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67 days to the 3rd Millennium

KARTIK 10, 1406 BS

RAJAB 14, 1420 HIJRI

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**UZ polls: EC to watch political situation first**

By Staff Correspondent  
The Election Commission will monitor the political situation for a couple of weeks before deciding on holding Upazila Parishad elections.

The three-member Commission headed by Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena decided this at a meeting yesterday.

"The Commission will watch developments in the political arena to see whether a congenial atmosphere is there for holding the elections," said a top official of the EC Secretariat. "They would make a final decision about the polls in the mid-November."

The deadline for Upazila polls ends December 28.

The Commission, however, did not discuss anything about city corporation elections yesterday. EC sources said, adding that they are likely to discuss the issue in a day or two.

The deadline for holding

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**Ban on 16 companies may be lifted soon**

The ban on transaction of shares of 16 listed companies will be withdrawn soon.

An official at Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) told UNB yesterday that it would consider permitting the 16 to come to the market at the request of Bangladesh Association of Stock Exchange Listed Companies.

They are also responding positively to the requirements needed to withdraw the ban, he said.

After an emergency meeting with the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC), the DSE and CSE imposed the restriction on the sale of shares of the

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**8 addl judges of HC take oath**

Five advocates of the Supreme Court Bar Association and three judicial officers yesterday took oath as additional judges of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court on a two-year term, reports BSS.

Chief Justice Mustafa Kamal administered the oath of office yesterday morning at his office.

The lawyers who were appointed the High Court Judges are: Mohammad Abdur Rashid, Khademul Islam Chowdhury, Surendra Kumar Sinha, Mohammad Abdul Wahab Miah and Mohammad Momtazuddin Ahmed.

The three others, belonging to the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs who took oath are: Sikder Moqbul Haque, the Secretary-in-Charge of the ministry, Mohammad Abdus Salam, the Solicitor (Joint Secretary) and Mohammad Arasuddin, a Joint Secretary.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed earlier appointed them as judges.

**Inside Today**

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## Business

Govt to clamp down on illegal money transfers  
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## Prayer Timings

October 25

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:40	5:20
Zohr	12:45	1:30
Asr	4:00	4:15
Maghrib	5:32	5:37
Esha	7:15	7:45

French first lady, Bernadette Chirac, dances with Chinese President Jiang Zemin at a function in Chaumeil, central France yesterday.

— AFP photo

Source: Islamic Foundation

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## Used disposable syringes being imported, reused!

By Naimul Haq

Hundreds of thousands of pieces of used disposable plastic syringes are imported and marketed in the country.

At least 17 lakh pieces of such syringes from South Korea arrived at Chittagong Port recently. Many more such legal shipments arrive every year.

Around two lakh disposable syringes are used every day in the country, most of those imported. Disposable syringes are also manufactured locally.

According to sources concerned, local traders import used plastic syringes, mostly from South Korea, Malaysia and China. In the import documents, traders mention that the reason for importing these syringes is recycling the plastic material to manufacture other plastic items.

However, an investigation by The Daily Star revealed that the syringes are cleaned without any safety precaution, packed in plastic containers without being sterilised and sold for huge profits.

Those packing and marketing such 'unhygienic' syringes said each imported syringe costs Tk 0.40 on an average. But they sell those in the wholesale market, mostly in Mitford, at a price of Tk 2.70 each. Ultimately, its retail price stands at about Tk 3 each.

According to experts, specially sterilised 'blister and ribbon packs' are globally recommended and used for safety. The syringe should be properly discarded after use so that it cannot be used again.

This practice should be made mandatory for hospitals and clinics. Each hospital and clinic must have devices to destroy the used syringes properly," said a leading physician.

There are at least two dozen 'factories', mostly in the old city, engaged in such trade. "They open letters of credit to import used syringes at throw away prices. The syringes are regarded as 'garbage' in the countries those are made and exported for recycling the plastic," one source pointed out.

Import of such products is allowed by the commerce ministry and not the health ministry. "There is virtually no control over this. The issue of safety is not considered here. And for this, the business is going on unhindered," said a trader.

One such factory at Gaudaria in the old city, which claimed it

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Used disposable syringes being imported and marketed in the country.

— Star photo

## WB reminds risks of investment in new pvt power projects

Star Report

World Bank representatives from Washington yesterday reiterated their stance on Bangladesh's power sector saying that the government was pursuing new private power projects without considering their negative impact on the balance of payment in the future.

The WB representatives yesterday met officials of Economic Relations Division (ERD) and the Power Development Board (PDB) to discuss various issues of the power sector.

The government officials began by expressing their grievances against the WB for withdrawing a decision to provide a risk guarantee to IFC for a loan for the 360-MW Haripur Power Project by US company

AES.

They told WB officials that Bangladesh's power sector had indeed investment and therefore had invited private companies to set up plants. The WB, which had not given any credit to the power sector of the country for nearly a decade now, should play a 'positive role' by providing the risk guarantee to IFC.

WB officials however reminded the ERD officials that the risks of investment in Bangladesh's power sector continued to be high as reform programmes, introduced in the early nineties, were going at a very slow pace.

They also observed that the level of system loss in the power

sector more or less remained at the same level as it was years ago.

The WB felt that the government must commit itself to expediting the reform programmes and improving the system loss status.

On the risk guarantee issue, WB maintained that Bangladesh had committed not to pursue new private projects as there were projects with 1330 MW capacity in the pipeline. Further projects would create heavy pressure on the foreign currency reserve of the country.

Despite such a scenario, the government continued to pursue new ventures like the Meghna-2, they said.

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## Holidays end, erratic power supply starts

By Staff Correspondent

The city suffered 100 mega-watts (MW) of power shortage yesterday after having a comparatively better power supply during last few days.

A Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) official said the power situation in the last few days was better because of less demand as many mills, factories, business establishments and government offices remained closed due to holidays.

Mills, factories and shopping centres, which are the major electricity consumers, opened yesterday and the demand for power went up accordingly, the official said.

The power shortage occurred as DESA got 900 MW of electric-

ity from Power Development Board (PDB) against a requirement of 1,000 MW for the day, the DESA official added.

On the other hand, according to a PDB estimate the shortage in the country was only 84 MW. The PDB Control Room sources said DESA was asked to maintain 33 MW deficit in its command areas.

Though the power supply from the PDB increased to 900 MW from usual allocation of 800 to 850 MW the DESA had to maintain some load shedding in its command areas," said a DESA official.

Apart from Dhaka metropolitan areas, DESA is

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CALCUTTA, Oct 24: The proposed railway link between India and Bangladesh through the Petrapole border was ready on the Indian side, according to railway board chairman V K Agarwal, reports PTI.

Railway tracks from Bongaon to Petrapole in north 24 Parganas district had been laid and the board, through the external affairs ministry, was in touch with the Bangladeshi authorities over formalities for track-lying up to the no-man's land.

Once the rail link was set up, goods train would be operated initially and subsequently passenger train services between the Bangladeshi capital Dhaka and the Sealdah terminal here would begin. Agarwal said it will also connect Assam and Tripura by rail through that country.

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India readies track for railway link

## Garbage dumped in front of Mir Nasir's house

From Nurul Alam CHITTAGONG, Oct 24: Huge quantities of garbage have been dumped in front of the residence of former Chittagong mayor and president of the BNP city committee Mir Md. Nasir Uddin at Chittagong Road early this morning, family sources said.

Mir Nasir said Mayor A B M Mohiuddin Chowdhury was behind the act committed when all his family members were asleep.

"In the morning, we could not go out as the stench-spreading rubbish was put on the premises of my house," Nasir told The Daily Star.

"It is the politics of perverted brains," the former mayor said and added that the present mayor had earlier threatened to dump garbage in my house.

He alleged that it was done to

make the day before.

The prime minister spoke of the need for accountability and transparency of the judiciary in the city on

Sunday.

For example, he said, the Article 109 of the Constitution provides for accountability of the lower courts to the High Court Division. And Article 66(3) says about the higher courts' accountability to the Supreme Judicial Council.

"But the reality is that the process of accountability has

## 20 hurt as police, pickets clash in Ctg during hartal

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Oct 24: At least 20 people including six policemen were injured in pitch battles during today's dawn-to-dusk hartal here, police and

witnesses said. Gunshots were fired and crackers exploded during the clash. Police fired from shot-guns and lobbed teargas canisters to disperse the pro-hartal activists.

The situation was brought under control after half an hour, police said.

Another clash between police and pro-hartal activists took place in front of BNP office near Nur Ahmed Road at noon.

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## Accountability of judiciary Constitution to dictate the process: Law minister

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government wants to ensure accountability of the judiciary to the law of the land and the Constitution, not to the executive branch, the prime minister or the Cabinet, Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru said yesterday.

The provision of accountability of the judiciary is already there within the framework of the present Constitution," the minister told BBC radio last night, explaining PM's remarks on the issue

become very weak due to shortage of judges and inadequate time of the honourable judges. And the system is not effective (now).

Asked about the government's plans in this regard, Khasru said it would be done by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Citing examples from South Africa and Sri Lanka, he said the number of the High Court judges should be increased. "Say, we have now 40 judges in the High Court. If we

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documents. The ninth amendment to the Indian Constitution in 1958 ratified the agreement between the then Pakistan and India regarding exchange of enclaves, which is applicable for Bangladesh, the officials said.

After independence, the Mujib-Indira agreement of 1974 also provided for exchange of enclaves. The agreement was ratified by Bangladesh parliament in the next year.

But till the last DG level meeting between BDR and BSF, the Indian side had been insisting that the agreement was not ratified by the India parliament.

Over the years, the Indian side raised different pleas to do

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## Sonia may be called as witness

### Bofors arms scandal

NEW DELHI, Oct 24: India's opposition leader Sonia Gandhi was likely to