

20 including  
9 BSF men  
killed in  
Tripura blast

AGARTALA, Nov 7: At least 20 people, nine BSF personnel and 11 civilians, all travelling in a BSF convoy, were killed in a powerful explosion by suspected militants of the banned National Liberation Front of Tripura near Raishyabari in Dhalai district, the Director General of Police, Tripura, B P Singh, said, reports PTI.

The massive explosion, believed to have been triggered by anti-tank mines, blew up the vehicle, which was the second from the front, into pieces. Seven of the nine BSF men were killed on the spot. Five people, including two civilians, were injured.

The BSF Inspector General, AK Sarbadhikari, said that the militants attacked the BSF convoy which was on its way to Dyke four around noon after conducting an anti-militant operation in the border areas. The militants looted a cache of arms including SLR rifles.

A general alert had been sounded all along the border and patrolling intensified in the area, the BSF I G said. The Tripura Chief Minister, Dasarath Deb, directed the army and para-military forces to launch massive combing operation in the area.

**JSD leader  
shot dead  
in Kushtia**

From Our Correspondent  
KUSHTIA, November 7: A JSD leader and Freedom Fighter, Abdul Wahab, 45, was gunned down last night by five unidentified persons of a tea stall at Khoksa Bazar in the town.

Police later recovered the body and sent it to Kushtia General Hospital for autopsy. A case has been registered with Khoksa police station in this connection.

After autopsy today, JSD leaders and workers brought out a big procession with the body of Wahab and paraded the main streets of the town.

They later held a meeting at Majampur gate with Lokman Hossain in chair and called dawn-to-dusk hartal in the town protesting killing.

They also brought out a torch procession this evening in support of tomorrow's hartal.

**56 killed as  
train hits  
bus in Cuba**

HAVANA, Nov 7: A train hit a packed passenger bus that had failed to stop at an intersection in rural Cuba early Thursday, killing 56 people and injuring eight, according to a preliminary toll, radio Progreso reported, says AFP.

The crash occurred near the eastern Cuban town of San German.

Most of the people on the bus were adults travelling from the town of Urbano Noris to the provincial capital Holguin. The train was travelling from Santiago to Havana.

**The Daily Star  
on the Internet  
<http://www.dailystarnews.com>**

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**Business**

Investors' Forum:  
Tofael stresses setting  
up of gas-based  
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Investors urged at concluding session of int'l confce

## Exploit vast potential in Bangladesh

Large-scale foreign private investment.

"There is a national consensus on economic issues and investors should take note of it... Yes, there are some occasional disturbances, but these are nothing but some ripples," he told the conference.

He again listed the incentives and opportunities now prevailing in Bangladesh and said many foreign investors have already shown tremendous interests to invest in the country's potential sectors.

"You please come to invest in the potential sectors for high returns by taking advantage of the preferential market access and investment incentives offered by the government," Tofael told the investors.

Representatives of the foreign companies already active in the country also expressed the same view that despite some problems, Bangladesh remains a good destination for foreign investors as it ensures profitable growth.

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starvation and economic backwardness, rather a country of bright prospect for rapid economic development," he told the conference.

The Bangladesh government in collaboration with the Financial Times Conference, a subsidiary of the London-based economic daily, organised the forum just after the Bangladesh Aid Group Meeting at a city hotel.

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed, who spoke on the role of foreign investment in Bangladesh, also made a similar call to the investors to invest in a country that have many opportunities to offer.

"We are no more identified as a country of cyclone, tidal bore,

representatives of the foreign companies already active in the country also expressed the same view that despite some problems, Bangladesh remains a good destination for foreign investors as it ensures profitable growth.

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Task Force meets in Ctg today to review CHT situation

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 7: The Task Force on refugee repatriation will hold a meeting at Chittagong circuit house tomorrow to review the overall situation in CHT ahead of resumption of repatriation of tribal refugees from Tripura, India.

Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong Md Shakhat Hosain who is the member secretary of Task Force told this correspondent that tomorrow's meeting was also aimed at taking preparation to start the next phase of repatriation, scheduled to begin from November 21.

Chief Whip of Jatiya Sangsad Abul Hasnat Abdullah who is heading the National Committee on CHT is expected to attend the meeting as chief guest while Mayor of Chittagong City Corporation Mohiuddin Chowdhury will remain present as special guest, sources in the Task Force said.

The meeting will be presided over by Kalparanjan Chakma, MP, Chairman of the Task Force.

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## Cyclonic storm in Bay intensifies

By Special Correspondent

The remains of Typhoon Linda that raked Vietnam, Cambodia and parts of Thailand gained strength rolling in the Central Bay yesterday, but it slurred northward movement on the day kept meteorologists on their toes, watching its movement.

The cyclonic storm is likely to intensify further and move slowly in a northerly direction. If it does not change course, it may move towards Bangladesh, a meteorologist told The Daily Star last night.

If the storm moves in a north-easterly direction, it will crash on the mountains of Arakan in Western Myanmar and lash parts of Bangladesh's south-eastern tip, he said.

According to Reuters reports from Calcutta quoting Indian weathermen, the storm was moving "in the north direction, the typhoon may avert India and hit parts of Burma and Bangladesh".

The weird course of the storm has baffled its watchers.

When the tail spin moved from the remains of Linda on the Andaman Sea last week, it turned into a cyclonic storm on Wednesday and proceeded north-westward.

The talks will continue till Monday when the renewal of the Indo-Bangladesh protocol on inland water transit and trade began here today, reports BSS.

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At the talks, Shipping Secretary AH Mofazzal Karim is leading the Bangladesh side while Surface Transport Secretary Yogendra Narain is the head of Indian side.

The agreement was signed earlier in 1995 for a period of two years.

**Water transit**  
Indo-Bangla talks on renewal of protocol begin

NEW DELHI, Nov 7: An official-level talks between Bangladesh and India on the renewal of the protocol on inland water transit and trade began here today, reports BSS.

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**Albright to start S Asia tour Nov 16**

WASHINGTON, Nov. 7: US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Defence Secretary William Cohen planned to travel to South Asia and Asia next week on separate trips, reports AP.

Albright will visit Pakistan, India and Bangladesh to help prepare for a presidential trip to those countries in early 1998.

She will arrive in Pakistan on Nov. 16 after taking part in a Middle East economic conference in Qatar.

In Pakistan she will encourage the government's commitment to democratic development, human rights, and religious tolerance, and work with Pakistani officials to end the conflict in Afghanistan, State Department spokesman James P. Rubin said.

He said the focus in the chair will be on strategic and environmental issues. The dispute between India and Pakistan will not be a central theme of the trip.

The agenda for Bangladesh includes democratic and economic development, women's empowerment and child labour issues, Rubin said.

**Preparations for business summit almost complete**

Preparations are almost complete to host a three-nation business summit in the city on November 23 that is poised to usher in a new horizon of mutual trust and climate of cooperation among the countries of the subcontinent, reports UNB.

Initiated by Dhaka, the summit conference will be attended by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Indian Prime Minister IK Gujral and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

The three leaders will strive to devise ways of maximising trade and economic cooperation to promote socio-economic condition of some 1.25 billion people.

The planned summit, first of its kind, is seen as launching pad towards establishing a free trade zone in the South Asian region.

IK Gujral and Nawaz Sharif, who will arrive in the city on Nov. 23.

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**4-nation confce on eradication of Malaria, Kala Azar in city Nov 18-20**

By Staff Correspondent

A four-nation conference on control and eradication of two deadly diseases — malaria and kala-azar — will be held in Bangladesh from November 18 to 20.

Official sources said, the three-day conference, to be participated by about 35 experts from Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan is being organised by the South East Asia Region Office (SEARO). The conference to be held at the BRAC's Centre for Development Management, at Rajendrapur, would focus on strategies to control the diseases in the common border regions.

The sources said, the principal target of the conference would be to find ways for a synchronised effort to contain the diseases. They would also pre-

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Khaleda at discussion on 'Solidarity Day'

## Foil conspiracy on CHT, Sylhet

By Staff Correspondent

Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday cautioned against 'conspiracy' to compromise the country's sovereignty over Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Sylhet and some other areas and urged the people to get united in the spirit of November 7 revolution.

"Conspiracy is on against the CHT, one tenth area of the country. If the country's sovereignty over CHT is compromised, we may lose Chittagong and the sea port as well and eventually Feni also," said the BNP chairperson while taking part in a discussion in the

city as chief guest.

The discussion meeting marking the 'National Revolution and Solidarity Day' was held at Ramna Park, organised by the solidarity day observance committee, with its convenor and BNP leader Mir Shakhat Ali in the chair.

Begum Zia also said that conspiracy was on with some other resourceful parts of the country including Sylhet. "If this subversive government tries to hand over to India various parts of the country including CHT, the people will unite in the spirit of March 26, 1971 and

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**Bidding for exploration blocks**

## No outcome in talks with Shell

Star Report

Negotiations with oil giant Shell, for hydrocarbon exploration in different blocks in the country ended last week without any positive outcome, sources said.

Meanwhile, the government, on Wednesday, invited South Asia Oil, USA, to discuss hydrocarbon exploration in blocks 4 and 5. The company told the Energy Ministry that it would send its representatives on November 16.

Another US company, Enron, has been invited to discuss about blocks 6 and 11 on November 11.

The sources said no substantial progress has been made so

far in the negotiations on signing Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) for exploration of hydrocarbon in 12 blocks in the country. The government had said earlier that negotiations would be completed and PSCs signed with 'competent' companies by December 15.

The Energy Secretary, who plays a vital role in the negotiation process, is scheduled to go on a two-week official visit to the US while a member of the negotiation committee is leaving for a week-long visit to India. Observers said that their absence would slow down the on-going negotiations.

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## 3 more EPZs to be set up in 2 yrs

Bangladesh will have three more export processing zones within next two years providing additional facilities for investors from both home and abroad, reports BSS.

Disclosing this in the last session of the investors' forum in the city yesterday, Moazzem Khan, executive chairman of BEPZA said the existing two export processing zones (EPZ) are unable to cope with increasing demand from investors.

Peter Montagnon, Asia edi-

tor, Financial Times, was in the chair. The session was titled "investing for export: export processing zone". Kihak Sung, chairman, Youngone Corporation, one of the largest foreign companies in EPZ also spoke in the session.

Khan said despite expansion, BEPZA and DEPZ are not in a position to make room for any more investor.

The homogeneous nature of the land and its people, large number of potential human resources, were the main reasons for the success of BEPZA, Khan said.

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**Water, power lines of 16 shops at ZIA cut**

By Staff Correspondent

The Zia International Airport (ZIA) authorities has disconnected the power and water supply lines of most of the shops inside the airport following a four-year dispute over rent.

The action was taken on Wednesday in a bid to recover about Tk two crore in unpaid rent and other charges from the shops, airport sources said.

It concerned 16 shops including those of stationary and snacks.

Shop owners claimed that the ZIA authorities did not have the right to disconnect the utility supply lines as there was a court order to maintain status quo. They also said the action seriously hampered their business and tarnished the image of the international airport.

General secretary of the ZIA, Md. Sharif, said the ZIA officials had not shut down the

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