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Dawn-to-dusk hartal today

By Staff Correspondent

The countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal, called by the BNP-led opposition alliance, begins at 6 this morning, protesting the proposed national budget for 2000-2001 fiscal.

The BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Oikya Jote, Jagpa, Democratic League, Progressive Nationalist Party and Nationalist Democratic Alliance staged separate demonstrations and took out torch processions in the city yesterday in support of the shutdown.

Main opposition party BNP held rallies in eight different places in the city and later brought out torch processions from the places. BNP's Lalbagh, Kotwali, Sutrapur, Ramna, Demra, Motijheel, Sabujbagh and Khilgaon thana units brought out a huge procession from the central office at Naya Paltan in the evening.

Other torch processions were brought out from New Market by the BNP's Dhanmondi-Mohammadpur unit, from Rokeya Sarani by the Kafrul thana unit, from Mirpur-10 roundabout by the Mirpur unit, from Azampur bus stand by the Uttara thana unit, from Tejgaon rail gate by the Tejgaon thana unit, and from Postagola by the Shyampur thana unit.

Jatiya Party brought out a torch procession from the city's See page 11 col 8

Defaulting loans 47 directors of private banks lost positions in 5 years

By Staff Correspondent

The government notified 139 directors of different private banks for defaulting loans in the past five years and 47 of them already lost their positions.

Of the notified directors, 58 paid back their outstanding loans, 19 are still retaining their positions due to court injunctions while 15 others were acquitted of the charge. Finance Minister S.A.M. Kibria, disclosing the information in parliament yesterday, said the steps were taken during the period between 1995 and 2000 under the Bank Company Act.

Article 17 of the Act provides for removal of a private bank director if found guilty on charge of defaulting loans taken from any bank or financial institutions.

The finance minister also mentioned various other steps taken against the bank loan defaulters as he replied to a question from ruling party lawmaker Mohammad Shah Alam. The Bank Company Act of See page 11 col 7

BSP team meets Prime Minister

A delegation of Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Parishad yesterday met the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday evening, reports UNB.

They discussed various problems of newspaper industry including advertisement and newsprint.

The Prime Minister assured the delegation of looking into their problems.

State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed was present.

Inside Today

Article

Fledgling Democracies Increasingly Becoming Vulnerable

by Mansoor Mamoon
Page 4

Supplement

A two-page supplement on 'Independence Day of the Philippines' on Pages 8 & 9

| June | Sun Rises | Sun Sets |
|------|-----------|----------|
| 12 | | 6-47pm |
| 13 | 5-10 am | |

Prayer Timings

June 12

| | Azan | Jamaat |
|---------|------|--------|
| Fajr | 4-15 | 4-45 |
| Zohr | 1-00 | 1-30 |
| Asr | 5-00 | 5-15 |
| Maghrib | 6-50 | 6-55 |
| Esha | 8-15 | 8-45 |

Source: Islamic Foundation

Dhaka 36.44pc: Ctg 37.27 pc: Jessore 45.44pc: Comilla 35.40pc: Rajshahi 47.26pc

Pass percentage lowest in 5 yrs

By Staff Correspondent

Results of Secondary School Certificate Examination held under the five boards this year were announced yesterday with an average pass percentage of 40.36, the lowest in the last five years and 15.12 per cent less than last year's.

The average pass percentage was 55.48 last year, 47.95 in 1998, 48 in 1997 and 52 in 1996.

This year, the highest pass percentage of 47.26 is in Ra-

ishahi Board and the lowest 35.40 in Comilla Board. It is 45.44, 37.27 and 36.44 for Jessore, Chittagong and Dhaka boards respectively.

Last year, Chittagong Board had the highest 59.86 and Rajshahi Board the lowest 49.43. The pass percentage was 58.75, 56.38 and 53 for Jessore, Comilla and Dhaka boards.

This year's SSC examination was marked by mass

copying. As many as 5,000 examinees were expelled on the first day of the examinations that began on March 2. The five boards had formed 60 vigilance teams this year to check copying.

A total of 918,045 examinees appeared at the examinations this year, of whom 381,762 passed.

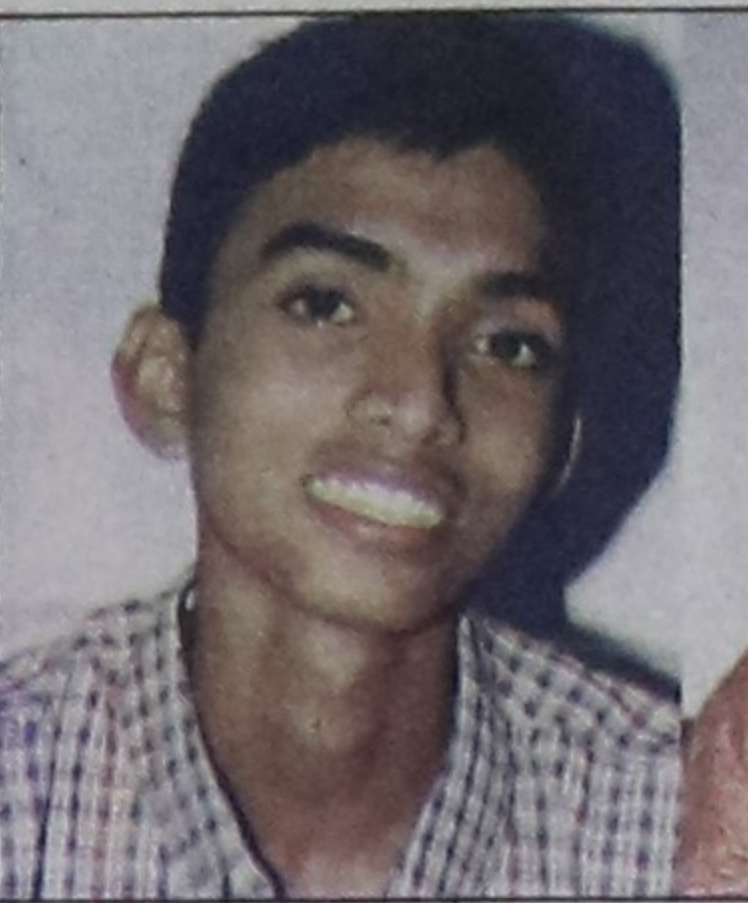
Dhaka Board
Shobnam Zerlin of My-

mensingh Girls Cadet College topped the merit list in Dhaka Board scoring 946 marks. Firdous Saleheen of Ideal School and College in Dhaka city and Hillol Debnath of Rani Bilashmoni Government Boys High School at Gazipur jointly secured the second position with 945 marks each.

Fifty-five students shared the top 20 positions. Ideal See page 11 col 4



Shobnam Zerlin, 1st in DB Science Group



Firdous Saleheen, 2nd in DB Science Group



Nafiz Tanzim Nipun, 1st in DB Humanities Group



Rehnuma Ahmed Keya, 1st in DB Business Studies

Female candidates steal the show

By Staff Correspondent

Female students dominated the combined merit lists of Science, Humanities and Business Studies groups in this year's SSC examinations held under the five education boards.

In the combined merit list of Science Group in Dhaka Board, female students got the first, fourth, fifth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, 12th, 13th, 14th, 16th, 18th, 19th and 20th positions in the merit list of 20.

They also got the first, second, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th and 19 positions in Humanities Group.

In the Business Studies group also, female students secured the first, fourth, fifth, sixth, eighth, 11th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th positions.

In Chittagong Board, female students secured the fourth, fifth, eighth, 10th, 13th, 14th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th positions in the combined merit list of Science Group.

In Humanities Group, they also got 16 positions out of 20. These are the first, second, third, fourth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 15th, 17th, 19th and 20th in Humanities Group. See page 12 col 6

Poor show by most cadet colleges

By Staff Correspondent

Traditionally good schools maintained their superiority but some less known schools also secured positions in merit lists of this year's SSC examination results.

Most of the cadet colleges failed to maintain their earlier positions.

Among the 11, Jenidah, Barisal and Rajshahi cadet colleges maintained their superiority in the merit list. Performance of Foudzdarhat Cadet College was very poor this year.

Two students of Bangladesh Mashhoor ul Haque Memorial

High School in Doha, Qatar also secured two positions in the merit list in Science Group in Dhaka Board.

Of the 55 students who shared the top 20 positions in Science Group in Dhaka Board, 10 are from Ideal School and College, eight from Viquarunnisa Noon School and seven are from Government Laboratory High School in Dhaka city. However, Mymensingh Girls Cadet College secured the top position.

Four students each from St See page 11 col 1



About 200 people demonstrated in front of Nagar Bhaban yesterday demanding return of their shops at Adarsha Market. — Star photo

Sit-in in front of Nagar Bhaban

Return shops as per court order, shop owners demand

By Staff Correspondent

About 200 people claiming to be shop owners at Adarsha Market at Fulbaria in the city staged a sit-in in front of the Nagar Bhaban yesterday demanding return of their shops as per a court order.

About 411 shop owners were evicted from Adarsha Market by the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) on May 22, about two years after it was occupied by a group claiming ownership. While DCC claimed it owned the market, the Waqf Administration under the Religious Affairs Ministry allocated the land to a group of people in the name of Waqf Estate.

Adarsha Market is one of the four in the cluster of markets known as Bangabazar.

The shop owners who staged the sit-in showed this correspondent a court order to police, DCC Estate Department officials and magistrates. The order said possession of the shops should be handed over to the

Secretary of the Market Committee and the Petitioner, SM Abdul Jabbar, by June 11 and the DCC authorities must appear before the court by 10:30 am on June 12.

The DCC did not take any step in this regard till yesterday.

"When DCC asked us to vacate the shops on May 22, we locked our shops full of garments worth lakhs of taka and walked off," said Syed Mohammad Sayeed, a leader of the evicted shop owners.

Sayeed said that the present Market Committee broke the locks of their shops, looted all their merchandise and demanded Tk one lakh each from the evicted shopkeepers for re-entering their shops and do business.

Other shop owners said the present Market Committee had been allocated stalls at the recently built Sundarban Market. See page 11 col 3

Nothing surprising in budget, says Prof Muzaffar

By Staff Correspondent

Renowned economist Prof Muzaffar Ahmed has said the proposed national budget for fiscal 2000-2001 is 'a traditional one lacking the surprises' that people expected from the last budget before the next general elections.

"The only shift is that this time the finance minister did not shed light on the macroeconomic fundamentals which was usual in his budget speeches in the last four years," Prof Ahmed told The Daily Star.

The huge budget deficit is the reason behind the finance minister's silence in this regard, he felt.

The economist also said the finance minister did not say anything about foreign exchange reserve, rather he spoke about the real effective exchange rate (REER) because the reserve position is not good. And this can be felt from the kerb market dollar rate, he added.

Reduction of interest on different government savings and defence instruments is not proper, said Ahmed, who is a professor at the Institute of Business Studies, Dhaka Uni-

See page 11 col 7

62 pc pass SSC vocational exams

Results of the SSC (Vocational) examinations 2000 under Bangladesh Technical Education Board were announced yesterday, reports UNB.

A total of 14,560 candidates took part in the examinations. Of them, 9005 came out successful. The percentage of pass was 61.85.

Of the successful candidates, 5387 got first division, 3578 second division and 40 third division.

The Board authorities withheld the results of 205 examinees while 199 were expelled.

Mohammad Alimuzzaman (Roll-RT 05288) of Vocational Training Institute, Faridpur, topped the merit list securing 1191 marks.

M Siratul Islam (Roll-Building 00382) of Bhanga Pilot High School, Faridpur obtained second position. He secured 1188 marks.

Rajib Saha (Roll-Building 06358) of AC Laha Pilot High School, Bagerhat, stood third securing 1186 marks.

Kamal Majumder interrogated

By Staff Correspondent

Ruling party MP Kamal Ahmed Majumder, father of Jewel who is an accused in a murder case, was interrogated by Detective Branch of Police for four hours yesterday afternoon, police said.

Haji Ahmed, father of another accused in the case -- Saiful -- was also interrogated along with the MP.

An official of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh, whose son is also an accused in the same case, is yet to be interrogated, police said without giving details.

When contacted, DMP Commissioner Muttur Rahman said, "The MP will be interro-

gated till he gives satisfactory answer regarding the whereabouts of his son."

He went on, "This is for the first time a ruling party MP was interrogated by police."

Kamal Majumder was brought to the DB office following a police raid at his Gulshan residence yesterday.

Three persons including the lawmaker's son are accused in the case for murder of businessman Iftekhhar Ahmed Shipu, 38, in the city's Banani area on May 24.

Kamal Majumder could not be contacted yesterday evening for his comments.

15 sacked in 4 US factories Workers lay siege to CEPZ GM's office

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 11: About 4,000 workers of four towel factories of American company Qualitex Group at Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) began a sit-in in front of the factories at 7 am today demanding reinstatement of 15 terminated workers, police and CEPZ sources said.

The sit-in continued till filing of this report at 7 pm, company source said.

The 15 workers of four factories — Crown Towel-1, Crown Towel-2, Qualitex Towel and Modern Towel — were terminated by the management last night.

They also laid a siege to the office of the CEPZ General Manager for one hour from 4 pm today demanding withdrawal of termination order.

Company sources said the four export oriented factories

today suffered a loss of about 30,000 Pounds due to abstention by the workers.

Police were deployed there to avoid violence.

The workers have been agitating for the past two months demanding wages as per the 1993 circular which was cancelled by BEPZA.

The workers were now being paid as per the 1989 circular, company source said.

The four factories lost some export orders as production fell due to labour unrest in the past two months, company sources said.

The goods are exported to different countries including the USA, Canada, France and Italy.

Trade union activities are banned in the Export Processing Zone.

Rajesh Pilot killed in road accident

JAIPUR, June 11: Senior Congress leader and former Union Minister Rajesh Pilot was killed today when a jeep carrying him collided with a bus in his Lok Sabha constituency Dausa, 90-km from here, reports PTI.

The 55-year old Indian Air Force Pilot turned politician, who was rushed to SMS Medical College Hospital here, succumbed to his injuries, Prof SR Dharkar told the newsmen.

A member of the Congress working committee, Pilot was survived by his politician wife Rama and a son and a daughter.

Prof Dharkar said that Pilot was brought to hospital with multiple injuries with no heart beat.

Official sources said that the Congress leader's gunman died on the spot.

Representing Dausa in Lok Sabha for the six times, Pilot, who quit the Indian air force in 1979 when he was a squadron leader, entered the house for the first time in 1980.

He was minister of state for home and communications in the Narasimha Rao Government.

Raju murder in Khulna: One gets life term

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, June 11: District Judge, Khulna ATM Fazle Kabir today sentenced Ismail Hossain (absconding) to life term and fined Tk 10,000, in default to suffer more one year RI, in Jubo League leader Raju murder case.

The other accused in the case, Abdul Gani, has been acquitted of the charge.

The prosecution story in brief is that Rezaul Karim Raju was gunned down at noon on June 5, 1998 at Basupara under Sonadanga thana. The murder was a sequel to intra-party rivalry in the West Bania Khannar.

Later a case was filed with Sonadanga thana accusing three Jubo League activists — Shahidul Islam Liton, Ismail Hossain and Abdul Gani.

Accused Shahidul Islam Liton was gunned down in police custody while being taken to district jail from Judges' court in February last.

Seventeen prosecution witnesses were examined in the murder case.

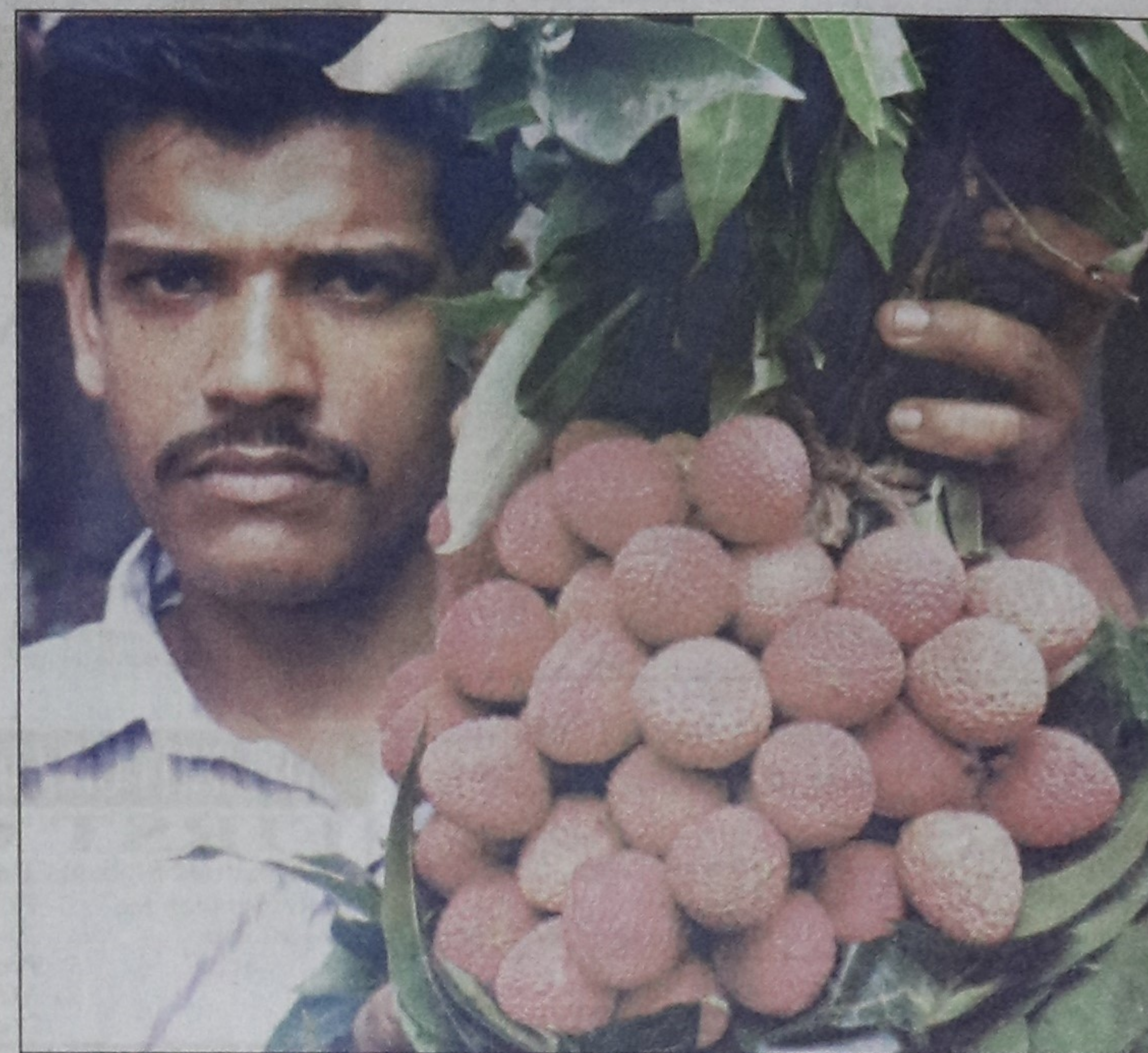
Kazol sent to Dhaka for interrogation

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, June 11: Farouque Ahmed Kazol, alleged mastermind of Kotchandpur 'Syndicate Bank' was taken to Dhaka from Jhenidah today for interrogation in Joint Interrogation Cell there, according to local administration sources here.

Kazol was boarded a van early in the morning amid heavy police escort, sources said.

Kazol was arrested on May 9 and placed under one month detention. Later the duration of detention was extended for another 3 months.



Lichis are sour! Plenty in the market though, this short-lived summer fruit sells for a staggering Tk 300 per hundred, and the buyers think twice to get a hand on it. — Star photo

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Fight against arsenic menace Filter system showing success

By Naimul Haq

The fight against groundwater arsenic contamination is showing some signs of success.

The emergency programmes jointly taken up by the government and the World Bank (WB) to address the massive public health problem have proved quite successful, sources said.

Experimental use of five different water filters have shown that high concentration of arsenic can be completely removed from tubewell water at a relatively cheaper cost.

The foreign but environment-friendly technologies, now in an experiment stage in six thanas in six districts since last April, are projected to be very effective in addressing the problem that has put millions of lives at risk. The thanas are, Bheramara, Golapganj, Iswardi, Uzipur, Gopalganj, Sadar and Hajiganj.

"The filters are easy to use and affordable," said an official working under the project.

"Data received from villages (816) where the experiment is in progress shows that the technologies have high rate of ac-



A man drinks water from tubewell at a village in Pabna's Bera thana (left) and the jar-based filter being used by villagers there. — Star photo