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PHOTO: STAR

## Tk 4cr forex seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials at Zia International Airport (ZIA) yesterday seized about Tk 3.78 crore in foreign banknotes en route to an unknown destination abroad in one of the biggest hauls in Bangladesh.

Two suspected employees of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (Caab) were attempting to smuggle 19,31,500 Saudi

riyals, 79,000 US dollars, 1,11,500 UAE dirhams, 1,000 UK pound sterling and 1,220 Kuwait dinars, stuffed in their pockets in 14 wads.

The green paper wrapped wads, written with 'Allah Hefajtkari' (Allah is the custodian), made up Tk 3,77,68,900.

"An unnamed caller tipped the customs off that the pair was planning to smuggle the banknotes through boarding bridge No. 6," a customs official said.

Customs Inspector Mofazzal Hossain Mafu along with his colleague Manjurul Hasan went near the bridge at about 7:15am and saw the two stepping onto it, Mofazzal told journalists at ZIA.

He caught one of the alleged smugglers, triggering a scuffle. As the pair saw another customs man rushing towards them, they threw away 13 wads and tried to make a quick getaway pushing

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Writer improving slowly, able to swallow liquid food

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Humayun Azad was able to swallow liquid food for the first time yesterday since the eminent writer was admitted to Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in a critical condition following the deadly machete attack on February 27.

Azad, author of over 50 books and professor of Bangla at Dhaka University, was, however, only able to speak for a few minutes in a feeble voice.

"He seemed very eager to talk, but could not bear the strain after a few minutes," Azad's wife Latifa Kohinor told The Daily Star yesterday. "He was talking in a feeble and laboured voice."

His weakness is due to the heavy medications he is on and doctors want him to sleep undisturbed, she said, adding hospital authorities are not allowing anyone other than her and their three children to visit him.

"Doctors warned that he is still vulnerable to the danger of catching an infection," Latifa said yesterday morning after visiting her husband, now being kept at a VIP cabin.

"Whenever I met him over the last two days, tears rolled down his cheeks and he tried to say

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## 'Bangladesh most violent country for newsmen'

CPJ urges govt to probe threats, try killers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) yesterday tagged Bangladesh as the most violent country for newsmen in Asia in an investigation that also expressed deep concern at repression on them here.

After a weeklong fact-finding visit to Bangladesh, a four-member delegation of the New York-based media watchdog asked the government from a press conference at the Hotel Sonargaon to open investigations into threats to journalists and prosecute the killers.

"In Bangladesh journalists are

working increasingly under threat," said CPJ Executive Director Ann Cooper from the US, who led the team of Abi Wright from the US, Iqbal Athas from Sri Lanka and Andreas Harsono from Indonesia.

Listing savage attacks on journalists -- from Tipu Sultan to Manik

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

PM to address BNP rally at Lalbagh today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) holds a rally today at Lalbagh in the city that coincides with the countrywide daylong hartal enforced by Awami League (AL), Communist Party of Bangladesh, Workers Party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Jnu).

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is scheduled to address the afternoon rally aimed at, what the party said, denouncing the anarchy unleashed by main opposition AL.

The last two BNP public meetings that the prime minister addressed in the city -- one on February 14 at Jatra Bari and another on February 28 at Bashabo -- did also coincide with AL-enforced hartals.

Meanwhile, school children of the Lalbagh area were asked through announcements over loudspeakers to assemble at their respective schools by 11am today and then join in queues on either sides of the Khaleda Zia's route to Balur Math, the venue of the public meeting.

The guardians of the school-goers of Lalbagh area are gripped with anxiety as instructions came from the ruling party for their kids to go to school defying today's hartal and that again not for attending classes but for waving hands and miniature flags to welcome the BNP chairperson.

Another slum fire victim's body found

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday recovered a burnt body from a lake near Baubazar slum at Korail in Gulshan that was reduced to ashes in a fire Wednesday.

The charcoaled victim was identified as Sohrab, 45, son of Neta Miah, of Sherpur.

The identity of four children, who were roasted alive in the fire, could not be known till yesterday. Several children of the slum are still missing. Siddique Biswas and Hanufa -- rickshaw-puller and a domestic help -- have been searching for their 3-year-old daughter Nurjahan since the incident.

Local government offices, Awami League and BNP leaders and

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Blix believes war in Iraq was illegal

APR, London

Former UN chief weapons inspector Hans Blix believes the US-led war in Iraq was illegal, a British newspaper reported yesterday.

Blix told the London-based Independent daily that a second United Nations resolution explicitly authorising the use of force would have been required to make the invasion of Iraq last March lawful.

"I don't buy the argument the war was legalised by the Iraqi violation of earlier resolutions," Blix said.

Blix attacked reasoning by Attorney General Peter Goldsmith, the British government's top legal adviser, that UN resolution 1441 authorised the use of force because it revived earlier resolutions passed after the first Gulf war.

Blix said that while it was

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JCD bars Azad Mancha activists from holding programme

DU CORRESPONDENT

The pro-government Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) forced activists of the Humayun Azad Mancha out of Dhaka University (DU)'s TSC (Teacher-Student Centre) area yesterday as the Mancha activists prepared to hold a programme there protesting the February 27 attack on Prof Humayun Azad.

Students under the banner of Humayun Azad Mancha to Protect Free Thinking and Resist Undemocratic Forces had been staging a protest there for the last five days against the deadly attack on the eminent writer.

The Azad Mancha in a statement said its activists gathered at the foot of the Raju Bhaskorjo to render

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PHOTO: STAR

ATOP THE WORLD: Pakistan team members celebrate their triumph in the ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium last night.

## Pakistan world U-19 champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Tantalising spin bowling by Tariq Mahmood, terrific fielding and decisive batting from Asif Iqbal in his first match of the competition landed Pakistan the Fifth ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup trophy at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Pakistan overcame the West Indies by 25 runs to claim their first ever youth World Cup in the day-night final, which brought the curtains down on the nearly month-long competition.

Captain Khalid Latif took the coveted trophy from International Cricket Council (ICC) president and compatriot Fhsan Mani after an absorbing battle in front of a sell-out

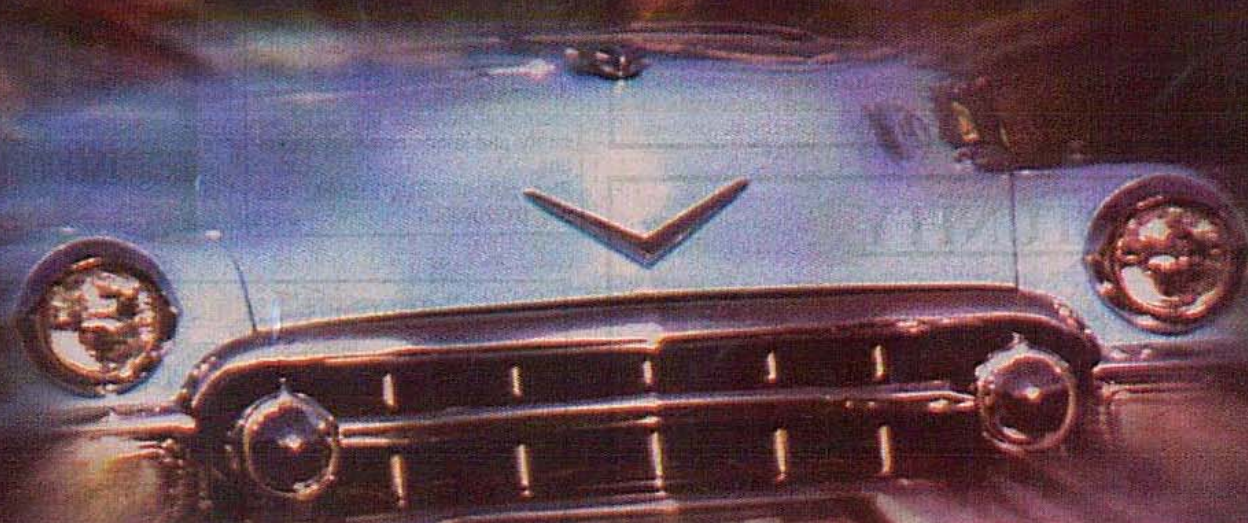
crowd.

Latif won the toss and decided to do what was only natural for him at the BNS and that was to bat first. The Pakistan captain and fellow opener Adnan Zaheer put on 53 but the introduction of left-arm spinner Rishi Bachan in the 12th over paid immediate dividends as Zaheer (33) was bowled first-ball by a full length delivery.

Latif soon followed suit as he was stumped by his opposite number Denesh Ramdin in Bachan's next over and Pakistan were 58 for three. Jahangir Mirza and the hero of the semifinal Mahmood were both gone in the space of two runs and Pakistan were tottering at 81 for four in the 22nd over.

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