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## NEWS BRIEFS

### PM shocked at death of Bush's mother

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has expressed deep shock at the death of US President George Bush's mother Dorothy Walker Bush. "I was deeply shocked to learn of the sad demise of your mother Mrs Prescott Bush. I extend to you my deepest condolence," she said in a message to the American President, George Herbert Walker Bush, reports UNB.

### BNP expels Maltiar

Motahar Hossain Alamgir Maltiar of Bhola has been expelled from the BNP, a party press release said here last night. Maltiar has been expelled for his involvement with the anti-party activities, reports BSS.

### Milad mahfil at Sugandha today

A milad mahfil will be held at the Prime Minister's Sugandha office today after Magreb prayer to express gratitude to Almighty Allah for saving the lives and properties of the country's coastal areas from the disastrous effects of probable cyclonic storm and tidal surge. The Prime Minister's office urged all irrespective of party affiliations to attend the milad, reports BSS.

### 75 more held on various charges

Police arrested 75 people from different parts of the city Saturday on various charges, said a DMP press release. Of the arrested, ten were wanted criminals, one on charge of murder, two accused in kidnapping, three for burglary and another three for stealing, reports UNB.

### Heroin recovered

The Department of Narcotics Control yesterday recovered 55 grams of heroin from East Nakhla Para area under Tejgaon Thana. One Mosammat Jannu Begum was arrested in this connection, reports BSS.

# Storm takes two before fizzling out

**By Staff Correspondent**  
 The severe cyclone that had threatened devastation along the coastal region, finally weakened and crossed the Bangladesh-Myanmar coast as a land depression Saturday afternoon, Meteorological office said.

Two people were killed, one at St Martin's island and another at Kutubdia, as the storm battered the areas before reaching the man land.

Communications were disrupted with these two islands and crops and thatched houses damaged because of the high winds, according to Control Room sources. A large number of cattle also perished on the islands.

The depression reached land at around 11 am with maximum wind speed of 50 to 60 kilometres per hour (within 64 km of its centre) and under its influence the southern part of Cox's Bazar experienced light rain and gusty wind.

There were no reports of any major damage or casualties.

The Met officials said that the sky over the country would become clear by Sunday and that the weather would be comparatively cooler.

Our Cox's Bazar correspondent reports: The cyclonic storm which swept over the Teknaf coast left two people dead and 50 injured.

The storm packed winds of upto 90 km per hour. It



RETURN OF THE NATIVES: Evacuees from Laldiar Char in Patenga trailing back home.

— Star photo by Mohsin

crossed St Martin's island at 3.30 pm and went towards Akyab of Burma.

About a quarter of the cattle on St Martin's island were killed in the storm and over 400 kutcha houses were damaged.

The mosque and the BDR station on the island were also damaged. About 37 boats of the islanders were also badly battered.

In Teknaf, crops on about 1000 acres of land were damaged.

Of the three people killed at St Martin's island and Kutubdia, one was a child, trampled to death in a cyclone shelter at Kutubdia by the crowd.

Three children were born at Kutubdia High School, BRAC office and the hospital during the storm.

These who took shelter in different places alleged that most of their houses were looted while they were away.

The authorities sanctioned Taka two lakh and 50 tonnes of rice for the distressed people of the island.

People who took refuge in the cyclone shelters returned home soon after the storm was over.

Our Staff Correspondent from Chittagong reports: Normal life has almost returned to the port city after the cyclonic storm that had approached Bangladesh coast weakened Saturday afternoon.

The people, evacuated earlier, returned to their homes. — See Page 12 Col 6

## SKOP, govt agree to talk more

By Nurul Kabir

The first round of talks between the government and the leaders of Sramik Karmachari Otkya Parishad (SKOP) ended yesterday with the former requesting to defer the 48-hour work stoppage scheduled for November 29 and 30 and the latter refusing to do so, sources said.

The contending parties, however, agreed to meet 'within two or three days' to reach a consensus on the issue.

The SKOP announced plans for the country-wide work stoppage to press its demand for immediate implementation of the bilateral agreement

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## Shopkeepers call strike today

By Staff Correspondent  
 All shops in the capital's markets will remain closed today (Sunday) in protest against the killing of a shopkeeper in the city Thursday.

Shopkeepers of the Government New Market and its surrounding markets brought out a torch-procession and demonstrated on the Mirpur Road yesterday evening. As a result, traffic movement from Science Laboratory area to Nilkhet was disrupted for two hours.

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## Siddique Sardar dead

From Our Correspondent  
 NARAYANGANJ, Nov 21: Siddique Sardar, a Jattia Party-backed labour leader of Adamjee Jute Mills (AJM), died of heart attack at 7:45 am today. He was 55.

Driven out from his Dhaka Bazu Colony residence by his pro-BNP rivals in May last, Sardar had been staying at the AJM rest house where he breathed his last.

Siddique Sardar led the JP's labour wing of the mills—AJM Sramik Union—until his death and also became the CBA President of the mills during Ershad era.

The sudden demise of the labour leader who served the

See Page 12 Col 3

## S Korean, another killed in road accidents

By DMCH Correspondent  
 At least two persons including a foreign national were killed and another six injured in three separate road accidents in and out of the city during last two days.

A South Korean citizen and Managing Director of Kintex Limited and Delight Netting Company of Chittagong was killed and his brother injured when a speeding truck knocked their car near Zia International Airport (ZIA) at about 2 am Saturday.

Both the foreigners were coming home at Banani from Uttara. The fatally injured Director JB Kim, 45, and his brother JS Kim, 35, was immediately sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where JB Kim succumbed to his injuries after admission. Police sent the body to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

JS Kim was admitted to the DMCH. An old man was killed and a young man was injured when a

See Page 12 Col 6

## France rejects EC-US accord

PARIS, Nov 21: French Agricultural Minister Jean-Pierre Soisson today rejected the farm trade agreement reached between the European Community and the United States, reports Xinhua.

He declared that his government would make its final decision after consulting the parliament, and that a meeting of the EC ministers council should be convened to work out a final stance of France and the EC.

The minister also asked the European Commission to verify whether the deal conformed with the European agricultural policy or not.

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# Sea surface wind dit it 'Sheer luck, mercy of God'

Star Report

Weather experts termed the weakening of the powerful cyclone heading towards the Chittagong coast yesterday a 'miracle' and were also baffled by its 'freaky' patterns of movement.

"The freak of nature usually devastates us but this time we are saved from a major disaster," Deputy Director of the Meteorological office Sajedur

Rahman said with a sigh of relief. The sea surface atmospheric wind, that provides pace to storms and cyclones, suddenly changed its pattern a few hours after the cyclone became static Friday night, that helped defuse it, he said.

"It is very unusual that such a powerful cyclone could weaken in this way" Rahman

said, adding, that "Many depressions and storms, however, fizzle out over the Bay before intensifying."

According to the Met official the cyclone was first located as a 'low pressure' over the Andaman Bay by last Sunday. It had a strong influence over Malaysia and crossed the Gulf of Siam before enter-

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COX'S BAZAR, Nov 21: Some thought it was sheer luck. Many put it down to the mercy of God.

Whatever it was, Cox's Bazar wore a dizzy look Saturday, as the mighty cyclone passed it fizzling out as it went.

The cyclone, carrying the windspeed upto 210 kph at its centre, came so close to running over this coastal town that some regional newspapers

From Sabir Mustafa

wrote a premature obituary. "Mighty storm grabs Cox's Bazar, 15 feet tidal wave," screamed the Saturday headline of a Chittagong newspaper Dainik Purbokone.

The paper said the storm had the ferocity of a python.

Python or not, the panic of the moment was all too evident out on the beach in the afternoon. The sun was setting with all

its usual brilliance of colour, but there was hardly a crowd there to watch it. The day trippers had obviously thought it better to give it a miss this time.

The horizon over the sea, which is usually crammed with the silhouettes of countless fishing boats, was blank, not a boat over there. They had not sunk, they had all move to

See Page 12 Col 4

## Few public ltd companies have floated shares

Star Report

Of the nearly 2100 firms registered as public limited companies with the registrar of Joint Stock Companies only about 143 are listed with the Dhaka Stock Exchange.

Although it is mandatory for insurance companies to sell shares to the general public as per the Insurance Act, only four out of a total of 16 general insurance companies have floated shares so far.

After registering as a public limited company, a firm is required to obtain a consent letter from the Controller of Capital Issues for floating shares in the stock market.

A large number of the 2100 firms registered as public limited companies, including all insurance companies have already obtained the consent letter to float shares, but are yet to issue shares for subscription by the general public.

However, there is no specific deadline for floating shares after the consent letters are obtained by the companies.

Normally the companies are given a period of about two years within which to float public shares.

But this informal time limit

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President and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Abdur Rahman Biswas, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Chiefs of the Three Services placed wreaths at the Shikha Anirban—the Eternal Flame at the Dhaka Cantonment on the occasion of the Armed Forces Day yesterday.

— ISPR photo

# Amity with armed forces will grow further: PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday underlined the need for carrying on united efforts by all with mutual friendship and amity to lead the country towards self-reliance and development, reports BSS.

Begum Zia said her government was carrying out relentless efforts to fulfill its sacred commitment of presenting the future generation with a happy and prosperous country.

The Prime Minister was speaking at a colourful reception organised on the occasion of the Armed Forces Day at the

Sena Kunja at Dhaka Cantonment in the evening. Begum Zia said the nation had started its new journey in a democratic atmosphere and lauded the contribution of the Armed Forces in bringing back the democratic rights.

"We are all the companions on way to development" the Prime Minister said and hoped the instance of mutual friendship and amity that we had set would further be strengthened.

Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan-Pannu, ministers, opposition leaders, members of parliament, diplomats, high ranking civil and military offi-

cials, retired military officers including former chiefs of staff, elite of the city and journalists attended the reception.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Abdus Samad Azad, Sajeda Chowdhury MP, Dr Kamal Hossain, Jamaat Secretary General Maitur Rahman Nizami, MP and CPB President Saifuddin Ahmed Manik were, among others, present at the occasion.

The Prime Minister exchanged greetings with the dignitaries and enquired about their well-being.

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## Colourful functions mark Armed Forces Day

The Armed Forces Day was observed yesterday with due solemnity and enthusiasm, according to an ISPR press release, reports BSS.

In Dhaka, the day's programme began with the laying of floral wreath at the Shikha Anirban—the eternal flame—at the Dhaka Cantonment in the morning.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas, who is also the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, placed floral wreath at the Shikha Anirban. He stood in solemn silence to pay homage to the members of

See Page 12 Col 7

# Uniform family code ensuring women's rights under study

The government is examining the existing laws with a view to establishing the just rights of the women under the purview of country's Constitution, reports BSS.

This was stated by Law, Justice and Parliament Affairs Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz while addressing as the chief guest at the inaugural session of a seminar on "Women Rights, Law Reforms and Uniform Family Code" in Dhaka yesterday.

The minister said a special cell had been formed at the Law, Justice and Parliament Affairs Ministry to examine the legal aspects for ensuring equal participation of women

in all socio-economic activities. Bangladesh Mahila Parishad has organised the two-day seminar at the National Museum Auditorium. The inaugural session was chaired by Mahila Parishad Chairperson Begum Sufia Kamal and addressed by its General Secretary Ayesha Khanam.

Advocate Zeyad-al-Malum presented a proposed draft "Uniform Family Code" at the inaugural session on behalf of the Mahila Parishad.

Mirza Golam Hafiz said: "We have laws about marriage, divorce, maintenance and alimony of women, children's succession and guardianship." But as the people belong to

different religions, there is no uniformity of law that covers all the citizens, he said.

Giving an example, the Law Minister said, according to the Muslim Law a Muslim marriage is a contractual, terminable relationship between man and woman while the Hindu Law said a marriage between man and woman is a religious sacrament that remains intact for the whole life.

The minister said in the Muslim Law both man and woman enjoy the equal rights of divorce or separation but the Hindu Law does not permit it.

So, the minister said it was a very complex matter to

frame a uniform family code about the rights of women of different religion. "It is really tough to enact law contrary to religious and long-established customs. Because the matter is highly sensitive," he added.

Mirza Golam Hafiz expressed the hope that if the leaders and citizens of different religions came forward and voiced demand and raised women's consciousness, it would be possible in near future to frame laws for women—irrespective of religion, caste and creed—to establish their rights as envisaged in the Constitution.

Our Staff Correspondent adds: Speaking during the af-

ternoon session of the seminar Dr Kamal Hossain, Convener of Bangladesh Democratic Forum, said that the men should come forward in support of the women's movement for equal rights.

"When the movement is for equal rights, all progressive people should participate in that," Dr Kamal said.

Dr Kamal expressed his opinion that the Constitution of the country does not restrict formation of any law to bridge any disparity. "All the clauses of the Constitution will help the movement for a discrimination-free society," he said.

The seminar was also ad-

dressed by Justice Anwarul Haque Chowdhury, Attorney General Aminul Haque, Dr Meghna Guha Thakurata and Dr Atiur Rahman.

Dr Kamal said the movement must be through the democratic process in which people from all stages should be involved for a consensus. He viewed that if the democratic process continues, the just rights of all section of people could be met.

He noted that the nation has gone backward by bringing so many amendments to the Constitution and stressed the need for a concerted movement to regain the lost rights.

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