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## Appointment of CEC: President yet to make statement

By Staff Correspondent

There was still no sign of appointment of a chief election commissioner even thirteen days after the post fell vacant following resignation of Mohammad Abu Hena on May 8.

Meantime, speculations were on about who is going to take over as the new CEC. Different newspapers have been printing different names, most of them retired civil bureaucrats, as government nominees for the post. But government leaders yesterday expressed ignorance about the issue.

Some sources said that the President might take a step to find a CEC acceptable to both the ruling party and the Opposition, while others believe that the President would not expose himself to any controversy in this regard.

Both Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia have already called on President Shahabuddin Ahmed and claimed that they wanted a new CEC on the basis of consensus. But they also accused each other of foiling an attempt for consensus.

The President is, however, yet to make any public statement on the contentious issue.

## Laws underway for steps against schools violating code of ethics

By Staff Correspondent

The government is formulating laws so that punitive action can be taken against schools violating certain code of ethics. Education Minister ASHK Sadik told The Daily Star yesterday.

Provisions for criminal proceedings under the laws are also being planned, the minister said when his attention was drawn to the killing of a residential student at Matrichhaya Pre-cadet High School in the city on May 18.

The Matrichhaya Pre-cadet High School is not registered with the government, he said.

A law is underway to take punitive action against schools not registered, he said.

Incidents of crime are increasing at non-government schools as many of those are not registered with the government and could not be monitored by relevant agencies, Sadik said.

Under the proposed laws, coaching centres with students beyond a certain number will have to be registered, and those will be treated as schools, he noted.

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## Inside Today

### Article

#### China's March to the WTO

Column: Connecting the Dots  
by A R Choudhury  
Page 4

### Focus

#### Is it coup or terrorists' action in Fiji? and Legacy of a long-drawn war

Page 5

### Business

#### Trade, aid getting more condition-bound

China eyes key US vote after striking WTO deal with EU

DSE, CSE price quotations

Pages 6, 7 & 8

## Dangerous trade

Tons of used disposable syringes, saline and blood bags and transfusion sets are sold for reuse



A man collects used disposable syringes from the rubbish bin in front of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday for resale. —Star photo

By Naimul Haq

Tons of used syringes, saline and blood bags, transfusion pipes and other disposable medical equipment are sold every day in Old Dhaka for recycling and re-use.

The dangerous trade which can spread incurable diseases like AIDS and Hepatitis B and C is going on allegedly in connivance with a section of law enforcers and officials despite newspaper reports on several occasions earlier.

During a visit yesterday and the day before, Shamsu Mia was found collecting such used articles from a dustbin in front of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

"I only sort out the used syringes, glucose packets, blood and saline bags and transfusion sets," said the old man in his late fifties.

Shamsu Mia, living in a slum opposite the hospital emergency gate, said "One kilogram of used syringes would fetch me about Tk 20 and one kilogram of plastic blood and saline transfusion tubes (popularly known to traders as *lata*), Tk 12 to 15, depending on freshness of the materials".

Used injection glass bottles are costlier. One kilogram of such glass bottles fetches twice the amount earned from *lata*, he said.

This correspondent followed Shamsu Mia to a place opposite the Asiatic Society office at Nimtali, not far from the DMCH, and reached a cluster of small shops.

This correspondent posed himself as a seller of used medical equipment. At one of the shops, a young man in his mid thirties, showing a huge plastic bag already stuffed with syringes, said, "Dada (brother) come. We will give you good price. Are you from the hospital (DMCH)? You look a newcomer

See page 12 col 1

## Dhanmondi Lake project uncertain 98 kathas of public land yet to be recovered from 42 encroachers

By Staff Correspondent

Uncertainty clouds the Dhanmondi lake development project since several components cannot be completed "within the near future," sources said.

The PWD is yet to recover the entire stretch of 98 kathas of encroached public land from 42 lakeside residents although a demolition team of DCC and PWD conducted a week-long recovery drive recently.

The walkway component at different places along the lake is incomplete as the encroachers refuse to budge. The slig-

gishness by DCC and PWD officials to take action has even encouraged some encroachers to believe that the government has lost its battle to recover public land. The encroachers have rebuilt their boundary walls at two places.

A large portion of the lake between the bridge at Road-32 and the pond at Road-27 could not be excavated as planned in the project. Officials said this part is still full of sludge, which would contaminate the rest of the lake. Officials fear it would not be excavated at all unless

the encroachments are removed.

But, with several project deadlines expiring since 1997, DCC is now trying to complete the project "in a hurry." DCC officials said the walkway can not be completed unless PWD handed over the land. However, in the meantime, other components are being completed, they said.

About Tk 32 lakh landscaping component of the project is also suffering. The contractor of the project has employed his

See page 11 col 7

## Kotchandpur 'syndicate bank' Some top agents not interrogated

From Delwar Kabir

Jhenidah, May 21: The survey committee headed by the Kotchandpur municipality chairman did not interrogate some important agents of "Syndicate Bank," investors alleged today.

The 70-member survey committee interrogated 34 agents on Saturday and Sunday, said sources close to the committee.

The survey committee allowed all the 34 agents to return to their homes under the supervision of Sirajuddin Seru, Kotchandpur municipality chairman who is also the convener of the survey committee. The move has angered many in the area.

Fariq Ahmed Kajol is the owner of the so-called bank and the main suspect of the alleged defalcation involving Tk 1,200 crore.

Asked why the agents were not handed over to police, Seru said he only allowed the agents to return to their homes considering "the interest of the investors."

Many in the town fear a fierce battle may erupt any time between the two sides, since many agents could not convince their investors regarding repayment of their capital as well as the profits.

Agents of "Syndicate Bank" who built palatial houses in

See page 11 col 8

## Garments employee stabbed to death in city

By Staff Correspondent

A garments employee was stabbed to death at Bishal under Mirpur police station in the city yesterday evening.

The victim was identified as Sohel, 20, son of Selim of Road Number 11 in Mirpur 1. Sohel came under attack while he was going to the shop of his uncle Shafiqul Islam at 3.30 pm. One Sumon allegedly stabbed him when Sohel reached in front of the local AL office.

He was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the attending doctors declared him dead at about 5:15 pm yesterday. Police could not identify the reason behind the killing.

A case was filed with Mirpur police in this connection, but none was arrested till writing of this report last night.

## Larma urges PM for quick implementation of accord

PM warns against plot to disrupt CHT peace

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina warned yesterday against any move to frustrate the hard won peace in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and called for concerted efforts for overall development of the region, reports UNB.

"Some quarters are not happy with the peace accord due to obvious reasons. They continue plotting to disrupt peace. We must keep vigil against their evil designs," she said, chairing a review meeting on development activities in the CHT at PM's Office, which was attended

by former tribal guerilla leader Shantu Larma.

The prime minister said her government has given special attention for real development of the people and the region in the interest of overall development of the country.

Reviewing various on-going development projects in the region, she called for an effective coordination among the CHT Ministry, Regional Council and three hill district councils of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban to carry out the uplift plans.

Focusing on the peace dividends, Hasina said a number of projects were underway to develop infrastructure, communications, agriculture and health-care in the hill tracts.

She said some farmers who used to cultivate poppy in the remote jungles were persuaded to undertake normal agriculture.

The Prime Minister emphasised social and cultural advancement of the communities living in the hilly region alongside efforts for economic development.

Regional Council Chairman Shantu Larma praised the prime minister for restoring peace through the peace accord and said people in the region had started reaping the benefit of the deal.

"Post-peace accord situation is definitely better than the pre-accord situation," said Shantu Larma, who had taken over the PCJSS leadership after his brother M N Larma was slain and led the bush war for autonomy until the peace deal was struck.

See Page 12 Col 7

## Opposition's planned rally at Sylhet postponed

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance has postponed its public meeting at Sylhet on Thursday due to differences between the BNP and Jatiya Party over formation of the All-Party Action Council (APAC) there.

Besides, there is also a serious crisis in the JP over its local leadership, sources said.

They said the JP demanded the convenor post of the APAC unit in Sylhet, but the three other parties in the alliance made a local BNP leader as convenor of the body (APAC) which angered the JP.

But the Central Liaison Committee at a meeting at 29 Minto Road yesterday postponed the meeting on grounds of 'torrential rain'. It said the Sylhet Madrassah Maidan, the scheduled venue for the meeting, was submerged by rain water and it will remain so for about a week.

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan presided over the meeting.

Sources further said the local BNP is also angry over the recent 'indecent' remarks made by JP secretary general Nazim Rahman Manjur about former Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman MP.

They said the meeting was postponed as the local JP refused to organise the joint meeting on the plea that its party unit was not made convenor of Sylhet unit of APAC.

A BNP leader based in Sylhet told The Daily Star last night that the meeting venue was not submerged by rain water. "The venue is totally dry. The main cause for postponement of the meeting is Jatiya Party's illogical demand," he said.

## 12 beaten to death in three weeks

By Staff Correspondent

Twelve people including a 12-year-old school student and a five-year-old housemaid were beaten to death in the city and other parts of the country in the last three weeks, according to police records and newspaper reports.

Five of them were killed in Chittagong in three incidents.

Two-year-old Abu Bayazid Mohammed Munit, a student of class six, was beaten to death by some fellow students just on the plea that he had taken away some mangoes from their dormitory room.

The tragic incident took place at the Matrichhaya Pre-cadet High School at Modhubagh in Dhaka city on May 18.

A housemaid, Rashna, 5, was beaten to death by members of

the family she worked for at Uttar Goran in the city on May 15. The case filed in this connection said she died 'naturally'. But the autopsy report said she died from assault injury.

A young man, Shahidul Islam, 19, was beaten to death by a gang of miscreants in Old Dhaka on May 7.

Unidentified people beat to death a young man — Majful Islam, 20 — at Natun Road under Kotwali police station in the city on May 5.

Two alleged muggers — Montu, 35 and Mobarak, 29 — were beaten to death by a mob at Gunthighar under Sutrapur police station in Old Dhaka on May 2.

Three alleged dacoits were beaten to death while they were

See page 11 col 8

## Judicial statements

## Nayan confesses beating Munit along with 6

By Court Correspondent

Seven students of Matrichhaya Pre-Cadet High School, arrested in connection with the killing of a 12-year-old student of the school early Thursday, gave judicial statements in the CMM's Court yesterday.

The arrested Raju Ahmed Nayan, Sarif Ahmed, Rafiqul Islam Rani, Safiqul Islam Rubel, Sumon Saha, Mizanur Rahman and Azim were produced before the CMM's Court at 5 pm. The court sent them to the Central Jail after recording their statements.

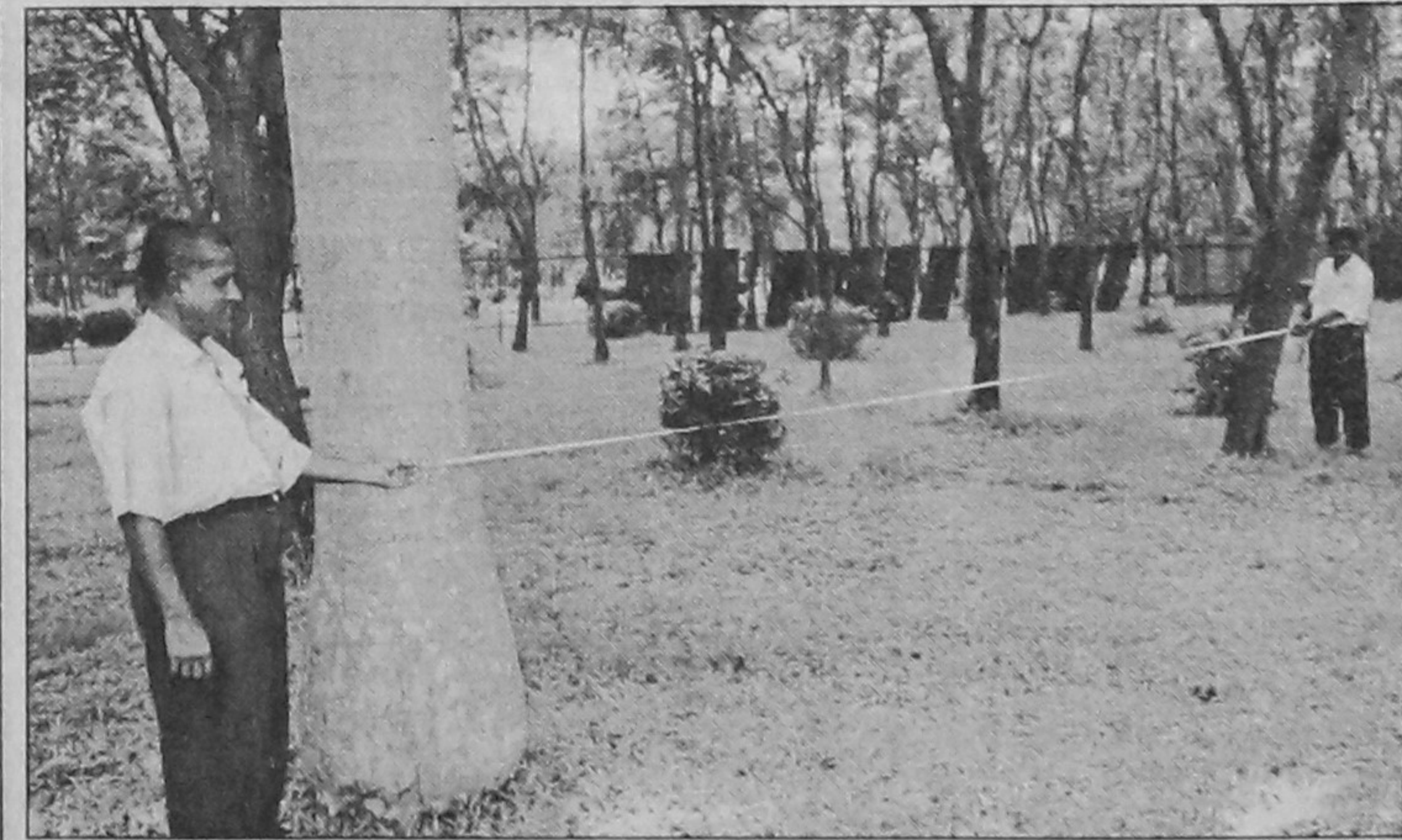
Another accused, the vice-principal of the school was taken on a ten-day police remand for interrogation.

Nayan, the principal accused in the murder case, confessed that he along with his accomplices beat Munit mercilessly for taking away some mangoes from his room.

He also told the court that Munit died from his injuries caused by him and his accomplices. Six other accused — Rafiqul Islam, Safiqul Islam, Sarif Ahmed, Mizanur Rahman, Sumon Saha, Azim — also gave similar statement in the court.

This is the first time that seven accused gave judicial statements to the Magistrate in an hour.

See page 11 col 8



Two men measure the proposed site for the small power station to be built for the International Conference Centre at Chandrima Udyan in the city yesterday. Newspaper reports said about 100 trees will be felled to build it. —Star photo

## Sonia accused of being incompetent, autocratic & insensitive



Sonia Gandhi

NEW DELHI, May 21: Sonia Gandhi, the head of India's opposition Congress Party, is facing a growing challenge from senior party leaders who accuse her of being incompetent, autocratic and insensitive, reports AFP.

The widow of former premier Rajiv Gandhi — a scion of the Nehru-Gandhi political dynasty which ruled India for four decades and monopolised the Congress Party — is under increasing pressure for failing to revive India's oldest political grouping.

The latest broadside was fired by senior Congress leader

Vithal Gadgil, considered a

loyalist, on Friday when he accused her of mediocrity.

"To expect a person to perform beyond his capacity is unfair to that person and he is bound to fail. In Western management jargon it is called the Peter Principle. We forgot that the Peter Principle works in politics also," Gadgil said.

He conceded, however, that Sonia, who lived a Garboesque life until she was virtually forced by the Congress leadership to take up the party presidency two years ago, was not the only one to blame for their declining fortunes.

"We are the people who practically forced her to come to

politics. She was very reluctant. At least personally, she repeatedly said: 'I don't understand politics. I have no knowledge of it'."

"We expected that she would not only be a crowd-puller but also a vote catcher."

Congress spokesman Jairam Ramesh recently stirred up a hornet's nest by apparently telling a magazine the Congress would not return to power for 50 years if Sonia remained president.

Ramesh apologised and said he had been quoted out of context.

Several senior party officials have resigned from the

Congress recently, expressing dissatisfaction with Sonia.

N. Bhaskar Rao, director of the Centre for Media Studies, said Sonia's time was clearly up.

"It is the tip of the iceberg... An explosion in the party is in the offing. It will show up in the November 3 elections to elect the Congress president and Sonia faces an ouster."

"Her biggest advantage now is TINA (There Is No Alternative). But six senior Congressmen are trying to find a leader to contest the elections. There will be stiff competition."

Rao said Gandhi had "committed mistake after mistake."

alienating the Congress rank-and-file. "She is imperious, has a total lack of understanding and her advisers are zero. And everything is highly centralised."

"Her mother-in-law (and former premier) Indira Gandhi had a low-key approach. Sonia visited western India recently and, despite a prevailing drought, took two planes with her."

"One plane was filled with her entourage, a person to hold an umbrella over madam's head, another to pass her water."

The Italian-born Sonia has

See page 11 col 7

## DTO takes over AS CCCI administrator

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 21: Per-ozze Kibria, Deputy Secretary and Director of Trade Organisations (DTO) under Commerce Ministry, has taken over as administrator of crisis-ridden Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) this morning.

Kibria met the staff of CCCI and went round its different sections, chamber sources said.

The government appointed Kibria administrator of CCCI for interim period to run its routine works and to arrange its election after preparing a voter list.

The deadlock was created when the CCCI board of directors removed its president Kamal Uddin Ahmed and elected its senior vice president Saifuzaman Chowdhury Javed as president.

The deadlock forced the government to appoint an administrator, sources said.

The government also dissolved the CCCI board of directors.

Kamal still claims himself as president of CCCI. He also filed a writ with the High Court. The court issued a stay order for ten days on the decision of board of directors.

The battle between Kamal and Javed, son of Awami League leader Aktaruzzaman Chowdhury Babu, continued for about two months centring the post of CCCI president.

## Armed attack on Bangabandhu's house in '89: One remanded

By Court Correspondent

Imam Hossain Inon, arrested in connection with the case of an armed attack on the residence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Road No 32 in Dhanmondi Residential area on August 11, 1989, was taken on one day's police remand yesterday.

Inon was produced before the CMM's Court yesterday with a prayer for seven-day remand. The court granted one-day.

## Ctg Mass Killing

## Deposition of 2nd witness complete

CHITTAGONG, May 21: Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge Court here today completed taking deposition of the second witness in the Mass Killing case, reports UNB.

The judge AMM Sayeed took deposition of witness advocate Ramdas Gupta and fixed June 5 as the next date for hearing. The first witness was advocate Mohiul Huda.

At least 30 people were killed and over a hundred injured when police opened fire on a procession brought out by the then eight-party opposition alliance here in 1988.

## Mob lays siege to Narsingdi DC's office

NARSINGDI, May 21: The police fired tear gas shells to disperse agitating people that laid a siege to the DC's office today demanding trial and punishment to terrorists, reports UNB.

Sources said terrorists under protection of the ruling party have been harassing the residents of Hajipur Union under Sadar thana.

The terrorists recently attacked and set fire to seven houses including that of local UP chairman. Seven villagers were beaten up mercilessly when they went to file case against the terrorists.

Police also refused to take case against them for reasons unknown.