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RAFA-NOVAK IN FINAL

Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic fight it out for the US Open today

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PAKISTAN FLOOD

PM calls for global help; UN says 200 killed, almost 1 million homes damaged

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DAYS BEFORE 1/11

Wikileaks US diplomatic cables describe situation back then

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Media shown the door

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 60 journalists of print and electronic media were forced out of a meeting on road safety by four ministers yesterday, although the media were invited to cover the event. The four are Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan, Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain, Home Minister Sahara Khatun and her deputy Shamsul Haque Tuku. Invited by the communications ministry, the reporters went to cover the National Road Safety Council meeting at Rail Bhaban in the capital at 10:30am. The communications ministry organised meeting with Abul Hossain in the chair. Half an hour into the meeting, Shahjahan Khan, who is also a trade union leader, questioned the media presence first. He demanded that the communications minister tell the journalists to leave. Abul Hossain complied.

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Road safety left in limbo

Abul presides, Shahjahan rules the meeting; 5-hour discussion produces little

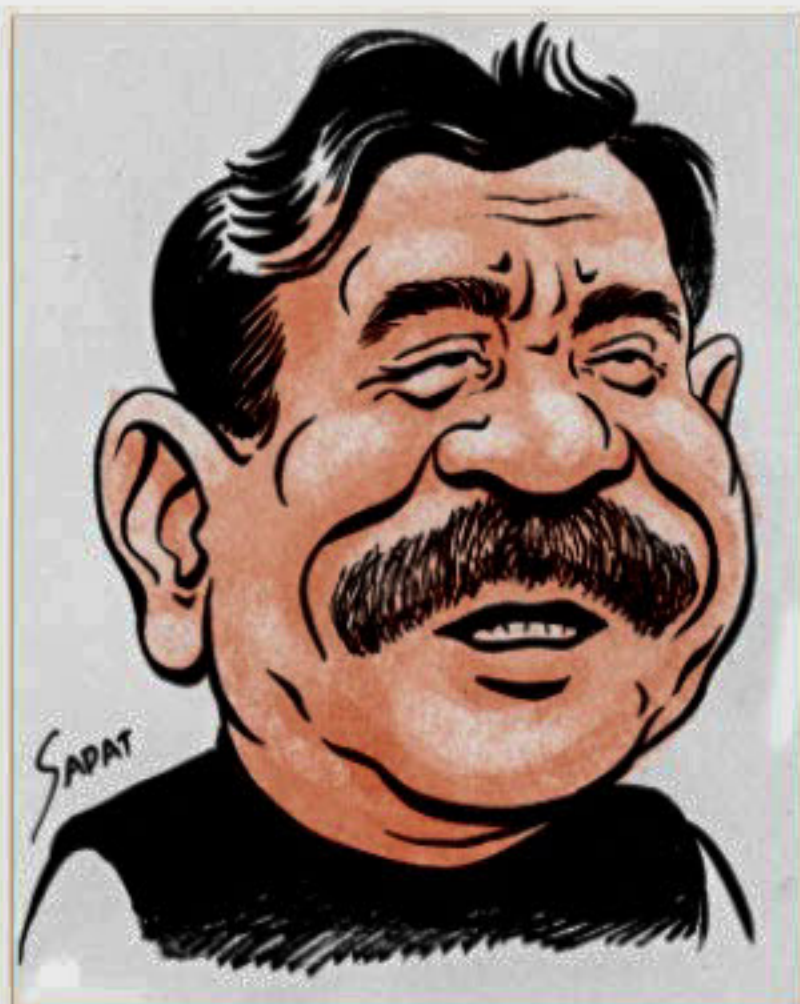
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Road Safety Council, chaired by Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain, was largely dominated by Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan yesterday and it failed to decide on anything significant on road safety. The five-hour meeting discussed issues which have been talked about over and over again in the last few years, like why road accidents happen, who are responsible for accidents and what should be done about it. But, nothing concrete was decided to stop deaths on roads and bring discipline to the sector. Shahjahan has been holding the post of executive president of the Bangladesh Sharak Paribahan Sramik Federation, the apex body of all transport workers' and owners' with 30 lakh memberships, for the last 19 years and he flexed his muscles yesterday. Shahjahan, flanked by his federation leaders, played down the seri-



ousness of the road safety issue by questioning the accuracy of the fatality figures. He claimed the numbers have gone down.

He also tried to divert the talks to the brink of making the discussion pointless by demanding to know why some agreements made with transport owners since 1980 have not been implemented.



When film star Ilias Kanchan, a vehement road-safety activist, suggested that the discussion be focused on road safety, Shahjahan asked him to stop talking and listen to him.

Shahjahan also blamed a section of the media and the civil society for putting transport owners and workers in confrontation with the people

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ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Restriction ready

Draft broadcast policy proposes provisions to limit freedom of media

M RAHMAN

A draft national broadcasting policy has barred private television channels, radios and Internet protocol TVs from broadcasting any program making derogatory comments about national figures like Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a high official said yesterday.

The draft also forbids programs that may pose threat to national security and sovereignty and may seem satirical to national ideology, said the Information Ministry official speaking on condition of anonymity.

These are some of the provisions proposed in the country's first draft National Broadcasting Policy submitted to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Ministry on July 31.

The draft said the authorities of private television channels, radios and internet protocol televisions will be held responsible if the government finds them airing distorted or irrelevant information in their programmes, including talk shows.

The broadcasting companies must take permission of Information Ministry before transferring ownership, said the official.

The policy also discourages character assassination of any person, but his/her activities can be discussed. The broadcasting organizations must be careful so that they do not broadcast any information regarding army or the

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Grameen board members harassed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seven board members of Grameen Bank, who travelled to Dhaka to meet with the well-wishers of the microcredit organisation, were harassed by their former colleagues and security officials yesterday.

A section of former Grameen Bank officials and security personnel quizzed them about their tour and the reason for travels to the capital, said the board members. They even asked the directors whether Grameen Bank founder Prof Muhammad Yunus paid them to talk in his favour.

At one stage, they even tried to brand the directors as members of outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh.

Board members including Rozina Begum, Rahima Begum, Majida Begum, Sundori Akhter, Nasima Begum and Anwara Begum came to

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1/11 was inevitable

SHAKHAWAT LITON and SHAMIM ASHRAF

The animosity between BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina was so intense that they both would rather like to see the military than the other one in power.

Patricia A Butenis, the then US ambassador in Dhaka, had this impression after a series of meetings with the two leaders and their deputies during the political impasse that led to the promulgation of state of emergency and suspension of the parliamentary polls then slated for January 22, 2007.

"Neither woman appears to imagine that they might be ousted themselves under military rule," she wrote in a cable in the morning of January 11, 2007, hours before the then president Iajuddin Ahmed declared the state of emergency.

According to the cables, Butenis and other foreign diplomats worked in private and public to find a peaceful solution to the political deadlock by making Khaleda and Hasina agreeable to each other but found it an impossible task.

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WikiLeaks cables reveal deep-rooted animosity between Khaleda, Hasina; exile threat even could not stymie them

President for crisis

STAR REPORT

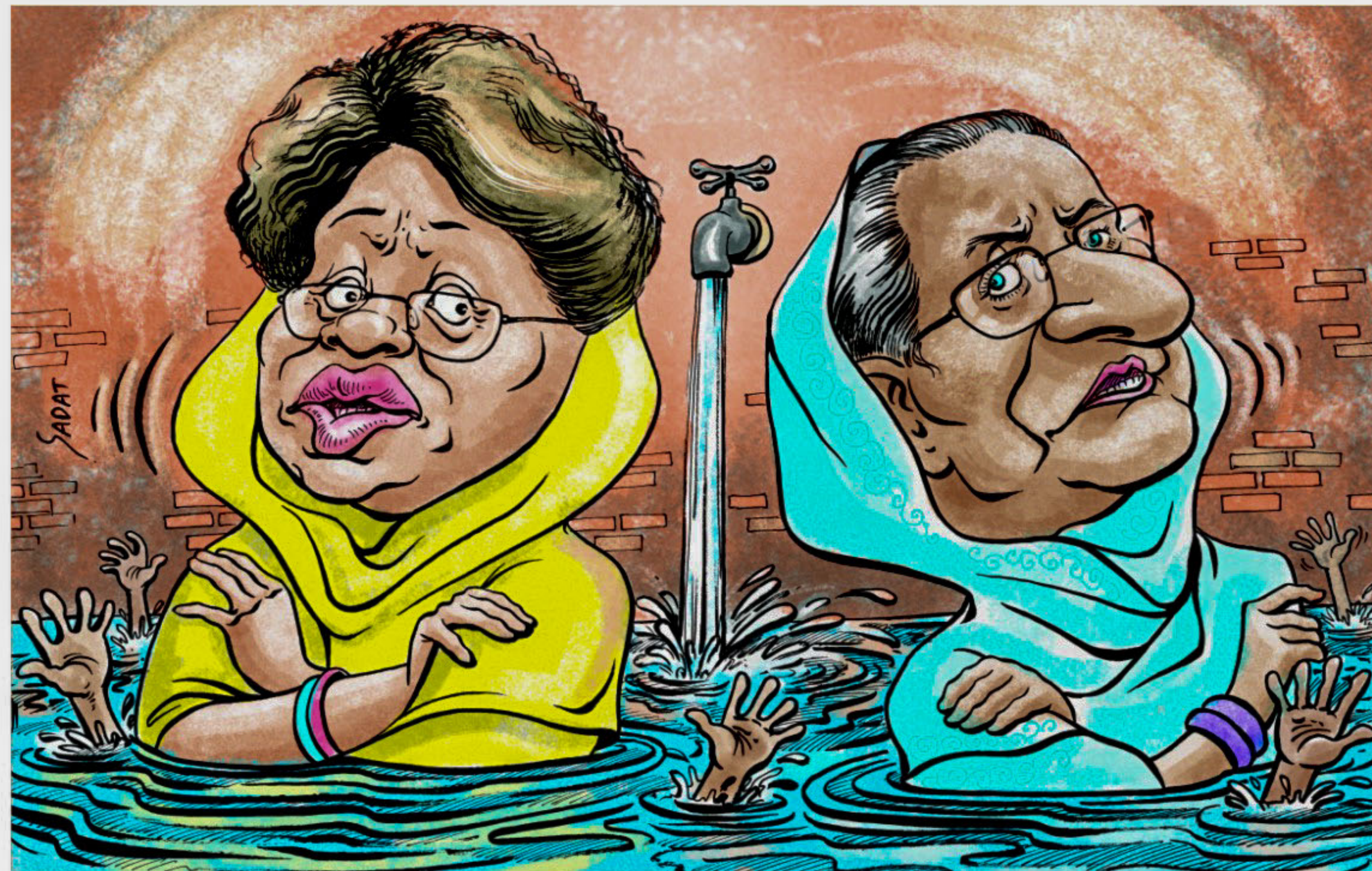
Fed up with Awami League's shifting demands, BNP had forced the then president Iajuddin Ahmed to deploy the army in December 2006 in a fit of pique, said a recently leaked US embassy cable.

On late December 9, Iajuddin against apparently the unanimous view of his advisers, ordered the nationwide deployment of the army "to aid civil administration" and preempt the opposition's planned sit-in the next day at the presidency, said the cable.

The cable was sent to Washington on December 10, 2006. The same day, US ambassador Patricia A Butenis met AL chief Sheikh Hasina who stated there was no point in further talks with the caretaker government advisers.

Another cable said the president's November 12 decision of army deployment was reversed at the last minute when the advisers balked at not being

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6 STUDENTS KILLED AT AMINBAZAR 8 cops closed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight police personnel have been closed for negligence in duty that led to the deaths of six students in a mob beating at Amin Bazar in Savar on July 18.

Two sub-inspectors and six constables of Savar Police Station were closed yesterday after a departmental enquiry committee found them guilty of negligence in duty and responsible for the deaths of the six students, said Mizanur Rahman, superintendent of police in Dhaka.

The policemen are sub-inspectors Hares Shikder and Anwar Hossain, and constables Habibur Rahman, Nazmul Hossain, Sohel Mia, Saidur Rahman,

Onion prices rise on Indian ban

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prices of onions jumped yesterday, buoyed by a ban by India on the export of the item, traders said.

The price of onions rose to Tk 36-45 a kilogram yesterday from Tk 32-42 on Thursday in markets in Dhaka, according to Trading Corporation of Bangladesh.

The wholesale prices of onions also rose. "There is a lack in the supply of onions in the

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Indian think-tank for Teesta sharing

Says it can generate impulse for big regional change

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

A leading think-tank of India has favoured the country making concessions to Bangladesh on Teesta water sharing saying it can "generate the impulse for big change in the region".

"It remains a fact that as the upper riparian, India has to be mindful of the just requirements of Bangladesh as a lower riparian," said Dr Ashok K Behuria, Research Fellow at the Institute of

Defence Studies and Analyses.

He said the opposition to the Teesta water sharing agreement by Paschim Banga Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, and by a section of people in Assam state to the land boundary agreement "is unfortunate".

According to Behuria, "The forces of economy and imperatives of geography demand that India and Bangladesh need to unfreeze their mindsets and set out on a

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MONEY-LAUNDERING Trial of Tarique begins

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The trial of a money laundering case against BNP senior vice chairman Tarique Rahman and his business associate Giasuddin Al Mamun began yesterday with the deposition of the complainant.

Judge Mohammad Mozammel Hossain of the Special Judge Court-3 of Dhaka recorded a part of the statement from

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