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To get to play is a basic right of all children and the International Children's Day was observed yesterday to get this message, among other things, across. But the city authorities seem least caring about that need. Picture shows the children's park at Ramna (right) that has swing stands without seats, and slides that have rusted and almost weathered away with time. So where do the children go? These destitute children (left), who cannot even dream of buying a ticket to go to an alternative place like the Wonderland, make the most of a bamboo set up at a city point.

Conviction of 37 for Zia murder

JS body for revocation of court martial verdict

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence Ministry recommended yesterday revocation of the court martial judgement that convicted 37 army officers, of whom 13 were hanged, of killing President Ziaur Rahman, reports UNB.

The committee found the entire court martial proceeding "illegal and unjust", which were aimed at eliminating the freedom fighter officers from the Army.

After investigating the martial trial, the lawmakers were of the view that the proceedings should be nullified under Army Act 132 for the sake of justice.

The decision came after a sub-committee headed by Showkat Ali, a retired army Colonel submitted its report maintaining that the punishment given under

Martial Law was "preplanned and judgement was delivered without adequate witness and proof."

The sub-committee also was of the opinion that the accused were not allowed to defend themselves and there was only three defending officers for the 37 accused army officers.

Later, briefing newsmen, Committee Chairman KM Shafiqullah, former army chief and retired Major General, said having gone through the Rules of Procedure and Army Act it was viewed that the documents of the Martial Law Court could be seen by the committee as there is no legal bar.

Earlier, the Ministry of Defence and the Army chief had declined to furnish the lawmakers with the proceedings of court martial.

When asked about the recent

Army Headquarters clarification, he said the contention was not totally correct.

General Shafiqullah said the Defence Ministry and the Army chief agreed to assist the committee with all documents.

The committee chairman also agreed that the Army chief deviated from his clarification given to the press that he has limitation as per the Army Act in providing the documents.

Shafiqullah, a freedom fighter and the first Chief of Bangladesh Army, said injustice was meted out to most of the army officers hanged and convicted on charges of murdering Ziaur Rahman, and that most of the convicts were freedom fighters.

"We can't give them back their See page 11 Col 4

New education policy okayed Pry edn up to Class VIII, grading in exams

By Mustak Hossain

The Cabinet yesterday approved the National Education Policy redefining primary and higher education to bring some fundamental and qualitative changes in the system, sources said.

It will be placed before the Jatiya Sangsad. Under the new education policy, duration of primary education will be increased to eight years from present five years by 2010. It will be increased to six years by 2003, seven years by 2006 and eight years by 2010.

All out efforts will be made to ensure the eight-year primary education for all irrespective of boys and girls, the sources said.

"It may take ten years to get full benefit of the education policy," one source said.

The traditional marking system will be replaced with grading system.

The present systems of holding Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination will be changed.

An 'assessment examination' at national level will be introduced in class five and a 'pre-public examination assessment' will be held after class VIII.

The new policy divides the whole education sector in three sub-sectors - general education, madrassah education and technical education.

The policy aims at introducing a scientific, secular and modern higher education system in the country to face the challenges of the 21st century.

The Honours course would be for four years and the Master's course for one year. The Degree course would be for three years, with compulsory 100 marks for English Language.

The teacher-student ratio will be reduced to 1:40 from the present 1:120 by appointing more teachers, the source said.

A Teachers Selection Commission (TSC) will be formed like the Public Service Commission (PSC) to appoint new teachers every year and

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Laws soon to stop child torture: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said, necessary laws will be enacted to stop physical torture on children in educational institutions, report agencies.

She said that the relevant ministry has been directed to frame laws while education ministry and primary education division were asked to frame code of conduct to stop child torture in schools and madrassah.

"Children are tortured by elderly people for trivial matters at home and beaten at schools. This must be stopped," Hasina said, addressing a children's rally at Osmani Memorial Hall marking the World Children's Day.

She said the government is committed to ensure the rights of women and children as well as human rights, which were long absent because of military rule.

"We want all children irrespective of religion and colour to get equal opportunity in society to build their career with proper education as worthy citizens.

The Prime Minister deplored that although the rights of children are envisaged in the Constitution, the killers brutally murdered small children Sheikh Russel, Babu, Baby and Arif along with Bangabandhu on August 15, 1975.

She said those who committed the murders were not punished so long, rather rewarded with diplomatic jobs.

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Tale of a children's park

By Staff Correspondent

The capital city don't seem to be children-friendly because while thousands of them are deprived of a open space to play or even walk, the engineering section of the Public Works Department (PWD) appears to have abandoned the 'children's park' at Ramna Park.

The authorities recently renovated several components of the Ramna Park, including walkways and shelter for joggers, but they kept their eyes close to the children's park.

With amusements dangerously falling apart, the children's

See page 11 Col 4

Hartal almost peaceful Six hurt as AL, BNP clash in Moulvibazar

By Staff Correspondent

The countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal called by the opposition passed off almost peacefully yesterday with increased number of vehicles plying the roads in the capital.

Six people were injured in Moulvibazar town when activists of Awami League and BNP clashed at Berir Par Point at noon yesterday. Police lobbed tear gas canisters to take control of the situation. District BNP leaders said an AL procession attacked the BNP pickets without any instigation.

Barring that, there was no

report of untoward incident from other parts of the country during the hartal hours. At places, the shutdown was observed partially.

The four-party opposition alliance comprising BNP, Jatiya Party (Ershad), Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote called the shutdown protesting the recent abduction of Laxmipur BNP leader Nurul Islam and increasing acts of terrorism across the country among other issues. However, eight flood-hit southwestern districts were exempted from the day-long shutdown.

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IO of Nurul Islam abduction case missing

LUXMIPUR, Oct 2: CID Inspector Ashrafur Islam investigating the abduction of BNP district leader advocate Nurul Islam was missing from the town since Saturday evening, reports UNB.

Police said they were searching Inspector Ashraf for the last two days but not finding in Laxmipur till late this evening.

He was designated Investigation Officer on September 25 in the case of abduction of advocate Islam from a hose in Laxmipur town on September 18. Police have earlier said the abductors might have killed him.

Meanwhile, plain clothes police arrested Marju, son of Nurul Amin, from Lamchhari at 7-15 pm today. Marju is one of the 15 See page 11 Col 6

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Murder on Court Premises and Dhaka's Underworld
Column: Heart of the Matter

By Mansoor Mamoon
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Supplement

Three-page special supplement on Tenth Anniversary of German Unity on Pages 13-15;

Three-page special supplement on National Foundation Day of the Republic of Korea on Pages 16-18 and

Two-page special supplement on Khulna Shipyard on Pages 19-20

Nairobi carnival from today

NAIROBI, Oct 2: Shane Warne will be the most famous of a number of the world's top players missing when all 10 Test-playing nations plus hosts Kenya compete in the ICC KnockOut Trophy which begins tomorrow, reports Reuters.

A knee injury has robbed the world champions of leg-spinner Warne's many talents. Other absentees, including banned

former South African captain Hansie Cronje, have been linked to allegations of match fixing.

Bangladesh Television and ESPN will telecast all ten games. Live matches start at 12.45pm BST.

Despite Warne's absence, Australia, with a formidable limited-overs pedigree, will start

as favourites. They have a bye to the quarterfinals where they are likely to face India.

India, who meet the host nation in the tournament's opening match, will be without two former captains in Mohammad Azharuddin and Ajay Jadeja.

They have been questioned by federal investigators following a match-fixing scandal triggered last April when Delhi police

accused Cronje of corruption. India captain Saurav Ganguly said the tournament was a chance for the world to look at

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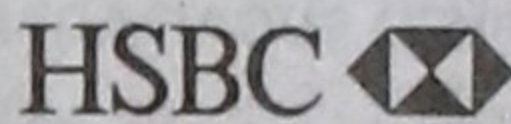
Today's match

India VS Kenya
at 12.45pm BST

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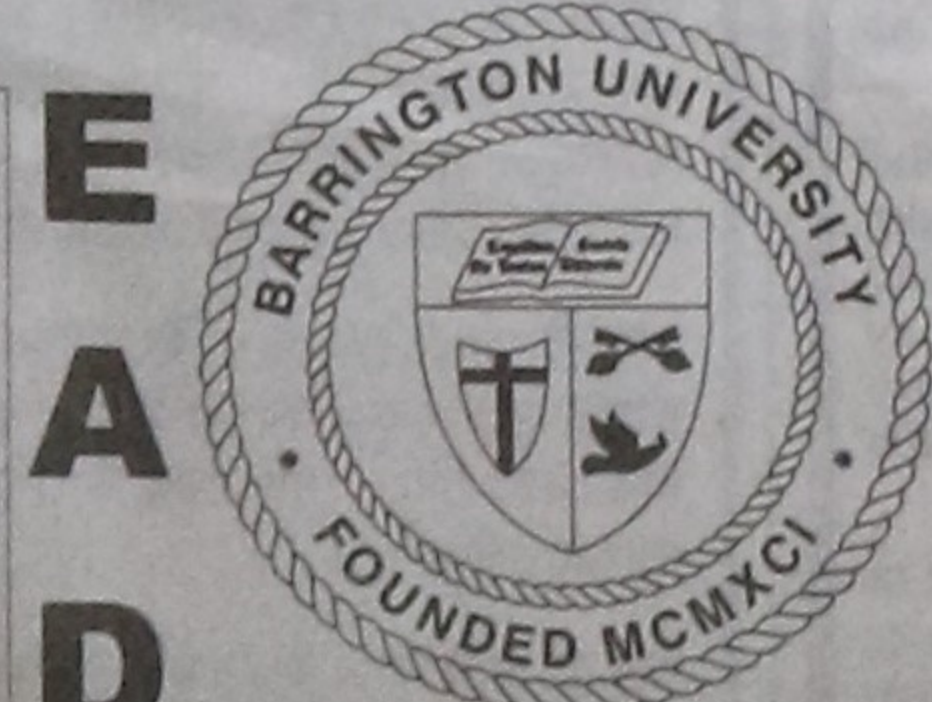


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Durga Puja begins today

Sharadiya Durga Puja, the greatest religious festival of Hindu community, begins today, reports BSS.

Mohanagari Sharbajantin Puja Committee has chalked out a six-day programme in observance of the festival.

Main programmes of the day in the city will be held at the Dhakeswari Jatiya Mandir

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Happy Inauguration Today

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