

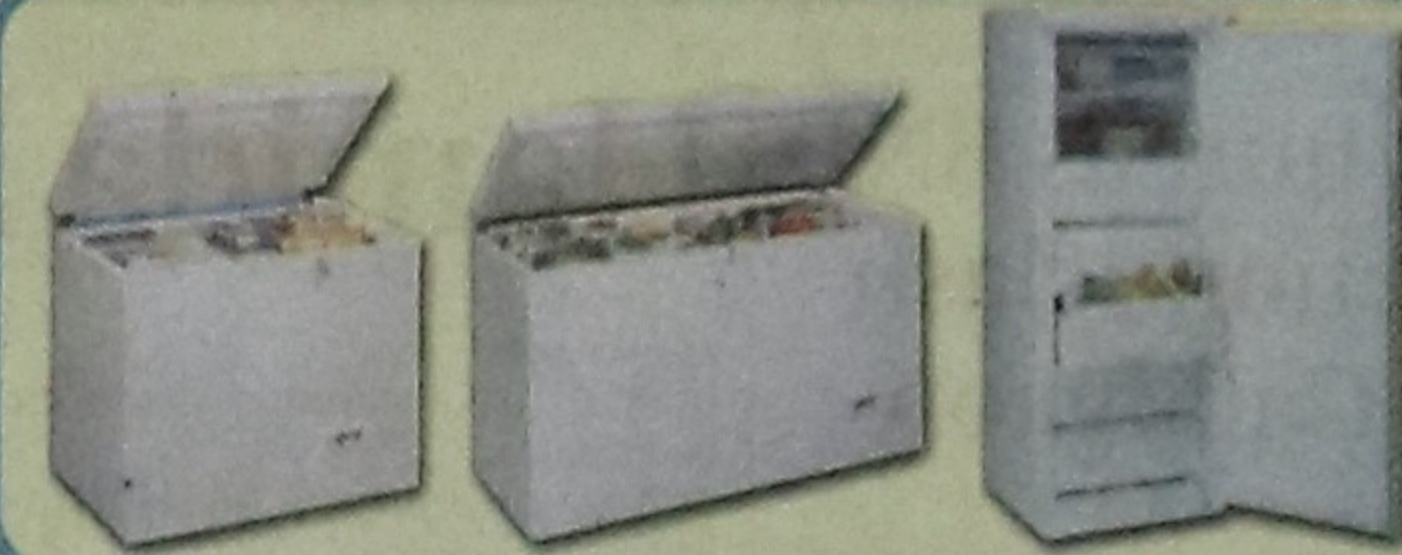
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Shihab (in white circle)

## Shihab killing verdict today

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The judgement in the sensational Shihab abduction and murder case will be given today.

Hossain Shahid Ahmad, Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge, Dhaka, will pronounce the verdict, court sources said.

The prosecution and the defence completed arguments in the case on July 6. The court recorded statements of 28 out of 33 prosecution witnesses.

Trial of the case began on May 19. Khondaker Shihab Ahmed, 13, a student of class seven at the Motijheel Model School and College, was abducted in front of the school on February 7. The abductors killed Shihab the same day, slashed his body into pieces and dumped those at several places in the city.

The victim's father, Khondaker Dildar Ahmed, filed a general diary (GD) on the day with the Motijheel

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## Train derails in B'baria: 8 hurt

UNB, Brahmanbaria

Eight passengers were injured when a Jagannathganj-bound express train derailed at Brahmanbaria in Kasba upazila Monday night.

Official sources said the Rajshahi Express from Chittagang derailed at a place between Kasba and Imbari stations at about 10 pm.

Train movement on Dhaka-Chittagang route remained suspended for eight hours following the derailment. The train service resumed at 6 am yesterday

# Power play with power plants

## Move to force non-guaranteed Russian equipment on Ghorashal power units

SHARIEF KHAN

Business lobbies with strong political connections are trying to talk the government into accepting more than 1,400 tonnes of non-guaranteed power plant equipment from a Russian company on the ground that otherwise relationship between the two countries would suffer.

Technopromexport, better known as the TPE, imported the equipment without pre-inspection or government approval early last year for the Ghorashal Power Plants 1 and 2 Rehabilitation Project. Moreover, its contract with the Power Development Board (PDB),

signed in 2000, was not effective. As a result, the PDB never accepted the equipment.

On receipt of a letter from the Russian embassy, the Prime Minister's Office has recently formed a committee, headed by Principal Secretary Dr Kamaluddin Siddiqui, to look into the project's implementation and problems.

While the finance ministry is against a letter of guarantee (LG) for the TPE for the project because of its poor track record and handling of the Ghorashal project, the PDB spelled out some conditions to accept the equip

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# A sparky JS session

NAZRUL ISLAM

The just-concluded Jatiya Sangsad session has been most eventful since the inception of the eighth parliament nine months ago.

With 24 sittings over one and a half months, it witnessed an unceremonious departure of the president, a censure motion against the opposition leader, controversial rulings by the Chair and the maiden appearance of the main opposition Awami League (AL).

Although the opposition participated, the long-standing parliamentary stalemate did not ease due to the 'biased' role of the Speaker and a hostile relationship between the government and the opposition.

The session could not form the long-pending parliamentary standing committees on different ministries. Nor was a deputy leader of the House selected from 221 members.

This session was shorter than other budget sessions in terms of sitting days. The House became somewhat turbulent over several issues with the joining of the main opposition. But the debates did not last long, as the opposition was staying off the House on the day of prorogation, being 'deprived' of parliament floor and protesting the arrest of an AL MP towards the end

of the session.

After the AL lawmakers joined the House on June 24, it witnessed unscheduled debates on issues like the national budget, law and order, gas export, and the closure of the Adamjee Jute Mills.

On the joining day, the AL lawmakers made a unique protest in the House by displaying photographs of victims of 'political persecution' over the last eight months of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's government. Acting Speaker Akhter Hamid Siddiqui, who believes the opposition's presence is crucial for the function of the parliament, allowed the AL lawmakers to speak.

But on the following days, the Treasury Bench members who used to make uproars on the floor seemingly compelled the acting speaker to interrupt the opposition lawmakers.

Such interruption led the AL lawmakers to walk out four of the five times they were in the House.

The AL members staged their last walkout on July 11 when the Chair switched off their microphones. They were speaking on the 148 notices.

The Chair accepted only one notice on law and order for discussion under the Rule 68 of the Rules of Procedure. However, the discussion

could not take place, as the AL lawmakers had said they would return only when Shawqat Ali, the AL MP, is released.

The acting speaker, who presided over the sittings, initiated a move for a dialogue between the ruling BNP and the opposition AL to resolve the standoff the walkout triggered. However, the initiative did not gain momentum due to the AL's absence. The Treasury Bench members were busy with issues like the 'removal' of the president and adopting a motion of censure against the opposition leader.

The nation saw an unprecedented move by the ruling BNP Parliamentary Party forcing Prof. AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury to resign from the presidency during the session. Chowdhury, whom the BNP elected president only seven months before his exit, stepped down on June 21 responding to the BNP's request.

On June 29, the House passed the national budget for 2002-2003 amid the AL's boycott. The budget proposed a massive tax-restructuring and spread of the tax net for the new fiscal. It also passed seven bills.

In a controversial move in the House, Speaker Jamiruddin Sirar (now acting president) ruled that the

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## Young man shot dead in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A young man was shot dead and another strangled in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

In the first incident, Mohammad Yusuf Azad, 25, a stationary shop owner, was shot in the chest and abdomen by a gang of five. The incident took place beside the Islamic High School in Pallabi at about 11:45am yesterday, only 100 yards away from his house.

The victim, a resident of 2/H, 11/20, Section- 6 of Block-Ta at Mirpur, has a stationary shop in the area. Some unidentified armed men went there and gunned him down.

Pallabi police recovered the body at about 12:30pm and sent it to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital

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# 7 Israelis gunned down in W Bank

AFP, West Bank

Palestinian gunmen killed seven Israelis and wounded at least 19 in an attack on a bus near a Jewish settlement in the northern West Bank Tuesday, the Israeli army said.

Israeli security officials said roadside bombs were detonated under the bullet-proof bus, after which Palestinian snipers perched on a nearby hill opened fire on fleeing passengers and people in other cars.

Israel's Channel Two television and rescue workers said the gunmen were three Palestinian militants disguised as Israeli soldiers. An army spokeswoman could not immediately confirm the information but said: "As far as we know they escaped and we're searching the

area."

The ambush, claimed by two Palestinian groups, was the first deadly attack in nearly four weeks. It came as members of the "quartet" of four powers seeking to restart the ailing Middle East peace process were preparing to meet in New York.

Medical sources told AFP 19 people were injured, eight of them seriously. The sources said nearly all the injuries were sustained in the shooting phase of the attack.

The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) issued a statement claiming responsibility for the "heroic operation against the settler bus."

Earlier, an anonymous caller claim

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## JCD activist beaten to death in Rajshahi

BSS, Rajshahi

An activist of Jatiyatabadi Chharrha Dal (JCD) was stabbed to death at Sonadighi crossing under Boalla police station in the city at midnight on Monday.

The victim was identified as Noman Haider, 30, son of late Lutful Haque of Hatemkhan area and an activist of local unit of JCD.

Police quoting witnesses said Noman Haider along with two of his friends -- Shafiguzzaman Rashed and Maruf -- dragged one of their rival youths to a nearby place and beat him.

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PHOTO STAR

Students of the Vigarunnisa Noon School and College break down in front of the house of Hamida Ali, hearing the hand-over of her charge as principal yesterday.

## Hasina off to UK, US

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition leader and the Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina left the country last night on a 25-day tour to the UK and the US.

This is her third visit to the two countries in seven months. Since the October 1, 2001 national elections, the former prime minister has visited both the UK and US twice before, in December-January and April-May. Hasina has stayed out of the country for over two months in total.

Party sources said her latest tour is a private one. She left for London on an Emirates flight and would return home on August 10.

On the first leg of her 25-day tour, the opposition leader would stay for a couple of days in the UK where she is scheduled to attend an academic function of her nephew (son of her younger sister Sheikh Rehana) now studying at the London School of Economics (LSE).

Then she would fly to Florida, US to meet her children and grandchildren. She would also address a two-day convention on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to be held late this month in Miami. She is scheduled to spend 10 days there.

On the last leg of her trip, Hasina

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# Nutrition in new health plan

NAIMUL HAQ

The government is planning to launch a new health programme next year, proposing a merger between national nutrition and health and population sector programmes.

The proposed five-year (2003-2008) sector-wide health programme will cost additional money, though the amount is not fixed yet. But sources said it will cost at least Tk 10,000 crore.

The proposal came after a meeting of the Bangladesh Development Forum in March, 2002 in Paris where the government renewed its commitment to a sector-wide approach to the proposed health, nutrition and population (HNP) programme and agreed to undertake the second phase of the existing programme.

Its goal is to give healthcare services to the poor and reduce malnutrition through the locally managed bodies.

The programme will mainly focus on decentralisation, restructuring of the family planning and national nutrition programme, major reforms in healthcare services, public sector health delivery and cost sharing.

"The poorest of the poor are the main focus of this programme...we are planning how to reach healthcare services to them and to give priority to preventive healthcare services rather than construction of new buildings," said a health ministry official yesterday.

The present US\$1.7 billion health and population sector programme (HPSP) will end on June 30 next year. The government has already indicated that some 'major changes' are needed to accelerate its progress.

For this, a technical mission, now in the city, sponsored by the development partners and the government has started a draft-processing plan to prepare the HNP.

"Basically, our mission is to find out and make a draft report to the government on how the process of this change will unfold," James Herm, the leader of the 12-member review mission, told The Daily Star on Monday.

Herm and four other foreign consultants were appointed to help prepare the review report.

"This is just a proposed name and it necessarily does not mean that the government will launch a new programme under this banner," he said.

Meantime, experts strongly criticised the move. They said the existing

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## Car crash kills 2 in Ctg

UNB, Chittagang

Two youths were killed and two others injured in a car crash near Shah Amanat International Airport here in the early hours of yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Naoshad, 32, and Belal, 32.

Relatives said the accident took place at about 1:00 am when the speeding private car they were travelling in hit a standing sand-laden truck from behind at Laldiar Char.

Naoshad and Belal died on the spot while Zia and Kohinur Akhter were injured seriously.

Local people rescued Zia and Kohinur and sent them to Chittagang Medical College Hospital where attending doctors stated their condition as 'very critical'.

Bodies of Naoshad and Belal were sent to the hospital morgue.

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Applicants must be 18 years of age or above.

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### Prayer Timings

July 17		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-56	7-00
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation