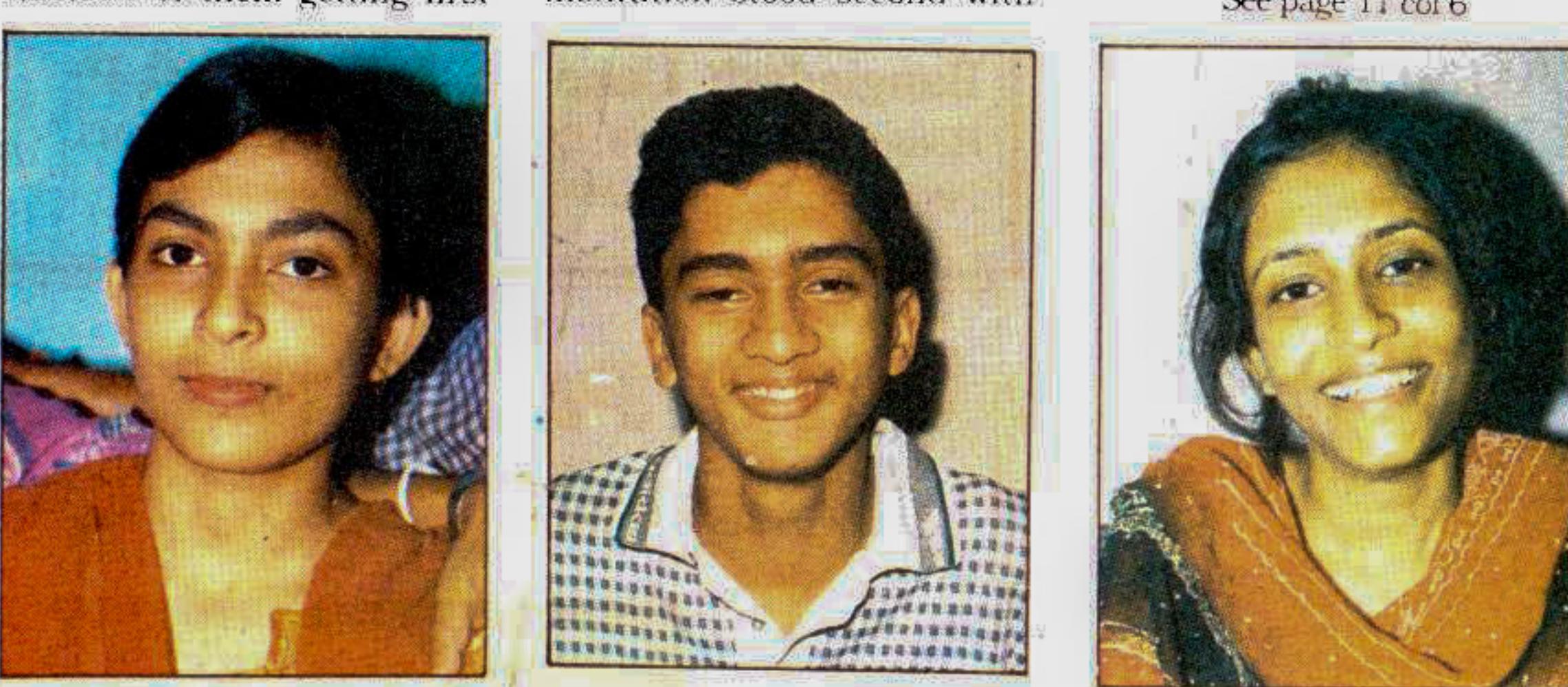
division and 1,94,485 were female with 70,869 placed in the first division.

Under the Dhaka Board, 1,24,885 out of 2,34,565 passed, the percentage being 53.0. Of the successful candidates, 59,005 got first division, 56,655 second division and 1,067 third division.

A.F.M. Noor-Uz-Zaman of Mirzapur Cadet College topped the combined merit list in Science Group securing of 958 marks.

Ahsanul Karim of the same institution stood second with

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Barnali Dey: First among girls

Oliur Rahman: Third in Science Group



Fauzia Afrose: First in Humanities Group

## Beyond the boundary The Last Tango

By Shakil Kasem

Schopenhauer it was who said, "Against stupidity the gods battle in vain." When Hansie Cronje won the toss and opted to field pundits and bookies alike were left biting their nails. Few sides had successfully chased runs second. Was Cronje in control of his senses? Remember, this was the point of no return. Was it the time to gamble? The Aussies are probably the dullest clients in any casino, predictable as they have always been when it came to

risks. Ergo, they had a plan in mind.

The plan was put together with a certain degree of elan. Mark Waugh was dismissed even before the Headingley crowd had even settled down. The Australians realised, even at that early stage of the match, that they had a match on their hands. There was more than a faint tinge of deja vu as the Aussies found themselves struggling for runs. 58 for three with more overs gone than

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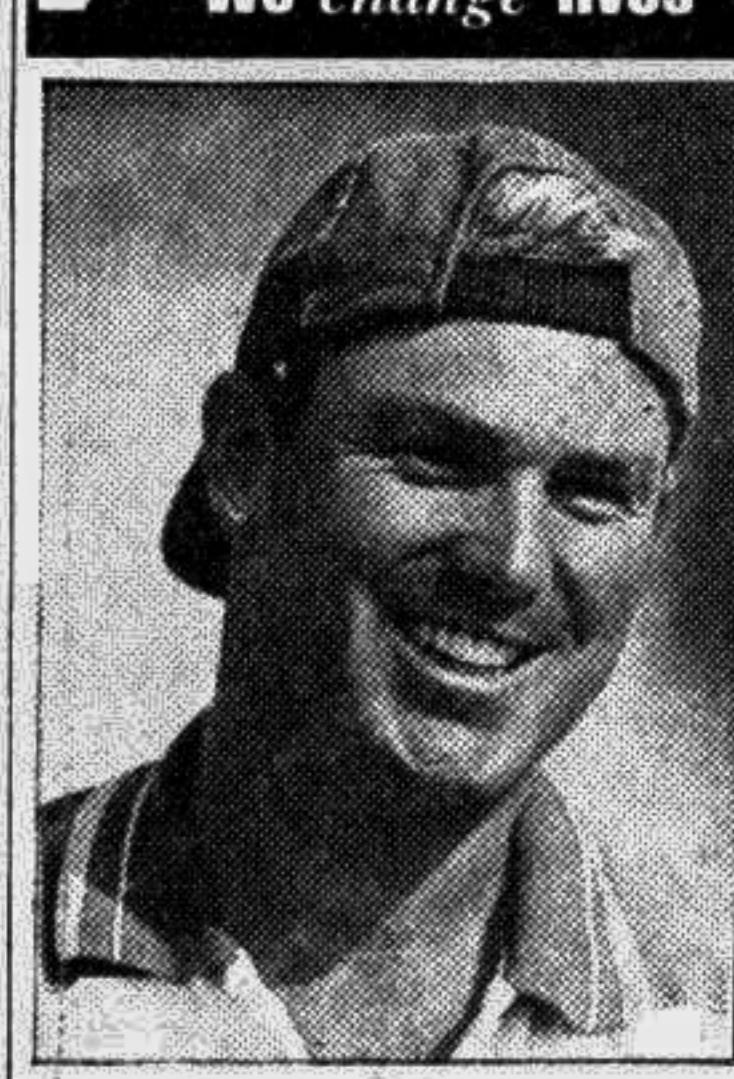
we score...

while others watch

Standard Chartered

### APTECH COMPUTER EDUCATION

We change lives



SHANE WARNE  
(Australia)  
Man of the Match  
Second Semifinal

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## Gritty Australia hop to final Suicidal South Africa see off WC hopes

A view from the  
**Gully**  
By Tawfiq Aziz Khan

Gritty Australia hop to final

Suicidal South Africa see off WC hopes

EDGBASTON, England, June 17: Australia, inspired by Shane Warne, reached the final of the cricket World Cup here today after tying with South Africa in one of the most extraordinary finishes ever seen in a one-day international, reports AFP.

South Africa, needing one off three balls to win, saw their last man run out after a disastrous mix-up.

The scores were thus tied on 213. Australia going through to take on Pakistan at Lord's on Sunday thanks to their higher

position after the second round.

Australia, sent in, had

seen to be out of the game af-

ter limping to 213 for seven,

with Shaun Pollock grab-

bing five wickets and Donald four.

But a mesmerising spell by

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