

শ্রী বুদ্ধি জিতিক।  
স্বাভাবিক কাচামাল গ্রামবাংলা হতে সংগ্রহ করা  
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## Shafi Sami to carry letter from PM for Gen Musharraf

By Diplomatic Correspondent

Foreign Secretary Shafi Sami will leave for Islamabad today as special envoy of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Disclosing this to newsmen yesterday the Foreign Secretary said he would carry a letter from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for Pakistan's military ruler General Pervez Musharraf. He declined to disclose the contents of the letter but when asked if it would be identical to what Hasina wrote to Indian Premier Vajpayee, he said, "I cannot say if it would be identical, but some of the contents are likely to be similar."

The Foreign Secretary earlier visited Delhi as special envoy of Prime Minister Hasina on August 7 and 8 and delivered a special letter to Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. Sami's 4-day trip would be the first ever official level visit of a high level emissary to Islamabad following the military takeover in Pakistan last October.

The Foreign Secretary disclosed that it was likely that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will hold a meeting with General Pervez Musharraf on the sidelines during the upcoming Millennium Summit in New York. In fact, Sami said, See page 11 col 4

## Cylinder blast in Habiganj kills 4

HABIGANJ, Aug 21: Four people were killed and some 50 injured in cylinder blast during pumping gas into fancy balloons at a Urs Mahfil here today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the gas explosion occurred at about 4 pm while a balloon seller puffing up balloons with the cylinder at the annual religious festival of Syed family at Sultans village in sadar upazila.

The dead were identified as Faisal, 12, and Abdul Awal, 14, of Hatirhan, Jakir, 10, of Sultans and balloon seller Kabir, 40, of Auspara villages in the sadar upazila.

Of the injured, 24 were admitted to Habiganj Sadar Hospital and local clinics. Four of them were shifted to Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital in "critical" condition.

The cylinder blasted with a bang at one stage of blowing up the balloons with gas from the cylinder and people surrounding Kabir, the balloon seller, were struck in the blast," said a spot report.

## Janmastami today

The Janmastami, marking the birthday of Lord Krishna who preached the message of universal love among mankind and fought against all evils, will be celebrated today in a traditional joyous and befitting manner throughout the country, reports BSS.

The Hindu community will celebrate the day through holding colourful rallies, con-

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## Inside Today

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### Prayer Timings

August 22

August	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Aug 22	5-37am	6-26 pm
Aug 23	5-37am	6-26 pm

### Prayer Timings

August 22

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	5-05
Zohr	12-45	1-20
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-40	6-45
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

# Kursk crew are dead

Rescue teams abandon efforts to find survivors



A Russian Navy official (L) comforts the crying mother (R) of an officer of Kursk submarine prior to the relatives' departure for Murmansk from Moscow's airport yesterday. All the 118 crew on the submarine Kursk are dead, the Russian Northern Fleet Chief of Staff Mikhail Motsak declared yesterday. — AFP photo

MOSCOW, Aug 21: Rescue teams abandoned efforts today to find survivors in a sunken Russian submarine after determining that all of the 118 crew members had perished in the flooded vessel, officials said, reports AP.

Norwegian and Russian officials in charge of rescue efforts concluded the submarine was completely flooded after it suffered a massive explosion and sank Aug 12 during naval exercises in the Barents Sea.

"There was no longer hope of finding survivors in the submarine Kursk," said a Norwegian statement.

Norwegian divers who managed to open the escape hatch on the nuclear submarine today found no sign of survivors and confirmed that the Kursk was flooded, officials said.

The Russian navy said a video camera would be lowered into the hull of the Kursk to determine conditions inside. But the rescue effort was now shifting to raising the submarine, an enormous task that could take weeks or even months.

The Russian government was initially reluctant to announce that the crew were dead. But Vice Adm Mikhail Motsak, chief of the Northern Fleet, said Monday afternoon. "All sections were flooded and there are no survivors," RTR television reported.

The government has faced

strong public criticism for not doing more to save the crew.

The loss of the Kursk, one of the newest and most powerful submarines in the navy, has shocked many Russians, prompting may to question if their crisis-ridden nation will ever return to peace and stability.

Russian navy officials said no decision had been made about retrieving the bodies of the Kursk's crew. There appeared to be no practical way of recovering the bodies short of raising the submarine.

Most, if not all, of the crew died when a huge explosion ripped through the submarine when it sank, officials said. The blast, which probably involved up to 30 warheads stored in the torpedo compartment at the front, tore the submarine to bits.

"The divers have determined that the submarine is full of water. That is sad," said Norwegian Capt. Rune Fredheim.

The Norwegian rescue teams would be pulled out unless government officials decide they should stay for other reasons, Fredheim said.

After a 10-day rescue operation, the Norwegian divers managed Monday to open an escape hatch at the rear of the Kursk, but found no sign of survivors, officials said. It then be-

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## Petition for quashing contempt case filed

By Staff Correspondent

Former president of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) Barrister Shaikat All Khan filed a petition with the High Court yesterday for rejection of the contempt petition against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina filed by SCBA President Barrister Mainul Hossain on Wednesday.

On behalf of Khan, Barrister Amirul Islam submitted the petition before a Division Bench of the HC comprising Justice Md Mozammel Haq and Justice Abdur Rashid.

Hearing on the admissibility of two contempt petitions against the Prime Minister by the same Bench began yesterday and will resume on Wednesday.

The Bench will also hear admissibility of the petition for

rejection of contempt petition on the same day.

In his submission yesterday, Barrister Islam argued that the contempt petition filed by Mainul Hossain was unauthorized and not maintainable as the petitioner had no sanction from general members of the SCBA. "Neither the Executive Committee nor the President has power to file contempt petition," he said.

He said the Executive Committee of SCBA does not have power to authorise filing of a petition against the Prime Minister without the sanction of a general meeting.

Barrister Islam further submitted that under Article 27 (b) of the Constitution of the Association, its General

Secretary is solely empowered to handle such legal matters. He claimed that the President was neither authorised nor was appointed to file the contempt petition on behalf of the SCBA under Article 53 of the Constitution of the Association.

He also stated that the contempt petition was not only frivolous but also malicious because it was part of a political campaign by the combined opposition.

"This is part of a destabilising process to encourage unconstitutional forces in the country," said Amirul Islam.

"The attempt to kill the Prime Minister by planning a genocide and having planted a bomb

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## Opposition MPs file contempt petition against PM

By Staff Correspondent

Lawmakers belonging to three main opposition parties yesterday filed a contempt petition with the High Court against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her recent remarks against the judiciary and lawyers.

The petition was submitted to a division bench comprising Justice Mozammel Haq and Justice Abdur Rashid. BNP Standing Committee member Barrister Moudud Ahmed moved the petition at division court no. 5 at about 10.30 am.

The court will hear on the contempt petition tomorrow after 2 pm, court sources said.

This is the third such petition against the Prime Minister. Earlier, Supreme Court Bar Association

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## Wife alleges Mondal's house was attacked several times before murder

By Staff Correspondent

Hired goons of Saedur Rahman Shahid, DCC Commissioner of Ward No 83, had attacked the residence of Advocate Habibur Rahman Mondal several times before killing him on Sunday, Nilufer Yasmin Diba, wife of Mondal alleged yesterday.

She also did not rule out the possibility of involvement of her husband's *muhuri* (clerk) in the killing.

*Muhuri* Asad has gone into hiding since the murder, she said when contacted last night.

Asad was driving the Vespa motorcycle and Mondal was sitting behind him when the incident took place while they were going to court.

Before going into hiding, Asad had told some people that

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BNP lawmakers led by Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury are coming out of the court yesterday after filing a contempt petition against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. — Star photo

## Contempt cases: Hearing on admissibility begins

By Special Correspondent

Hearing on admissibility of two contempt petitions against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her recent remarks on the judiciary began in the High Court yesterday.

Appearing for the state, Attorney General Mahmudur Rahman argued that the PMs remarks were not tantamount to contempt of court. There was no malafide intention to attack the judiciary. She was defending freedom of expression and fundamental rights of citizens against the backdrop of a law and order situation. The AG was joined by Barrister Amirul Islam.

The petitioners said that the PMs remarks undermined the judiciary and rule of law. Barrister Mainul Hossain, President of Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) and Barrister Rafiqul Haq argued for the petitioners.

The hearing before a Division Bench comprising Justice Mozammel Haq and Justice Mohamamd Abdur Rashid was adjourned till Wednesday.

Barrister Mainul Hossain filed one of the petitions on behalf of the SCBA and Barrister Rafiqul Haq filed the other on behalf of 339 pro-opposition lawyers.

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Barrister Amirul Islam moved a counter petition on behalf of SCBA member Barrister Shaikat All Khan, praying for dismissal of Mainul Hossain's petition, saying he had no right to move it on behalf of SCBA.

In a packed court, the AG cited Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Bajpayee's speech at a Golden Jubilee function at the Indian Supreme Court. Bajpayee criticised the "poor and pitiable condition of

## Mondal's murder pre-planned: Opposition

By Staff Correspondent

Several thousand opposition leaders and activists yesterday marched through the city streets to protest and mourn the killing of one of their leaders by "ruling party-backed terrorists".

Advocate Habibur Rahman Mondal, Joint Secretary of city BNP and a leader of Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum, was gunned down in Old Dhaka on Sunday, triggering violent protests by lawyers.

As parts of a countrywide

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Indian judiciary and the system of delivery of justice", but no contempt petition was moved against it, he said.

"Against that background, I want to put our PM's remarks in proper perspective. Your lordships, you know the law and order situation is very bad. Only yesterday, two lawyers were gunned down. In her remarks she wanted to reflect this sentiment and to undermine the judiciary. Her remarks can not be considered as contemptuous. We have to consider the fundamental right to freedom of speech of a citizen and a public representative and the contempt law."

He said, "My humble submission to your lordships is to dismiss this petition."

While the AG was making his submission, Barrister Amirul Islam stood up. He said the contempt petitions were filed with a political motive and the PM's remarks were being politicised. At this stage, the court stopped him and asked him to sit down while the AG was on his feet.

Amirul Islam said that he had submitted a petition to the court for dismissal of Mainul Hossain's petition. This prompted Mainul Hossain to re-

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## Hartal observed in Bagerhat Young man confesses killing Kalidas Boral

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Aug 21: A dawn-to-dusk hartal called by the district Awami League was observed today in Bagerhat protesting the murder of Advocate Kalidas Boral.

Boral, general secretary of the District Bar Association and former chairman of Chitalmari upazila, was gunned down on Sunday morning near Shadhana crossing.

Traffic movement on all routes including Rupsha-Bagerhat road remained suspended during hartal. Normal life was paralysed. None but hundreds of mourners including leaders of all political parties were seen on the roads of Bagerhat town.

Boral was cremated at his ancestral village Khasherhat in Chitalmari at 10.30 am. Local leaders of Awami League and

BNP were present at the funeral.

Police suspect that an influential quarter was behind Boral's killing.

District Awami League and its front organisations held a protest rally at local Swadhinata Udyan this afternoon. The speakers demanded immediate arrest of the killer of Kalidas Boral.

Bagerhat District Bar Association took a week-long programme to protest the murder. Lawyers boycotted court today demanding immediate arrest of the killers and their exemplary punishment.

Meanwhile, police arrested a young man from Patlakhal village under Bagerhat Sadar on Sunday midnight.

Saeed, 26, confessed his direct involvement in the murder.

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Members of the Dhaka Bar Association for the first time boycotted the Court of District and Sessions Judge and other lower courts in the city yesterday to protest the killing of two lawyers on Sunday.

In another development, the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate along with his colleagues held a "tolerance meeting at his chamber."

None, however, was arrested in connection with the murder of Advocate Habibur Rahman Mondal in the city.

The usually busy courts wore a deserted look yesterday.

Advocate Mondal, who was joint secretary of the city unit of BNP, and Advocate Kalidas Boral, who was vice president of Bagerhat district Awami League, were gunned down in the city and at Bagerhat respectively.

The Dhaka Bar Association held a peaceful protest meeting on its office own premises at about 11:00 am yesterday.

The meeting presided over by Lutfe Alam, President of the Bar, demanded immediate arrest of the culprits and expressed sympathy for the families of both the victims. Rezaul

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## Dhaka Bar Assoc members boycott court

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## Arsenic problem can be solved by sinking tubewells to deeper aquifers: Experts

By Naimul Haq

The arsenic problem in groundwater in the country can be easily solved by sinking tubewells to deeper aquifers, crossing arsenic affected layers, according to a panel of experts from home and abroad.

Such deeper aquifers can be found between a depth of 20 and 200 metres, 30 experts from India, UK, USA and Bangladesh agreed on the second day of a three-day review meeting here yesterday. The Review Meeting on Deeper Aquifer in Bangladesh was organised by the Public Health and Engineering Department.

They are likely to recommend to the government this simple method to solve the

problem of groundwater arsenic contamination in 59 out of 64 districts, putting over eight crore people at risk.

An added advantage of the simple method is that the groundwater so drawn will also be free from harmful bacteria.

Asesh Ray, one of the experts from India, told this correspondent yesterday that the method proved remarkably successful in arsenic affected areas in West Bengal.

"We started installing tubewells at deeper aquifers in many affected areas since 1994. Water drawn from such deeper aquifers is not only the safest drinking water. The arsenic affected people have also shown

signs of remedy after they started drinking such water", Ray said.

This method can be used in Bangladesh as geological conditions here and in West Bengal are similar, he said adding, Bangladesh can share our experience. Ray is the Chief Engineer of Water Quality Management in West Bengal.

Ray said, in 1994, there were about 11,000 identified cases of arsenicosis in the command areas in West Bengal. The number has come down to 450 now, he added.

"So far, we have not found arsenic beyond the permissible level in any tubewell sunk to deeper aquifers in the affected

areas. Even if there are traces, those are within the permissible level of 0.05 milligram per litre (mg/L).

"If it exceeds the limit at any place, we have the technology to treat water by using simple method", Ray said.

Two methods are used to draw water from deeper aquifers. One is use of 'small diameter tubewell' and the other is use of 'large diameter tubewell'. The technology is used depending on the number of people to be served. Arsenic-free drinking water is now supplied to the doorsteps of people in the affected areas through pipeline networks, he said.

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## Ctg port workers call off strike

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 21: Over 2000 workers and employees of Chittagong Port went into strike from 8 am today, suspending loading and unloading of cargo and leaving up to 42 cargo ships stranded.

The indefinite work abstention followed postponement of the CBA election of Chittagong Port scheduled to be held today.

The election was stayed yesterday by the High Court. The order came upon a writ filed by Md Selim, greaser of the port's marine department.

When the news of stay order reached the port last night, five labour organisations contesting the CBA polls got agitated and called an indefinite strike from this morning, port sources said.

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The labour organisations tonight postponed their abstention programme till September 6 following assurance from the port authority that the CBA election will be held as soon as possible.

The port workers today staged demonstration on port premises and held rallies demanding CBA poll immediately.

Loading and unloading of cargo of 28 vessels anchored at the jetties came to a halt while the entry of 14 other cargo vessels waiting at the outer anchorage became uncertain, port sources informed.

The agitating workers also

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## Education minister to hold meet with teachers tomorrow

Education Minister ASHK Sadique will hold a meeting with the leaders of non-government teachers' association at Education Ministry in the city tomorrow, reports UNB.

Three representatives of Bangladesh Teachers' Association - Chowdhury Rashid Alam, MA Awad Siddiqui and KM Abul Hasan called on the Education Minister and requested him to convene a meeting to resolve their problems.

The non-government teachers have been observing a non-stop strike to realise their 6-point demand.