

The Daily Star

BUY NOW PAY LATER



Whirlpool
HOME APPLIANCES USA
Gas Cooker

Transcom Electronics Limited
Authorized distributor in Bangladesh for Whirlpool Appliances, USA

LEASE FINANCING
Are You Looking For Financial Assistance In

- Capital Machinery
- Heavy Construction Equipment
- Medical Equipment
- Marine Transport
- Generator & Boiler
- Vehicle like Luxury Buses, Microbuses, Trucks, Tractors
- Cargo Carriers, Pick-Up, Cars
- Auto/Elevators
- Air Conditioning Plants

PHOENIX LEASING COMPANY LTD.
Shahinata Bhaban (1st fl) 88, Motiheel C/A, Dhaka
Phone: 9569007 (Auto Hunting) Fax: 9567787
Agrabad Branch, R.M. House, 31 Agrabad C/A, Ctg. Ph: 710088, Fax: 710088

VOL. IX NO. 277 REGD. NO. DA 781

www.dailystarnews.com

DHAKA MONDAY NOVEMBER 1, 1999

60 days to the
3rd Millennium

KARTIK 17, 1406 BS

RAJAB 21, 1420 HIJRI

16 PAGES PRICE: TAKA 6.00

Dhaka-Ankara accord to avoid double taxation

ANKARA, Oct 31: Bangladesh and Turkey today signed an agreement on avoidance of double taxation to boost bilateral trade through a broad-based economic cooperation between the two countries, reports UNB.

Foreign Secretary Shafi Sami and Turkish Under Secretary for Finance Erdogan Oner inked the accord at the Presidential palace, capping summit talks between the two countries. President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Turkish President Suleyman Demirel witnessed the signing ceremony that took place after a tete-a-tete between the two heads of state and the official talks.

At a joint press conference both the presidents hoped that the agreement would boost bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

"We have agreed to open a new vista of cooperation. We will establish a business council to encourage private sector, enhance trade volume and attract Turkish investment into Bangladesh," Shahabuddin told.

See Page 11 Col 4

JS goes into session today

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad goes into its 15th session this morning with the opposition parties in parliament calling a dawn-to-dusk hartal across the country. The Opposition did not take part in the 14th session of parliament that lasted 12 days. There is little possibility of the Opposition's return to the House this time also.

The session beginning at 9:30 this morning is likely to be a brief one. Today's sitting will be adjourned after an obituary reference on Shamsul Huq alias Golap Miah, a ruling party MP from a Kishoreganj constituency, who died last month.

The JS Business Advisory Committee has decided that the

See Page 11 Col 2

Vajpayee phones Hasina

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee last night telephoned Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and thanked her for facilitating him on his assumption of the office of prime minister, reports BSS.

During the telephonic talks Sheikh Hasina conveyed her deepest shock and condolences at the loss of lives and property in the devastating cyclone that hit the eastern Indian State of Orissa.

The Bangladesh prime minister offered all possible help for the cyclone-hit people of the affected state.

England A tour Four-day match begins today

Sports Reporter
Vice-captain Khaled Mahmud has been dropped by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) from the 14-member Bangladesh team announced yesterday for the four-day match against the visiting England A.

The match, the final encounter in the second-string England side's 19-day tour to Bangladesh.

See Page 11 Col 3

Inside Today

Article

Democracy Under Assault?

Column: Perspectives by Brig (Rtd) M Abdul Hafiz Page 4

Focus

Referendum in Australia

Republic-to be or not to be! Page 5

Prayer Timings

November 1		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5:00	5:30
Zohr	12:45	1:20
Asr	4:00	4:15
Maghrib	5:29	5:34
Esha	7:15	7:45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Over 200 feared killed in EgyptAir Boeing crash

BOSTON, Oct 31: More than 200 people aboard an EgyptAir Boeing 767 were feared dead today after the Cairo-bound passenger jet disappeared shortly after taking off from New York's John F. Kennedy airport, reports AFP.

Wreckage and one body were located in the Atlantic south of Nantucket Island. Rear Admiral Richard Larrabee of the US Coast Guard told a press conference.

"We have located one body," among aircraft seats, seat cushions, life rafts and other small objects in a "debris field" about 70 kilometres southeast of Nantucket, he said.

EgyptAir flight 990 carrying 214 people — 199 passengers and 15 crew — took off from JFK airport around 1:20 am local time after an unexplained two-hour delay, according to airport officials.

It disappeared around 2:00 am or 40 minutes later, according to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) spokesman Eliot Brenner.

Fox News cited a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) official as saying the plane had exploded in mid-air. Authorities said preliminary investigations had revealed no evidence of sabotage.

An anti-terrorism task force to investigate the disappearance was set up in New York, including New York City police, the FBI and State Department officials.

But preliminary investigations of flight 990 showed no signs of criminal activity, New York Port Authority police inspector Anthony Infante told a news conference in New York.

Meanwhile officials reported that a massive search had been launched in the waters off Nantucket, part of the state of Massachusetts. A Coast Guard officer said four of its vessels and a plane were taking part in search operations.

"There may well be survivors because the water temperature is above 15 Celsius," Coast Guard Commander Alan

Thompson told AFP, describing search conditions as "perfect". A total of 129 US nationals and 62 Egyptians were among the 197 passengers aboard, according to Egyptian Transport Minister Ibrahim al-Dumeiri.

The plane issued no distress call before it disappeared, EgyptAir and the FAA said. The FAA vigorously denied that the aircraft had been forced to make an emergency landing on its way to New York from Los Angeles.

The plane had flown from Cairo to the United States on Saturday morning.

It was due to land at JFK but was diverted to Newark because of bad weather. From there it continued on to Los Angeles and made an uninterrupted return leg to JFK.

Robert Kelly, aviation director Port Authority of New York/New Jersey, which operates New York area airports, told a news conference there had been no emergency landings.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed going round a stall after the opening of BATEXPO '99 in the city yesterday. —Star photo

Frigate deal draws JS committee flak

Star Report

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence Ministry yesterday expressed its dissatisfaction at the way the Ministry decided to purchase a US\$ 100 million frigate when, what it said, there were scopes of purchasing the same at half the price, sources said.

The Committee meeting at the Sangsad Bhaban yesterday asked the defence secretary and the navy chief to produce all documents related to the frigate deal in its following meeting scheduled for November 17.

The meeting, chaired by Maj Gen (ret'd) KM Shafiqullah, also said that if the Standing Committee detected irregularities after scrutinising the documents, it would launch a probe into the purchase deal.

Sources said that the Standing Committee members yesterday asked the navy chief and the defence secretary to explain why the authorities decided to purchase the frigate from Korean company Daewoo which was the fourth lowest bidder and when the lowest offer was made by Chinese PLA.

PLA offered a frigate for US\$ 78 million while Daewoo quoted US\$ 93 million initially.

Then again, the Committee

members pointed out, the Daewoo price went up to US\$ 99.97 million in the process of follow-up negotiations when the usual practice is to lower the rates.

"Who's interest was served by enhancing the price?" asked a Committee member to the navy chief and the secretary.

The chief of the navy staff and the secretary however said that the bidding authorities were "somewhat" convinced that the Daewoo offer was the best among the bids invited in 1997.

In a previous meeting last month, the Committee members quoting naval experts said that the frigate could be actually purchased for a price of around US\$ 50 million.

In 1995, the government floated a tender to purchase a frigate when six companies submitted offers. After scrutiny, the tender committee found none of them satisfactory.

In 1997, the government again invited bids when nine suppliers came up with offers. A 16-member expert committee scrutinised the bids and selected Daewoo Corporation as the 'best' bidder -- but not as the 'lowest' bidder.

See Page 12 Col 8

Deepening crisis Ministry summons SB board

By Inam Ahmed

The finance ministry has summoned the Sonali Bank board today to review the situation against the backdrop of its plummeting financial position and mismanagement.

The ministry is also toying with the idea of changing the composition of the board as it failed to live up to the expectation.

When the government, for the first time, appointed a board taking persons from different professions, it was hoped that the bank would now perform better.

But the financial position of the bank weakened further as its management gave loans to parties many of whom are defaulters with non-viable projects.

However, bank insiders say the ministry is too late in waking up to the reality as SB Managing Director, Mahbubur Rahman Khan, is going to retire on Tuesday.

Sonali Bank has plunged into a deep crisis during his tenure, they said. Its capital shortfall increased to Tk 482 crore in June this from Tk

See Page 11 Col 4

7 run over by bus near ZIA

By Staff Correspondent

At least seven persons including two women were killed and 15 others injured when a minibus ran over people waiting for transports near the Airport Gool Chaitar (roundabout) in the city yesterday afternoon.

Five of the dead were identified as Ayesa, 32; Halim, 60, an employee of Airport Railway Station; Khokon, 40; Darek, 30, reportedly a civil aviation employee and Bellal, 20.

Identities of two of the dead, one male and one female, could not be known immediately. Both were aged around 40, police said.

A number of passengers were also injured as the minibus hit the pavement at the North-West end of the crossing at about 4 pm. It was going to Kapasia from Dhaka.

The injured people were admitted to Dhaka CMH, Tongi Hospital and local clinics, Cantonment police said.

The driver, Rafiq, 27, was arrested and the minibus was seized soon after the incident.

The bodies were kept at Cantonment thana compound till filing of this report last night.

BATEXPO '99 opens in city PM assures steps for bank, customs, port facilities 'everyday'

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has assured garments exporters that measures would be taken to ensure bank, customs and port facilities seven days a week for uninterrupted export-import activities.

The assurance was given yesterday in response to garments exporters' plea for these, made at the inaugural function of Bangladesh Apparel and Textile Exposition '99 at Sonargaon Hotel. She inaugurated the three-day fair.

Criticising opposition political parties for calling hartal she said, "I do not find any reason why they agitate and call hartal while there is no major issues".

She however jokingly said, "It (hartal) is environment-friendly and you can breathe in pollution-free air. Though businessmen face tremendous difficulties, it is good for health and rickshawpullers can earn a lot of money during hartal hours" she said.

"Why the opposition political parties call hartal while I am committed to resign after expiry of my tenure? I can assure you when time will come, I will resign and election would be held under a neutral caretaker government," the Prime Minister said.

There is no scope of removal of an elected government without election. Removal of governments by other means was very bad for the country in the past. The economy was ruined, all institutions were destroyed and corruption gripped the country," she said.

Hasina sought cooperation of garments exporters to disallow opposition parties from agitation that would create unrest and destabilise the political situation".

The Prime Minister also called upon garments exporters to prepare themselves to face the new challenges in the next millennium. She hoped that the exhibition would play an important role in development of textile and garments sectors and boosting garments export.

Hasina also assured the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) that land,

See Page 11 Col 7

Countrywide day-long hartal today

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance has called a nationwide dawn-to-dusk hartal today demanding cancellation of the 'unilaterally declared' city corporation polls schedule.

The BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic Oikya Jote held separate rallies and brought out torch processions in all city, district and thana headquarters in support of today's hartal.

The government has also taken preparation for maintaining law and order in the capital as elsewhere in the country. Some 5,300 riot police, armed battalion police and paramilitary BDR troops will be deployed in Dhaka city.

Police sources said deployment of security personnel in important establishments would start from midnight last night while special deployment will be made at markets and shopping centres which would remain open during the hartal hours.

Main opposition BNP organised pro-hartal rallies and took

See Page 11 Col 5

Govt-AES deadlock continues

By Staff Correspondent

The government and US power company AES could not reach an agreement over the Haripur power plant issue till filing of this report at 10pm last night.

The two parties were continuing negotiations till late last night as AES insisted on getting a decision by Monday morning. Otherwise, it would walk out of Bangladesh, it indicated.

The government officials and AES have been holding a series of meetings for the last two weeks now over the work

See Page 11 Col 6

SAARC summit likely to be postponed

KATHMANDU, Oct 31: The

eleventh summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is expected to be postponed at the request of some member-countries, including India, senior Nepalese foreign ministry source said today, reports AFP.

An Indian embassy source confirmed that after consultations with the SAARC member-countries, the general view was

See Page 11 Col 1



Prolific Mohammedan Striker Alfaz Ahmed (R) starts celebrating after heading in his second goal against Abahani during their premiership clash at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. —Star photo by Amran Hossain

Unimaginable trail of devastation Thousands feared killed in Orissa cyclone

BALESHWAR (India), Oct 31: Hundreds of villagers driven from their homes by a powerful cyclone stood on the road begging for food today, while relief helicopters and trucks waited helplessly for the weather to clear, report AP, AFP.

Villagers wielding sticks forcibly stopped passing cars and looted shops and a mill on the highway linking Bhubaneswar and the town of Cuttack, taking potatoes, wheat and flour, witnesses and officials said.

With communications severed along the vast swath of the eastern coast, no one knew the exact number of casualties.

The death toll from the 'super cyclone' could be in the thousands with millions of people affected, newspapers reported today.

Orissa Chief Minister Girdhar Gamang said there were no verified details of the losses caused by the 'cyclone of the century'.

"The toll could be in the thousands and damage to prop-

erty beyond description, with one-third of the state's 35 million population affected." The Pioneer newspaper quoted Gamang as saying.

Officials fear the death toll could be in the hundreds and the damage could have set back the region by 20 years.

Millions of trees have fallen across the roads in the east of the state would have to be cleared, Gamang said after authorities activated two satellite phones in the area.

See Page 11 Col 6

Mohammedans lift title

By Sports Reporter
Mohammedan Sporting Club lifted the coveted Premier football league title in grandiose style, beating arch-rivals Abahani Krira Chakra 3-0 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in the city yesterday.

The heart-thumping clash of the two most crowd-pulling outfits petered into an anticlimax when Mohammedan swept aside an under-strength Abahani, who missed the services of their three regulars.

Captain Alfaz Ahmed struck twice after Andrei gave the black and whites an eighth minute lead to confirm the reputed club's eleventh league title following a couple of disappointing seasons. All the three

See Page 11 Col 8



a box of care... for your ready-made wear

In the ever-changing world of fashion, timing is crucial. At DHL we understand the precision with which your deliveries are timed. Which is why we've devised the **DHL Fashion First** - the only dedicated service tailored specifically for the garment and textile industry.

FASHION 1st
...the cutting edge in fashion

DHL Customer Services Hotline
Dhaka Tel: 9886305-9, 9881703-7 Fax: 883248
Chittagong Tel: 031-715835-6 Khulna Tel: 041-724711
Sylhet Tel: 0821-711618 E-mail: dhl@dac-co.bd.DHL.COM

Represented by **HOMEBOUND**

DHL
every second counts