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# The Daily Star

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## Opposition to go ahead with planned road, launch march

The opposition alliance is determined to launch their planned 3-day road and launch march from July 25 despite floods in some parts of the country.

A meeting of the liaison committee last night decided to go on the planned road and launch march braving incessant rain and monsoon floods. The meeting, chaired by BNP vice-chairman Shamsul Islam, made a call for all to make the programme a success to mobilise public support against the government's 'misrule, misdeeds and repression against the opposition'.

Anwar Zahid of BNP, Mohammad Quamruzzaman and ATM Azharul Islam of Jamaat and ARM Abdul Matin of IOJ were among those who attended the meeting at 29 Minto Road.

Jatiya Party representatives did not attend the meeting for their preoccupation with central committee meeting, the meeting sources said.

## Liakat murder

### Four alleged killers held in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, July 20: Special team of the detective branch of police in a pre-dawn raid today arrested four alleged killers of CCC Ward Commissioner Liakat Ali Khan from Bailtoli village under Chandanish thana.

The arrested are Md Shahjahan, Md Nasir, Abdul Halim and Shawkat Ali. They are all named accused in the sensational murder case, police said.

Liakat was murdered by armed terrorists on June 2 in Chaldatoli area under Panchlaish thana in the city.

Police said that the arrested were also accused in the BCL activist Shahjahan murder case. Shahjahan was murdered on March 4 this year.

They were produced before the court today and the court placed them on a 7-day police remand.

## BNP denies intra-party conflict in Comilla

BNP yesterday protested The Daily Star story under the heading 'Intra-party Conflict: Khaleed warns of action against some top leaders' published Tuesday.

In a letter signed by a low-ranking BNP official, the BNP termed the report baseless, imaginary and harmful. 'No member of the BNP standing committee nor any vice-chairman or any other central leader had ever been engaged in any affair of the Comilla (North) district committee. They are not even engaged in such matter now,' it said of the reported involvement of two central leaders in the Comilla affairs of the

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### The Russian Mig-29s or a Missile-based Defence System?

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### Liberation and Beyond

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## Business

EPB to participate in US electronic visa information system  
Indian PM, President lock horns over new telecom policy

DSE, CSE price quotations  
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## Prayer Timings

| July 21 |       |        |
|---------|-------|--------|
|         | Azan  | Jamaat |
| Fajr    | 4:10  | 4:15   |
| Johr    | 12:50 | 1:25   |
| Asr     | 4:55  | 5:05   |
| Maghrib | 7:00  | 7:05   |
| Esha    | 7:55  | 8:15   |

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Rivers rising: More rains forecast

# Another onslaught of floods likely

By Special Correspondent

Heavy rains during the past 36 hours until yesterday evening send the major river systems in spate again, threatening another round of flooding with flash floods in the northern region and the south eastern hill basins, officials said.

Gumti yesterday recorded fresh rise due to heavy rain, inundating more areas in Devidwar, Chandina, Muradnagar and Daudkandi thanas in Comilla. Flash floods gripped northern districts of Kurigram, Kusthia, Rangpur, Gaibandha and Bogra. Erosion took a serious turn devouring vast tract of land in Barisal, Kurigram,

Bagerhat, and many other districts.

'There has been very heavy rain in the Brahmaputra, Ganges, Meghna and south eastern hill basins on Monday, renewing surge in the rivers. We are expecting another onslaught of floods', an official of the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) said yesterday.

Reports from India received by the FFWC said the Brahmaputra and the Ganges are also rising, upstream, the rivers feeding the Meghna in north-eastern India are also on the rise and the rains in the south-eastern hills have also swelled

the rivers in the region.

The flood situation along the river Padma from Goalundo to Bhagyakul may deteriorate slightly. The prevailing flood situation in the Meghna basin will deteriorate further. Extensive rainfall in the south eastern hill basin has caused flash flood in the hill districts. Further heavy fall may aggravate the situation in the hill basin. FFWC said in its flood warning.

Brahmaputra which normally goes in spate in late July had gone up and down twice in May due to heavy melting of snows in the Himalayas. It also

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## Foreign cos hiding facts

# 'Gas exploration still inadequate to meet domestic demands'

By Sharier Khan

Foreign oil companies exploring gas in the country are trying to build a case for exporting gas by claiming that there is not an 'adequately large' domestic market. But facts tell a contradictory story.

The current rate of gas exploration is still insufficient to meet even the demand of power plants to be set up by 2005.

By 2005, our additional demand for gas will be 450 to 550 million cubic feet per day (mmcfcd) for generating at least another 2500 MW of power under private and government initiatives. These projects are already underway to ensure a

ready market for the foreign companies,' said an expert in the power sector.

'Mysteriously, the foreign companies are deliberately overlooking the figures and pressing for gas export. It is high time that the government should sit with the companies and settle the hue and cry for gas export once for all. There is no need to linger the controversy over gas export,' he added.

The present gas exploration and development activities under Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) with Shell/Cairn,

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## Block-7

### Petrobangla, Unocal close to accord

Star Report

Petrobangla has resumed negotiations with US oil company Unocal on Block 7 under the second round block bidding. Sources concerned said Unocal and Petrobangla have agreed on 'several vital points'.

One of these points is, the oil company will not spend anything till Petrobangla Board approves a budget for exploration activity. If the oil company spends anything, Petrobangla will not take the responsibility.

Petrobangla also proposed price listing of exploration equipment and services on monthly basis. The price listing will be the basis for approval of budget for oil and gas exploration and development. Unocal also agreed to this.

Unlike Shell Oil and Maersk, Unocal did not pursue any amendment to the Produc-

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## Mosharraf could not meet party chief

By Staff Correspondent

State minister for land Rashed Mosharraf could not discuss with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday about the allegations brought against him by the Awami League unit in his home district Jamalpur.

Mosharraf, earlier, planned to meet the party chief yesterday to explain his position about the Jamalpur AL's action against him. The party unit on Saturday suspended his membership on charge of anti-organisational activities.

The prime minister did not have time to discuss about the

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## Myanmar's gas export thru' pipeline Bangladesh company's bid to strike deal

Star Report

A Bangladeshi company is pursuing an inter-regional gas pipeline project for export of gas from Myanmar to India through Bangladesh.

As per the project proposal, gas from Myanmar will enter Bangladesh through India and Bangladesh will get royalty for providing 'transit facilities'.

The local company—Mohona Holding Ltd.—is mediating a deal between authorities in Myanmar and India and has plans to make a deal called 'Tras Myanmar Bangladesh

Gas Pipeline' with the Gas Transmission Company Ltd (GTCL) of Bangladesh. GTCL will get royalty for the 'right of way' needed for construction of a huge pipeline under the project.

The project is now at a preliminary stage and does not have any study on its feasibility or the cost involved, the sources said.

Moreover, Mohona does not have any investment or expertise for setting up the

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# Smuggling rampant in outer anchorage of Ctg port

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, July 20: The outer anchorage of Chittagong port has turned into an 'open market' of smuggled goods dropped from foreign cargo vessels due to lax anti-smuggling drive, sources said.

The anti-smuggling task force of Chittagong Custom House hardly go for raiding the outer anchorage with their patrol boats, they added.

Sources in the customs said one of the two patrol boats of the anti-smuggling team is out of order for the last one year, forcing suspension of regular patrol at the outer anchorage. The other boat is occasion-

ally used in anti-smuggling drive on receipt of secret information, they said.

Some foreign cargo ships carrying imported goods to Chittagong port reportedly bring smuggled goods worth crores of taka and drop those on mechanised boats, kept waiting at the outer anchorage by clients, the sources said.

The smuggled items include foreign cigarette, gold, liquor, electronic goods, ceramic products etc.

A section of shipping agents are also involved in the smuggling, they alleged.

Sometimes crew of a section

of foreign cargo vessels operating between Chittagong and Singapore reportedly get payments from the clients in advance and bring the smuggled goods as per order.

A section of customs officials have links with the 'kingpins' of smugglers, they claimed.

The smugglers also use old vessels, brought here to be scrapped, to carry smuggled items.

The anti-smuggling team mostly avoid a complete search of foreign vessels when those anchor at Chittagong port.

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## BCL blamed: Half-day hartal called JCD activist chopped to death in Manikganj

MANIKGANJ, July 20: A JCD activist was chopped to death by his political opponents here this evening, reports UNB.

The district BNP and its student front JCD called a half-day hartal in the district town tomorrow in an instant protest against the killing and demanding arrest of the killers.

Police said Kabul Hossain, 23, an MA student of Government Debendra College, came under attack at about 6:30 pm by a gang of armed youths on his way to Ghosher Bazar in the town from his village Garhara Chandar.

The assailants chopped Kabul, son of late Majibur Rahman, indiscriminately

with chapati leaving him dead on the spot. They also hurled several hand-bombs, says an eyewitness.

BNP and JCD alleged that the attackers were the activists of the student wing of the ruling party, Bangladesh Chhatra League.

In reprisals, the leaders and workers of the district unit of BNP and its front organisations ransacked many shops in the town and put up barricades on the Dhaka-Aracha highway at Manikganj bus stand about 7 pm. They also damaged some 12 passing vehicles on the road.

The traffic halt continued till writing of this report at 10

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## BCL-JCD gunfight in Feni: Two killed

From Our Correspondent

FENI, July 20: Two persons were shot dead and five others injured with bullets in a gunfight between the activists of ruling party-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and JCD at Panchgachia road in the town this evening.

The dead were identified as Rubel, 20, a BCL activist and son of Elias Bhuiya, General Secretary of Feni Town Merchants' Association and Abdul Awal, 22, a rickshawpuller.

They received bullet injuries during the gunfight between the rival student groups and were rushed to Feni Cosmopolitan Hospital where the doctors declared them dead.

Of the injured, two were identified as Shimul, Feni Jubo League leader and Mamun, a BCL activist. They were admitted to a private clinic in the town. The identity of three others could not be known immediately.

Police and witnesses said, the gunfight erupted when a group of BCL activists went to Panchgachia road to rescue three Mensidyl traders — Nuru, Belal and Miah — held hostage by Iran Group of JCD. The gunfight began at around 5 pm and continued till 6:30 pm.

None was arrested in this connection till filing of this report late last night.



Dirty deal

All for Tk 200 a day! WASA contractors have always ignored the safety of these poor sewerage workers who dive deep into the sewage without any protective gear. It is alleged that many have died in the past while cleaning the dirty drains. The picture was taken yesterday at Purana Paltan in the city.

— Star photo by A K M Mohsin

# Printing of textbooks for primary schools delayed

## Deadlock over conditions in tender

By Gobinda Bar

Supply of textbooks to the primary school students is expected to be delayed at least by a month as there has been a discord between printers and the government over conditions of tender.

Distribution of textbooks among the students are scheduled to start on January 1 next year while supply of books to the district headquarters is to be completed by December 31 this year.

Press owners and publishers say they will not participate in the bidding for printing primary textbooks as they are financially unable to do the 'big packages' as required in the tender which has 'tough' conditions.

No schedule has so far been sold since floating of the tender in the last week of June. The tender will be open on August 1.

The entire tender for printing, binding and making delivery of 5.80 crore books to district headquarters has been divided into 111 packages. Of the total, 54 packages are financed by the World Bank (WB) and the rest 57 by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Four of the WB-financed packages involve Tk 90 lakh to Tk one crore each while the rest is worth Tk 6 to Tk 10 lakh each.

The total contribution by the WB and the ADB to the project is around Tk 44 crore. The government will bear the expenditure for paper.

Sources said no printer has bought any tender schedule as yet. They are thinking of formally announcing abstention from the bidding because of the 'hard tender conditions', the sources added.

'If none of the printers participate in the bidding, the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) shall have to cancel the tender. In that case, the tender procedure will take one more month and the official formalities for final approval might take another one month, pushing the entire procedure for completion by October,' said a source. If so happens, he said, both printing and supply of books will be delayed because the printing cannot be

completed in one and a half months.

The deadline for printing books is December 15 while delivery of the books to the district headquarters would have to be completed by December 31. Printers say no press has the capacity to do the huge work of any of the packages by meeting all the conditions.

Leaders of the press owners' association (POA) said a printer will have to keep around Tk18 lakh as bid bond, excluding the 10 per cent 'performance guarantee' for doing every package worth Tk 10 lakh each. They say no printer can pay that amount of money and that none has the capacity to show

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## Alleged killer of Sohel Chy held

By Staff Correspondent

An accused in ten murder cases, including that of film actor Sohel Chowdhury's murder case, was arrested from city's Kakrail area Monday night.

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday placed the arrested Tarikul Saif, alias Mamun, 33, on a remand of eight days.

According to police Mamun was an accomplice of a notorious criminal Imon, also accused in a number of murder cases.

Mamun has been accused in ten murder cases that took place in and out of Dhaka since 1997. Besides, there are a number of other criminal cases against him in different thanas.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Motijheel police rushed to Kakrail and found about six persons gossiping in front of a car showroom at about 8:30 pm on Monday.

Police interrogated the six on the spot and on suspicion took Mamun to Motijheel thana. Initially, Mamun

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## Judgement in Humayun Zahir Murder Case on Aug 4

Sixth Additional District Judge, Dhaka yesterday fixed the date for judgement in the sensational Humayun Zahir murder case on August 4, court sources said, reports BSS.

Humayun Zahir, a renowned industrialist and Chairman of the United Commercial Bank Limited (UCBL), was murdered by a group of miscreants at his Dhanmondi residence on April 8, 1993.

The judge Shahid Nuruddin fixed the date for judgement at the end of arguments by both the sides.

Senior Advocate Sirajul Haque appeared for the accused while Public Prosecutor (PP) Kamrul Islam moved on behalf of the State.

Father-in-law of Humayun Zahir filed a case accusing seven persons, including Awami League central leader Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury Babu, also a Director of UCBL, with Dhanmondi police station on the day of murder. Police submitted the charge sheet against seven persons after a detailed investigation.

A total of 45 prosecution witnesses were examined in the case.

## Severed head of businessman Babul found

By Staff Correspondent

Savar police yesterday recovered the severed head of businessman Babul from near Ashulia bridge in the early hours of yesterday.

Beheaded body of Babul Ahmed was recovered from Rayerbazar area on Monday.

Meanwhile, Ramna police were interrogating a young woman identified as Tamanna — in connection with Babul murder till filing of this report last night.

'We have not arrested Tamanna so far. We are interrogating her as she was known to Babul,' the officer-in-charge of Ramna thana said.

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