

**Gas export**  
Dhaka disagrees  
with Vajpayee's  
claim

Bangladesh's stance on the crucial issue of gas export is unchanged, said state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury apparently disagreeing with the Indian prime minister's claim that Dhaka and Delhi are at advanced stage of gas talks.

Asked to comment on Indian premier Atal Behari Vajpayee's remarks in parliament, Chowdhury said: "I can't be drawn into making a comment on a reported observation by prime minister of another country."

He, however, said the government has an "open position" on this.

"Our prime minister clearly articulated that a decision on this matter would be taken after careful consideration of national interests, one of which is at least 50 years' reserves to meet the needs of future generation," he told UNB.

On Thursday, Vajpayee told Lok Shava that India is in advance stage of talks with Bangladesh on importing its natural gas.

He said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is very keen on the proposal and there could be some agreement with Bangladesh.

**Woes of 300  
telephone  
subscribers**

By Razia Rahman

Three hundred telephone subscribers in the city's Pallabi area have been deprived of service for the last 10 days due to inter-organisation tangles.

The telephones under Mirpur exchange are not operating since March 26 due to faults in underground cables in Pallabi area, an engineer at the exchange said seeking anonymity.

The authorities concerned could not take steps for repair of the cable as Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) is yet to give permission for digging the pavement of a road, needed for this.

We submitted application at the local office of DCC soon after the subscribers complained, the engineer said. Nagar Bhaban officials say they need the opinion of the local office to give permission while the local office says first they need permission from the Nagar Bhaban.

Sources at the exchange said they need to dig a 15 to 20 feet stretch of a pavement. The exchange authorities clearly mentioned in their application to

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**Prayer Timings**

**May 5**

**Fajr** 4:15 4:45

**Zohr** 1:00 1:30

**Asr** 5:00 5:15

**Maghrib** 6:30 6:33

**Esha** 8:00 8:30

Customers go about their business as usual in an Internet cafe in Manila yesterday despite the news of an "ILOVEYOU" computer virus being spread throughout e-mail systems. The virus, which has infected millions of files worldwide, is believed to have originated in the Philippines.

—AFP photo

**Complaint against 5 ministers  
No confidence petition  
will be submitted**

By Staff Correspondent

A 'no confidence petition' will be filed before the Special Tribunal, Dhaka, formed under the Public Safety Act, against the final report submitted by police on a case against five ministers and a ruling party leader, said Golam Kibria who filed the case.

The final report was 'illegal' as it did not meet all the requirements of law, claimed Kibria, a lawyer.

Motijheel Police submitted the final report Wednesday evening after six days of investigation, interviewing 150 people whose identity was not disclosed.

Police also maintained secrecy before submitting the report in the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate on May 3 well after the day's busi-

ness was over.

"It is mandatory for the Investigating Officer under Section 173 of the Code of Criminal Procedure to inform the complainant prior to submission of final report which was not done in the said case," Kibria alleged.

DMP Commissioner Motiul Rahman, when contacted, said that the final report was submitted fulfilling all the requirements of law.

He, however, refused to comment on the complainant's allegations of irregularities in the investigation.

Kibria went to Motijheel police station on April 25 on behalf of a group of lawyers to lodge a complaint against five ministers and a ruling party leader for making 'provocative' statements.

By Staff Correspondent

Brac Bdmail Limited has announced a one lakh taka award for identifying the hackers who hacked its domain for the second time in the span of four days.

The announcement came at a meeting of the Internet Service Providers (ISPs) on Wednesday. The meeting, titled 'ISP security and Development', was convened by the ISP forum and chaired by the Advisor of the Software Export Committee, Professor Jamilur Reza Chowdhury.

The country's leading ISPs, who attended the meeting, expressed concern over the recent domain hacking.

Brac Bdmail representative

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visible to the naked eye are on

the opposite side of the sun from Earth.

Planetary alignments occur when three or more celestial objects move into positions so that a straight line could be drawn through their centers. But the definition is a bit loose: Planets that appear close together in the sky are considered aligned.

For centuries, doomsayers have predicted the end of the world whenever an unusual alignment occurs. But astronomers say the planet has never reacted to such an event.

One book ominously titled "May 2002 will involve all five planets plus the moon," he said. "It will be similar to the one happening now, except you'll be able to see it."

The alignment has been in the works for over a month. In early April Mars, Jupiter and Saturn were close together in the evening sky and outside the sun's glare. Now, all five planets

visible to the naked eye are on

the opposite side of the sun from Earth.

Mosley dismisses the prediction and has included a quote from Noone's book to open a debunking planetarium show titled "Cosmic Catastrophe."

"If this were true, it would have happened already," he said.

Noone, who moved his family to safety in Georgia, did not return a telephone message Thursday, but in a news release seemed to be backing away from the claim that a pole shift was imminent.

"Careful modeling would be necessary to predict how often in the past this has occurred and what the likelihood of it happening soon might be," he said. "Unfortunately, we don't understand enough about the various independent and interrelated influences which might be involved to make any such meaningful predictions."

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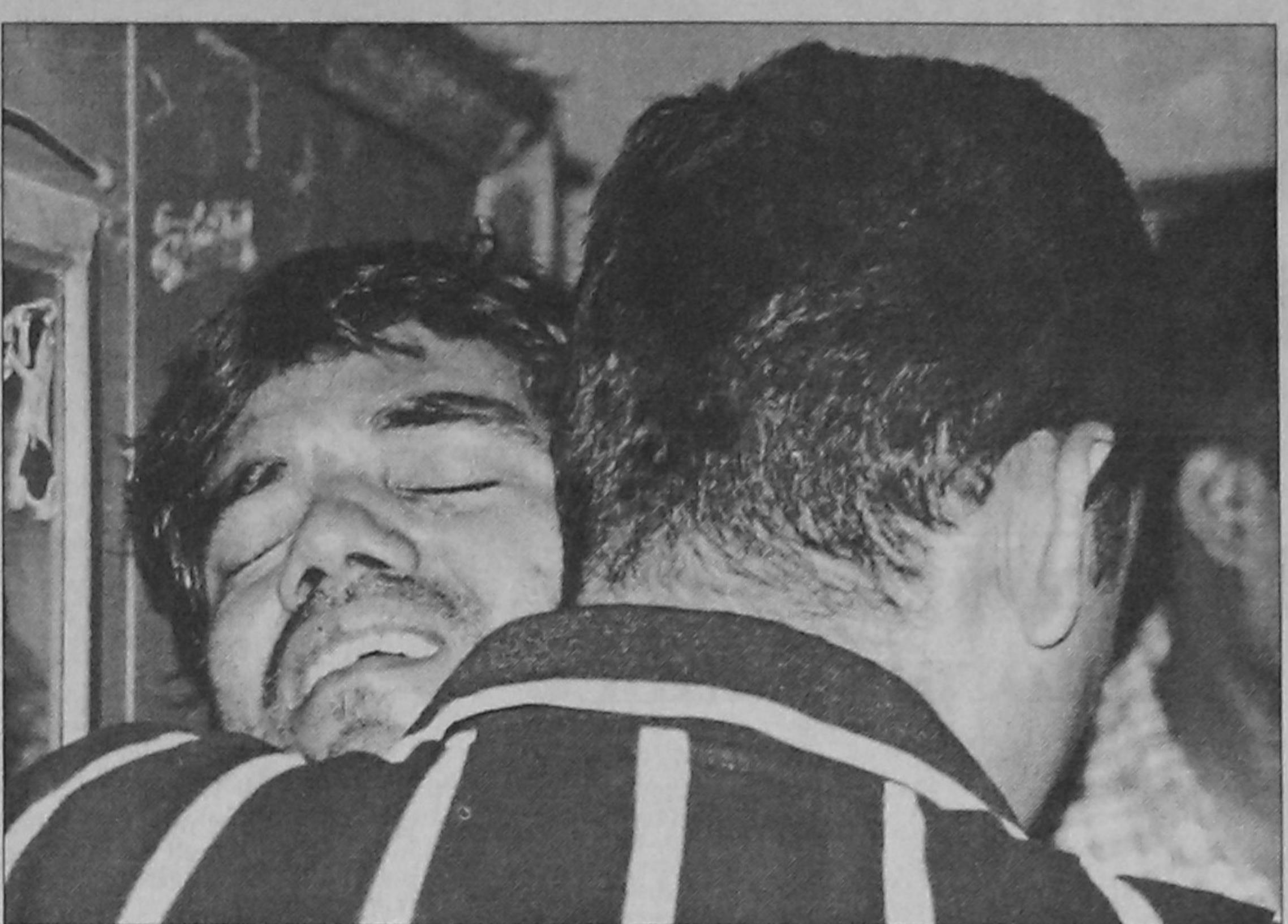
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Brothers of Rebel and Jewel wail after hearing the news of murders yesterday.

— Star photo

**Ransom for  
hijacked  
autorickshaw**

By Morshed Ali Khan

Autorickshaw driver Solaiman was sitting idly in his three wheeler at Agargaon Road in the city at around 7:30 pm on Monday.

"Do you want to go to Dhaka Medical?" a young man asked politely.

As the two agreed on a fare, the young man said, "Move in this direction, please. We will have to pick up a patient."

Solaiman did so. After a few minutes, they arrived at an isolated corner of Agargaon area. Within seconds, four men turned up, pointed a gun at Solaiman and asked him to get off his vehicle. The gang took control of the autorickshaw and vanished in the alleyways, leaving its driver helpless and bewildered.

Solaiman immediately informed owner of the vehicle, Rahman (not his real name), about this. Rahman went to Tejgaon police station to file a case.

What can we do? We are filing. See page 11 col 7

**Judgement in  
Fatik Murder  
Case May 14**

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, May 5: Judgement in Advocate Fatik murder case will be delivered on May 14 by the Additional District and Sessions Judge of the Special Court. The court is trying all the murder cases against Ershad Shikdar and his armed cadres.

Six out of eight FIR-named accused in the case including Shikdar faced the trial which took 47 days to complete. Thirty-nine prosecution witnesses were examined.

Three of the six arrested accused have already been sentenced in death in Zainal and Khalid murder cases.

They are Ershad Shikdar, Jamil Faruque and Lilaqat Lashkar.

Two accused — Shikdar's wife Khodeja and Ayub Munshi — are still at large.

Advocate Jahangir Alam Fatik, a young lawyer of Khulna Bar, was brutally killed on April 3, 1998 in the factory at the Skid Ghat river post. Later, his dead body was dumped into Bahrab river along fish landing ghat.

Advocate Fatik was killed by Shikdar for having extramarital affair with Khodeja Begum, said Noor-e-Alam in his judicial confession recorded under 164 in the CMM's Court on September 1, 1999.

**Sadik Abdulla  
yet to vacate  
ground floor**

By Staff Correspondent

Chief Whip's son Sadik Abdulla is yet to vacate the ground floor of the seven storied building he had allegedly occupied, Shahjahan Begum, sister of the building's owner said last night.

Sadik allegedly occupied the sixth floor flat and the ground floor of the building at Lake Circus in Dhanmondi area since July last year, she said.

He vacated the sixth floor flat on Thursday and was supposed to vacate the ground floor yesterday, she said.

"None came to remove belongings of Sadik from the ground floor yesterday," Shahjahan Begum said.

When contacted, Sadik Abdulla's family said the ground floor will be vacated today.

**Shikdar's armed  
cadre Bhutto  
arrested**

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, May 5: Bhutto, 32, one of the armed cadres of Ershad Shikdar was arrested by Khalishpur thana police on Thursday night from CSD godown area.

He was arrested in connection with a case recorded with Khalishpur thana on May 2, 2000.

According to police, Bhutto was also wanted in labour leader Siraj murder case. Police arrested him while he was severely beating the complainant of this murder case near CSD godown.

Police said 'Jamal' Farooq and Nasir Khan told them that Bhutto is one of the five people who used to keep illegal firearms of Ershad Shikdar.

He was staying in the house of Awami League Leader Kazi Asgar Ali alias Tara Kazi, younger brother of Kazi Sikandar Ali Dalmi MP of the ruling party.

Apart from several other criminal cases pending with Khalishpur thana, Tara Kazi was acquitted by special court in Khalid murder case on April 30. His daughter has been married to the eldest son of Ershad Shikdar.

## Next 'doomsday' in 2002

LOS ANGELES, May 5: All five bright planets, the sun and the crescent moon were tightly grouped together in the sky for what it was a rare celestial event, reports AP.

Astronomers say Friday's planetary lineup was the tightest alignment of Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn and the moon since 1962. On May 17, the 'still-unblocked' planets will bunch up even closer, though the moon will have moved away by then.

Star gazers must wait two more years before another grand grouping takes place, said John Mosley, an astronomer at Griffith Observatory.

One book ominously titled "May 2002 will involve all five planets plus the moon," he said. "It will be similar to the one happening now, except you'll be able to see it."

The alignment has been in the works for over a month. In early April Mars, Jupiter and Saturn were close together in the evening sky and outside the sun's glare.

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