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# The Daily Star

Ramadan  
begins  
tomorrow

The holy month of Ramadan begins tomorrow (Monday) as the moon was not sighted anywhere in the country yesterday, said the Islamic Foundation, reports UNB.

The National Moon Sighting Committee at a meeting yesterday evening evaluated reports from different parts of the country and announced that Ramadan will begin on Monday.

Presided over by State Minister for Religious Affairs Moulana Nurul Islam, the meeting also announced that holy Shab-e-Qadr will be observed on the night of January 15.

**Diplomatic zone  
in city under  
security alert**

Security around the US embassy as well as in the capital's diplomatic enclaves has been tightened after the embassy yesterday reportedly received anonymous phone calls threatening bomb attacks, reports APB.

Official sources said the authorities had taken necessary measures to provide security for the citizens of the United States living in the country following the latest US and British air strikes on the Iraqi capital of Baghdad.

Police said different security agencies had been put on alert and huge contingents of personnel both uniformed and in plainclothes deployed in and around the diplomatic enclaves of Baridhara, Gulshan and Banani.

Motor vehicles plying on the roads in the Gulshan and Baridhara areas were being searched on Saturday evening, witnesses said.

## Inside Today

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End, Not the End  
Itself

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Missiles hit Baath Party office

## Fiercest attack, heavy damage

BAGHDAD, Dec 19: The

United States blasts military and government buildings in Baghdad today in what appeared to be the fiercest attack on the capital in three days of strikes, reports AP.

Fiery streaks from what appeared to be Tomahawk cruise missiles arced across the sky before dawn. Warheads exploded a few seconds later, lighting the pre-dawn horizon in a red glow that silhouetted palm trees against the dark sky.

Iraqi anti-aircraft gunners on rooftops opened fire, filling the sky with booms and bright flashes. Orange tracer bullets streaked high above. Iraqi army claimed downing of 77 missiles so far.

When the attack ended, ambulances or fire trucks with sirens blaring were heard speeding away. Officials, who must escort journalists wishing to tour the city, refused to take them to the targeted areas.

Baghdad residents said damage from the Friday and Saturday attacks was heavy and that a number of buildings in the centre of the capital — including palaces, security headquarters and offices of the rul-

ing Baath Party — had been hit. Western reporters staying at Al-Rashid Hotel in central Baghdad saw explosions in nearby areas known to have palaces, a headquarters of the Special Security Service and the command centre for the Popular Army, which is a paramilitary force.

The walls of the Military In-

WASHINGTON, Dec 19: President Clinton said today he believed the US and British air strikes against Iraq were 'going well' and gave no indication when they might end, reports Reuters.

ustrialisation Corporation, which oversees state-run factories, were still standing, but the building appeared to have been gutted by missiles.

Today's attack appeared to be the toughest yet against Baghdad since the US and British militaries began air strikes early Thursday to punish Iraq for its obstruction of UN inspectors searching for evidence of weapons of mass destruction.

Before today's attack, the United States fired nearly 300

tomahawk cruise missiles from ships in the Gulf or from B-52 bomber aircraft. The missiles carry warheads weighing up to 1,350 kilograms.

Sailors rearmed their warplanes for more strikes against Iraq today despite the arrival of Ramadan, the Muslim holy month.

"We're preparing for another night. We're expecting to continue," said Adm James Cutler Dawson, commander of the Enterprise Battle Group in the Gulf.

The activity aboard this US aircraft carrier countered speculation that the US and British air assault would be called off for Ramadan, which began today in Iraq. Some nations will begin the month of dawn-to-dusk fasts tomorrow because of later sightings of the moon.

AFP quoting Tehran radio said, thick clouds of black smoke from explosions in Iraq have covered Iranian border regions.

A cloud of smoke has covered Musian, Mehran and Dehloran regions in southwestern Iran, it said.

The radio said "strong explo-

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Thrust on pvt sector cooperation  
**BIMSTEC for early  
setting up of rail,  
road links**

By Staff Correspondent

The second BIMSTEC ministerial meet in the city yesterday "decided on developing rail, road, multi-modal transport, shipping and air linkages" among the member states giving particular emphasis on speedy implementation of the "components" of Trans-Asian Railway and Asian Highway projects.

The 18-month old regional organisation stressed setting up of these linkages for enhancing commercial, industrial, cultural, social interaction and tourism among the five-member countries.

A 22-point joint statement incorporating the decisions of the ministerial meet was released at a press conference yesterday afternoon. It was attended by the participating state ministers and deputy ministers of the five countries.

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Osmani Airport starts operating wide-bodied aircraft today

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Dec 19: Osmani International Airport here is now all set to operate wide-bodied aircraft with the completion of Runway Extension Project, an official said.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is likely to inaugurate the operation tomorrow, he said.

The inaugural flight BG-801 of Biman is scheduled to land at the Osmani Airport at 2 pm. A 221-seat Airbus with 196 of Economy Class and 25 of Business Class seats will be the first wide-bodied plane to land here. Initially there will be one such flight a week on Friday, a Biman official said.

Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury, foreign minister Abdus Samad Azad, finance minister SAMS Kibria and civil aviation minister Mosharraf Hossain will also attend the function.

The prime minister will also offer *safra* at the shrine of Hazrat Shahjalal (RA).

The Runway Extension Project was initiated in 1991-92 fiscal with an estimated cost of

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1,500 crore.

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It's all go for the great Gregorian

By Staff Correspondent

Amartya Sen says he was not a "good student" in childhood.

"I wouldn't say that I was a remarkable student," Sen told fellow Gregorians at a reception at his alma mater yesterday.

"If anybody wants to differ with me, Father Peixotto (the acting headmaster) can check with the records."

It was a big occasion for the school and its former students as they received the most celebrated Gregorian the school has ever produced.

On a brief tour of the Old City where he lived as a child, Sen stopped at St. Gregory's High School, when he recalled his days as a student, his formative years.

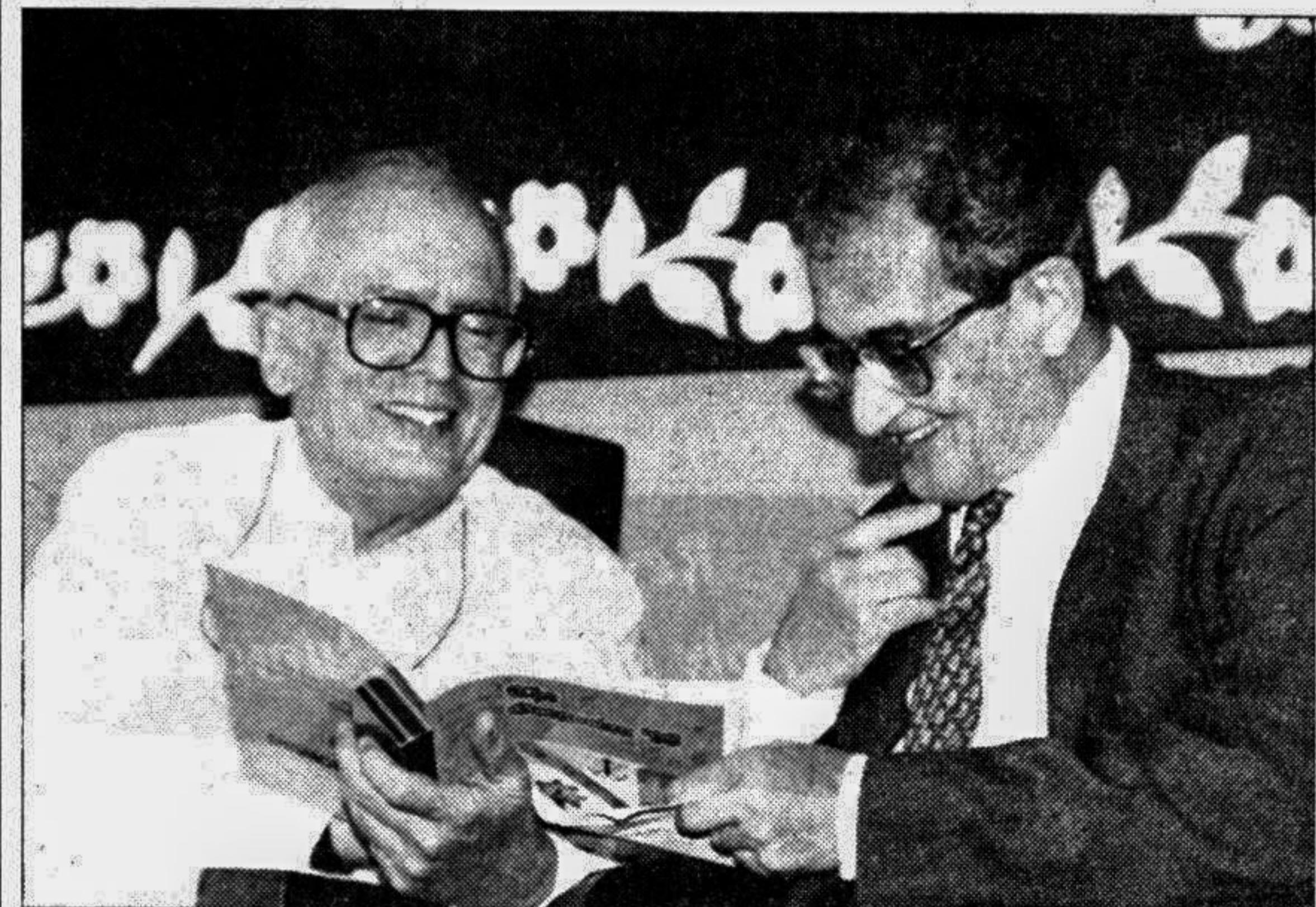
"I can clearly recollect those days when I began going to school, my early education life ... when I was developing curiosity for various subjects," Sen said as hundreds in a jam-packed school playground listened to the Nobel laureate.

The school and the Gregorians' Association did not miss the chance to honour the second Bengali winner of the Nobel Prize, the first Asian for economics.

Those who gathered included past and present students, guardians, noted citizens, politicians, and teachers of the school and residents of the neighbourhood.

"I feel privileged for being here in Bangladesh and especially at St. Gregory's School,"

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St Gregory's was the first choice

He says he was nothing great as a little scholar. But today the world learns from him. As the humble Nobel laureate went to his alma mater yesterday, he recalled his days at the high school more than half a century ago. The school and its students — past and present — did all they could to honour this great *Dhakaiya chele*. For Amartya Sen it was a pleasant surprise when Father Peixotto, the headmaster, showed him his 1943 registration card reproduced in a school magazine during a reception.

Star photo

(More photos on Page 11)

Tough programme after Eid

**Hartal in Ramadan,  
if needed: Khaleda**

By Staff Correspondent

Opposition leader Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday urged the government to immediately accept BNP's demands to avoid hartal in the month of holy Ramadan.

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