

NIRMAN-TILES
Broken Marble Tiles In More Shades Than The Rainbow
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NEWS BRIEFS

Total lunar eclipse Monday

A total lunar eclipse will take place on Monday. Met office says the moon will enter the penumbra at 0927 BST and will leave penumbra at 1525 BST on that day. The moon will enter umbra at 1040 BST and will leave umbra at 1412 BST. The total eclipse will, however, begin at 1202 BST and will end at 1250 BST. The magnitude of the eclipse will be 1.092. This eclipse will not be visible from anywhere in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

SPGRC hunger strike today

Stranded Pakistanis General Repatriation Committee (SPGRC) has decided to observe a token hunger strike today to protest 'demolition and eviction' of camps of stranded Pakistanis. The eight-hour hunger strike in front of the National Press Club will begin at 8 am, reports UNB.

Four terrorists held in city

Detective police arrested a notorious terrorist from Fulbaria bus terminal area yesterday afternoon. Police sources said Nasiruddin Ahmed alias Nasir Khan, 40, was wanted for his involvement in various crimes, including murder, extortion of toll and rioting. Nasir was an absconding accused in a number of cases filed with Ramna police, the sources added. Dhanmondi thana patrol police arrested three more terrorists and recovered a loaded pipegun from their possession during a raid in Kathal Bagan area yesterday, reports UNB.

3 killed in Ctg road mishap

CHITTAGONG, Nov 26: Three persons were killed in two separate road accidents on Chittagong-Cox's Bazar road under Chandanaish thana today. According to district police, a Chittagong-bound bus from Cox's Bazar ran over two persons who were standing on the roadside at Zohara bus stand. The accident occurred as the driver lost control over the vehicle. The two victims were identified as Minto Mia and Mazal. In another accident, a passenger, Waziullah, died when he fell from the roof of a running bus coming to Chittagong from Rowshanhat under Chandanaish thana, reports BSS.

No headway in efforts to end JS crisis

By Nurul Kabir

No substantive progress was reported yesterday in negotiations between the ruling BNP and the boycotting Opposition in Parliament to resolve the present crisis arising out of the Opposition threat of resignation from the Jatiya Sangsad (JS).

According to Awami League policy-makers, Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina is still firm on her decision to resign unless Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali rescinds his ruling allowing a privilege motion in the House against her.

Earlier, on Monday, the Speaker allowed an identical motion against the Prime Minister and Leader of the House Begum Khaleda Zia.

Several rounds of talks have taken place so far — most of them over telephone — between the front-ranking leaders of both the ruling and Opposition parties.

On Wednesday night, soon after Hasina's threat in the House, the Prime Minister assigned Deputy Leader of the House Professor Badruddoza Chowdhury and BNP Secretary General Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder to explore all avenues for a reasonable settlement of the stand-off by holding talks with the boycotting Opposition.

The two leaders made hectic efforts all day Thursday to persuade the Opposition to agree to a compromise formula — that both the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition would make separate statements on the floor of the JS to clarify their respective positions on the accusations brought against them and to bury the controversial issue once and for all. Both are charged with accusing each other — and their party colleagues — of telling lies in the Jatiya Sangsad in contravention of their oaths as Parliamentarians.

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Step Back from the Precipice, Please

by Mahfuz Anam

Let me put it bluntly. The foremost public reaction to the present "created" crisis in Parliament is one of disillusionment, verging on disgust. Why is our hard-earned democratic option being put on shaky turf? What, possibly, can be the public gain from the present stand-off between the Leader of the Opposition and the Speaker? The question that is in the mind of every sober and straight thinking voter is: is this why we have spent hundreds of crores of Taka to hold an election — and continue to spend additional crores to sustain our public representatives — to quarrel to their hearts' content (and national interest be damned), on issues that have so very little to do with public well-being?

With monumental development challenges, acute all-round poverty and, so far, a lacklustre performance in attracting foreign investment to fuel our much needed growth, we should, literally, not have a moment to spare. But who cares? All we have produced in Parliament, so far — except the all-important 12th Amendment and a few legislations — are endless hours of accusations and counter accusations, bombastic rhetoric and facile debates. Oops, let me not forget

the consensus on raising perks and pensions, and of course the tax-free car!

The current tortuous situation began when our Prime Minister, who never finds anything good in the Opposition, said in a public meeting (7 November) which in effect meant that the Opposition MPs tell lies in Parliament. To this, our quick-to-retort, Leader of the Opposition said, (on 19 November, on return from China), that it is the Treasury bench which does the lying. Then came the two privilege motions — one each by the Treasury and the Opposition benches. The Speaker admitted both on succeeding days. The Leader of the House did not oppose the motion against her, but the Leader of the Opposition did, under a threat of resigning. The Speaker said that the AL chief had no right to challenge his ruling, and Sheikh Hasina said the Speaker's decision was a breach of the rules of procedure, smacking of political bias.

Given this sequence of events, was Sheikh Hasina right and justified in threatening to resign? Are threats and counter threats the language through which parliamentary democracy

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PM prompted Speaker's decision, says Hasina

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday alleged that the Speaker's ruling on November 24 was a planned move of the Prime Minister to undermine Parliament, reports UNB.

"It was not an isolated incident. The Prime Minister was always in favour of the presidential system; she is virtually running the government that way. She wants to use Parliament as a doll's house," Hasina remarked.

Talking to a group of intellectuals and cultural activists at her official residence at 29 Minto Road, the Awami League president also blamed the Prime Minister of tarnishing the image of Parliament by her utterances against the House on November 7.

"The long-drawn plan to belittle the image of Parliament has now taken a final shape. This situation can never be acceptable to the people," she said.

Besides, she said, the PM remains absent frequently from the proceedings of the House. If she at all remains present, the Prime Minister keeps herself mum and does not take part in any debate in Parliament, Hasina alleged.

Poet Shamsur Rahman, Zilur Rahman Siddiqui, Justice KM Sobhan, Dr Nilima Ibrahim, Dr Mazharul Islam, Santosh

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Remain alert against troublemakers, warns PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said politics of slogans and destruction will not help ensure welfare of the people and development of the country, reports UNB.

She blamed a certain political party, without mentioning its name, of creating 'unnecessary issues' to disrupt the development process and urged the people to remain alert against the troublemakers.

The Prime Minister was addressing the leaders and workers of Ramganj thana units of the BNP and its front organisation of Laxmipur district, who met her at Sugandha in the evening. They included the chairman and commissioners of the area.

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Businessmen alarmed by JS stand-off

Star Report

The current deadlock in the Jatiya Sangsad and the consequent political crisis had caused the country's business circle to be alarmed.

Businessmen are closely watching the developments in the political arena and fear that further aggravation of the present crisis would put the country's economic future into a spin of uncertainty and backtracking.

They are now hoping that the crisis would be solved amicably for the sake of saving the economy.

Anis ud-Dowla, former president of the Bangladesh Employers' Association (BEA), expressing his reactions to The Daily Star yesterday, said, "The present situation is a

destabilising development. "It would put back the investment climate created through the excellent macro-economic situation," he commented. "The climate had been clouded by the labour militancy of the SKOP for two years, and now once again the political stand-off has dampened it."

The turmoil in the Jatiya Sangsad would once again encourage the labour front to be militant, he felt.

"The political parties now must exercise restraint for the sake of the economy," Anis ud-Dowla maintained.

Latifur Rahman, president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry

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Rao seeks Dhaka's cooperation to send back Chakmas

AIZAWL, Nov 26: Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao today sought the cooperation of Bangladesh in repatriating the 50,000 Chakma refugees sheltered in refugee camps in Tripura for about seven years, reports PTI.

The Prime Minister, who was here on a two-day election campaign tour for Congress-I, told a news conference this evening that talks had been held between the two countries to resolve the problem. He was hopeful that it would be settled by the two countries.

He said recently a refugee delegation had visited the Chittagong Hill Tracts and reported that the situation there was much better now.

He said a delegation from Bangladesh also visited the refugee camps and this was a continuous process.

Representatives from Bangladesh, Tripura government and the centre would sit together and sort out the matter, he added.

S M Ali's chehlum held

By Staff Correspondent

The chehlum of S M Ali, founding-editor and publisher of the Daily Star, was held at the office of the Daily yesterday after Asr prayers.

A large number of friends, relatives, admirers, diplomats and colleagues attended the chehlum.

A milad held on the occasion sought eternal peace and salvation of the departed soul.

S M Ali died on October 17 at a Bangkok hospital due to kidney failure.

Ali's long and distinguished journalistic career, spanning over four decades, earned him name and fame at home and abroad, especially in the South and Southeast Asian region.

As Editor-Publisher of The Daily Star — launched on January 14, 1991 — Ali gave journalism in Bangladesh a new and badly needed impetus.

Dr Milon's death anniversary today

By Staff Correspondent

The third death anniversary of Dr. Shamsul Alam Khan Milon, will be observed today.

Dr. Milon, Joint Secretary General of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), was assassinated on the Dhaka University campus, at the age of 40, at the anti-autocracy agitation on December 27, 1990.

Different organisations including the BMA have taken up elaborate programmes to mark the day.

The programmes include placing of wreaths at the newly-built memorial sculpture of Dr. Milon near the Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) of the DU, where he was gunned down by some unknown assailants.

The BMA leaders will hold a

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Australian MPs arrive today

A six-member delegation from the Australian parliament arrives here today on a seven-day official visit, reports BSS.

The Deputy Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives, Harry Jenkin, is leading the delegation.

The purpose of the visit is to promote relations between Bangladesh and Australia, to explore opportunities for increased trade, to inspect project supported by Australian aid to Bangladesh, and to find out more about relations between Bangladesh and other SAARC countries.

The delegation will visit Rangamat and Bandarban to explore the current situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The delegation will also visit Cox's Bazar, where it will inspect refugee camps and discuss issues associated with the repatriation of Rohingya refugees.

The member of the delegation are: Harry Jenkin (Deputy Speaker and leader of the delegation), Tewart McArthur, Colin Holjis, Silvia Smith, John Bradford and Philip Cleary.

The delegation has been in India since November 21. After leaving Bangladesh on December 3, it will make an official visit to Nepal before returning to Australia.



Despite a ban on the shooting or capture of guest birds — which migrate from cooler climes — such sights are common on some major city streets, especially at this time of the year. — Star photo

10m legal immigrants to become US citizens

NEW YORK, Nov 26: The Clinton administration will encourage some 10 million legal immigrants to become US citizens in a bid to counter anti-immigrant sentiment. The New York Times reported in its Friday edition, reports Reuter.

The administration's effort could enfranchise millions who have live in the United States for years without seeking citizenship.

When immigrants become citizens, they gain the right to vote, hold public office and serve on juries.

Becoming citizens would also make it easier to get jobs, a police officer or public school teacher, positions reserved for citizens in some states.

Citizenship also makes it easier for immigrants to bring close relatives into the United States, the Times said.

The immigration and naturalisation service estimates that 10 million legal permanent residents who are not citizen live in the United States.

By the turn of the century, this group may constitute one-fourth of the population in some

cities, including New York, Los Angeles and Miami, the news paper said.

Until now the federal government has not promoted naturalisation, and the complexity of the process has probably discouraged many from applying for citizenship, the report added.

In addition, many immigrants express ambivalent feelings, wishing to become part of US society while also retaining roots in their homeland.

Doris Meissner, the commissioner of immigration and naturalisation, said in an interview with the newspaper that the new policy was intended to defuse tension over immigration.

"We have to do as much as we can to promote naturalisation... I am very concerned about the anti-immigrant feeling we see in various parts of the country and in Congress."

"Naturalization helps counter anti-immigrant attitudes. When people become citizens, they accept our values, and most Americans are reassured," Meissner added.

24 thatched huts, noodles factory gutted in city

By Staff Correspondent

A noodles factory at Postogola and 24 thatched huts at the Gopibagh sweepers' colony in the city were burned down yesterday, leaving 200 people homeless.

The thatched houses were gutted when a fire spread from a kerosene-lamp at the Gopibagh railway sweepers' colony at around 1 pm.

Some 200 people became homeless and lost their belongings in the blaze which engulfed the area immediately.

Firemen said that it took them over two hours to douse the flames.

An electric short circuit caused fire which gutted the tin-roofed room of the Dodo Noodle Factory near Alam Market at around 2 pm.

Firemen brought the blaze under control after about an hour.

A huge quantities of flour, prepared noodles and electric motors were burned to ashes.

The factory owner estimated the loss at about Tk 5 lakh.

50 hurt as BNP factions clash in Cox's Bazar

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Nov 26: Some fifty people were injured in sporadic clashes between two factions of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) here today.

The clashes occurred a day before the Prime Minister's Cox's Bazar visit. Begum Khaleda Zia is due here for a two-day visit tomorrow.

Two factions — led by district BNP leaders Ekramul Huda Chowdhury and Mahmudul Karim Chowdhury — confronted each other while leading separate processions at the Laldighi area at 5 pm. Later the skirmishes spread to the Court Road and its adjacent areas.

Police resorted to baton charge to disperse the processions at different points, witnesses said. Police also felled two parallel rallies of the groups at the Court Road area at six in the evening when speakers from both sides were making provocative comments against each other.

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Money market Another dull week

By Inam Ahmed

A situation of surplus liquidity coupled with feeble inter-bank transactions marked the last week's money market in the country.

The inter-bank call money rates remained depressed and inter-bank US dollar rates showed the continued low mood of the market, according to banking sources.

"Imports did not pick up during the week, causing the low appetite for dollars," a banker commented on the week's trading. "Investments are yet to come up."

The inter-bank call money rates ranged between two and four per cent while the inter-bank dollar rate remained around Tk 39.76. Despite efforts put in by some foreign banks like Standard Chartered and ANZ Grindlays, and keen interest to develop the forward covers by the Bangladesh Bank, the inter-bank forward market did not develop.

When asked, a senior official of the Bangladesh Bank (BB) said clients are not interested in taking forward cover because of

stable taka position against the dollar. However, he mentioned that the Central Bank has already taken notice of this trend and the commercial banks have been advised last week to be more active in inter-bank transactions and quote forward rates to clients.

Other than the US dollar, there had been some growing interests from the customers in major crosses. Market sources said there had been a sizeable transaction in the yen.

"This also resulted from the stable taka because the clients had no fear of losing in double conversions," a source said.

During the Saturday and Sunday, the Standard Chartered dealing room alone remained open and quoted on the majors with safety margins.

Despite the depressed market situation, the clients rates did not show any changes. Cost of one US dollar from the banks' counter remained between Tk 39.95 and Tk 40.

During the week, the bank rate also remained unchanged at 5.5 per cent

Govt will help private sector develop computer technology

By Staff Correspondent

A two-day computer exhibition began in the city yesterday with 18 major computer companies of the country taking part.

Computers from the popular 80386 to the latest Pentium have been put on display. The Bangladesh Computer Society (BCS) has organised the show at Sonargaon Hotel.

The response is more than just encouraging', Sajjad Hossain, president of the BCS told the Daily Star. He said that several thousand people visited

the fair on the opening day.

"All the computing solutions under one roof," is the slogan of the show.

Inaugurating the exposition, Commerce Minister M Shamsul Huq said computer technology could play an important role in expediting the overall development of the country.

He said the government will extend all possible cooperation to the private sector to develop computer technology in the country.

A large number of govern-

ment offices have already introduced computers, he added.

Ciproco Ltd, a BCS member which could not book space in the exhibition, organised a separate show of its products at a nearby stall.

On the opening day the visitors showed keen interest in the latest range of international office equipment, the Canofile 250 machines.

The speciality of the Canofile is that the machine can handle multiple files from different

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Committee to gear up cottage industries soon

By Special Correspondent

A high-level committee will be formed to boost growth of cottage industries for generating more job opportunities.

According to official sources, the committee to be headed by the Minister for Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives will be constituted with ministers heading other relevant ministries such as Industries, Finance, Youth and Sports, Labour and Manpower etc as its members. The committee will coordinate the activities aimed at setting up more cot-

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Israeli withdrawal from Gaza may be delayed

JERUSALEM, Nov 26: After one of the bloodiest days since the signing of the Israel-PLO accord, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has warned there could be a delay in the start of the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, reports AP.

The military on Friday was sending troop reinforcements to Gaza, media reports said.

Thirty-four Palestinians, including a 10-year-old boy and two 12-year-old boys, were injured in rioting Thursday, hospital officials said.

Thursday's unrest came a day after the army killed guerrilla leader Imad Aqal in an

ambush. Aqal, 23, was commander of Izzedine el Qussem, the military wing of the Muslim fundamentalist group Hamas, which had been waging a violent campaign to derail the Israel-PLO peace talks.

In a leaflet, Hamas threatened to kill Israeli soldiers in retaliation.

A commercial strike was underway for a second day in Gaza to mourn the death of Aqal, who topped Israel's most wanted list for killing 11 Israeli soldiers and four Palestinians suspected of being informers.

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