



Tyson feels the punch

Challenger Mike Tyson of the US leaves the ring with a cut above the right eye from a punch from heavy-weight champion Lennox Lewis during their World Heavy Weight Championship fight yesterday at the Pyramid in Memphis, TN. Lewis won by knockout in the eighth round.

PM assures help for families of two slain ward commissioners

A heart-rending scene was created when family members of the two slain ward commissioners of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) met Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office here yesterday. Saidur Rahman Newton, commissioner of ward no. 8 of Mirpur and Binoy Sarkar Bina, commissioner of ward no. 72 of Kotwali, were killed by unidentified gunmen in two separate incidents in the city last month. Sharing the pain of loss of the family members of the two victims, the prime minister consoled and assured them of punishing those responsible for the killing of the two elected representatives of the DCC. She said investigations into the killings were on and that the culprits would not be spared under any

JAGPA, PNP merge with JP (Ershad)

As JAGPA and PNP merged with Jatiya Party (E), former president and JP chairman HM Ershad has called upon all Islamic and democratic forces to join the platform of Jatiya Party to build up a third political force. "People are now looking for an alternative political force after seeing the misrule of two major parties," he told a conference through which Jatiya Ganatantrik Party (JAGPA) and Progressive Nationalist Party (PNP) formally merged with JP(E) yesterday. JAGPA chairman Shafiqul Alam Pradhan and PNP president Sheikh Shawkat Hossain Nilu also addressed the conference and announced formal dissolution of their respective parties. Ershad cautioned Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, mentioning widespread terrorism, extortion and killing that has gripped the country.

Men's French Open goes to Costa

Albert Costa beat fellow Spaniard Juan Carlos Ferrero 6-1, 6-0, 4-6, 6-3 to win the French Open men's singles title here yesterday for his first Grand Slam title. The 20th seed won a two-hour, 30-minute contest which had been interrupted for 20 minutes in the first set because of rain. Ferrero, seeded 11th and who had suffered from an ankle sprain early in the tournament, looked out-of-sorts as his game fell apart despite a valiant fightback on the Philippe Chatrier Centre Court.

The deaf DPHE

Arsenic-contaminated water now being supplied in four towns

NAIMUL HAQ
The Department of Public Health and Engineering (DPHE) which is responsible for ensuring supply of safe water is supplying arsenic-contaminated water in four district towns. The four towns are Chuadanga, Kushtia, Moheshpur (Jhenidah) and Chapainawabganj where the level of arsenic in pipeline water is between 0.07 and 0.16 mg, 0.06 and 0.08 mg, 0.09 and 0.15mg, and 0.08 mg per litre respectively. All production wells in the four towns supply arsenic-contaminated water. The WHO-recommended allowable limit of arsenic in drinking water is 0.05mg per litre. Municipal authorities in the four towns have not

made any public announcement that the pipeline water is contaminated with arsenic, according to sources in the towns. The arsenic contamination in pipeline water in Chapainawabganj was detected in January 1998 and made known to the DPHE in the same month. Regarding supply of the poisonous water in Chapainawabganj, The Daily Star published a report headlined 'Criminal Silence for 3 Years' on April 5, 2001, but to no result till now. The arsenic contamination of water in the rest three towns was detected during August-November 2001 when the Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation Water Supply Project (BAMWSP), a wing of the DPHE, tested 390 samples collected from 99 municipalities including the

Barapukuria coalmine accident Chinese officials were told about the crack in roof

ANWAR ALI, Back From Barapukuria
Two of the three probe committees formed to investigate the first ever disaster in the country's only coalmine at Barapukuria in Dinajpur have confirmed that the miners informed their Chinese superiors about the crack in the roof and their later attempt to conceal the bodies of the dead miners. However two of the committees set up by Petrobangla and Barapukuria Coalmine Company Ltd. said they could do little with this information, as "there is poor evidence to support this". "There were four Bangladeshis, five Chinese labourers and engineers at the accident site. Of the Bangladeshi labourers, Kamruzzaman Zamal, 28, and Nirmal Mandi, 30, were killed in the accident, Rabiul, their companion, fled away after the accident," said a member of the Petrobangla probe committee. Another surviving miner, Abul Hossain whom the project officials claim to have become 'mentally disturbed', alleged that at least 15 minutes before the accident, the coalminers had informed their Chinese superiors about the crack in the coalmine. Aatur Rahman, a miner who was working in another tunnel near the spot, said Chinese men took over the total affair after the accident and drove away the Bangladeshi labourers from the scene. The Chinese developers of the project denied the allegations and told probe members that there was no reason to avoid any apprehen-

sions raised by anyone inside the mine under any circumstances. "Nobody told us about any crack in the roof" a source quoted a Chinese witness as saying. Abul Hossain and Aatur Rahman told The Daily Star that after recovering the deceased from beneath a piece of stone (1.3 x 0.9 square metre) the Chinese men folded the bodies and wrapped them into two separate polybags. "The Chinese men took the bodies outside the project area by a covered pickup van. After being tipped off by a miner from the auxiliary shaft from the main access of the coalmine, we interrogated the covered pickup van at the main gate. When we challenged them, t h e



BUET students vacate their halls yesterday, as the university was closed until July 3 amid escalating tension following the killing of Sadequunnahar Sony on the campus Saturday.

Potato chips, french fries may cause cancer

AP, Oslo
The Norwegian Food Control Authority has said a scientific study found high levels of a probable cancer-causing substance in several high carbohydrate foods. The governmental agency ordered the chemical analysis of some 30 foods after Swedish scientists in April reported that potato chips, french fries and other high carbohydrate foods contain acrylamide, which may cause cancer. Acrylamide forms when carbohydrates are heated in some cooking processes such as deep-frying potatoes or baking bread, according to the findings. "Some carbohydrate-rich fried foods contain large quantities of the suspected cancer-causing substance acrylamide," the agency said in a statement on Thursday. Mary Ellen Camire, a food scientist and nutritionist at the University of Maine, was skeptical. She said fried foods contain a lot of chemicals that aren't healthy but that the link between acrylamide and cancer wasn't clear and there was no reason to tell people to stop eating food products that contain the chemical. "Brend and rye crisps and breakfast cereals have a lot of health benefits. And if we start cutting back on those, what's going to fill the void?" she said.

Arshad-uz Zaman honoured by French govt
DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT
Arshad-uz Zaman, a former ambassador of Bangladesh to several countries and also a former assistant secretary general of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) has been named Officer of the Legion d' Honneur by the French government. This is the highest honour of the French government and he is the first Bangladeshi to receive it. Arshad-uz-Zaman would be formally decorated with the badge of honour at a later date. The French ambassador in Bangladesh Michel Lummaux in a letter to Ambassador Arshad-uz Zaman said, "By this distinction, the highest French authorities recognise all that you have done for our language and our culture and for strengthening the bonds of friendship between our two countries." Arshad-uz Zaman served as Bangladesh's ambassador to Algeria, Senegal and Egypt. Later, he was elected assistant secretary general of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).



Water vessels remain anchored at the Dhaka Sadarghat terminal, as launch workers are on strike to press home their 11-point demand.

Launch strike continues

UNB, Barisal
Communication on river-routes was disrupted as launch workers continued their strike for the second day yesterday. Bangladesh Launch Workers Federation went on strike on all 34 inter-district routes and 28 long-routes on Saturday to press him their 11-point demand. Transport of goods almost stopped by the strike, which may lead to price hike of consumer goods. Steamer service of BIWTC on Dhaka-Khulna route via Barisal, bus and coach plying different routes are carrying passengers beyond the capacity. UNB Narayanjanj correspondent adds: People travelling on short river routes from here used engine boats and trawlers to reach their destinations yesterday. Some owners tried to operate their launches considering sufferings of the passengers, but the attempts were foiled by the striking workers. The launch owners expressed dissatisfaction at the lack of administrative support for operation. Their association is likely to sit with labour leaders for ending the strike through negotiation today.

Hasina looks for illegal ways to oust govt, JS told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain yesterday accused opposition leader Sheikh Hasina of plotting to topple the government through extra-constitutional means. "Instead of attending the parliament, she is looking for illegal, extra-constitutional ways to oust the government... she must join the House to prove that she is not engaged in such conspiracy," Akbar told the House. The shipping minister's comments came at a time when Hasina, also the chief of main opposition Awami League (AL), has been saying time and again that the political atmosphere is not conducive to her party's joining the parliament. Opening the discussion on the supplementary budget for 2001-02 fiscal, the shipping minister wondered what else the opposition leader would do if she stayed outside the House for the rest of the tenure of the present government.

Businessman shot by extortionist at Kamalapur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
A businessman was shot by an armed extortionist at South Kamalapur in the city's Motijheel area yesterday. The extortionist went to Vital International Furniture shop at 152/5 South Kamalapur at 12:15 pm yesterday and demanded money from Kamal Hossain Sunny, 38, owner of the shop. As Sunny refused to oblige, the extortionist shot in the legs. Family members rushed him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). No case was filed with Motijheel police till 8 pm yesterday.

Reconditioned car dealers to start agitation today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Importers and dealers of reconditioned vehicles announced a series of agitation programmes to press home their demand for withdrawal of ban slapped on import of reconditioned vehicles. The Bangladesh Reconditioned Vehicles Importers' and Dealers' Association (BARVIDA) will continue its agitation programme till their demand is met, said a press release yesterday signed by its president Md Anwar Hossain. The members of BARVIDA will hold rally everyday from 2:00pm to 5:00pm in front of the Scouts' Market in Purana Paltan. They will wear black badge and hoist black flag in all the showrooms from today. Employees of all showrooms of reconditioned vehicles will stage a sit-in on Monday from 10.00am in front of the Jatiya Press Club. The BARVIDA will also discuss the impact of the government decision with different professional organisations. Meantime, the Bangladesh Business Forum of Japan (BBFJ), an organisation of Bangladeshi business people living in Japan, said the government decision to bar import of reconditioned vehicles have made life difficult for many Bangladeshis living in Japan. In a faxed message yesterday, the BBFJ said that about 400 Bangladeshis have set up their own business firms in Japan and earn their livelihood from reconditioned car trade. Moreover, about 1000 Bangladeshis are engaged in jobs at these firms which send reconditioned cars from Japan. "With the government ban on reconditioned vehicles, most of these Bangladeshis will become jobless and will be forced to go back home," the BBFJ statement said. It said the finance minister must have taken the decision based on wrong information. It also mentioned that many countries including Sri Lanka, England, New Zealand and Australia import Japanese reconditioned cars as old as more than five years. In this context, the BBFJ urged the government to reconsider its decision.

Budget discussion begins

Quorum crisis delays JS sitting
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Discussion on the supplementary budget for fiscal 2001-2002 began in the parliament when its budget session resumed yesterday after a two-day recess. The House witnessed a quorum crisis once again, causing a 20-minute delayed start of the fourth sitting of the budget session. It was scheduled to start at 7pm. Leader of the House Prime Minister Khaleda Zia entered the House at 7.45pm. In line with the decision of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC), the regular question-answers were tabled in the House. The Speaker suspend two of the three call attention notices due to absence of the lawmakers concerned belonging to the ruling coalition. Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain and some other Treasury Bench members spoke on the supplementary budget. They criticised the immediate past Awami League government, which had presented the budget for the current fiscal, for 'financial mismanagement and deterioration in law and order during its rule'. After passage of the supplementary budget within next 2-3 days, the House will witness a long discussion on the proposed budget for fiscal 2002-2003 placed in the House by Finance Minister Saifur Rahman on June 6. The BAC earlier decided that lawmakers from the Treasury and the Opposition benches would have opportunity to debate on the budget for 40 hours. AL lawmakers are abstaining from attending parliament sessions. Leader of the Opposition in parliament and AL chief Sheikh Hasina at a post-budget press conference hinted that they may join the budget session to resist passage of the 'anti-people' budget. Hasina said that the budget was designed to protect the interests of the rich and that her party lawmakers would join the budget session to protest, if necessary. However, the AL is yet to call its parliamentary party meeting to discuss whether the party would join parliament proceedings. Party insiders said the AL has planned to discuss the issue first at a meeting of its policy making body, the Central Working Committee, scheduled for today.



Bullet-hit Kamal Hossain, a businessman, being stretchered down the corridor of the DMCH yesterday. Kamal was shot by an extortionist.

HC verdict in cassette scam case stayed for 8 weeks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday stayed the High Court verdict in cassette scam case for eight weeks. A division bench of the High Court on May 20 sentenced the editor and publisher of vernacular tabloid Daily Manavzamin to one month in jail for contempt of court. The court also gave former president HM Ershad a six-month jail term in the same case. On behalf of Manavzamin Editor Motiur Rahman Chowdhury and publisher Mahbuba Chowdhury, Barrister Ishtiaq Ahmed moved the appeal yesterday. Earlier on May 22, Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division Justice Ruhul Amin said a full bench of the Appellate Division would hear the petition on June 9.