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## Shab-e-Barat on the night of Dec 5

The holy Shab-e-Barat will be observed in the country on the night of December 5, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the National Moon Sighting Committee here yesterday with State Minister for Religious Affairs and Chairman of the committee Maulana Nurul Islam in the chair.

The meeting decided that the month of Shaban will start from Sunday (Nov 22) as the moon was not sighted anywhere in the country yesterday.

Secretary of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Ismail Hossain, Director General of Islamic Foundation and other members of the committee attended the meeting, said a press release.

## Sylhet airport officials manhandled

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Nov 20: The station manager of Civil Aviation in Sylhet, four customs officials and two sepoys were manhandled by some unruly youths at the customs lounge at Sylhet Osmani Airport this morning.

An official said a group of activists of pro-Awami League Bangladesh Chhatra League went to the airport to receive Bahadur Bepari and Ajoy Kar Khokan, president and general secretary respectively of the central committee and Enamul Haque Panna ex-president of the student organisation. They asked the Civil Aviation officials to allow them to use the VIP lounge. But the employees refused.

Then they approached the station manager who also refused to comply with the same. The BCL activists at this became agitated and attacked the airport officials. They also chased the airport manager who took shelter in the customs lounge. The agitated youths made their way into customs lounge and swooped on the officials and employees there.

The Superintendent of Customs, Saifullah, who was on duty in the customs lounge and was manhandled, said the rowdy elements manhandled him and customs inspector Kalipada Roy and Abdul Mannan, sepoys Yousuf and Abdul Mannan.

The customs and airport officials immediately after the incident stopped working de-

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FROM DELIGHT TO PLIGHT: Mother wails over the body of her son, Akter, (left), and grief-stricken father of Rimon (inset). The boys went to Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium at Mirpur to enjoy an open-air concert, but returned dead after a clash outside the stadium.

## Two concert goers stabbed to death

By Staff Correspondent

Two students were stabbed to death and two others were injured outside the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium at Mirpur in the city last night.

The incident took place when an open air concert to collect fund for flood affected people, organized by Joy Bangla Sangsritik Oikkya Jote, was going on inside the stadium.

The dead were Rimon, 18, son of Amjad Hossain and a first student of BCIC Science College, and Imrul Most Akter, 17, son of Shah Alam and a first year student of Adamjee Cantonment Public School and College. They died when they were being taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, hospital sources said.

One of them, found lying in front of Mirpur thana in a critical condition, was taken to the DMCH by police and the others were taken to the hospital by some local people, police said.

The injured were Russel, 17, reportedly an SSC examinee from National High School and Shaqir, 18, reportedly an extra at the FDC. Russel is a friend of the two who died. They were admitted to DMCH with critical stab wounds in their chest and back. Shaqir was at the operation theatre till filing of this report at about 11:30 pm.

Neither police nor relatives of the victims could say how the incident took place. Police said there was a chaos outside the stadium at that time. Some young men exploded a number of crackers and were locked in a scuffle with another group and chased each other. Mirpur police said but could not confirm whether these led to the killings.

One person who left the stadium at the end of the concert at that time told this correspondent that when he came

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## Six new police stations under DMP soon

By Staff Correspondent

Six new police stations are going to be set up under the Dhaka Metropolitan Police shortly, said highly placed official sources.

The new police stations - Kamrangirchar, Hazaribagh, Badda, Kafur, Khilgaon and Shyampur - will be in addition to the existing 15 under the DMP, the sources said.

Funds have been sanctioned and policemen are being posted, they added.

Areas of the new police stations (thanas) have been demarcated, unless sets procured and houses rented.

Each thana will have at least 50 constables, 11 ASIs, 15 SIs under an OC of the rank of Inspector.

Kamrangirchar area is now under Lalbagh thana and Hazaribagh area is covered jointly by Mohammadpur, Lalbagh and Dhanmendi thanas. The two new thanas in Kamrangirchar and Hazaribagh will come under the DMP South Zone.

Khilgaon and Shyampur areas are now under Sabujbagh and Demra thanas respectively. These two thanas will come under the DMP East Zone.

Badda and Kafur areas, now covered by Gulshan and Cantonment thanas, are under DMP North Zone. The new thanas will remain under the same zone.

No new thana, however, is going to be operative in the West Zone of DMP.

## Military courts to try 'terrorists' Civil rights suspended in Sindh, army called in

KARACHI, Nov 20: Pakistan's prime minister today suspended civil rights in a southern province and ordered the army to quell violence in the port city of Karachi, where 1,000 people have died in factional fighting, report AP.

Nawaz Sharif called in the army in the Sindh province to aid the government and set up military courts in the port city of Karachi to try the "terrorists" who are behind the factional violence. These courts will decide cases within days, not weeks and months, he said.

"The step has been taken because the terrorists were becoming more and more powerful," he said. "We want to get Karachi out of this hell."

Sharif last month dismissed the elected provincial government of Sindh after widespread political violence killed more than 1,000 people in Karachi this year, paralysing economic activity.

Sharif accused his former ally, the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM), of most of the bloodletting in Karachi including last month's murder of former governor Hakim Said.

Human rights groups and opposition parties today said the move was unconstitutional and threatened democracy.

"It is an undeclared martial law," said Asma Jehangir, the chairperson of independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, who urged Sharif to resign. Calling in the army "is an acceptance of incompetence by the government."

Sharif said the state of emergency is in the larger interest of the city and the country. President Rafiq Tarik invoked Article 245 of the Constitution, which allows the suspension of civil rights, bans political meetings and strikes and prevents military court rulings from being challenged in civilian court.

The official news agency APP said the president today promulgated the Pakistan Armed Forces (acting in aid of the civil powers) Ordinance, 1998.

The Ordinance shall extend to such areas of the province of Sindh in which the armed forces are called upon to act in aid of the civil powers under Article 245 of the Constitution.

Sharif said all cases of terrorism and serious crimes in Karachi would be tried to military courts and that appeals (against decisions) would also be heard by military courts.

He said the governor will continue to head the provincial administration and military courts will operate until they are no longer needed.

The MQM, which changed its name to Muttahida Quami Movement from the Mohajir Quami Movement, is locked in a bloody conflict with its dissident faction called the MQM Haqiqi.

The main party is controlled by Altaf Hussain, who has lived in London since 1992.

## Indo-Bangla talks on cross-border insurgency today

Bangladesh and India will open official talks in the city today with cross-border insurgency, push-in, trafficking and some other outstanding problems on top of the agenda, reports UNB.

Home Secretary Shafiqur Rahman will lead the host side while his counterpart BP Singh, will lead his country at the two-day talks, officials said.

This parity, deferred twice earlier, is seen as important in view of push-in and push-back of Bengali-speaking Indian nationals across the frontier in recent months.

The push-in issued, a bone of contention between the two next-door neighbours now-days, was also raised at the BDR-BSF talks held in Dhaka last month.

Bangladesh wants to resolve all the longstanding issues, including the sensitive push-in problem, through bilateral discussion.

"During his stay in Dhaka, the Indian Home Secretary will call on Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad."

BSS adds: Indian Home Secretary BP Singh arrived in the city yesterday afternoon for talks with his Bangladesh counterpart Shafiqur Rahman, official sources said.

## Cyclone heading towards coast

By Special Correspondent

The deep depression over east central Bay and adjoining west central Bay turned into a cyclonic storm yesterday afternoon and was moving towards Bangladesh coast, Meteorological Department said tonight.

It is moving in a north-westerly direction and unless it turns towards the west, the cyclone may make a "land-fall" in the coast. Met officials said.

However, its precise direction will be available later if it moves further.

The cyclone was centered about 770 km south-southwest of Chittagong port and 700 km south of Khulna city at 9 pm yesterday.

"Its peripheral gusty or squally wind may touch the coastline by tonight (Friday night)," a special bulletin from the Storm Warning Centre said last night.

Maximum sustained wind within 54 kms of the storm centre is about 65 kph, rising to 85 kph in gust or squall.

"Sea will remain very rough," cautioned the weather office.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been advised to keep hoisted local Cautionary Signal Number 3.

The depression brewed off a low in the Andaman Sea and kept a northwestern course until yesterday morning when it began moving in north-westerly direction, they said.

PTI adds: Coastal districts of West Bengal were yesterday alerted by the administration against a cyclonic storm, having a wind-speed of 80 to 100 km per hour, which is likely to lash its coast today.

District authorities of Midnapore, south and north 24-Parganas, Calcutta, Howrah and Hooghly have been asked to take necessary precautionary measures.

A cyclonic alert was also sounded over north coastal Andhra and the collectors of cyclone-prone Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam were asked to take necessary measures, official source told PTI in Hyderabad.

## 7-party rejects polls in 2000

The seven-party alliance has rejected the Prime Minister's announcement of holding elections in 2000 saying the people want immediate relief from Awami misrule, reports UNB.

The people expressed no confidence in the government by observing 60-hour hartal despite armed resistance and terrorism by the ruling party, the alliance said in a meeting held at the office of Jamaat-e-Islami at Maghbarah with BNP leader Shamsul Islam MP in the chair.

Apprehending the people's resentment, the government announced general elections in 2000 and virtually accepted the justification of the opposition's demand for mid-term elections, the alliance said.

It called upon the government to step down immediately and hand over power to a caretaker administration, said a press release.

The leaders termed the declaration that "Awami League would never enforce hartal" as an evil design of the government to create confusion among the people.

## Armed Forces Day today

The Armed Forces Day will be observed in the country today, reports UNB.

On this day in 1971, Bangladesh Armed Forces comprising army, navy and air force, were formed and launched an allout attack on the then Pakistani occupation forces.

Considering the post-flood situation, the day's programme will be observed in an austere manner.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages on the eve of the Armed Forces Day.

The President in a message said the members of the armed forces would always remain ready to perform important

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## BNP compelled to call hartals



Envoys from Muslim and Asian countries met with opposition leader and BNP chief Khaleda Zia at her official residence in the city yesterday.

## Diplomats and donors told

By Special Correspondent

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia continued to meet diplomats and donor agency representatives yesterday, explaining the current political and economic situation in the country, one of her aides said.

The BNP chief explained her stand vis-a-vis the "no hartal" offer by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, reiterating that it was up to the government's attitude whether there would be hartals or not. Rezaul Karim, foreign policy adviser to Begum Zia told newsmen. The diplomats called on her at her Minto Road official residence.

She reiterated her stand on it telling the diplomats that she does not believe in the politics of hartal (general strike). She also stated this in parliament.

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## Khaleda tells Reuters Govt should quit, call mid-term polls

Star Report

Begum Khaleda Zia, Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad yesterday said that she saw no end to the current standoff with the government unless it called early elections.

"Prevailing situation in the country demands a mid-term election," she told Reuters in an interview, excerpts of which was obtained by The Daily Star.

"I ask the government to quit now and call elections immediately," said Khaleda, chief of the main opposition party BNP.

"The national economy is going downhill since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina took over two and a half years ago. Sooner she goes is better. So we have given our programme to build pressure on the government," Khaleda said.

Khaleda said she would not ease the pressure despite a recent sobering gesture by Hasina.

Hasina said her Awami League would never resort to general strike again for political gains "no matter we are in the government or in the opposition".

"Our agitation programme will continue," said Khaleda, Hasina's predecessor, who called a 60-hour national strike that virtually crippled the country for three days last week.

Hasina took office in June 1996 following a general election.

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## Gruesome!

By Staff Correspondent

Extortionists cut tendons of both hands and legs of a shoe vendor at Gulistan in the city yesterday afternoon.

Identified by hospital sources as Biplob, 22, son of Najrul Islam, the victim was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

A gang of about five hoodlums demanded toll from the shoe vendor at about 4:30 pm, sources said.

When he refused to entertain their demand, the gang dragged Biplob inside staircase of a nearby building and cut his tendons.

**Inside Today**

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**Supplement**

Today's 20-page issue of The Daily Star contains a 4-page supplement on 'Armed Forces Day' on pages 17, 18, 19 & 20

## Farmers harassed in Madaripur No bribe, no agri loan

By Gobinda Bar back from Madaripur

Despite government's directive to ensure a corruption-free and quick disbursement of agriculture loan, bank officials in Madaripur are allegedly taking bribe from farmers in giving loans.

Bank officials, in connivance with brokers, middlemen and tahsildars, force farmers to bribe Tk 100 to 200 for a loan of Tk 1000, farmers alleged. Those who do not bribe the officials are put off even for months.

"If their palms are greased, loans are available in a day and if not, they say there is no application form or take to other pleas," said a farmer in Rajoir.

Khorshed of Bajitpur village under Rajoir thana and Anil of Bahadurpur village under Madaripur Sadar thana said they are yet to get loans from Sonali Bank though they applied more than a month ago.

Makhan Lal Biswas and Amar Chand Roy in Kamalapur village under Rajoir thana alleged that they had to bribe Sonali Bank officials for loans. Pabitra Adhikari of Satpur village said he got a loan of Tk 5000 after one month of filing the application.

Local Awami League leader and farmer Abdus Sattar Sheikh of Rajoir said, "Loans are not disbursed according to lists given by block supervisors of Agriculture Extension Service. Anybody can get loan if he gives bribe even if he is not a farmer."

Farmers further alleged that brokers also were extracting money from loan-seekers to "manage" loans.

Almuzzaman, who came to Sonali Bank at Rajoir for loan, told this correspondent that a four-taka revenue stamp required for bank loans now sells at Tk 20 to 25 at the Rajoir thana post office. When this correspondent asked for the stamps and wanted to know its price, post office employees said it was not available there.

Ishaq Sardar, Senior Principal Officer (SPO) of Madaripur Regional Branch of Sonali Bank admitted that some middlemen were exploiting the loan seekers. The SPO and Rajoir

Sonali Bank Manager Sardar Mosharraf Hossain however, claimed that the loan disbursement process was fair and ruled out the allegations of corruption.

When Food and Agriculture Minister Begum Motia Chowdhury was informed of alleged bribery in disbursement of agri loans, she said tough action will be taken against the persons concerned if such allegations are proved. She advised the people to inform such irregularities to the local monitoring cell led by TNO and the district monitoring cell headed by the DC.

"Local UP chairman was informed about the matter but no action was taken. Bank officials have developed links with tahsildars to earn money illegally," said a farmer of Kadambari.

Sunil Godu, a farmer from Harinagar said he and some other submitted necessary papers and Tk 100 each to a broker, who is a local leader of a political party for loans from Sonali Bank.

## All 5 dormitories of Ctg Polytech closed for 4 yrs

From Ofiul Hasnat Ruhin

CHITTAGONG, Nov 20: All five dormitories of Chittagong Polytechnic Institute have remained closed for the last four years.

At least 1,500 students, some 300 of them female, have been facing acute accommodation problem as the authorities failed to reopen these hostels for lack of initiatives.

Essential furniture of the hostels have become unusable due to lack maintenance and the buildings are lying in an abandoned state.

The authorities had ordered the students to vacate five dormitories — Dr Shahidullah Hostel, Nabab Siraj-ud-Dawla Hostel, Surya Sen Hostel, Kazi Nazrul Islam Hostel and Moazzem Hossain Mithu Female Hostel following clashes between Jatjyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) on November 20, 1994 that left three killed.

Although classes resumed after eight months of that violence, the authorities did not reopen the dormitories citing various grounds, especially 'security risk'. Later, 85 female students were accommodated in the staff quarters of the Institute and they are living there till date.

But, for the rest there has been no such makeshift arrangement and students are finding it hard to carry on their study at the Institute.

Prof Fariduddin Ahmed, Principal of the Institute, when asked, told The Daily Star, "Reconstruction is required for the reopening of the hostels." All the furniture needs to be refurbished, he pointed out.

"We need a lot of money and I've informed the Facilities Department about it. We're waiting for a positive response," said Ahmed adding, they also need more staff and guards to re-open the hostels.

Meanwhile, some student leaders alleged that the authorities and a section of teachers of the Institute were against re-opening the dormitories.

**Another abducted in Khagrachhari**

KHAGRACHHARI, Nov 20: Another tribal was kidnapped last night here allegedly by opponents of the CHT peace accord, reports UNB.

It has occurred only after five days of abduction of four

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**বিশেষ বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

স্বামিনিত ক্রেতাদের অবগতির জন্যে বাজার পেইন্টস বাংলাদেশ লিঃ আনন্দের সাথে জানাচ্ছে যে, গুণগতমান নিশ্চিত করার কৌশল হিসেবে ৪ লিটার ডাবল টাইট ক্যানকে আরও মজবুত ও জোরালো করা হয়েছে। আর সে কারণেই ডাবল টাইট ক্যান থেকে ক্যাপসীল প্রত্যাহার করে নেয়া হয়েছে। এখন বাজার-এর ৪ লিটার ডাবল টাইট ক্যান মানেই মজবুত এবং সুবিধাজনক।

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