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The Daily Star

Cabinet endorses draft Public Security Act '99

By Staff Correspondent

The Cabinet yesterday endorsed in principle the draft Public Security (Special Provision) Act, 1999 to ensure speedy trial of offenders of heinous crime.

With Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair, the meeting, however, deferred its decision over a particular section of the proposed law that deals with the media.

To deal with serious crimes like extortion, hijacking, breaking vehicles, damaging public and private property, obstruction in tender submission, realising ransom, creating barriers to traffic movement, arson and bombing, the new Act will have provisions for special tribunals and stern punishment.

A minister attending the

See page 11 Col 3

JS to discuss transhipment, no date fixed

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday resolved to discuss the proposed land transhipment facility to India but did not fix any date for the planned discussion.

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed, moving the resolution, urged the boycotting opposition parties including BNP to participate in the planned discussion, make their suggestions and produce documents in support of their contention on the government move.

The current session is scheduled to be prorogued on September 12. Sources in the ruling Awami League said discussion on transhipment has been deferred to facilitate participation of the boycotting opposition.

Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury said he would later fix a date to hold a general discussion in the House on the issue.

Earlier, Tofail moved the resolution seeking a general discussion on the July 28 Cabinet decision to examine the proposal for providing India with transhipment facility through Bangladesh's land.

Before placing his proposal, Tofail blamed the BNP for trying to mislead people by calling "transhipment" as "transit" and "corridor" and requested the opposition party to prove its claim in the parliament.

The government has appointed two consultants and a task force to examine if the transhipment favours the

See page 11 Col 2

Kader Siddiqui at JS visitors' gallery

By Staff Correspondent

Rebel Awami League leader Kader Siddiqui, who resigned from the Jatiya Sangsad last week, witnessed proceedings of the House sitting in the VIP visitors' gallery yesterday for about an hour. He was accompanied by his wife, Nasrin Siddiqui.

Siddiqui was also seen sitting in the visitors' gallery on August 30. The previous day, the opening day of the current session, he had submitted his resignation letter to the Speaker.

The day after Siddiqui's resignation, Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury told newspapers he would inform the House of the resignation on September 6 and refer the issue to the Election Commission.

But he did not make any announcement in the House yesterday regarding the matter.

Inside Today

Article

New Challenges for the Awami League Government

by M Rashiduzzaman

Page 4

Focus

Human rights law and institution; Of worries, miseries and unhappiness

Page 5

Prayer Timings

September 7

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-20	4-25
Johr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Magrib	6-25	6-30
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

Higher courts patronising terrorists, Nasim tells JS

By Staff Correspondent

Home Minister Mohammad Nasim has accused the higher courts of 'patronising terrorists' by granting them bail indiscriminately.

Nasim made the accusation in the Jatiya Sangsad while replying to a supplementary question from ruling party MP Shahina Monwara Haq during question-answer session yesterday.

"Sitting on high pedestals to ensure justice in the society, they (judges) are patronising terrorism," he told the House.

The minister also accused the opposition parties of protecting terrorists. They talk of deterioration of law and order but demand release of criminals and terrorists from jails, he

mentioned. "Curbing terrorism would be a difficult job if the opposition parties continue to play double standard and terrorists get bail from the courts," Nasim observed.

To justify his allegation against the higher courts, the Home Minister described how a 'terrorist' was arrested in the city and then 'freed' under High Court order.

"One day, some local people from Maghbazar area came to me to inform that notorious terrorist Shubhra was released from jail as the High Court granted him bail. They said it would be really difficult for them to live in peace in the area if Shubhra is allowed to move

freely. "Convinced by what they said, I immediately asked the Inspector General of Police to arrest Shubhra again. But the IGP informed me in five minutes that the High Court had not only granted him bail but also issued a directive not to arrest him again. The court also warned that if Shubhra was arrested again, it would take action against the home minister."

The minister then posed a question, "Who are protecting criminals and terrorists?"

Nasim also referred to an accused in a murder case, Nurunnabi, who was granted an interim bail by the court.

See page 11 Col 4

See page 11 Col 8

Bangabandhu Cup

Ghana-Japan final today

Sports Reporter

Ghana Olympic team will take on Japan Football League (JFL) selection in the final of the 2nd Bangabandhu Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium this afternoon.

The grand finale of the 12-team meet will kick off at 5 pm. Bangladesh Television will provide live coverage of the final which will also be relayed by Bangladesh Betar.

Ghana, the only African team participating in the tournament, paved their way into the final defeating Kerule Football Club of Hungary 2-1 in the first semi-final last Sunday, while the JFL selection edged past the South Korea under-18 team with a 'golden goal' after their 90-minute second semi-final the same day ended in a 2-2 draw.

The most sensational murder was that of police constable Mohammed Mohsin. He was shot dead by a gang of miscreants inside Gopibagh police camp on August 6.

Two alleged muggers were beaten to death by a mob near the south gate of Baitul Mukarram mosque on August 3.

A young man, Arman Hos-

See page 11 Col 18

Murders on rise in city

By Shaikh Nazrul Islam

Incidents of murder in the city showed a sharp rise in the last two months.

Thirty-five people were killed in August and 26 in July against 18 in June.

A total of 1722 cases were filed with the 21 police stations in the city last month. The highest number of 187 cases was recorded with Motijheel thana and the lowest of 13 with Kamrangirchar thana. The number was 1442 in the previous month.

The most sensational murder was that of police constable Mohammed Mohsin. He was shot dead by a gang of miscreants inside Gopibagh police camp on August 6.

A body of a truck driver, Salauddin, 35, was recovered from the carrier of his truck which was seized earlier by police and kept at the Tejgaon thana compound on August 20.

A transport workers' leader, Abdul Jalil, 28, was shot and

hacked to death allegedly by rival transport workers near Lalkut at Mirpur on August 22. Jalil was General Secretary of Dhaka-Aricha Transport Workers Union.

An alleged police informer, Hasibul Bashar Sumon, 28, was shot dead during a gunfight between a gang of miscreants and Demra police at Dholaiupur on August 23.

Four unidentified bodies including that of a minor boy were recovered from different areas in the city on a single day on August 25. They were killed, police said.

Another gunfight between two rival groups of terrorists at Darus Salam Road in Mirpur on August 28 left a school student, Shah, 12, and a young man shot dead.

A owner of a rickshaw

See page 11 Col 8

WHO regional body for SEA meets

Dhaka calls for urgent policy, increased budget & assistance

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has sought pragmatic initiatives from the South East Asian governments and assistance from the donors to improve health status of the people in the region, reports UNB.

"The burden of disease is of great magnitude in this region and it calls for urgent policy, increased budget and pragmatic initiatives from the governments and close collaboration from development partners," she said while inaugurating the 52nd session of the WHO Regional Committee for South East Asia at Hotel Sheraton yesterday morning.

"We all should accept the challenge for improving the health status and quality of life of our people," Hasina said, adding that her government would soon declare a National Health Policy to improve the health condition of the people.

"Bangladesh has been facing formidable health problems ... We should give the highest priority to alleviating the burden of diseases, disabilities and premature deaths," she said.

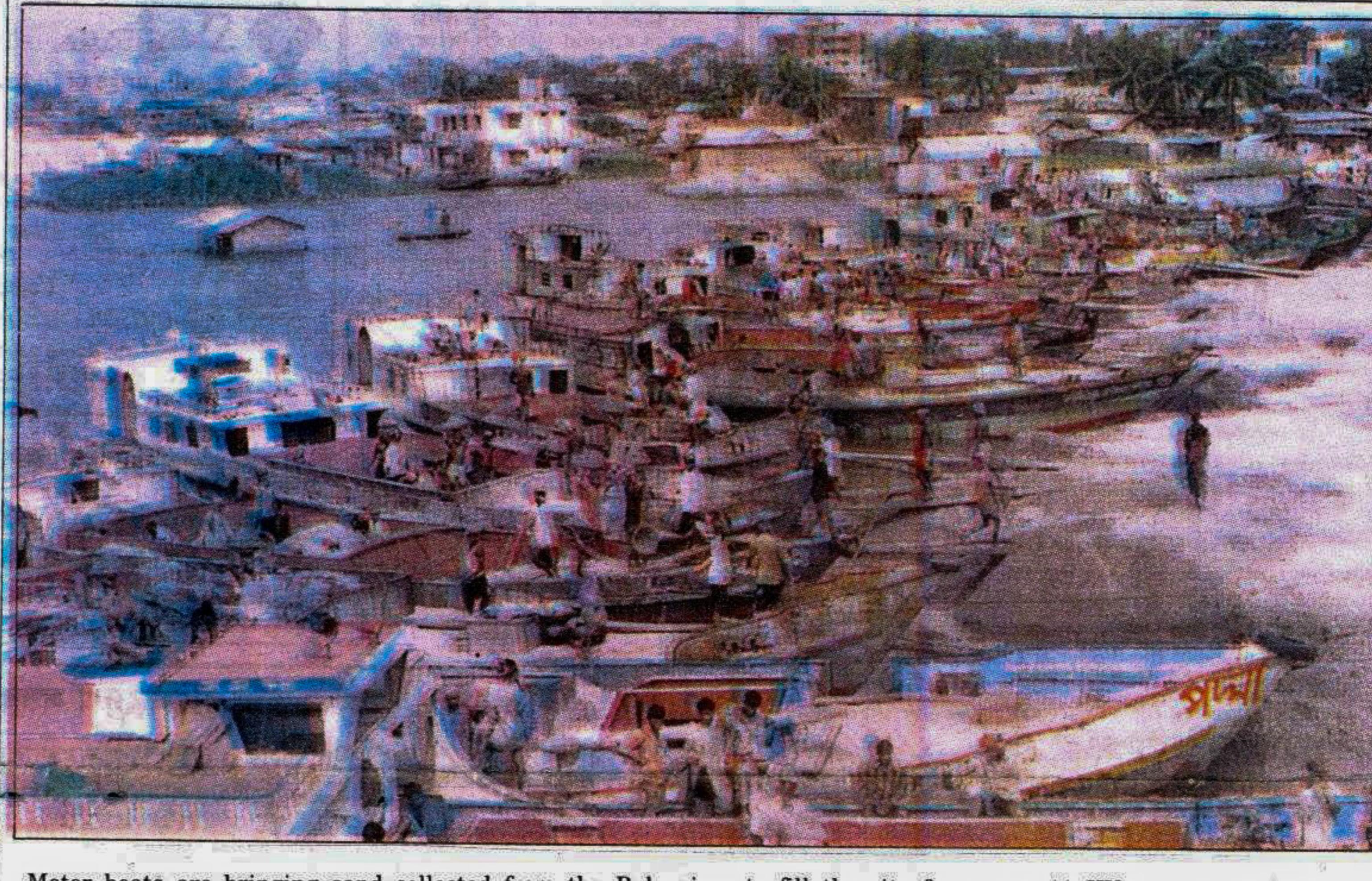
Health minister Salah Ud-

search, UN agencies, inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations are taking part in the conference.

Health sector reforms are considered as an inevitable process of change that might on the part of the governments lead to wide ranging improvements to policy and strategic issues in every country. Hasina said.

Referring to the approach to

See page 11 Col 8



Motor boats are bringing sand collected from the Balu river to fill the site for a new 11 KV power grid station at Anandanagar, Badda on the outskirts of the city.

News Analysis

Next C'wealth SG: Is Bangladesh losing a golden opportunity?

By M Anwarul Haq



Farooq Sobhan

Bangladesh announced the candidature of Farooq Sobhan for the post of Commonwealth Secretary General in April, 1998. The election is due on November 12 in Durban, South Africa. Election of the new Secretary General, for a four-year term, would be held on the first day of the four-day Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

Two questions now warrant immediate attention: How important is the Commonwealth and the position of the Secretary General? And is Bangladesh doing enough to pull through its candidate?

Although billed a club of former British colonies, the Commonwealth Secretariat in London still attracts reasonable attention and grudging respect from its 54 member nations. Like any international organisation, it has its critics, sceptics and cynics. However, the very fact that so many nations have voluntarily decided to continue their colonial kinship for over 50 years speaks of a common fraternity that can create both occasional news and noise in the international

landmark Commonwealth summits.

This year's CHOGM at Durban is due to be attended by 40 heads of government including Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The Commonwealth has, over years, also developed a myriad of cooperative programmes designed to help growth of innumerable voluntary and non-governmental organisations. Its fledgling Secretariat at Malborough House in London with a posse of international civil servants also attempts to foster cooperation and partnership between governments and independent organisations to build a civil society.

Bangladesh definitely has put up the most formidable candidate for the post of Secretary General. Known as an astute diplomat, Farooq Sobhan has served as Bangladesh's envoy to China, Malaysia, Brunei, Mauritius and India. He was foreign secretary for two and a half years and, on retirement, appointed Chairman of BOI.

A familiar face in the international diplomatic circuit.

See Page 11 Col 7

Unocal firing Oxy's local employees

Star Report

American oil company Unocal is firing Bangladeshi employees of Occidental Bangladesh's concerns which it acquired recently, violating its' promises and legal procedures, official sources said.

But Unocal says it is "re-structuring" Occidental Bangladesh Ltd (OBL) and Occidental Exploration of Bangladesh Ltd (OEBL) to "minimise overhead cost".

Four Bangladeshi employees were fired from Occidental's concerns in the country a couple of weeks ago on the ground that there was "lack of activity".

Dr Shameem among the Kathmandu crash victims

By Staff Correspondent Two Bangladeshi nationals were among the victims of the plane crash in Nepal on Sunday.

Dr Shameem Ahmed, a health scientist at Operations Research Project of ICDDR,B and K Islam, a Calcutta-based Unicef official, were among the 15 on board the Pokhara-Kathmandu flight, the Bangladesh embassy in Nepal said.

See Page 11 Col 8

See page 11 Col 3

ties" in the organisation. Sources said that the employees were issued termination letters in Unocal's pad that mentioned OBL as its' wholly owned subsidiary".

However, Unocal is yet to complete the legal procedures and submit documents to the government to officially claim OBL and OEBL as its' subsidiaries, the sources pointed out.

It is also understood that one or two departments of Occidental would be abolished very soon, they pointed out.

When Unocal took over Occidental's concerns in Bangladesh a couple of months ago, its Bangladeshi chief had promised at a press conference that no Occidental employee would be fired. Unocal was involved in oil and gas exploration in blocks 12, 13 and 14.

A source in Unocal however said that firing of the four employees was planned by Occidental before the take-over because its' activities had decreased.

When contacted yesterday, a government official said, "We have not yet received any legal document from Unocal that authorises it to assert such powers. Besides, Unocal had publicly committed in July that it

will not fire any employee.

The Leader of the Opposition in Parliament said that during BNP rule, Awami League had created 'unprecedented anarchy' for years by setting fire to government establishments, banks and vehicles and killed people in the name of movement. The party is now resorting to anarchy to divert people's attention and cling to power.

Begum Zia was addressing a mammoth public meeting at Bashabo playground in the city yesterday.

Motijheel, Khilgaon and Sabujbagh thana units of BNP jointly organised the meeting as part of the party programme

See Page 11 Col 6

for holding such meetings in the eight constituencies in the capital. Yesterday's