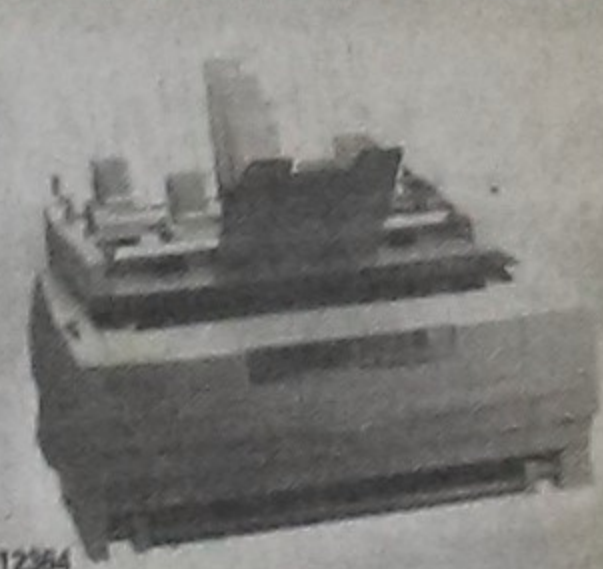


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There's no ban on Bangladeshi workers in Kuwait: PM

From Nazmul Ashraf

RAYAN PALACE (Kuwait city), Nov 1: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said today that her visit here would help broaden scope for economic and political cooperation between Bangladesh and Kuwait.

The first-ever meeting of the Joint Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation would be held in Dhaka by February next year," she disclosed at a press conference prior to leaving for Dhaka at the end of a three-day visit to this oil-rich Gulf state.

The prime minister expressed hope that the agreement on technical cooperation between the two countries which was signed on Tuesday would further facilitate export of skilled manpower from Bangladesh to Kuwait.

There was no ban on recruitment of Bangladeshi workers in Kuwait. Only a temporary restriction was in place," Hasina told a reporter. She hoped the new agreement would pave the path.

See page 11 col 3

Appointment of administrator of Ctg Chamber declared illegal

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 1: The High Court today declared appointment of the Director of Trade Organisation (DTO) as the Administrator of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industries (CCC&I) as illegal.

A High Court bench of the Supreme Court comprising of Justice Md Gholam Rabbani and Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana passed the order following the reply of a showcause by the respondents on October 23.

The same bench earlier issued a rule nisi upon four respondents on October 23.

Bashar, Enamul called back

Sports Reporter

In a dramatic development late last night, Habibul Bashar and Enamul Haque have been called up to join 14 other cricketers at the BCB training camp for the historic one-off Test match against India.

Surprisingly axed only on Monday by the three-man selection panel, the experienced duo was recalled following the advice of BCB president Saber Hossain Chowdhury. Sources said, Saber, in a letter yesterday, asked chief selector Tanvir Haider to include two more players in the list of 14 taking the advantage of being the hosts.

Although the BCB boss did not mention names of the additional two players, but his letter sent a clear signal to the chief selector of whom they should include.

Selectors came under a severe criticism for chopping Bashar, who had been the highest run-getter for Bangladesh against foreign teams for the last eighteen months.

Inside Today

Article

Middle East Crisis: Is the Stage Set for Other Mediators to Move in?

Column: Dilip Hiro writes from London

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Focus

Linking informal and institutional sources in the rural financial market
Page 5

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Nov 2		5.19 pm
Nov 3	6.06 am	

Prayer Timings

November 2

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5.00	5.35
Zohr	12.45	1.25
Asr	4.00	4.15
Maghrib	5.25	5.30
Esha	7.15	7.45

Source: Islamic Foundation

BTTB monopoly nears end

WorldTel to sign deal with govt next week for 300,000 new phone lines

By Mustak Hossain

WorldTel is expected to strike a deal with the Ministry of Post and Telecommunication next week for installation and maintenance of 300,000 land-based telephones in the city, ending the monopoly of the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB).

Sources at the ministry said yesterday that the company would work independently like the private mobile phone operators, and install and run a basic telephone exchange in the city alongside those of the state-owned BTTB.

The exchange, to be set up in three years' time with modern equipment and technology on a build, own and operate (BOO) basis, will provide broadband and basic service, and ensure high-speed Internet access.

WorldTel is expected to invest at least 300 million US dollars for the project with 10 per cent free equity to the government.

The company will also give the government ten million US dollars in two phases before beginning

their network. Moreover, the government will get 2.5 per cent of the revenue the company will earn from licence and frequency fees. The BTTB, on the other hand, will get 60 per cent on nation-wide and international calls.

The WorldTel promises a subscriber-friendly basic telephony, according to sources.

"The company would install phone with in a day upon receipt of demand letter from any subscriber," sources said.

It would provide fixed network local access services, local and long-distance domestic call services and value added services.

The cabinet approved the project more than a year ago and a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed during US President Bill Clinton's visit early this year.

But, as the ministry and WorldTel could not resolve differences on a number of issues including the debt-equity ratio, finalisation of the deal was

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Opposition firm to hold rally at Paltan

By Staff Correspondent

The central liaison committee of BNP-led opposition alliance yesterday reiterated that the alliance would hold its earlier announced November 7 'grand public meeting at Paltan Maidan in the city at any cost.

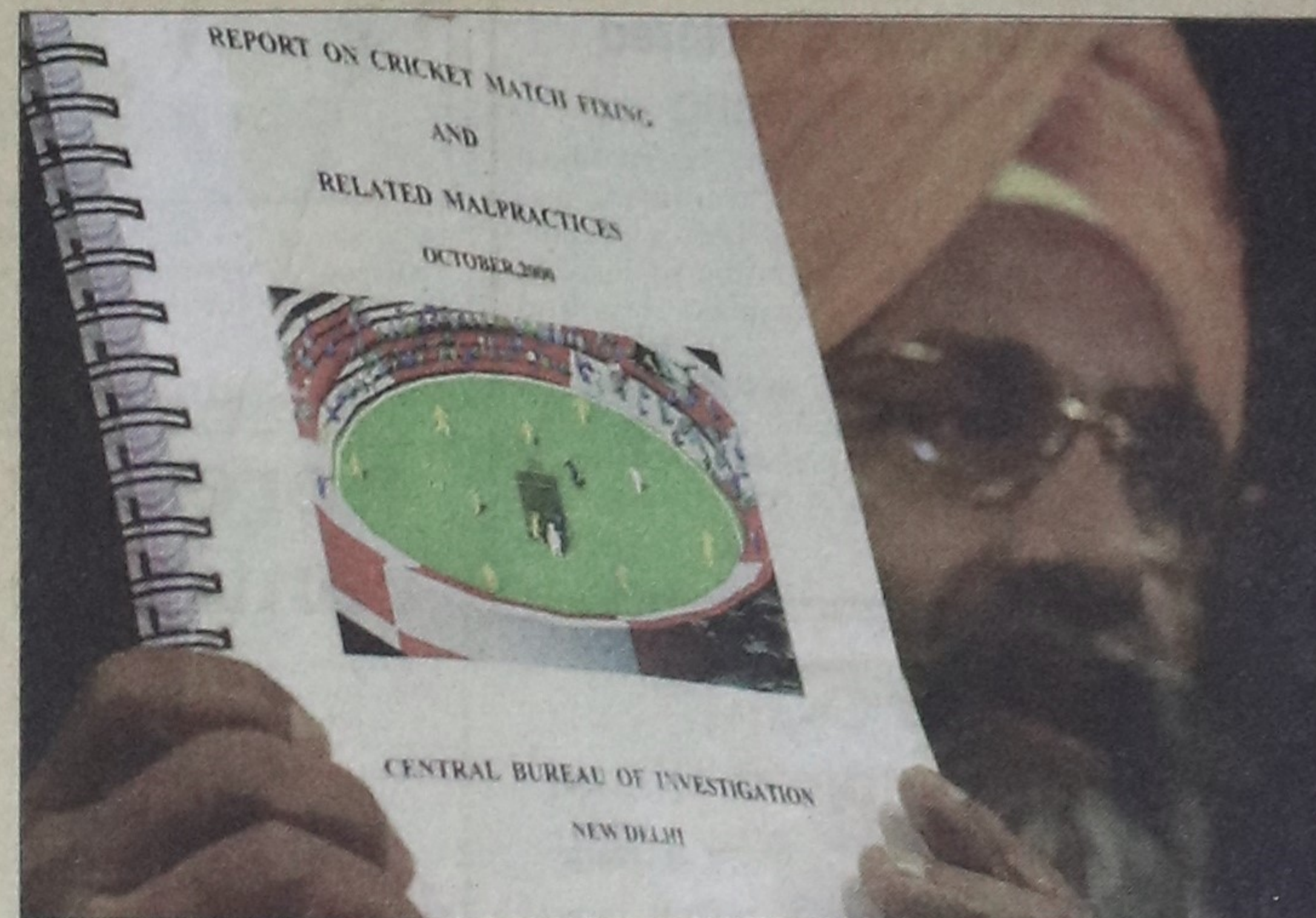
It said the component parties of the combine have taken all preparations to make the joint rally in observance of the National Revolution and Solidarity Day a success.

The committee hoped that good sense would prevail upon the government to allow the opposition to hold its scheduled rally at Paltan Maidan.

Chaired by BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, the meeting at his residence said the government will have to bear the responsibility of the consequences of its bid to foil the November 7 programme.

Secretary General of BNP, See page 11 col 3

The Pandora's box



Indian Sports Minister Shukhdev Singh Dhindsa displays the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) report on match-fixing in world cricket during a press conference in New Delhi yesterday. The report implicates former Indian national captain Mohammad Azharuddin, Alec Stewart of England, Brian Lara of the West Indies, Martin Crowe of New Zealand, Salim Malik and Asif Iqbal of Pakistan for their involvement in rigging international matches for cash. (Reports on page 13) - Star photo

Dhaka should take advantage of geo-strategic location

This will boost economy & security, seminar told

By Special Correspondent

Participants at a seminar in the city yesterday observed that Bangladesh situated at the crossroads of Asia should capitalise on its geo-strategic location to open up land and sea linkages in all directions to boost its economy.

This will create a 'natural climate' of national security by establishing Bangladesh's role as an indispensable gateway, they noted.

The seminar on 'National Security of Bangladesh in the Information Age' was organised by the government-run think tank Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) and the National Defence College.

The participants strongly pleaded that Bangladesh should take advantage of its geo-strategic location to provide facilities for movement of goods by giving transit, transportation and access to its port services to other countries including China, India, Nepal and Bhutan.

Bangladesh's geographical location also gives it a unique opportunity to influence regional affairs, they said.

Two papers were presented at the seminar.

The first paper was prepared by a team from the Defence College comprising Brigadiers AIM Mustafa Reza Noor, SAHM Tauhid, Mustafizur Rahman and Navy Captain M Kamal.

They argued that Bangladesh being at the crossroads of Asian countries could capitalise on its

favourable geographical location and act as a linkage between ASEAN and SAARC and play a model role for prosperity of the member countries of SAARC.

The team led by Brig Reza Noor strongly recommended that Bangladesh allow, both through land and sea, movement of goods in all directions - to China, Bhutan and Nepal on the north, to India and also to the ASEAN countries.

They noted that several countries just by adding value to goods, providing services or allowing transit and access to port facilities are increasing their GDP. Bangladesh should immediately encourage this and once the Asian Highway is completed, "this ideal and strategic opportunity" could turn into a reality, they felt.

"Bangladesh could play an influential role at bilateral levels or at multi-lateral levels for regional benefit within and between the various organisations of the Region. These benefits can be political, economic and in the fields of trade and commerce."

The paper said that the apparently controversial issues of natural gas, land and river transshipment, corridor or transit and utilisation of sea port facilities could very well be settled in favour of Bangladesh.

"For this, national will and morale have to be of the highest order."

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Annual ordeal... parents crowd the premises of Viqarunnisa Noon School to collect forms two months before the admission tests.

- Star photo

Bid to resolve crisis over Block 9 Govt likely to send draft documents to Chevron

By Sharier Khan

The government is considering sending a number of draft documents to US oil company Chevron for its consent in a last-ditch attempt to resolve the crisis over signing of the production sharing contract (PSC) on block 9.

A well-placed source said yesterday following the government's recent abortive attempt to strike a partnership deal between US companies Chevron and Texaco and Irish company Tullow, Chevron refused to respond to a government suggestion to come to a conclusion about the PSC on block 9 by October 30.

Instead, Chevron, which had been pushing hard since December 1997 for signing of the PSC, suggested that the government send it the draft joint venture agreement (JVA) and the initialled PSC documents. Chevron would place these documents before its

executive committee for a final decision and accordingly, the company would give the final feedback.

Chevron complained that the government was delaying the PSC signing process time and again. The company was asked to sign the PSC in March, again in June and finally in early October, but

Ghulam Azam quits as Jamaat chief

By Staff Correspondent

Ghulam Azam has quit as the chief of Jamaat-e-Islami, party Secretary General Matlur Rahman Nizami said.

In a statement yesterday, Nizami said that at a party meeting on October 21 Ghulam Azam appealed for retiring from the post of Ameer due to old age and the party accepted it later.

the attempts ended in futility.

Sources at Petrobangla said that after series of negotiations, the PSC for block 9 was initiated on March 9 with an equity share of 30:30:30:10 among Chevron, Texaco, Tullow and BAPEX, respectively. The companies agreed that Tullow and Chevron would be the operators during the seismic operation and the development, respectively. It was also agreed that a joint venture company would be registered by March 20 so that the contract could be signed during the visit of US President Bill Clinton in Bangladesh.

However on March 18, Chevron came up with a proposal that it would be the operator during both seismic operation and development period. At the same time, Texaco sent a letter to Petrobangla, which said that after

See page 11 col 1

Terrorist Kalam gets 20-year RI in Chittagong

CHITTAGONG, Nov 1: The District and PSA Tribunal Judge ANM Bashir Ullah today sentenced terrorist Abul Kalam to 20 years rigorous imprisonment in two separate cases, reports BSS.

The judge sentenced him to 15 and five years' RI in the cases on charges of keeping unauthorised arms and explosives.

The prosecution stated that on June 6 this year, terrorist Abul Kalam, son of Abdul Malek of Raja Khali under Chandgaon thana committed a mass dacoity at Satish Babu Lane, Patharghata in the city and he was caught red handed by Kotwali Thana Mobile Officer Jashim Uddin.

Abul Kalam tried to escape from police custody by exploding crackers and firing gun shots. Police recovered from his possession a single shooter rifle, two rounds of bullets and nine cock-tails.

Two separate cases were filed with Kotwali thana against Abul Kalam. Later Kotwali police submitted charge sheet against the terrorist.

The judge examined 20 witnesses in the cases and found him guilty.

Sonali Bank CBA polls today

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of major political parties are getting involved in the CBA election of the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs), anticipating that the polls results may have major impact on next year's general election.

The Sonali Bank CBA (Collective Bargaining Agents) goes to election today in 77 polling centres in 55 districts. Some 11,500 SB employees across the country will exercise their franchise to elect new CBA leaders.

Five different associations having affiliation with labour fronts of five political parties are contesting the CBA polls. That

See page 11 col 1



MILO-BCB join hands to promote cricket

MILO and the Bangladesh Cricket Board have made a pledge to develop and nurture cricket at the under 13 and under 15 age groups.

We believe that there are hundreds of youngsters out there who are going to bring success and glory to Bangladesh cricket.

Our future heroes drink MILO Chocolate Energy Drink

- the drink of champions, the world over.

The great chocolate taste of MILO provides vigorous health and boundless energy to win.



Shabash Bangladesh! Together we will be winners!