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Hasina selected for Pearl Buck Award '99

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been selected for the prestigious Pearl S Buck Award-99 in recognition of her vision, courage, achievements in political, economic and humanitarian fields and contributions to peace and empowerment of women, a message from Washington said here last night, reports BSS.

The award was introduced by Randolph-Macon Women's College to honour the college's outstanding former student Pearl Buck who won the Nobel Prize in 1938 in literature.

The President of the College Kathleen G Bowman sent a copy of the letter to Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States KM Shehabuddin yesterday informing him of their decision to give the award to Bangladesh Prime Minister.

The award which includes a medal and cash will be given at a simple ceremony on the college campus in Lynchburg, Virginia, USA at a time convenient to the Bangladesh Prime Minister.

'Cancel allocation of all 301 Rajuk plots'

By Staff Correspondent
Rajuk Plot Applicants' Association (RPA) yesterday urged the government for canceling the recently allocated 301 Rajuk plots at Uttara, Gulshan, Banani and demanded fresh allocation through lottery.

The demand was made at a meeting of the newly formed association in its office at Purana Paltan in the city.

The meeting, presided over by its convenor Fazlur Rahman Babul, was addressed, among others, by Mohammad Shahidullah Sharif, Mostafa Anwar, Abdur Rahman, Mohammad Abdur Rouf and Dr Anupom.

Speakers at the meeting condemned the move to allocate Rajuk plots by violating the law and said the move was not expected from a democratically elected government.

The meeting in a resolution also said that the minister for housing has committed 'atrocity' through the allotment by ignoring merit of thousands of plot applicants.

Khaleda to visit flood-hit Comilla

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia will visit the flood affected areas in Comilla today, reports UNB.

BNP central leaders will accompany the party chief during her visit, said a party press release.

Survey begins to rehabilitate sex workers

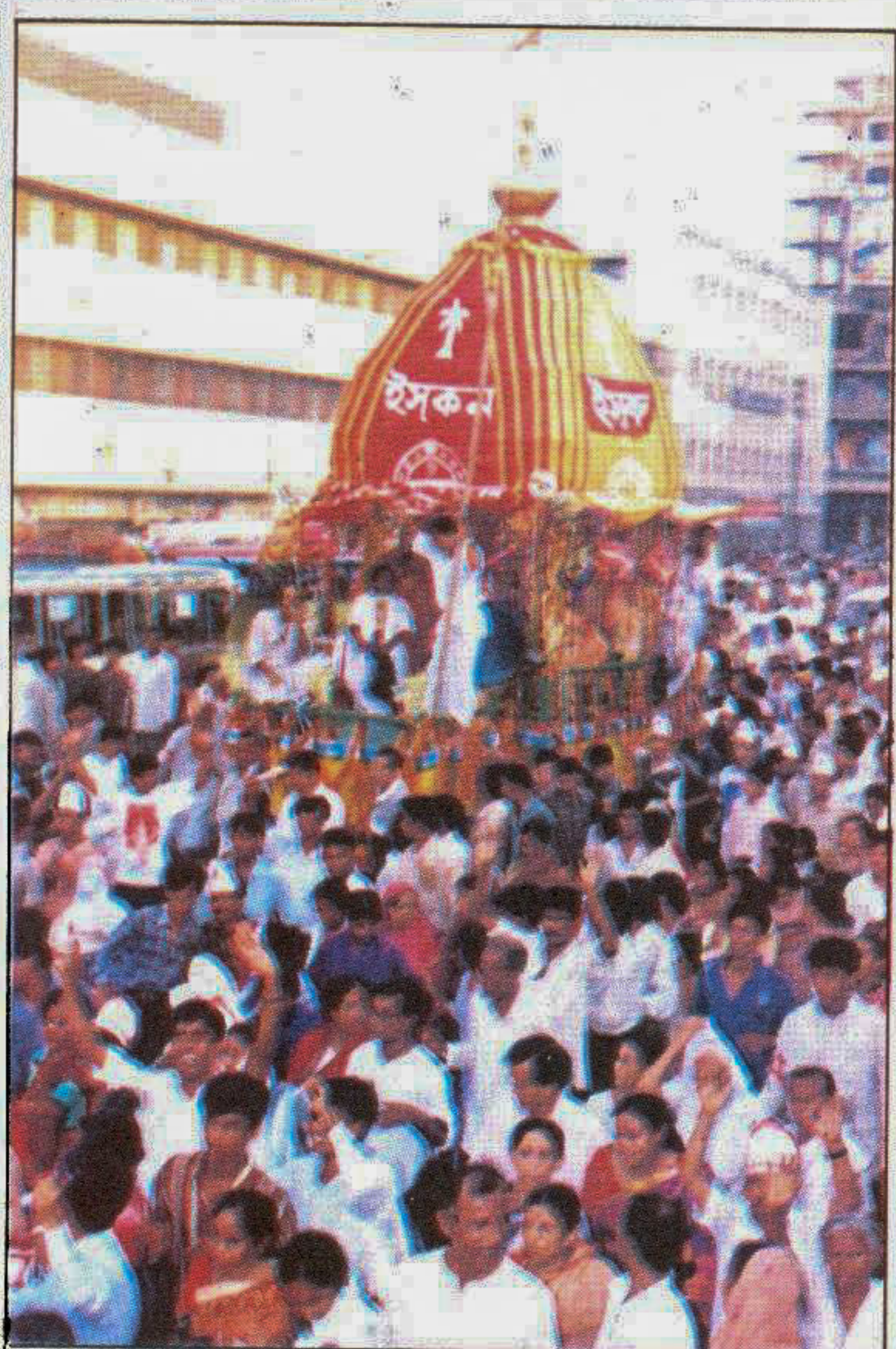
From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, July 14: The government has started a survey at the Tanbazar brothel here for rehabilitating the sex workers.

A team led by Deputy Director of the Department of Social Welfare QGM Faruki today distributed questionnaire among the sex workers and got the forms filled up.

The questionnaire contained 18 questions regarding their life history, children, future plan and intention.

A large number of female police were deployed at the brothel during the survey. The presence of sex workers was, however, very thin at the time.



Chariots of Lord Jagannath Rath Yatra hit the Dhaka streets, yesterday. —Star photo

Farhad murder : One of 3 arrested sent to jail

By Court Correspondent

Shamsuddin, one of the three arrested in the constable Farhad murder case, was sent to Dhaka Central Jail by the CMM's Court yesterday.

Farhad was killed and eight other policemen were injured when a bomb was allegedly hurled at near the city's Zero Point on July 7.

Police so far arrested three persons including a ward commissioner of Dhaka City Corporation for their alleged involvement in the killing.

Shamsuddin was produced before the CMM's Court at about 5 pm on expiry of a four-day DB remand in two phases.

DB police were interrogating the two others — Jahiruddin Babul, Commissioner of Ward No 24, and Shamim — now on remand.

Liaison body condemns attachment of property

BNP led four-party liaison committee yesterday protested and condemned the attachment of movable property of three DCC commissioners implicating them in police constable murder case, reports UNB.

The committee comprising BNP, Jatiya Party (Ershad), Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote in a statement said the government to protect itself from public wrath is trying to shift the responsibility of the killing to another party.

They said attachment of their property before submission of charge sheet implies that the government does not feel safe involving the opposition leaders into 'false cases'.

They demanded withdrawal of the false cases and formation of judicial committee to inquire into the incident.



Brutal destiny
Sex worker filling up form at Tanbazar, Narayanganj, yesterday. —Star photo

4000 floating sex workers in city

By Mustak Hossain

About 4,000 sex workers move around on the streets of Dhaka every night, a city of about 6 million people, according to a survey conducted by CARE-Bangladesh.

The girls, who do not have a permanent place to live usually pick up clients from the street, open public places and the number of such locations are more than 70, the survey said.

Of the street sex workers 37 per cent live in slum areas, 20 per cent in sidewalks and parks and 10 per cent in railway stations. Some of them come from the surrounding areas like Tongi and Narayanganj.

About 79 per cent of them were married at some time or other. Of them 60 per cent are divorced or separated; 16.5 per cent are currently married; 21 per cent have never married and 2 per cent are widows.

Twenty five percent are less than 18 years old. 20 per cent have some education, while the rest 80 per cent have no education at all.

About 33 per cent of them are previous workers of garments' factories, 42 per cent were employed as maid servant, 10 per cent worked in hotels or restaurants and 20 per cent worked in brothels.

Half of them have sex with an average of 3.4 clients every day. They earn about Taka 10 to 100 per sexual contact.

Of the sex workers 82 had Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) but only half of them admitted having so.

About 2.5 per cent of them use condoms all the time and 61.7 per cent use it irregularly or occasionally. 35 per cent never use condoms.

Twenty four per cent had abortion and 10 per cent are currently pregnant, 65 per cent

were pregnant at some time or other. Forty one per cent have children and 36 like to have children.

About half considered them to be at risk of STD and 28 per cent considered themselves to be at risk of AIDS. About 25 per cent thought that STD occurred due to poor personal hygiene.

More than half of them have heard about AIDS but only one-third (34.1 per cent) have little knowledge about AIDS being a sexually transmitted disease.

The potential development loss from an AIDS epidemic in Bangladesh is great. Despite its low income, the country has made great strides in increasing life expectancy by a decade in the past 15 years and cutting infant mortality by nearly half, according to a recent World Bank report. Bangladesh's per capita income is about U.S. 340 dollars.

It was amazing that 76 per cent knew that condoms protect them from STD and AIDS.

Gonorrhoea is the most common disease among sex workers. The incidence of laboratory confirmed cases of gonorrhoea are 54 per cent.

The World Bank said Bangladesh have a unique opportunity that most other countries no longer have: To act early and decisively to prevent the epidemic from taking off.

Bangladesh has so far only 100 known cases of AIDS, so Bangladesh must act quickly if it is to avert an epidemic. If it succeeds, it will establish itself as a world leader since no country to date has acted early enough to stop an AIDS epidemic.

WHO estimates, however, put the number of AIDS victims and HIV positive patients in Bangladesh to be much higher.

AL has only 2 paths

From Page 1
cisation, nepotism and terrorism. People are now preparing to give a befitting response to AL for its misuse in the next elections through the ballot.

The BNP Chairperson alleged that the ruling party was preparing fake voters' ID cards and lists with the motive of rigging the future polls and called upon the local level BNP leaders to build an all-out resistance to it.

Urging the party leaders and activists to strengthen the organisation, she said though the government is not willing to give general election right now, it may go for polls just to throw the opposition in a false position.

"This is why we will have to take preparations for election, movement and anti-government agitations so that none take advantage of any situation," she said and advised the party leaders to enlist the eligible people who have not yet been included in the voters list.

Begum Zia observed that the next general polls would be very crucial both for the BNP and the Awami League. The country and its people will face completely dark days if the AL again comes to power through rigging as it had done in the 1996 polls.

"Bangladesh will go in the hand of India if BNP is defeated in future polls," she said.

The BNP chief warned of strict disciplinary action if anyone tries to violate party discipline and resort to any sort of anti-organisational activities. "I will not hesitate to take action even if he or she is a top leader. It will be very difficult to maintain party discipline if we show liberal attitude to the trouble mongers," she added.

The BNP Chairperson advised

vises her party men to abide by the decisions of leadership and obey chain of command. All units of party fronts must listen to district BNP leaderships.

She also advised partymen not to give lift to relatives and friends in politics and they should give proper treatment to the dedicated leaders and workers.

The opposition leader also emphasised new and young leadership and advised all concerned to allow new faces in leadership. Dedication to the cause of the party should be given due importance.

Leaders of Laxmipur district BNP and front organisations alleged that the ruling Awami League has intensified repressive measures on BNP men after the by-elections. AL terrorists continued killing, looting and setting fire to houses and business establishments of BNP supporters.

They alleged that a number of activists of the party and its fronts were killed by AL cadres and many others lost either their eyes, legs or hands in attacks by them. Nearly 4,000 BNP activists in the district cannot live in their houses now to escape arrest as the ruling party lodged false cases against them.

They alleged that they don't get cooperation from the party MPs and central leaders from the district and urged the party chief to look into this.

Those who spoke on the occasion included BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Moudud Ahmed, Abdur Rab Chowdhury, Ziaul Haq Zia MP, Khairul Haq MP, Laxmipur district BNP president Shamsul Alam, general secretary Anwar Hossain.

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Travails of politics
BNP leader Sadek Hossain Khoka coming out of court, yesterday. —Star photo

BNP leaders

From Page 1
18) and stayed execution directing the police not to make any arrest of the accused or attachment of their property as ordered by the CMM's court, Dhaka, until hearing of their petition.

Sadek Hossain Khoka MP and 25 others have been sued for killing police constable Farhad on July 7.

They first appeared before a senior criminal division bench comprising Justice Md Sirajul Islam and M M Ruhul Amin seeking anticipatory bail, but the court refused to hear their prayer.

Then they moved to another criminal division bench comprising Justice Mahfuzur Rahman and Md Nurul Islam, which gave the orders.

Senior advocate Khandokar Mahbub Uddin Ahmed, Barrister Moudud Ahmed, Barrister Mahtubuddin Khokon and Humayun Kabir Bulbul moved the petition for the 25 accused. The court fixed July 18 for hearing the bail prayer.

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Both BJP, Cong try to derive election gain over Kargil

From Pallab Bhattacharya

NEW DELHI, July 14: Although guns have fallen almost silent in the mountains of India's Kargil region, their booms are likely to find an echo in the country's general elections in September-October.

Political parties agree that the Kargil stand-off with Pakistani intruders was a national crisis and should be kept above partisan politics. But it appears that the issue will figure prominently in the election campaign.

Only two days back, the BJP spokesman said the government of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee needs to be "congratulated" for its "total diplomatic victory" over Pakistan in the Kargil stand-off.

Political observers say this is indicative of the BJP's readiness to go to the electorate with the Vajpayee government's achievement on the issue.

BJP leaders say Vajpayee's bus ride to Lahore is not a mistake but a sincere attempt to promote friendship with Pakistan. But Pakistan's incursion in Kargil is an act of betrayal for which Vajpayee cannot be blamed.

The Congress, on the other hand, has decided to go on the

offensive on Kargil issue with the party posing questions everyday whose essential message is that a "more vigilant" government could have avoided the loss of lives in Kargil operations against Pakistan-backed intruders.

The Congress President Sonia Gandhi has publicly attacked the Vajpayee government for its "failure" to check armed intrusion in Kargil in time. Her allegation had come even when the Indian army's operations against the intruders was in full swing.

The BJP had responded by saying that any post-mortem of the government's handling of the Kargil situation at a time when the Indian armed forces were flushing out the intruders would demoralise the armed forces.

By Congress General Secretary Prasad Mukherjee said the criticism of the Kargil situation cannot be construed to be affecting the morale of the armed forces.

The BJP is likely to project Pakistan's total isolation internationally on the Kargil conflict as Vajpayee government's triumph on the diplomatic

front. But the Congress would seek to question the victory by claiming that the US-Pak joint statement formed the basis of Pakistan's withdrawal from Kargil as an "exercise in third party persuasion" by President Bill Clinton.

The BJP's strategy to counter Congress onslaught will revolve round posers relating to the Kashmir issue since 1948, says a senior BJP leader.

The BJP, party sources said, would seek to embarrass the Congress party by asking: Who first enabled Pakistan to internationalise the Kashmir issue by referring it to the UN? Who forced the Indian army to give up our territory it had captured in the 1971 War? Who gave up 93,000 Pakistani prisoners of war in 1971 without asking Pakistan to settle for a permanent solution on Kashmir?

The BJP and Congress have accused each other of trying to derive political mileage out of the Kargil conflict. Given the present war of words between the two parties, indications are that its scale is likely to go up in the coming weeks in the run up to the election.