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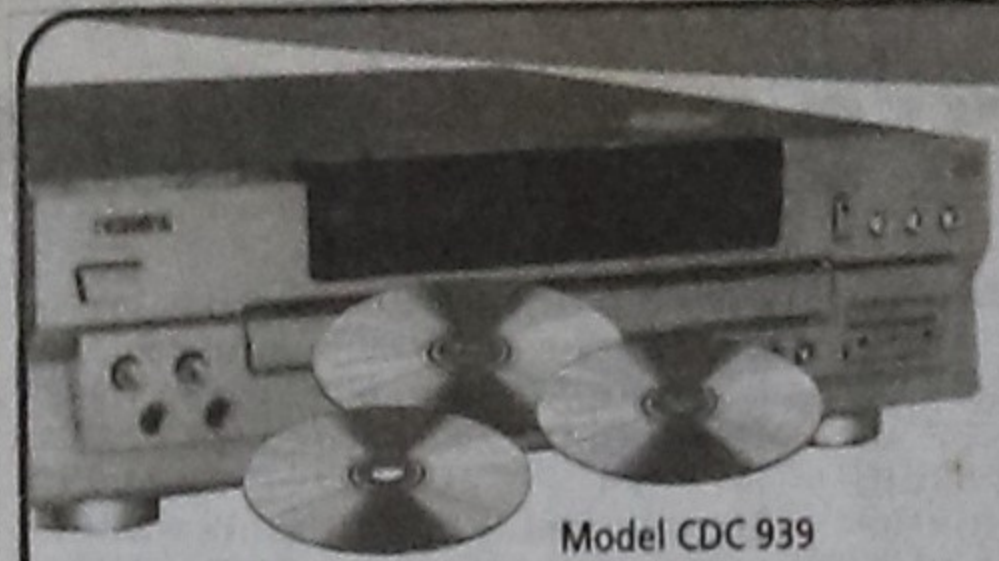
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## Body of housewife recovered, day labourer killed while digging earth

By Staff Correspondent

Police recovered the body of a housewife from Khilgaon government staff quarter yesterday.

The victim was identified as Sahina Akther, 23, wife of Abdul Khair.

In another incident, a female day labourer was killed while digging earth at the Suhrawardy Uddyan yesterday morning.

Fatema, 30, was fatally injured when piled up earth fell on her. She died while being taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The body was kept at the hospital morgue, hospital sources said.

Police recovered the body of Shahina when neighbours complained that foul odour was coming out from the room.

A gamcha (towel) was tied around the victim's neck and there were marks of injury in the chest, police said.

The victim's husband is absconding.

Shahina and her husband shared a flat with one Lily Begum, a government employee. Lily said she found Shahina's room locked since late Sunday afternoon.

Shahina met Khair about a year ago in Qatar where she ran a phone-fax shop. Returning home, they got married and started family life, relatives said.

Three months ago, Shahina came to know that Khair had four other wives. She went to Qatar again but returned recently.

On Thursday, Shahina went to her sister Rekha and told her that Khair was forcing her to hand over her 32 tolas of gold ornaments and Tk three lakh, deposited with a bank at Comilla.

"Today, I went to my sisters residence and saw police bringing out her body", Rekha told this correspondent at DMCH.

The body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

## Dhaka-Thimpu trade talks today

Bangladesh and Bhutan will hold trade talks today aimed at raising the present level of economic and commercial transactions for the mutual benefit of the two close neighbours, reports BSS.

Dasho Ugyen Tshering, Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bhutan, arrived here yesterday evening to lead an eight-member delegation to the talks.

A 13-member Bangladesh delegation will be led by Commerce Secretary Golam Rahman, official sources said. Rahman received the Bhutanese Foreign Secretary at the airport.

Bhutanese Ambassador Lhatu Wangchuk earlier said his country was going to propose free trade with Bangladesh during the talks and likely to ask for permission to use port facility along with opening of a second transit route.

## BTV chief cameraman falls from roof, dies

The Chief Cameraman of Bangladesh Television (BTV), died as he fell from the roof of a three-storey building at Shantinagar in the city last night, police and hospital sources said, reports BSS.

They said Mohammad Mustafa, 45, mysteriously fell from the roof of his 40, Shantinagar residence at around 9.30 pm. He was immediately taken to Holy Family Hospital and later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead.

## Clarification

The American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) issued a clarification on a report published in The Daily Star on August 28 titled, 'Leadership dispute - 15 trade bodies kept out of FBCCI voter list'. AmCham clarified it could not become a voter in the FBCCI election due to a memo given by the Commerce Ministry to FBCCI and not due to outdated trade license. The memo stated that 'the AmCham had been operating as a legal trade organisation under the Trade Organisation Ordinance, but will not have voting rights at the Federation election since joint chambers have no voting rights at the Federation election.'

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# 10000 tea workers protesting price cuts by big cos held in Assam

GAUHATI, Aug 29: At least 10,000 tea farmers protesting price cuts by larger competitors were detained today in Assam as police broke up highway blockades, injuring dozens of demonstrators in baton charges, officers said, reports AP.

The All Assam Small Tea Growers' Association, representing 25,000 tea planters, called for the highway blockades to protest an abrupt 50 per cent price cut for unprocessed green leaves by big tea companies, the primary buyers.

The small planters have been dumping their tea leaves on roadsides instead of selling to big companies at what they considered throwaway prices.

More than 150,000 kilograms of green tea leaves worth 1.5 million rupees (\$33,300 dol-

lar) were being dumped to rot daily for the past 10 days after big companies reduced the price," said Hemanta Gohain, president of the small growers' association.

An increasing number of small entrepreneurs, with little cash but lots of will, have begun growing tea in Assam. After 100 years of domination by large plantations, green tea has become a small farmer's crop.

The small growers now account for nearly 100 million kilograms of Assam's total annual tea production of more than 450 million kilograms.

Assam, home to 800 big tea plantations, accounts for 55 per cent of India's tea production of 865,000 tons.

Gohain said the highway blockade was called to "see to it that the big companies are un-

able to sell their produce, and also put a halt to the tea auction in the capital, Gauhati."

A police spokesman said protesters had tried to block traffic in four eastern districts of Assam—the tea growing areas of Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar, and Jorhat—where most of the 10,000 protesters were detained.

They were held in what police called "makeshift jails," open fields with police guards surrounding them, until they were released in the evening.

Police resorted to baton charges when the protesters tried to enforce the blockade. Some of them received injuries," said the spokesman, speaking on customary condition of anonymity.

The state government said today it had called a meeting

next week of the big and small growers to defuse the crisis.

The green tea leaves produced by small tea growers had been selling to big companies at an average price of 10 rupees per kilogram (20 US cents).

But two weeks ago, "some of the tea majors decided to reduce the price of tea leaves by more than 50 per cent, resulting in heavy losses to the small planters," said Purno Bora, secretary of the small growers association, in a telephone interview from Dibrugarh district.

Traditionally, tea was only grown in Assam on large privately owned plantations, varying from 350 to 650 hectares (860 to 1,600 acres).

It is estimated that nearly 25,000 small farmers in Assam

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## Peace Corps men have already trained 1600 English language teachers

By Diplomatic Correspondent

Peace Corps Volunteers from the United States now in Bangladesh are working to improve the quality of English language teaching, education and health, said the director of the Peace Corps yesterday.

"Peace Corps Volunteers are engaged in assisting in developing English language skills and working in several other sectors in Bangladesh. In the process, the Volunteers are able to learn about the culture of yours and other countries where they are working," Mark Schneider, the director, said speaking at a press conference in the city.

The Peace Corps Volunteers have already trained some 1600 teachers in the English language in Bangladesh.

This is for the first time that the Director of the US based Peace Corps is visiting Bangladesh where the Volunteers have started coming from United States in batches since 1998 at the invitation of the Bangladesh government.

The second batch arrived this February and another group is due shortly. Presently, there are some 48 young American men and women working as Peace Corps

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Mark Schneider, Director of Peace Corps, speaks at a press conference in the city as John Kincannon, Director of USIS, looks on. — Star photo

## 5 dacoits escape from magistrate court custody at Satkhira

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Aug 29: Five dacoits escaped from a magistrate court custody here by breaking window grills of a bathroom here this afternoon, police said.

They were identified as Bonny, 25, Saidur Rahman, 28, Shamsuzzaman Khokon, 24, Shaiful Islam, 24, and Anisad Ali, 29.

The dacoits, accused in two separate cases, were produced in the court for further remand. Earlier the court had granted them a two-day remand.

Local police administration suspended four of its members on duty following the incident. They were Havildar Golam Mostofa, constables Zaman, Ilias and Shah Alam.

However, Tala police later managed to apprehend Anisad and said that a special drive has been launched to arrest four others.

## 8 killed, 40 injured in Bogra road accident

BOGRA, Aug 29: At least eight people were killed and 40 others injured, three of them critically, in a road accident at Mohipur under Sherpur thana on Dhaka-Bogra Highway last night, reports BSS.

Police and hospital sources said, the accident occurred at about 12.15 am when a Panchagarh-bound night coach from Dhaka collided with another Dhaka bound night coach from Dinajpur.

Three passengers died on the spot while five others succumbed to their injuries at Bogra Medical College Hospital and Mohammad Ali Hospital.

Hearing hue and cry of the passengers, local people, police and fire fighters rushed to the spot and started rescue operation. The rescuers sent the injured persons to the hospital. Conditions of the three passengers were stated to be critical, hospital sources said.

The identity of the dead, however, could not be known immediately.

The bodies were sent to the Mohammad Ali Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Most of the injured were from Thakurgaon and Panchagarh, police said.

UNB from Chandpur adds: A septuagenarian was killed and 15 others were injured, six critically, in a road accident at Kumardugi on Chandpur-Comilla highway this morning.

Witnesses said the accident occurred at about 7 am when a Chittagong bound bus with about 50 passengers on board plunged into a roadside pond while giving side to another bus.

Six of the injured—Asfar, 30, Abdul Jalil, 55, Helal Hossain, 40, Kamal Hossain, 25, Harun, 20, Joyntal, 25—were admitted to Chandpur Sadar Hospital.

## Appeal against Sharif's conviction

# Gen Musharraf did not allow plane to land: Defence

KARACHI, Aug 29: Pakistan's secret agency Intelligence (ISI) had informed prime minister Nawaz Sharif of a plot to overthrow his government well before the October coup, a court heard today, reports AFP.

"This agency plays an important role in Pakistan from time to time. They were well aware of the coup and had informed Sharif about it much before October," Sharif's lawyer Azizullah Sheikh said.

Sheikh was arguing in Sharif's appeal against his conviction for hijacking and terrorism by a court which sentenced him to life term in April.

He said the record showed that three army generals, namely Pervez Musharraf, Mahmood Aziz and Mahmood Ahmed Khan—were "responsible for the mutiny, coup or whatever you call it against the elected government."

"They want to hang Sharif through this false case in order to cover up their illegal and unconstitutional action of October 12. Whatever witnesses prosecutors had produced contradict each other," Sheikh said.

He said the record showed that three army generals, namely Pervez Musharraf, Mahmood Aziz and Mahmood Ahmed Khan—were "responsible for the mutiny, coup or whatever you call it against the elected government."

"They want to hang Sharif through this false case in order to cover up their illegal and unconstitutional action of October 12. Whatever witnesses prosecutors had produced contradict each other," Sheikh said.

"I will prove that Sharif has not committed any hijacking or terrorism. The plane was kept in air for 48 minutes on the order of Musharraf who did not allow the plane to land until his coup succeeded," he said.

Syed Saeed Ashhad, who is heading a three-judge bench, asked Sharif's lawyer not to politicise the case.

"I am not politicising the

case but only referring to the material available on record of the case," Sheikh said.

It is a matter of record that on October 12 army brigade-11 stationed at Rawalpindi took control of state television station at Islamabad and the prime minister's official residence.

"It is the same brigade whose staff had been changed from the Prime Minister House a few months before the coup," he added.

Sharif was given life sentence for trying to stop a jet carrying then-army chief General Musharraf and some 200 passengers from landing in Pakistan on the night of the coup.

The hearing continues Wednesday.

The prosecution has also filed an appeal seeking the death penalty for Sharif and reversal of the acquittal of six co-accused, including Sharif's brother Shahbaz Sharif.

## Dengue: 33 more hospitalised in city

By Staff Correspondent

Thirty-three more people with dengue fever were admitted to different hospitals and private clinics in the city yesterday.

The Central Control Room at the Health Directorate yesterday said Dhaka Medical College Hospital admitted five patients while Mitford Hospital two.

Dhaka Shishu Hospital reported admitting two fresh cases, BIRDEM five, the Red Crescent Holy Family Hospital one, Bangladesh Medical College Hospital five, Bangladesh University Hospital four, Police Hospital in Rajarbagh one and Shaheed Suhrawardy Hospital reported admitting two.

Central Hospital on Green Road and Samaria Hospital reported admitting one and four patients respectively and Al-Care Hospital reported admitting one with dengue fever.

The Central Control Room also reported admission of seven patients to the Khulna Medical College Hospital and one to Khulna Sadar Hospital.

## Bus fares on Dhaka-Nganj route raised

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Aug 29: Bus fares on Dhaka-Narayanganj route has been increased by 43 per cent without any prior notice.

Karotoa Sitting Service has increased its fare from Tk seven to 10 while Shital Service from Tk 10 to 12.

The passengers have voiced their resentment over unilateral enhancement of bus fares on Dhaka-Narayanganj route.

Quarrels between bus workers and passengers over enhanced bus fares were also reported on Monday and today.

The owners of the buses have deployed a number of mastaans at many points on Dhaka-Narayanganj road to face any protest from the passengers. A large number of police were also deployed at Narayanganj has station.

The regular passengers alleged that the mastaans beat up some passengers when they refused to give extra fare.

When contacted the Bus Owners Association has admitted increase in fares and attributed it to the price hike of petrol and diesel.

However, the fares of AC buses have not been increased.

**FBCCI polls: 240 trade bodies to exercise franchise**

By Staff Correspondent

A total of 1186 voters of 240 trade bodies will exercise their franchise in the upcoming election of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) scheduled for October 12.

According to the final voter list yesterday, 391 voters of 78 chambers and 795 of 162 associations will elect FBCCI president, vice president, and members of its executive committee for the next two-year term.

Eight chambers could not qualify as voter due to leadership dispute and late submission of their names while 15 associations were kept out of the list due to similar reasons.

Meanwhile, business leaders said that least 10 false trade organisations have been included in the voters' list who do not even have an office.

The address of these trade organisations are known to be residence of certain powerbrokers who sell these votes before the polls.

When contacted, an office-bearer of FBCCI said licence of the trade bodies are issued by Ministry of Commerce and FBCCI allows memberships making them eligible for voting.



BNP brought out a torch procession in the city yesterday in support of today's hartal. The opposition alliance has called the country-wide shutdown protesting price hike of petroleum products and oil and filing of false cases against their activists. — Star photo

## Purchase of 2 angiocardigram machines CMSD changes tender bidding date 4 times, but why?

By Naimul Haq

For mysterious reasons, the Central Medical Stores Depot (CMSD) has changed four times the date for tender bids for purchase of two angiocardigram machines.

According to sources concerned, the government is buying the sophisticated machines under the Health and Population Sector Programme (HPSP) for use at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) in the city.

The machines to be bought with World Bank (WB) assistance would raise to four the number of angiocardigram machines at the NICVD used for treatment of heart ailment with non-surgical methods.

The original date for tender bid was May 15. The date was then changed to June 8, July 6, August 3 and finally August 31, the sources pointed out.

In the original tender document, it was stated that the provisions in the instructions to bidders and in general conditions of contract are the provisions of the World Bank standard bidding documents—procurement of goods.

The machines which also include X-ray machines are being purchased at an estimated cost of about Tk 15 crore. The WB may provide the money fully or partly depending on the agreement with it.

Some sources alleged that a particular supplier of medical equipment exerted influence to change the date repeatedly for 'amendments to specifications' in such a way that he wins the bid.

"When the tender committee finally evaluates the bids, it may appear that you have no choice but to accept the offer of that particular supplier," said an official of CMSD. "Such practices were also witnessed in the past."

A senior cardiologist at NICVD said, "The original tender was floated after specifications for the angiocardigram machines were scrutinised by experts. So there is no reason why the bidding date should be changed so many times."

Contacted by this correspondent, CMSD Director Brigadier Shahjahan said, "When the specifications first came to us, we found a lot of

anomalies in tender specifications. So we had to make the changes as per recommendation of the committee concerned."

Asked about the 'particular supplier', Brig Shahjahan said, "This is not possible as we have to comply with World Bank conditions. In fact, each time we make changes, we have to send the documents to WB for review."

About the delay, he said, "On receiving complaints from certain suppliers, we had to request for amendments which have to be reviewed again by WB, a condition we have to fulfil. So you I hope you understand the reason for delay in the process."

The Director also said CMSD has lack of experienced manpower, so they had to rely on WB experts for review.

The WB's procurement section was also contacted in this regard. An official of the section said, "For each amendment, at least four weeks should be allowed for preparations."

He however could not explain the repeated change of bidding date and the delay.

## Punish killers, sister of slain tribal leader Alfred Soren demands

By Staff Correspondent

Rebeka Soren, sister of the slain tribal leader Alfred Soren, has demanded exemplary punishment to the killers of her brother.

She was addressing a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. Organised by the ADAB, the press conference was attended, among others, by Rebeka's husband Bhupen, ADAB President Khushi Kabir, Advisor of Ain-o-Salish Kendra Nizamul Huq and members of the team of NGOs that visited the affected village recently.

Tribal leader Alfred Soren was murdered by the people of two landowners at Vimpur village in Naogaon on August 18. They also set ablaze their huts.

As per the findings of NGO team, Satish Chandra and Hatem Ali, the two landowners launched the attack on the Vimpur village if Mahadevpur thana to grab about 450 bighas of vested property which once belonged to a Hindu zamindar.

Twelve Saotal families were living and producing crops on about 125 bighas of khas land. Some of them were staying in Vimpur since 1973 while the rest, including Alfred and his relatives shifted to the village from Tanor area of Rajshahi in 1989.

Rebeka said both Satish and Hatem were at loggerheads over the land. But about a year ago both of them joined hands as Saotal people became an obstacle in their way to grab the land, she added.

Rebeka alleged that people of Satish and Hatem attacked Vimpur village twice—once on June 10 and then on August 4—this year. The tribal people filed complaints and submitted memorandum following the attacks, she said.

Vimpur village came under attack when tribal people were preparing to attend a rally on August 18 protesting torture by the two landowners.

"I saw women and children escaping by breaking the windows of the burning houses. Alfred also took shelter inside a hut. Then, Sattar, Jaiedul, Akkas, Latif and others dragged him out of the hut and stabbed

## Cement factory disaster: Death toll rises to 14

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 29: Another construction worker, Emran, 22, succumbed to his injuries last night at Chittagong Medical College Hospital while a body was being recovered today raising the death toll to 14 in cement factory disaster, police said.

Army continued the operation along with fire brigade personnel and police to recover bodies by removing the rubbles, police and security sources said. It may take time to remove all the rubbles of cement materials, they said.

Security sources said a vibration machine was brought to the site of the cement factory to break the rubbles.

Meanwhile, the Japanese team engaged in the construction of international airport at Patenga, was requested by the administration here to assist in the operation.

The construction manager of the Simuza Company Morahashi visited the disaster site today, but did not give any decision in this regard, sources concerned said. "But it is really difficult to carry out the operation inside the silo where access is very tough," an official said.

However, factory management and other sources said the under-construction roof of the silo collapsed due to faulty works. Two engineers and 12 workers died in Sunday's disaster.

**Ctg killing: Police interrogating Shibir leader**

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 29: CID police began interrogating today Chittagong Medical College Shibir leader Jafar Sadeq Milton, a suspect in the Bahaddarhat Carnage Case.

Milton was arrested yesterday.

CID sources said important information were gathered from Milton during today's interrogation, but for the interest of investigation it was not divulged.

Meanwhile, police is yet to arrest the six other members of 7-member 'killing squad' involved in Bahaddarhat incident in which eight people including six BCL activists were killed.