



Cabinet okays joint venture with China for laying gas pipeline

Star Report

The Cabinet yesterday approved signing of an agreement with a Chinese-Bangladeshi joint venture for laying a vital gas pipeline from Habiganj to Ashuganj.

Gas Transmission Company Ltd (GTCL) and Petrobangla will now start final negotiations with Summit Datqin of China and Summit Industries of Bangladesh for installation of the 54 km 30 inch diameter Habiganj-Ashuganj (HA) gas pipeline.

"We expect to sign the final agreement within one month. Once signed, it will take 10 months to complete the project," said a highly placed source.

The government has been pursuing this pipeline project for over a year now. Due to lack of financing from donors, it had been trying to involve the private sector in the deal while protecting monopoly rights of GTCL.

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**Major reshuffle in admn**

By Special Correspondent In a major reshuffle in the administration, the government yesterday transferred a number of secretaries in the ministries of Environment and Forests (MOEF), Food, Industries, Fisheries and Jute and those of the Election Commission and Securities and Exchange Commission.

According to Establishment Ministry sources, Secretary of Statistics Division Mianmumur Rashid has been transferred to the Election Commission (EC) as its Secretary.

The ministry changed the earlier order for transfer of Relief and Disaster Prevention Secretary Azad Ruhul Amin to the EC. He remains in the same post.

MOEF Secretary Syed Mughub Mursheed replaces Fisheries and Livestock Secretary Aynb Quadery, who replaces Food Secretary Malibub Kabir. Kabir who is suffering from

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**Mourning day today**

The government has decided to observe mourning day today to pay respect to Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad who died on Saturday, reports BSS.

The national flag will fly at half-mast in all government, semi-government and autonomous institutions and buildings and in Bangladesh Missions abroad, an official announcement said yesterday.

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by Praful Bidwai

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July-April export earnings fall 4 pc short of target

World oil summit starts in Canada amid violence fears

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June	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
13		6-47pm
14	5-11 am	

### Prayer Timings

June 13

	Azam	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

# The Daily Star

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## Bangladesh Bank directive Check Taliban-linked bank accounts

By Inam Ahmed

Bangladesh Bank yesterday asked all commercial banks to check whether any organisation directly supporting Afghanistan's Taliban government is operating bank accounts in Bangladesh.

The commercial banks have also been directed to identify if any such organisation is their client and report it to Bangladesh Bank.

The BB sent the letter following a United Nations Security Council letter to the Foreign Ministry that it has informed

that the Taliban are operating in this region.

UNSC also named a few organisations in India which are financially supporting the Afghan war lords. The Council requested Bangladesh to check Joypara in Dhamrai on March 20 for security reasons.

Though full details were not given about cancellation of the US President's trip to these places, there were unconfirmed reports that the Taliban or their followers were preparing to shoot down the helicopters carrying the US President with

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## Rajuk in trouble with its own lawyers: 3000 cases pending

By Morshed Ali Khan

Rajuk is in trouble on the legal front with over 3,000 cases pending with different courts for years and some of its listed lawyers refusing to cooperate, according to sources.

A top Rajuk official said they have found out that these lawyers in connivance with some Rajuk officials have suppressed for years cases involving valuable public land, unauthorised construction and encroachment.

"I can cite you an instance where one lawyer was charged with 250 court cases and he did not touch a single one and lost many, deliberately though," said the official, requesting anonymity.

Rajuk recently relieved most of the 130 lawyers and engaged a fresh batch of 90 in a bid to revamp its law section. Sources said Rajuk had to retain some

to a great extent because in thousands of cases they have not defended their client at all," alleged another Rajuk official.

A listed Rajuk lawyer, however, said it should be Rajuk's responsibility to monitor its own law section. He said the law section has been "as bad as any of its other sections" because none cared to improve this in-stution.

The person or institution who broke the law and was sued by Rajuk would always try to

win over the opponent's lawyer and with Rajuk's existing monitoring system the listed lawyer is least accountable to its client," said a Rajuk lawyer.

"If you fail to look after your own home you cannot blame others for your failure," said the lawyer, preferring he not be named.

26 charged with  
Apr 9 attack  
on Khaleda's  
motorcade

COX'S BAZAR, June 12: Police charged 26 people in two cases under the Public Safety Act with attacking the motorcade of Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia during her tour here on April 9, reports UNB.

Ramu police yesterday submitted charge sheet in the court. The accused included Golam Kibria, organising secretary of Cox's Bazar district BNP, local BNP MP Advocate Khelequzaman and his close relatives.

Three cases were filed under PSA with Ramu thana separately by three people in connection with the attack. Besides charge sheet in the two cases, police submitted a final report on the other case confirming the offence.

BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia came to Cox's Bazar on a four-day tour on April 9.

In the afternoon, when she started for Chaokoria from

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**SSC exams: Body soon to probe cause of low pass percentage**

By Staff Correspondent

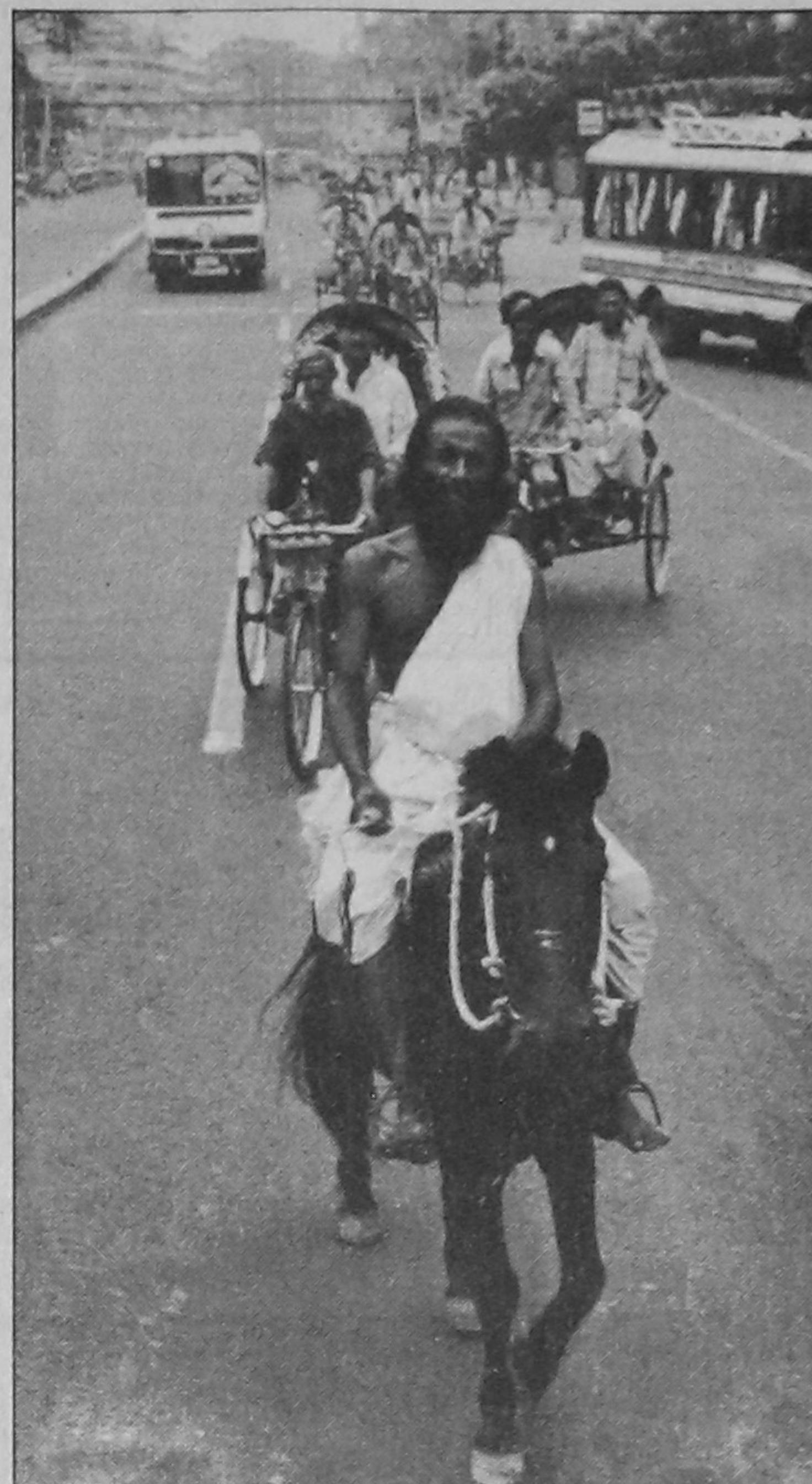
The government will form an independent committee of experts to find out the reasons behind failure of so many students in this year's SSC examinations. Education Minister A.S.H.K. Sadique told the Daily Star last night.

A total of 918,045 students were enrolled under the five education boards, of which 381,762 passed. The pass percentage was 40.36, 15.12 per cent less than the previous year and the lowest in five years.

Sadique said two important causes of failure of so many students can be put down to the fact that question papers were not similar to those given in the

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## Hartal passes off peacefully



Time for a ride: Mohammed Mustafa, a former BG Press staff, could not think of a better opportunity to go for a horse ride in the city than during yesterday's dawn-to-dusk hartal.

—Star photo

By Staff Correspondent

The countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal yesterday called by the BNP-led opposition alliance to protest the proposed national budget for fiscal 2000-2001 passed off by and large peacefully except stray incidents of violence.

In the city, pickets partially damaged some vehicles and set fire to some rickshaws. A few bombs were exploded in some areas but no serious injury was reported.

City BNP President Sadeq Hossain Khoka at a post-hartal press briefing claimed that at least 50 of their activists were arrested and more than 30 wounded in attacks by police and terrorists during the hartal.

Police, however, said they arrested only one person on charge of bomb explosion and other criminal offences.

Shops, business establishments, offices and educational institutions in the capital remained closed. Commercial banks were seen open with their main gates closed. Attendance in government offices was less than normal.

Inter-district buses and trucks to and from the city remained off the roads. A small number of minibuses and auto-tempo pilled on some specific routes. Movement of rickshaws was almost normal.

During the hartal hours, a convoy of over 100 buses, minibuses and microbuses carrying activists of an Islamic group passed through some particular roads in the capital. The bus procession was brought out on the occasion of Eid-e-MiladunNabi.

Picketing was hardly seen in most areas of the city but the hartal was observed. BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Oikya Jote, Jagga, Democratic League and PNP brought out a number of processions.

BNP brought out processions in Nayapaltan, Mouchak, Shahjahanpur, Sutrapur, Shantinagar, Dhamondi, Jatrabari and Demra areas. The

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## Two WC ties were fixed: Bacher



United Cricket Board chief, Ali Bacher testifies before the King Commission of Inquiry into cricket match-fixing allegations being held in Cape Town yesterday. AFP photo

CAPE TOWN, June 12: South African cricket boss Ali Bacher made sensational claims today about match-fixing in international cricket, including matches of the 1999 World Cup in England, report agencies.

Bacher told the King Commission of Inquiry that he had been told by former Pakistan

Syed Ashraf Hua, general secretary of the Bangladesh Cricket Board, on Monday denied any knowledge of alleged match-fixing in 1999 World Cup. "We do not know or believe it. We played our game and won the match against Pakistan," he said to Reuters.

cricket chief executive Majid Khan that two World Cup matches involving Pakistan, against India and Bangladesh, were "fixed."

Bacher also said he had information from an Indian bookmaker that Pakistani umpire Javed Akhtar was "on the payroll" when he made eight crucial decisions against South

Africa in their decisive Test against England in Leeds in 1998.

And he revealed a conversation on a South African domestic flight between a leading South African sponsor and a man who appeared to be Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar, who gave details of how matches were fixed.

Bacher also referred to the death in Johannesburg in May 1999 of a former Pakistan bookmaker, Mohammad Hanif Koovavi, who was shot by 67 bullets.

Koovavi, who moved to Johannesburg several years earlier, had been seen in sacked Pakistan captain Salim Malik's hotel room when the team was in Johannesburg in 1995.

Bacher did not give details of how the World Cup matches, Pakistan-India and Pakistan-India, had been fixed and said only that Majid Khan had made the allegations during the Wimbledon tennis championships in 1999.

Bacher also said he had information from an Indian bookmaker that Pakistani umpire Javed Akhtar was "on the payroll" when he made eight crucial decisions against South

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## 12 feudal landlords massacred, their villages looted in Bihar

by Sharier Khan

PATNA, India, June 12: At least 12 feudal landlords were massacred and their village looted in caste violence in the eastern Indian state of Bihar, officials said here today, reports AFP.

Some 150 armed men, believed to be landless farmers, raided Asari village in Nawada district and gunned down residents in apparent revenge for the murder of five poor farm workers on June 3, district administrator Shivnandan Ram said.

Seven others were seriously injured in the attack that began around 11:30 p.m. (2400 BST) Sunday, Ram said by telephone from Nawada, some 170 km

since June 7 when two landlords were slain by local farm tenants in an ongoing caste war, the officials said.

They said the bloodletting in Nawada began on June 3 when five farm labourers from the low-caste Yadav community were murdered in broad daylight by the Bhumiyars, who have set up large private armies in Bihar.

Extreme leftwing Maoist groups have conscripted poor farmers into their private armies which often clash with the powerful landlords in the eastern state, which borders Nepal.

With an annual average of

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DAMASCUS, June 12: Syrian President Hafez al-Assad's son Bashar faced the first challenge to his right to succeed his father today when his ban