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54 days to the
3rd Millennium

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RAJAB 27, 1420 HIJRI

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SAARC summit postponed

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit scheduled to begin on November 27 has been postponed, reports BSS.

SAARC Chairperson and Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga announced the postponement yesterday. Foreign Secretary CM Shafiq Sami told newsmen at the airport quoting a communiqué by the chairperson.

In the communiqué, issued to the heads of government of the SAARC countries, Kumaratunga said: "Since there is no unanimity to hold the SAARC Summit, we have decided to postpone it."

The SAARC chairperson, however, urged the foreign ministers of member countries to keep up the momentum of SAARC activities.

A report from Delhi adds: India has said it would continue to consult with member countries to fix a fresh date for the summit.

A spokesperson of the Indian External Affairs Ministry said no definite date for the summit could be fixed because of the situation in Pakistan.

The developments in Pakistan, he said, had led to "disquiet in our region and beyond" and cited the suspension of Pakistan from the Commonwealth.

While explaining India's decision, the spokesperson said the development in Pakistan was unprecedented after the formation of the SAARC. "The point has been made earlier that it is for the first time that a government of a SAARC country has been overthrown in a military coup," he added.

India earlier had sought the postponement of the SAARC summit in Kathmandu following the "coup d'état" in Pakistan.

Meanwhile, Pakistan has opposed India's suggestion to defer the summit and criticised New Delhi, saying the "Adventists" move to postpone the summit to "serve the hegemonic interests of one country will do incalculable harm to the grouping."

Team returns

Plan to import power from Bhutan fails

By Staff Correspondent

A high-level government delegation that visited Bhutan last week seeking options to import cheap hydropower for local consumption returned yesterday, apparently without success.

The delegation led by Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Dr SA Samad was pursuing an idea of importing power from Bhutan's Chukha hydropower plant at a price less than half the rate of Bangladeshi power. The idea was to import the power through West Bengal.

Sources said that the Chukha plant was built with Indian assistance and the Indians purchase power on priority basis.

Initially the Bangladesh delegation had the impression that it could purchase the Bhutanese power at less than 1 taka per unit. However, sources quoting the delegation members yesterday said that the Bhutan hydropower would actually cost more than two taka per unit.

Besides, under a contract, the Indians were purchasing all the power from the plant's surplus after meeting domestic needs.

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Prayer Timings

November 7		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-10	5-40
Zohr	12-45	1-30
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-29	5-34
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



A visitor at the month-long ninth Asian Art Biennale having a close look at one of the works on display at the Osmany Memorial Auditorium. —Star photo by Wahidur Rahman Khandaker

Ninth Asian Art Biennale opens

Art, culture to get free atmosphere: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said government is pledge-bound to the development of art and culture, and ensure a free environment for the flourishing of art to face the challenge of the coming century, reports UNB.

"We have ensured free flourish of Bangladeshi culture based on the ideals of great liberation struggle and independence," she said while inaugurating the 9th Asian Art Biennale at Osmani Memorial Hall yesterday afternoon.

Artists from 36 countries of Asia and Africa are taking part in the art extravaganza of this continent. The exhibition will remain open till November 30 at the galleries of Osmani Hall, Shilpakala Academy, National

Museum and Shishu Academy. A total of 630-art works of 328 artists including 205 by 168 Bangladeshi artists are on display.

The Prime Minister distributed awards among the participating artists. Prizes were given to Akinori Matsumoto of Japan, Mahbubur Rahman and Director Art of the Shilpakala Academy Shubeeb Chowdhury.

The Prime Minister said Bangladeshi have traditional rich culture. This nation is glorified with sacrifice for the language. The culture of this country existing from time immemorial has given especial variety with folk culture, folk art, folk song, art and crafts.

Honourable Mention Awards went to Khaza' al Al-Qaffas of Kuwait, Park Young-Son of Korea, Rokeya Sultan of Bangladesh, Yashinbek Shigaev of Kyrgyzstan, Magdy Abd El Aziz of Egypt, Abdul Aziz Ashour of Saudi Arabia, Tokhir Sato of Japan and Iftekhar Uddin Ahmed of Bangladesh.

The function attended by

artists, art critics and intellectuals was also addressed by State Minister for Cultural Affairs Obaidul Qader, Chairman of the Jury Committee Prof Ha Dong Chul, Shilpakala Academy Director General Azad Rahman, Cultural Secretary-in-charge Azizur Rahman and Director Art of the Shilpakala Academy Shubeeb Chowdhury.

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