

## Sheikh Hasina turns 56

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition in the Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina turns 56 today.

In celebration of her birthday, party leaders and activists will present bouquets to her at her Dhanmondi residence in the morning and Chhatra League, AL's student front, will hold a milad mahfil at the party office after Asr prayer.

Eldest among the two daughters and three sons of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Hasina was born on September 28, 1947 at her parental home at Tungipara, Gopalganj.

She stepped into politics during her student life when she became vice president of Eden College Students' Union in 1965. She graduated from Dhaka University in 1973.

Hasina was married to renowned nuclear scientist Dr MA Wazed Mia in 1968. They have a son and a daughter.

Hasina was in the then West Germany when her father was assassinated in a military putsch on August 15, 1975. Hasina returned home on May 17, 1981 to lead

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## Hasina leaves for Sylhet tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina leaves the capital for Sylhet tomorrow to attend the first of a series of party divisional conferences.

The purpose of the conferences beginning on September 30 in Sylhet is to shore up the morale of workers before the crucial central council of the party slated for December 22-23.

The conferences in the AL organisational divisions - Sylhet, Chittagong, Barisal, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna and Dhaka - will enable the party to strengthen its network at the grassroots level, AL leaders hope.

The Sylhet conference will be followed by the second divisional conference in Chittagong on October 20.

Schedules for the rest of the conferences are yet to be finalised, party sources said.

On her way to Sylhet tomorrow, Hasina will address a rally at Ashuganj in Brahmanbaria and another in Moulvibazar and offer feteah at the shrines of Hazrat Shah Jalal and Hazrat Shah Paran in Sylhet at night.

Hasina, the leader of the opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad, will address a rally at Bhairav in

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## Kolaroa incident Statements of 4 witnesses recorded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Kolaroa police yesterday recorded statements of four witnesses of the incident of attack on the motorcade of opposition leader Sheikh Hasina at Kolaroa on August 30.

OC Golam Kibria of Kolaroa police station, who is also the IO, took the statements.

The witnesses are commander Moslemuddin, the complainant of the case and General Secretary of Kolaroa thana Awami League, local journalist Abu Ahmed, B M Nazrul Islam, former MP of Awami League and engineering Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, acting convenor of the district Awami League.

The statements were taken at Satkhira DB (detective office) office for 'security reasons'.

On August 30, alleged rulings party armed cadres attacked the motorcade of Sheikh Hasina at Kolaroa, some 18 kilometres off the district headquarters at about noon when she was going to Jessore after visiting a rape victim at Satkhira Sadar Hospital.

## Erratum

A photo caption published in The Daily Star on September 25 mistakenly said the Mastermind School became the runner-up in The Daily Star-Viqarunnisa English Debate Championship. In fact, the Manarat International School became the runner-up. We stand corrected.



A student of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) signs the hall register on entry yesterday. The BUET halls opened for resident students a day before reopening of the university.

PHOTO: STAR

## Drive to discipline cab drivers begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) will launch an intensive drive from today against taxicab drivers who discriminate against passengers based on their destination or those who charge over the meter in violation of taxicab rules and regulations.

The DMP took the decision following a series of complaints against cab drivers refusing to go to certain places or demanding more than the fare on the meter, and hopes the measures will help ease difficulties faced by passengers.

Police will take stern action against drivers for violation of the code governing the city's taxicabs. The DMP has already set up a cell to receive complaints over phone about such violations. Complaints could be lodged at the following numbers:

Traffic Control Room: 017-

000990, DMP fixed phone: 7124000-49, Ext. 2627, Traffic South Office: 017-000991, Ext. 2578 and 418124, and Traffic North Office: 017-000992, Ext. 2580 and 9143212.

Police said they have already issued instructions to the relevant cab authorities to have these numbers written conspicuously on the body of each cab so that passengers could know where to call in case of a complaint. The cab operators, however, asked for a week's time to get their cars tagged with the phone numbers.

According to police, taxicab drivers are taking advantage of the temporary transport crisis following the government ban on the two-stroke three-wheelers in the city.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Traffic (south) Abu Musa Mohammad Fakhru Islam Khan said each and every complaint from passengers would be vigorously investigated and violations by cab drivers seriously

dealt with. A register will also be maintained to keep a record of the complaint and the actions taken in that regard.

The DC also urged everyone to inform the police about any irregularities so that legal actions could be taken against cab drivers flouting their code, adding that three mobile teams would be deployed in the city in this regard.

He said if for some reason the cab in question leaves and cannot be dealt with on the spot, it will be apprehended later and action would be taken as per the information provided by the passenger. Besides, police themselves would lodge complaints with the cab operators concerned in case of any reported irregularities by their drivers.

Police quoted the Cab Association of Bangladesh as saying that it would sack drivers who are found guilty of violating the taxicab

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## New passport at renewal fees!

STAR REPORT

Passport holders now prefer to apply for new passports instead of renewals, as charges for both are the same.

Since revised fees -- Tk 5,000 for an urgent passport or a renewal with a five-year validity -- were imposed in May this year, the number of applications for renewals has dropped more than one third.

Sources in the immigration and passports office at Agargaon said the number of applications for urgent renewals dropped to less than 300 in four months since May from 900 in January-April this year.

On May 8, the government issued an order imposing new fees -

- Tk 500 for an ordinary renewal and Tk 1,000 for an urgent renewal both with a one-year validity.

Before May, fees for the same period were Tk 120 for an ordinary renewal and Tk 220 for an urgent one.

In 1980, ordinary renewal fees were fixed at Tk 50 and the urgent at Tk 100 for a one-year validity.

Usually, a passport is renewed for five years and it takes an applicant a week for an urgent renewal and four weeks for the ordinary.

Excessive charges for renewals inspire passport holders to apply for new passports.

"A new passport costs the same as the renewed one. Why will I get a renewed passport then?" asked an applicant.

"We have more applications for new passports than renewals, which was reverse early this year," said an official at the immigration and passports office.

The revised fees have resulted in a drop in revenues as well, officials acknowledged.

Contacted, Director General of Immigration and Passports Wahedul Huq said, "We wrote to the home ministry about a month ago for reduction of the renewal fees. I think the charges are disproportionate."

The home ministry is considering revival of the previous charges and will soon send the proposal to the finance ministry for approval, the sources said.



The pothole-strewn Bashabo-Khilgaon-Sayedabad Road is no longer safe for traffic. Unfortunately, the longstanding problem failed to draw attention from the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC).

PHOTO: STAR

## 'Saddam has 3 doubles'

REUTERS, Berlin

A German television network said on Thursday it had made a scientific study of 450 photographs of Saddam Hussein in Iraq and concluded there are at least three doubles posing as the Iraqi president.

The ZDF public television network, working with a German corner, said it took the photographs and film clips of Saddam which it had in its archives and used facial recognition technology to determine that men said to be him were lookalikes.

"In the film sequences since 1998 only the doubles appear," said Dieter Buhmann, a Homburg coroner. "He himself has not been seen again."

But in the programme, ZDF said that the original Saddam reappeared on Iraq television on Saturday. It also quoted what it said was a former Iraq intelligence official describing how he had recruited doubles for Saddam.

"It was a practice started for security reasons because Saddam travelled a lot at the time and had contact with the public," said the former intelligence official, now living abroad in opposition.

ZDF said in the programme, and on its Web site (www.heute.t-online.de), that "a scientific investi

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ASM NURRUNNABI

Dhaka City is plagued with multifarious problems that have vitiated life for the residents of this megalopolis. Traffic jams, air pollution, hijacking, mugging, toll collection by musclemen, frequent hartals, loadshedding, crises of drinking water and road transport etc., are just some of the nagging problems that city-dwellers have to live with on a day to day basis.

Nevertheless, they must keep up their struggle for earning their bread in order to survive in this harsh urban environment. But man cannot live by bread alone, so goes the saying. An essential aspect of life is recreation, which revives the spirit and makes one ready to face the challenges of life with renewed vigor. But, to the peril of the city-dwellers, many of the places of recreation are on the verge of extinction.

The most conspicuous of such vanishing sources of recreation are the playgrounds and open spaces as well as the water bodies of the

## DOWN TO EARTH

# Dhaka City's ever shrinking playgrounds & water bodies

city including lakes, canals and rivers. The acute scarcity of playgrounds for children and youngsters of the city has very adverse repercussions on the mental and physical growth of our posterity. Particularly, the adolescents are so much affected by the absence of such facilities that they turn to immoral activities instead. The demand for playgrounds has therefore assumed a dimension that a healthy society cannot afford to neglect.

Even in the recent past, there were quite a good number of playgrounds and open areas where children and youth from adjoining areas could play various games

like cricket, football, ha-doo-doo and the likes. But presently, such facilities have become victims of commercialisation by the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), many private companies and different government bodies, which build shopping complexes, housing projects and other similar enterprises in those areas.

In some wards of the DCC, small parks for children were built some time ago. But most of them are now in an abandoned state, unfit for use for games or other recreational purposes. They are either under unauthorised occupation for use as impromptu shops or have become the haunts of anti-

social elements.

Similarly, youngsters from Captan Bazar, Siddik Bazar, Alu Bazar, Paltan, Fakirerpool, Arambagh, Tikatuli and Gopibagh once used to play at the once wide Paltan Maidan, which has now shrunk into a narrow strip of land. A big part of the Paltan Maidan has been used up for building the Hockey Stadium, where the prime consideration, was actually to set up shops. Consequently, a large part of the Maidan has also been rendered into a parking lot for the vehicles of customers and owners

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## Moudud out to save killers, says Khashru

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former law minister Abdul Matin Khashru yesterday accused his successor Moudud Ahmed of hatching a conspiracy to save the self-confessed killers of Bangabandhu by creating an "artificial" constitutional crisis.

He also accused Moudud of making the Supreme Court (SC) "helpless" and putting the Chief Justice in a "false position" by his "misleading" statements over appointment of judges to the SC on ad hoc basis.

"The Constitution is very clear regarding appointment of judges to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court on ad hoc basis. But the law minister is misinterpreting the Constitution deliberately with a motive and is creating barrier to the appointment of judges only to save the self-confessed killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur

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## Six hurt as JCD activists open fire in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Six people were injured when a group of activists allegedly belonging to the Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) opened fire while ransacking a community centre in the town yesterday.

Sources said the incident was sparked off by a trivial matter when a marriage ceremony was going on at the Green Community Centre in the Shahjalal Upashahar area of the city.

Toward the end of the ceremony at about 4:00pm, a 12-year boy from the community centre had a quarrel with some people at a nearby shop when the boy went there to play video games.

Later, a group of local JCD men -- Masum, Rubel and Alamgir -- went looking for the boy at the community centre and at one stage swooped on the men at the community centre. But the three were apprehended and Alamgir was beaten up.

After some time, Alamgir returned to the centre with a group

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A colourful procession organised by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism in the city on the World Tourism Day yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Respite in agitation till Oct 7 JUTA adds 3 new demands to its previous 11

JU CORRESPONDENT

The Jahangirnagar University Teachers' Association (JUTA) has postponed its "non-cooperation movement" till October 7 and asked the authorities to meet their 14-point demand by that time.

While postponing its movement at an emergency meeting on Thursday, JUTA added three new demands to its previous 11 demands.

The three demands are deferral of Syndicate meeting till October 7, submission of the authorities' report on legal complexities and Chancellor's opinion on holding of the VC-panel election and announcement of schedules for Senate, Syndicate and Dean elec-

tions. "A tougher movement programme will be announced if the demands are not met by October 7", an office-bearer of JUTA told The Daily Star yesterday.

A total of 166 JU teachers attended the meeting, chaired by JUTA President Prof Amin Muhammad Ali.

A letter of Vice Chancellor Prof Jasim Uddin Ahmad, sent to the JUTA president on September 22 regarding their demands, was read out at the meeting.

The letter said the authorities would announce a schedule for the VC-panel election immediately after the existing legal complexities are removed and the Chancellor's

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## DB police interrogating seven Arabs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch of police again interrogated three of the seven arrested Arabs yesterday but could reveal anything linking them with international terrorist groups or Islamic militants.

Algerian national Abu Ashem, Sudanese Hasan Adam and Yemeni national Abu Umayia were interrogated yesterday, DB sources said.

All the seven were interrogated several times since they were arrested from the Al Hermann Islamic Studies Institute, an NGO, and from their residences at Uttara in the city on Monday night.

Other sources said that the NGO Bureau, after investigation following an order from the foreign ministry, did not find any serious irregularity in the activity or funding of the NGO.

The seven arrested persons are Abu Nujaid of Libya, Abu Ashem of Algeria, Hasan Adam of Sudan, and Sadek Al Nasami, Abu Sallam, Abu Umayia and Abdul Abbas of Yemen.

They were placed on five day's remand on Tuesday for interrogation.

The sources said that the arrested persons told investigators that they (investigators) could visit the institute's branches in Dhaka and at Kisoreganj, Rangpur, Nilphamari, Gazipur and Netrokona and investigate their activities.

No evidence was found that the NGO was involved in trafficking of women and children from the country, the sources said.

Police also could not recover any firearm or leaflet from the institute

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Sept 28		5-49 pm
Sept 29	5-49 am	

  

Prayer Timings		
Sept 28		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-40	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	5-55	6-00
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation