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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 Shafi 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 Osmani 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 of Bangladesh and Yousuf Ahmed of Qatar.

Honourable Mention Awards went to Khaza' al Al-Qafas of Kuwait, Park Young-Son of Korea, Rokeya Sultan of Bangladesh, Yuristanbek Shigaev of Kyrgyzstan, Magdy Abd El Aziz of Egypt, Abdul Aziz Ashour of Saudi Arabia, Tokihiro Sato of Japan and Ifukhar 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 Shubeer Chowdhury.

The Prime Minister said Bangladesh has 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.

She said, "Our great leader Father of the Nation Banga-

See Page 11 Col 7

7100 home-made bombs seized in city: 3 arrested

By Staff Correspondent

More than 7100 home-made bombs and a huge quantity of bomb-making materials were recovered by police from a house at Mirpur in the city yesterday.

Three persons were arrested from the house at Bagbari Charanipara.

"This is the biggest ever recovery of home made bombs from a single spot in the city," said AKM Shamsuddin, Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

The bombs recovered included 4000 tape bombs, 2900 hand bombs and 200 rocket.

See Page 12 Col 8

15000 canisters of tear gas shells being imported

By Staff Correspondent

The government apprehending further violence in the country is going to import some 15,000 canisters of tear gas shells shortly, official sources said yesterday.

"Import of tear gas canisters this year has been increased by at least 5,000 in comparison to that of the previous year," an official of the home ministry said requesting anonymity.

Each Italian tear gas shell will cost three US dollars, the official said.

Asked why tear gas shells are being imported from Italy this year, the official said, "Probably the price quoted by the Italian company was lower than that of the South Korean ones". In such cases government floats tenders specifying the requirement. Private companies then import the product, he added.

This year's consignment is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka by the middle of this month, said another official.

No hartal at night

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance has revised its 42-hour countrywide hartal programme, making it dawn to dusk hartals today and tomorrow.

The alliance had earlier called hartal from 6am today to midnight tomorrow.

It had called hartal today to protest cancellation of public holiday on the 'national revolution and solidarity day' (November 7) and tomorrow to thwart submission of nomination papers for election of Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna City corporations, scheduled for December 6.

Now there will be no hartal from sunset to sunrise on both the days.

Announcing the revised schedule, city BNP Convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka MP said hartal has been relaxed for tonight in response to an appeal of the Hindu community for their Kali Puja.

"The BNP is determined to protect religious rights of all citizens. We have withdrawn the hartal tonight so that the Hindus can perform their Kali Puja smoothly," he said while addressing a rally in front of

the party central office at Naya Paltan prior to a torch procession yesterday evening in support of the hartal.

Khoka called upon party activists to observe the hartal peacefully and face Awami League "terrorists" on the streets politically.

But he warned of a "befitting reply" if ruling party terrorists try to obstruct and attack pickets like in the past. He also urged law enforcing agencies to discharge their duties neutrally.

But sources said alliance partners Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami strongly opposed the relaxation that created serious commotion within the two parties.

The rally over, BNP leaders and activists brought out a big torch procession which terminated in front of the Jatiya Press Club at about 6pm. Huge contingent of riot police followed the procession, but no untoward incident took place.

BNP leaders Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Lt Gen (Retd) Mahbubur Rahman, Major Gen (Retd) ZA Khan, party MPs Amanullah Aman, See Page 12 Col 1

Full bench hearing likely today

SC rejects HC stay on Ctg polls, upholds it for Rajshahi, Khulna

The Supreme Court yesterday temporarily rejected the High Court stay on mayoral elections in Chittagong, but upheld it for Rajshahi and Khulna, reports BSS.

Appellate Division Judge Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury passed the order in a special sitting at his residence following a petition by the Election Commission against the Thursday's High Court stay on polls process.

Justice Chowdhury set the date for a full bench hearing of the Appellate Division on the petition today.

Court sources, however, said the hearing was likely to be held on November 9 as the hearing does not usually take place

during hartals.

This would allow the intending candidates to file nomination papers in the Chittagong City Corporation polls as per the schedule announced by the Election Commission," a court official observed.

The High Court bench comprising Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury and Justice MA Aziz, had ordered stay on mayoral elections in the three cities for a week fixing November 11 for the hearing on the issue.

They also issued rules on the Chief Election Commissioner and five other commission officials demanding explanations within two weeks why the elec-

See Page 12 Col 2

Draft Nat'l Land Use Policy ready

By Reaz Ahmad

The draft National Land Use Policy prepared by the government prohibits earth-filling of private and publicly owned water bodies and use of arable land for non-agricultural purposes.

The draft policy also gives guidelines on land use for agriculture, industry, housing, urbanisation, forestry, embankments and roads, railway, educational institutions, health care centres, orchards, rubber and tea plantation and for other purposes for which "substantial area of land" is required.

Fellow lands under private and public organisations like Railway, Roads and Highways Department and cantonments have to be utilised, it says.

The policy has been prepared in view of increased flood-vul-

nerability, ever-shrinking agricultural lands and water bodies, decrease in fish resources, scarcity of irrigation water, increased salinity and water-logging problems.

The policy will be adopted after further consultation with different government and non-government organisations and other stakeholders, official sources said.

The policy gives thrust on introducing a 'land-zoning' system to retain the fast depleting arable lands and stop commercial use of lands in residential areas.

According to the draft policy, "existing water bodies have to be retained and can not be filled up."

In case of privately owned See Page 11 Col 8

Polls schedule for city corporations postponed

By Nurul Kabir

The Election Commission has postponed the schedule for election of three city corporations.

It will take a decision about fresh schedule for the polls after November 11.

"We have already postponed, schedule for holding election of Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi City corporations" Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena told The Daily Star last night. "We shall announce fresh schedule for holding the polls later."

As per the earlier schedule announced on October 28, November 8 was fixed as the last date for filing nomination papers, November 9 for scrutiny and November 16 as the last date for withdrawal of nominations. December 6 was fixed for the polls.

Meantime, the High Court on Thursday ordered a stay on the election process for a week. The HC order came following three writ petitions filed by six ward commissioners of the three city corporations. The court fixed November 11 for the next hearing of the cases.

In another development, Justice Mahbubul Alam See Page 11 Col 7

Opposition activists go on rampage at Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 6: One person received bullet wounds and a double-decker BRTC bus was set ablaze as opposition activists went on the rampage at station road near Reazuddin Bazar this evening, police and witnesses said.

Police said the trouble began at around 5-30 pm when a procession of BNP-led four-party alliance was marching through the road. A section of processionists damaged some passing vehicles on the road. The BRTC bus caught fire when they lobbed a cocktail on it.

Police rushed to the spot and chased the processionists.

The bullet-injured victim was admitted to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH). His identity could not be known immediately.

Opposition sources alleged that police opened fire when their procession was crossing Station Road. Police denied the allegation.

Opposition alliance brought out the procession after holding a rally near Laldighi Maidan this afternoon in support of the hartal beginning at 6 am tomorrow.

Meanwhile, security has been tightened here today ahead of the hartal.

Bomb blasts in city: 3 hurt

By Staff Correspondent

Three persons were injured in bomb explosions, four vehicles were set afire and several others damaged in different areas of the city yesterday.

The injured were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Police said the vehicles were set afire and damaged by pro hartal activists.

Sporadic explosions of home made bombs were reported from different parts of the city last night on the eve of the Opposition-called dawn to dusk hartal today and tomorrow.

Areas included, Naya Bazar, Mogh Bazar, Paltan, Gulistan, Bijoynagar, Nilkhet, Kataban and Jatrabari.

Gunshots were fired in Dhaka University area yesterday afternoon. No injury was reported.

Of the injured, one Jahangir's hand was blown off from the wrist when some home made bombs he was carrying exploded. The incident occurred at Nilkhet.

A rickshawpuller, Abdul Jalil, was injured in an explosion in Gulistan area. Another rickshawpuller, Tara Mia, was wounded in a blast in Kataban area.

Hartal observed at Feni protesting killing of Jubo Dal activist

From Our Correspondent

FENI, Nov 6: A day-long hartal was observed in the town today protesting the killing of Jubo Dal activist Nasiruddin Swapan.

Swapan was shot dead by some unidentified assailants at his shop on Takiabari road in the town at around 3:30 pm yesterday.

All shops and educational institutions remained closed See Page 12 Col 1



Non-government school teachers' association brought out a procession in the city yesterday to press their demands. — Star photo

Unauthorised consultancy DU to showcase teachers

By Abul Kalam Azad

The Dhaka University authorities will serve showcase notice on the teachers engaged in unauthorised consultancy despite repeated instructions to stop such illegal practice which is hampering the academic atmosphere at the university, highly placed sources said.

The action is being taken in the wake of failure to bring back the truant teachers and restore academic discipline at the university, said a top university official.

Over the last few years, the DU authorities made several attempts to stop teachers from taking consultancy but they could neither stop it nor take any action against the teachers.

These attempts were made following the widespread allegations that a good number of university teachers are very reluctant to perform their academic duties because of consultancy work outside the univer-

sity. Some teachers are also doing fulltime service in private institutions, it is alleged.

Showcase notice would be served immediately after making a list of those teachers who are more interested in their consultancy work than their academic duties, said a DU official. The university authorities had earlier asked the departmental chairmen and institute directors to make the list. But they did not bother to do it.

As part of its move, the authorities recently sat for a meeting with the newly elected faculty deans and adopted a 10-point recommendation which included taking classes regularly, meeting with the students at least three days a week, holding examinations as per schedule and announcing results within one month.

Besides, the DU authorities See Page 11 Col 7