

# The Daily Star

## on Friday

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21 days to the  
3rd Millennium

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#### Renewal of commitment

A procession in the city yesterday to mark the Rokeya Day, the birth anniversary of the legendary woman who gave the wakeup call to the Bengali Muslims. (Story on Page 11)  
—Star photo: Sk Enamul Haq

## Ceres Medal handed to Hasina

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was awarded the prestigious Ceres Medal by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) for her role in promotion of food security and struggle for eradicating hunger and malnutrition, reports UNB.

The Prime Minister in her speech renewed the promise to continue her struggle for building Bangladesh as a prosperous nation in the 21st century free from hunger, poverty and illiteracy.

Reciprocating the all-praise citation from the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Hasina lauded the bold and timely initiative being pursued by the director general of FAO in Bangladesh in general and the launch of the Special Programme for Food Security in low-income, food-deficit countries in particular.

The FAO DG lavished praises

on Sheikh Hasina's effort in socioeconomic development of rural people and empowerment of women. He said Sheikh Hasina set an example of leadership relentlessly advocating for welfare of rural people and ensuring adequate food for them. He also appreciated Hasina's micro-credit facilities for women.

Diouf said the Ganges water treaty, CHT peace accord and Bangabandhu Bridge would all together contribute to development of overall agriculture sector. He praised the way Bangladesh overcame last year's floods and got the highest food production this year.



Another feather in PM's cap  
Sheikh Hasina receives the Ceres medals from the FAO director general yesterday.  
—PID photo

## Biman moves to rev up ageing wings

A fifth DC-10 is on the way, more to follow

By Shehab Ahmed

Bangladesh Biman is on its way finally to acquire its fifth DC-10-30 aircraft, more than a year behind the schedule. Biman sources said yesterday.

After many months' wrangling, involving powerful quarters the Biman has signed a deal on Sunday with a US based aircraft leasing company—Pegasus to dry-lease the wide-body three-engine jet for three years. It also signed two other agreements—one for procuring an Airbus A 310-300 aircraft—also on dry-lease for three years

from the Singapore Airlines and the other for chartering two wide-body Boeing 777s from China Southern Airlines for the Hajj flights.

A Biman spokesman told The Star that the DC-10-30 aircraft and the Airbus A 310-300 are expected to join the national carrier's fleet by December 20.

The two aircraft are expected to ease the Biman's log jammed flight schedules, which often are in disarray, as its ageing fleet of four DCs suffers from

mechanical hiccups.

"We are going to service the long haul flights properly with the DC-10 and medium hauls to the Gulf and the region flawless with the Airbus", the spokesman said.

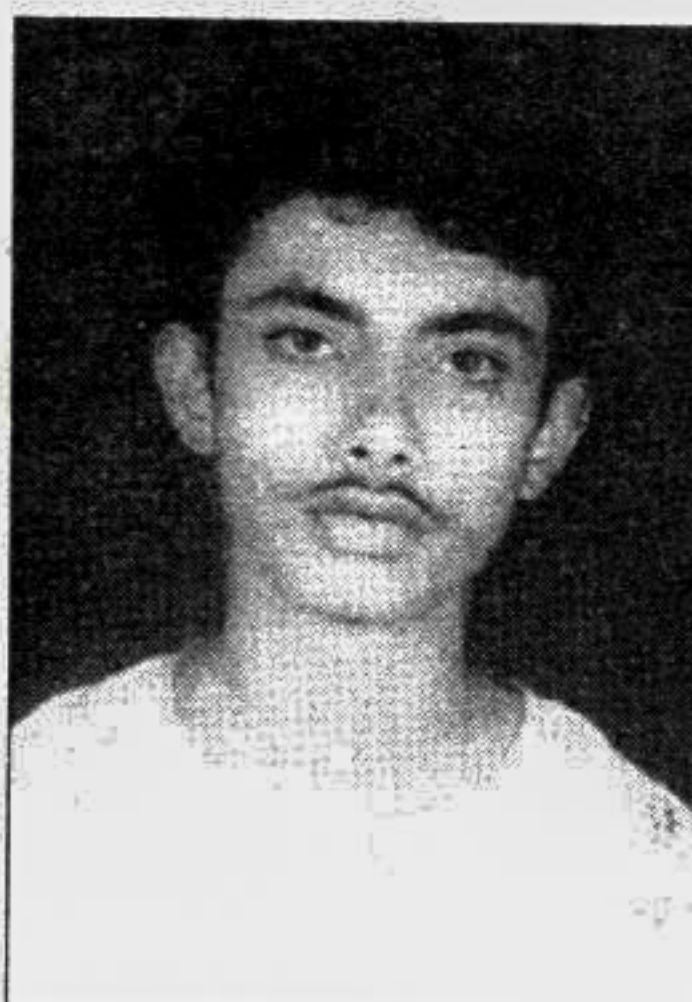
But he could not provide the details of the deals immediately, including the price tag. He said the Hajj flights scheduled to begin from February 15 next year would be smooth as the Biman has completed the agreement already.

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## Ten months on, police fail to find killers

### Murder of Sajal in daylight

By Raziur Rahman



Ten months have passed after BNP activist Sajal Chowdhury was shot dead in front of hundreds of people during a hartal in the city, but police are yet to arrest any one in this connection.

The investigating officer (IO) of the murder case has been changed three times so far and now, Inspector Rabiul of Detective Branch is investigating it. Police sources said the final report will be submitted shortly.

Final report of a case is submitted when police investigation fails to prove charges against the accused, which normally leads to disposal of the case.

On the other hand, Sajal's

family members are being constantly threatened by a quarter, they alleged while talking to this correspondent.

Guns from the rear of a motorcycle led by Haji Mokbul MP shot dead Sajal Chowdhury, 25, from a point blank range at the intersection of Mirpur Road and Green Road at about 11:30 am during the hartal on February 9, according to witnesses and earlier newspaper reports.

A sub-inspector of Dhanmendi thana filed a murder case following the killing. In the FIR it was stated that Sajal was shot dead during a clash involving activists of BNP, Jamaat-Islami and ruling Awami League near the Science

Laboratory crossing.

In the general diary (GD) filed with police, Sajal's father Shahidur Rahman alleged that a gang of gunmen led by Haji Mokbul shot his son dead. He also mentioned names of a number of BNP leaders including Abdullah Al Noman, Raziur Rahman Patal MP, local ward commissioner Bablu, his son-in-law Niaz Ahmed Chowdhury as witnesses to the killing.

The IO of the case told The Daily Star that they were preparing to submit the final report as the witnesses in the case in their statements told police that they did not know who killed Sajal. Only Niaz Ahmed

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## Kader Siddique plans to party soon

By Staff Correspondent  
The planned convention for floating Kader Siddique's party will be held at the Engineers Institution in the city on December 24, knowledgeable sources said.

"I am working with my followers to draw up the details of the convention," Siddique told The Daily Star yesterday, confirming his decision to float the new party as per schedule.

Siddique did not mention names of his followers with whom he was planning to finalise his next political course of action.

"These people had been with me during the liberation war, during subsequent movements and the hard days," Siddique said.

More than one thousand people are expected to participate in the convention, sources said, adding it would also include professionals and intellectuals representing pro-liberation forces.

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## Hartal again on Monday 6am-4pm countrywide

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance has called for a 10-hour countrywide hartal on Monday to protest "unilateral announcement" of the Chittagong City Corporation polls schedule and resist submission of nomination papers.

The hartal will be observed from 6 am to 4 pm. BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told newsmen after presiding over a joint emergency meeting of secretaries general of the four parties and representatives of the Liaison Committee of the alliance here yesterday.

The meeting was held at the official residence of the Leader of the Opposition in parliament.

The Chittagong unit of the Alliance earlier called a 36-hour hartal in Chittagong from 6 am Monday to resist submission of nomination papers.

The Election Commission on Tuesday announced the CCC polls schedule, fixing December 13 for submission of nomination papers and January 3 for

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## Pollution patrol in peril

Undermanned, under-funded drive fails to make sense

By Morshed Ali Khan

Constable Mizan and Constable Mohiuddin waded perilously into traffic at the Manik Mia and Mirpur Road intersection last Tuesday, while officials from the environment department sat under a nearby tree.

The constables managed to stop one baby-taxi, but fifty others raced past, filling the air with lethal gases: sulphur dioxide, lead oxide, nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide.

It was just another hour in the life of the government's underfunded and under staffed special mobile traffic unit, formed to cut the city's chronic air pollution. The BRTA officials, who were supposed to be present at the site, didn't turn up that day.

All the baby-taxis stopped during the hour produced either fake documents or none at all. The drivers openly admitted that they had fake driver's licences.

The constables gave offenders easily removable stickers and affixed a warning seal to the route permit, if the offender had one at all. Some drivers

carried laminated permits, which made it easy to rub off the seal.

The officials then resorted to stamping the warning sign on any document available. However, the constables also charged several offenders when they discovered that police had warned them earlier.

While some baby-taxis were easy to stop, others ignored the police entirely. The constables tried to stop a couple of tempos but they were almost run over. The tempos simply drove off without heeding the constables' warnings. After a dozen tempos and Maxis evaded police, the constables put their lives at stake and forced a maxi to stop.

Md Anisur Rahman, the maxi's twenty-something driver, said he didn't have a driver's licence or documents for the vehicle. He claimed the vehicle belonged to a minister and left it at that. A traffic sergeant sitting on a motorbike nearby didn't bother to book Rahman for not having the proper documents. The constables decided to impound the

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#### Poor exercise

They are there to monitor and detain air-polluting vehicles. The trouble is: nobody takes them seriously.

—Star photo: Sk Enamul Haq

## Govt wakes up to TU dangers in EPZs

Worried about the recent US 'threat' to Bangladesh to allow trade union in the EPZs or face cancellation of GSP facilities, government authorities reviewed the situation at a meeting yesterday, reports UNB.

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed apprised the meeting that he would soon hold parleys with the US ambassador and other chiefs of different missions to sort out this problem.

A non-governmental US organisation, American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO), demanded of their government to suspend the GSP facilities for Bangladesh on labour-standards plea.

They insisted that Dhaka failed to implement Industrial Relations Ordinance 1969 and Employment of Labour (Standing Order) Act 1965.

A letter handed over to the Bangladesh Mission in USA informed the Ministry of Commerce about the contentions. Earlier in 1992, the AFL-CIO

had recommended the same to the GSP sub-committee and the then government of Bangladesh agreed to implement those in three phases — Employment of Labour Act, 1965 in 1995, clause 3 of the Industrial Relations Ordinance 1969 in 1997 and all the clauses of the Industrial Relations Ordinance 1969 in the year 2000.

Tofail Ahmed expressed his annoyance for reaching such an agreement by the previous government without looking into the future.

Meanwhile, a source in the government told UNB that the US pressure annoyed the investors in the Export Processing Zones.

"If Bangladesh succumbed to the pressures, then investors would leave this country and no fresh investment, would come here," said an official of the Commerce Ministry, who preferred not to be named.

The meeting was chaired by Ahmed and attended by Labour and Employment Minister Ab-

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## Army launches probe into Brig Ashfaq's death

From Staff Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, Dec 9: A court of enquiry comprising senior army officers was formed to probe the death of Brigadier Shabbir Ashfaq, security sources said.

Brigadier Ashfaq was found dead at officers' mess at Chit-

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## Ctg docs still on strike

From Staff Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, Dec 9: Doctors in the port city continued their strike for the third day today, mounting sufferings of the patients.

The doctors went on indefinite strike from Tuesday protesting the attack on Chittagong Medical College Professor Dr Nilkanta Bhattacharya by a group of armed terrorists.

The striking doctors today staged a demonstration on Chittagong Medical College Hospital premises demanding arrest of the attackers.

They threatened to an-

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Sehri, Iftar timings			
Ramadan	Dec	Sehri	Iftar
1	10	-	5:15
2	11	5:06	5:16
3	12	5:07	5:16