

**RUPALI BANK**  
Saudi prince keen to buy remaining govt shares

**SARWAR A CHOWDHURY**  
Saudi Prince Bandar Bin Mohammad Bin Abdul Rahman Al Saud, preferred buyer of the state-run Rupali Bank, has expressed his willingness to buy the rest 26 per cent shares of the bank owned by the government.  
The Saudi prince conveyed the message to the Privatisation Commission while unveiling future reform plans for the bank, sources said.  
Privatisation Commission Chairman Enam Ahmed Chaudhury yesterday quoted the Saudi prince as saying that if the

**Opposition targets Hasan takeover**

Launches tough agitation from today amid govt's foot-dragging on electoral reforms

**HASAN JAHD TUSHER**  
Sensing that the government may not meet its reform demands, the 14-party opposition is making all-out preparations from today to launch massive street agitations to protest against handover of power to Justice KM Hasan.  
The Awami League (AL)-led opposition alliance is beginning the preparations with a series of meetings with their leaders of all

units and front organisations as uncertainty mounts over the success of ongoing BNP-AL dialogue.  
Moreover, the opposition has plans to go for countrywide indefinite hartal and blockade programmes alongside a march towards Dhaka. These programmes would be launched only if Hasan-led caretaker government takes over.  
Most of the 14-party senior leaders now believe the govern-

ment would not meet the demands for electoral reforms, especially the Justice Hasan issue.  
"We will have no alternative but to forge all-out movements if the dialogue fails," AL presidium member Tofail Ahmed told The Daily Star. He added that they would do everything to press home their demands for electoral reforms.  
"We will not only besiege the capital city but also put up resistance

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**SC to hear JMB petitions Nov 5**

**UNB, Dhaka**  
The Supreme Court (SC) has set November 5 for hearing the jail petitions filed by six condemned prisoners in the Jhalakathi judges' killing case seeking leave to appeal to overturn the High Court (HC) verdict that confirmed their death

**Gold smuggling case against Ershad further weakens**

**COURT CORRESPONDENT**  
Two more prosecution witnesses (PWs) of the gold smuggling case filed against the former president

**ISLAMI BANK**  
Ex-director among top 20 defaulters

**REJAUL KARIM BYRON**  
The top 20 defaulters of Islami Bank who share 47 per cent of the bank's total classified loans include one of its former directors and a sitting vice-chairman of another commercial bank.  
Of the two, the Islami Bank former director is also involved with an insurance company while the other is a vice-chairman of a

private university.  
The total classified loan of Islami Bank up to June 30 this year is Tk 414 crore which is four per cent of the bank's total outstanding loan.  
Of the amount, the top 20 defaulters owe the bank around Tk 194 crore and these two officials share six per cent of the amount. The first five top defaulters share 56

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**Monga returns again**

**ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi**  
With the Eid-ul-Fitr only days away, the monga-affected people of rural areas of the northwestern region are now crowding this city and other towns desperately looking for jobs just for their survival, not to speak of celebrating the greatest religious festival of the Muslims.  
Monga, a near-famine situation, hits this predominantly agricultural region in October and November each year when job opportunities for the farm workers and food stocks of peasants dry up with the main harvesting season

still to begin—in December.  
The government however is yet to take any special measures to create employment facilities for these sufferers by expanding its programmes like Food for Work. As a result, thousands of poor people in a vast region are exposed to serious unemployment problems at this time.  
The worst affected are those who have no farm land and are naturally not eligible for farm loans, and also not covered by the government's VGF (vulnerable group feeding) programme.  
The situation this time is so bad that those who have moved to this

**Business leaders again urge Jalil, Bhuiyan for crisis solution**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Top business leaders once again urged BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil to come to a solution in the ongoing dialogue by October 23.  
Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) President Mir Nasir Hossain, International Chamber of Commerce Bangladesh President Mahbubur Rahman, and Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association former president Anisul Huq last night met the secretaries general of ruling BNP

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**Loans for the poor end up with BNP men**

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari**  
Ruling BNP men misappropriated Tk 35 lakh in loans from the disaster management and relief ministry depriving destitute people of Khagrachhari.

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**8th Bangladesh meet starts in Hanover today**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
The 8th Bangladesh-Conference will be held in Hanover, Germany this year from October 20 to 22.  
The conference dates back to 1994, focusing each time on various

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**Tk 40 lakh bribe change hands at DMCH for seats**  
TIB report reveals

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Patients have to pay Tk 40.48 lakh in bribes a year for seats at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) while many of its third grade employees paid Tk 50,000 to Tk 2.5 lakh in bribes for getting jobs.  
An investigation report by the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) also said 32 per cent patients at DMCH have to pay bribe for seats, which is Tk 188 per seat on an average.  
Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) organised the roundtable at the VIP lounge of Jatiya Press Club on the occasion of publication of its investigative

report on corruption at DMCH.  
Food worth around Tk 1.15 crore is wasted every year as many patients do not take hospital foods for which there is government allocation, the report said.  
Although the price of an outdoor ticket is Tk 5 only, the corrupt employees often charge its double and 29 per cent outdoor patients pay Tk 21 on an average as bribe for doctors' consultations.  
Speakers at the roundtable blamed a mafia gang comprising influential 3rd grade employees for massive corruption, mismanagement, harassment and negligence to the patients at the country's

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**Jumatul Wida today**

**Lailatul Qadr tonight**  
**UNB, Dhaka**  
The holy Jum'at ul Wida, the last Juma of Ramadan, will be observed today while Lailatul Qadr on the night.  
Devotees will spend the night, offering special prayers and reciting the holy Quran. They will also visit the graveyards and offer prayers, seeking eternal peace of the departed souls.  
President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in separate messages greeted the Muslims at home and abroad.  
In his message, the president said Allah started revealing the holy Quran to Prophet Mohammad (SM) for the mankind on this night. He called for seeking divine blessings through prayers on this night for peace and welfare in this world.  
In her message, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia prayed for overall welfare of the country, its people and the Muslim Ummah.

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**Another feather in Yunus cap**

**AFP, Seoul**  
This year's Bangladeshi Nobel peace laureate was honoured again yesterday for his work in fighting poverty and pledged to continue struggling for a world free of want.  
Six days after winning the world's most prestigious award, Prof Muhammad Yunus was awarded the Seoul Peace Prize for his role as banker to the poor.  
Yunus told the award ceremony it was a "wonderful feeling and so exciting, because it's not only a prize to honor me, it's a prize to uphold a fate, a mission that we can create a poverty-free world."  
Yunus and the Grameen Bank he founded were jointly awarded the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize for

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Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus holds aloft the prestigious Seoul Peace Prize trophy 2006 in Seoul, South Korea, yesterday.

**Saifur critical of Grameen Bank**

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar**  
Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman said true development of the country will be achieved through establishing large-scale industries and modernising agriculture, not by running microcredit programmes.  
Saifur criticised Grameen Bank's microcredit scheme and other activities even though he congratulated Prof Muhammad Yunus on his winning the Nobel Peace Prize.  
He was speaking at the inaugural ceremony of Dutch Bangla Bank

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