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# The Daily Star

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TODAY'S ISSUE 20 PAGES

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## Dhaka says no to transit as JEC meet rolls onto Day 3

Bilateral agreement to be signed today



Visiting Indian External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha, right, meets Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

**STAR REPORT**

The Indo-Bangla Joint Economic Commission (JEC) meeting was unable to overcome the basic hurdles to Dhaka's demand for free access of its products and New Delhi's transit facility. As the two sides remained wide apart on some points, the talks rolled onto a third day. Officials said the paperwork for signing the final agreement could not be finished on schedule. "I want to inform the media that the final paperwork is being typed," said Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday. "We will sign the agreement at 9:00am tomorrow (June 16) and brief the media at 9:30am," he assured. Dhaka pitted its demand for duty-free access of 118 types of products at the talks against New Delhi's free trade agreement (FTA). Dhaka also wanted to know about

## Vietnamese FM arrives today

UNB, Dhaka

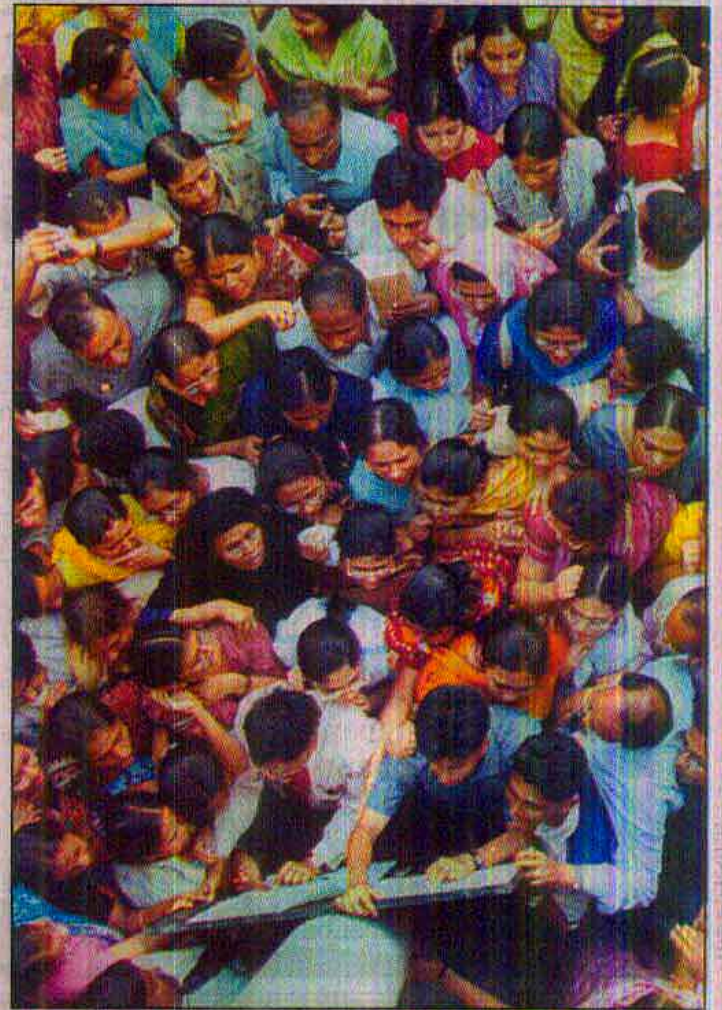
Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Dy Nien arrives in Dhaka today on a three-day official visit. The Vietnamese foreign minister will hold talks with his Bangladesh counterpart M Morshed Khan exploring ways and means to increase economic cooperation, volume of trade and investment. The two foreign ministers will also discuss the holding of the Joint Commission meeting. The Bangladesh-Vietnam Joint Commission was set up in 1997, but it has not met yet. He will call on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia tomorrow. Nguyen Dy Nien will also meet FBCCI leaders over a luncheon at Sonargaon Hotel tomorrow to discuss trade and investment. He will visit Beximco Industrial Park at Tongi. The visiting foreign minister will inaugurate the Vietnam embassy in Dhaka, reopened after a lapse of 20 years. He will also attend a photo exhibition at the Bangladesh

## SSC success rate dips to 36.85pc

Minister puts it down to strict anti-copying measures

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Results of the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations of 2003 under the seven education boards, published yesterday, recorded the average pass percentage at 36.85, lower than last year's. The average success rate in this year's exam results based on letter grading is 3.03 percentage points down from 39.88 per cent last year but 1.63 percentage points up from 35.22 per cent in 2001. Male students with a 38.75 per cent success rate took the lead over females with 34.53 per cent under the seven boards. Education Minister Dr Osman Faruk yesterday said the percentage of pass in the SSC exams was comparatively low because of strict measures taken against copying and other unfair means.



Students scramble to see the result sheets posted on a noticeboard at the Vigarunnisa Noon School and College after the SSC exam results were published yesterday.

## Narrow trade gap to widen co-op, Khaleda tells Sinha

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has called for reducing the huge trade imbalance between Bangladesh and India. She said narrowing the trade gap will help widen cooperation in other areas between the two next-door neighbours. Khaleda made the observation when Indian External Affairs

Minister Yashwant Sinha called on her at her office yesterday. The visiting Indian minister said New Delhi would also like to have an equitable trade relation with Dhaka. During the meeting, the foreign ministers of Bangladesh and India also briefed the prime minister about the outcome of the Dhaka-Delhi Joint Economic Commission (JEC) meeting held yesterday.

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## SQ Chy pleads immunity

BSS, Dhaka

The lawyer of Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, MP, in a reply to a legal notice by The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam said his client's speech in parliament was fully protected and immune from any proceedings in any court under the constitution. Barrister Rafiqul Haq, the attorney of Chowdhury, in reply to the notice served by Dr Kamal Hossain, legal consultant of Anam, said the news carried by the Daily Inqilab of July 2 was a verbatim report of his client's speech in the Jatiya Sangsad on June 26 this year. The speech was

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## 57 launches found risky and unfit

Ministry probes how they got licences

**REZAUL KARIM**

The shipping ministry has identified some 57 passenger vessels as "risky and unfit" and is now investigating how they got the licence of river worthiness. Of the "risky and unfit" vessels, 25 are still in operation in Dhaka region, six in Narayanganj, 11 in Khulna and 15 in Barisal region. Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Shipping Minister Akbar

Hossain said currently there are 2,100 passenger vessels and the ministry has divided those into four categories after inspection by experts. The A-category is good, B-category is passable, C-category needs repairing while the D-category is risky and unfit for operation. The minister said an instruction has been given to all categories of vessels to immediately remove

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## More A+ achievers this year

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

A total of 1,392 students obtained highest Grade Point Average (GPA) 5 or A+ in this year's Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations against 330 last year. This year 880 male and 512 female examinees scored GPA 5. Last year, 233 male and 97 female

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## Cousin castigates SQ Chowdhury

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Awami League (AL) lawmaker ABM Fazle Karim Chowdhury yesterday flayed Prime Minister's Parliamentary Affairs Adviser Salauddin Quader Chowdhury at a press briefing at the Sangsad Bhaban, alleging that he was carrying out criminal activities from his Rauzan residence, built on graves of children. Fazle Karim, the first cousin of Salauddin, said the document of the land on which the residence was built was a children's graveyard. "He is the secretary general candidate of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and an advocate of Islamic values, but he did not hesitate to put up the house there." He claimed that he knew Salauddin better than anyone, as he lived 41 years with him.

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## Qulkhwani of late Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed



We express our gratitude for the deep love and respect expressed for the late Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed, Barrister-at-Law by persons from all over the country and in the various national newspapers and electronic media, and for the sympathy and support extended to us. We thank those who have stood by us

at this time. The Qulkhwani of the late Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed, Barrister-at-Law will be held on Wednesday, 16.07.2003 after Asr prayers at the Gulshan Central Mosque (Azad Mosque). The family of the deceased requests all to participate in the Qulkhwani and pray for the departed soul.

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**INTERVIEWS BY APPOINTMENT AT THE FOLLOWING**

Date: 17th July 2003  
Time: 4:00 p.m.

**Axiom Technologies Ltd.**  
7-13 Satmasjid Road, Dhanmondi, Dhaka 1209  
Tel: 9128354-8, e-mail: info@axiom-bd.com

Student are requested to bring their mark sheet, IELTS score (if any) and preferably come with their parents or guardian

## 3 million marooned in flood fury

**STAR REPORT**

All major rivers continued to swell, swamping more villages in the northern and central regions and affecting about three million people in 23 districts. Three children drowned in the raging floodwaters in Gaibandha and Bogra and attendant diarrhoea claimed the life of a young boy in Lalmonirhat on Monday and yesterday. Lightning killed another two in

Lalmonirhat and snakebite killed one in Gaibandha yesterday. Two had died of diarrhoea earlier. Land communications between the southwestern and the eastern region were cut off as the Maowa ferry terminal was closed yesterday due to rise in waters in the Padma. Earlier on Monday, two ferry terminals in Daulatdia and Paturia were shut down, while the Arial Kha terminal also faced closure. The terminals link the southwestern

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