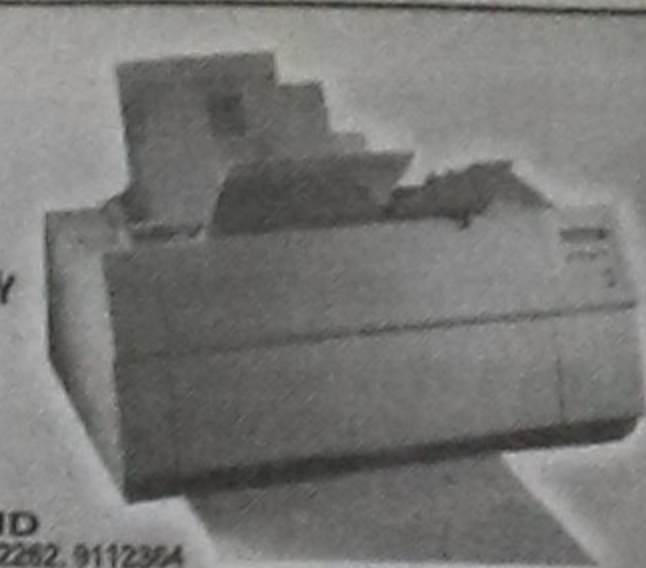


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Shab-e-Barat tonight

The holy Shab-e-Barat will be observed tonight throughout the country, reports UNB.

Muslims believe that Almighty Allah determines the destiny of all men, including their rijk (livelihood) on this holy night. They will spend the night offering prayers at mosques and also at homes seeking divine blessings for long life, peace, progress and happiness.

Muslims also observe three-day fasting on the occasion.

The day after the holy night (Sunday) is a public holiday.

Various religious organisations have taken up elaborate programmes to mark the occasion.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in a message on the occasion, urged the Muslims of the country to pray for peace, progress and prosperity of the nation as well as Muslim Ummah.

BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia, in a message on the occasion, called upon the country's Muslim community to pray for peace, progress and prosperity of the country as well as Muslim Ummah.

BNP will hold a milad mahfil at its central office after Asr prayers today.

Holiday

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed today on the occasion of holy Shab-e-Barat.

Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow.

8 arrested for involvement in Akhi murder

By Staff Correspondent

Eight persons were arrested yesterday for their alleged involvement in the killing of Akkasur Rahman Akhi, general secretary of the city unit (north) of Bangladesh Chhatra League, police said.

Five of them -- Moinul Hossain Suman, Mosleuddin Ahmed Dipu, Din Islam Swapan, Jasim Uddin Khan and Ashraf Uddin -- were arrested by Gulshan police and the other three -- Sharif, Shipu and Palak -- by Badda police. All the arrested are young. Suman, Sharif and Shipu are brothers. Palak is a brother of an wanted criminal, Rupak.

Akhi, who was also vice president of Titumir College Students Union, was gunned down and four other BCL activists were injured allegedly by Suman and his accomplices at Gulshan-2 in the city on Thursday night following a dispute over a club in Badda area and sharing of extorted money.

Sources said that the gang members were committing various crimes in Badda and See page 11 col 7

Inside Today

Article

President Clinton Makes Another Bid to End Violence
Column: Spotlight on Middle East
By Muslehuddin Ahmed
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Supplement

One-and-a-half page supplement on the Independence Day of Poland on pages 8 & 9

Business

APEC countries downplay US polls uncertainty
Tata, SLA form alliance for Air India pie
Pages 6 & 7

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Nov 11		5.15 pm
Nov 12	6-10 am	

Prayer Timings

November 11		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-00	5-35
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-25	5-30
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

OIC Summit starts today

Dhaka to float idea of a common market for member states

By Staff Correspondent

The ninth Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) Summit begins in the Qatar capital of Doha tomorrow (Sunday) amidst last-ditch efforts to ensure participation of all 55 member-states. The three-day summit is expected to adopt a tough resolution against Israeli aggression on the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina leaves the capital for Doha today to attend the Islamic summit. She will lead a 55-member Bangladesh delegation.

The summit was thrown into doubt Wednesday last when Saudi Arabia announced that it would boycott the November 12-14 assembly over "continued deterioration in the situation in the occupied Arab territories, particularly in Jerusalem."

The Muslim powerhouse, home to the OIC, was actually irked by Qatar's refusal to sever trade links with Israel.

On Thursday, following Qatar's decision to

shut down Israel's trade office in Doha, Saudi Arabia changed its heart. The Saudi cabinet announced yesterday that Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdel Aziz, who stands in for the ailing King Fahd, would represent the kingdom at the three-day conference.

Meanwhile, an Iranian envoy in Doha announced last week that President Mohammad Khatami would take part in the summit. Libya and Bahrain, however, decided to stay away.

As many as 30 or more member countries would send top-level delegations led by heads of state, said sources in Dhaka.

The Prime Minister apart, Bangladesh's delegation would include Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, foreign secretary, principal secretary and press secretary to PM. The entourage also includes PM's sister Sheikh Rehana, a number of ruling party lawmakers, officials and a media team.

Foreign Minister is already in Doha to attend a two-day ministerial preparatory session, which began Thursday.

See page 11 col 1

ICC conference calls for equitable fund flow

Developed nations not true to commitment, say speakers

Star Report

The two-day International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Asia Conference began in the city yesterday with a view to devising an appropriate approach towards a futuristic regional outlook.

The business conference titled, Investment in Developing Countries: Increasing Opportunities, first of its kind in Dhaka, is being attended by over 250 participants from 24 countries of Asia and Europe including policymakers, business leaders, economists, investors, lawyers and profes-

sionals. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the function at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, which was also attended by Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand and next Director General of World Trade Organisation (WTO) Dr Supachai Panitchpakdi, Asian Development Bank (ADB) President Tadao Chino, ICC Secretary-General Maria Livanos Cattai, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Executive Secretary Kim

Hak-Su, Commerce Minister Md Abdul Jalil and ICC-Bangladesh President Mahbubur Rahman.

The prime minister said her government has announced investment-friendly policies, and urged all concerned to explore the possibilities of investment in Bangladesh.

She said the flow of investment was slowing down and being diverted to the more developed regions. "If this trend continues unabated, the sufferings of the See page 11 col 2



(From left to right) Dr Supachai Panitchpakdi, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, ADB president Tadao Chino, ICC-Bangladesh chairman Mahbubur Rahman and ESCAP executive secretary Kim Hak-Su at the inaugural ceremony of the ICC Asia Conference yesterday. --Star photo

BNP lawmaker killed as bus, truck collide

Six more killed, 40 injured

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Nov 10: BNP lawmaker from Pabna Rafiqul Islam Bakul and six others were killed and at least 40 people injured, 20 of them seriously, as a passenger bus and a truck collided head on, about six km west of Bangabandhu Bridge, this evening, police and witnesses said.

The Pabna bound bus from Dhaka and the truck coming from Bogra collided on the road from the bridge at Konabari, about 10 km from Sirajganj town, at about 6:30 pm. The accident occurred as a front wheel tyre of the bus burst.

The MP suffered serious head injuries and was rushed to local Ine Sina Hospital, where doctors declared him dead. He was 50.

"He died of internal haemorrhage," a doctor said. The dead included conductor of the bus Azam Sheikh and driver of the truck. The four others were yet to be identified.

The lawmaker's body was kept at Maulana Bhasani Auditorium in front of BNP office here. Janaza will be held at Islamia College ground at 10 pm.

The other victims' bodies were kept at Sirajganj General hospital

morgue. The seriously injured were admitted to the General Hospital and Ine Sina Hospital.

Senior police officials visited the spot following the accident. A case was registered with Bangabandhu Bridge West Police Station in this connection.

BSS adds: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina last night expressed her deep shock at the premature death of valiant freedom fighter Rafiqul Islam Bakul, MP.

In a condolence message, Hasina said in his death the country has lost a freedom fighter and politician.

The Prime Minister prayed for salvation of the departed soul and conveyed her sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

According to a BNP press release issued in Dhaka last night, a namaj-e-janaza for Bakul will be held in front of the BNP central office at Nayapaltan in the city at 10 am today.

Later, the body will be taken to the South Plaza of the Sagesad Bhaban for holding another janaza. Bakul will be buried at his family graveyard in Pabna, the press release added.

Bush, Gore now raise funds for legal battle

WASHINGTON, Nov 10: The US election is over but the campaign continues in the improbable 2000 presidential race, with Al Gore and George W Bush raising funds for legal battles, waging a public relations struggle and deploying waves of lawyers and political aides to Florida, site of an intensely watched recount, reports AP.

"The vote count on Tuesday night showed Governor Bush won Florida's election, and a recount has now confirmed his victory," Bush spokeswoman Karen Hughes said in a statement released today.

In a statement, Gore countered, "Contrary to claims being made this morning by the Bush campaign, this election is not over." Gore said in a statement released early Friday. "Again, we want the true and accurate will of the people to prevail, and that means letting the legal system run its course."

Republicans continued to urge Gore to drop his challenge of the results. Former Sen. Robert Dole said, "I think if I were Al Gore, and I know him fairly well we've had a count, we've had a recount. It's time for him to say the election is over, let's go on with the business of America. The recount was held. Bush is still the winner."

With the tissue-thin margin, several thousands ballots in the mail from overseas could elect America's 43rd president. They would not all be counted before November 17, 10 days after the election.

Unless the election is challenged in other states, Florida's disputed vote will decide the presidency under the constitutional system that allots electoral votes to each state to equal its number of congress members.

Instead of focusing on a future in or out of the White House, Bush and Gore are raising funds for legal battles, waging a public relations struggle and deploying waves of lawyers and political aides to Florida.

The presidential election, of course, is on hold, former Secretary of State James A Baker III said Thursday in Florida, where he laboured on behalf of Bush's campaign. Another former secretary of state, Warren Christopher, represented Gore's interests.

Not counting Florida, where Bush brother Jeb is governor, Bush had won 29 states for 246 electoral votes. Gore had won 18 states plus the District of Columbia for 155, with 270 needed for victory.

Political charges aside, the uncertainty overshadowed any talk of the transition to a new administration.

The incomplete popular vote totals showed Gore ahead, with 49,145,883 votes, or 48 per cent. Bush had 48,940,963, also 48 per See page 11 col 8

Dream start for debutants

Bangladesh end day one at 239-6

By Al-Amin

Bangladesh's journey in the Test arena began well beyond their expectation when they scored a respectable 239 for six at stumps on the opening day of the Dutch-Bangla inaugural Test match against India at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

It was a successful day for the debutants in every respect starting with captain Naimur Rahman winning the historic toss in the morning and deciding to bat in perfect conditions until the final ball of Indian left-arm spinner Sunil Joshi under fading lights.

The capacity crowd at the big bowl could not have thought of a better way to spend the weekend, if not the most significant moment of their lives, as they were charmed by the two strikingly contrasting innings from Habibul Bashar and Aminul Islam.

Bashar walked into history as the first Bangladeshi batsman to reach a Test half-century when he scored a marvelous 71 to lay the foundation of a big total.

The right-hander, coming in to bat at his customary number three position, enthralled the home supporters with exciting stroke play. Out to prove that it could have been fatal had he not been picked in the team following a dramatic development after initially being ruled out by the selectors in the probable 14, Bashar hammered ten cracking fours in his 112-ball knock.

The baby-faced cricketer however missed the magical three-figure mark just when it looked a certainty. Bashar mistimed an attempted pull off Indian left-arm seamer Zaheer Khan into the safe hands of Ganguly at mid-off. It was the very first ball of the post-lunch session's drink break.

While Bashar's innings was more like a typical one-day knock, Aminul played a true Test knock of 70 not out during his nearly five-hour long stay at the crease. The former national captain played the sheet anchor role when he came in to bat after both openers were dismissed with the score reading 44.

Mehrab Hossain, on four, was first to go in the sixth over when he See page 11 col 1



Habibul Bashar.. 71

Aminul Islam.. 70 n.o.



What a day!

By Rabeed Imam

Oh, what a day it has been! From the prelude to the start of the inaugural Test to the close of play, there wasn't a Bangladeshi heart that rested for a second. If the lead-up to the match was fascinating, the quality of play from the Test babes was simply breathtaking.

Going into the apparently unequal tussle with India, there was actually nothing at stake for the locals, but even if there wasn't any expectation there was wistful anticipation. If the fans didn't have fear, they certainly were apprehensive.

But home conditions will always provide some sort of edge to any team, never mind if they are making their debut. The loss can be taken as an example. See page 11 col 1

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Would-be chief calls for WTO transparency

Thai Deputy Prime Minister Dr Supachai Panitchpakdi Friday called for transparency in the World Trade Organisation's decision making, saying future trade negotiations should benefit all, reports AFP.

"Developing countries are questioning about the transparency in WTO's decision making process ... There is scope for improvements in the process," said Supachai, who will succeed Mike Moore as WTO director general in 2002.

He was talking at the launch of a business conference in Dhaka, organised by Paris-based International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and inaugurated by Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

More needed to be done to practise free trade, which must go hand in hand with other enabling measures for developing nations, he added.

"Future trade negotiations can come about only if that is beneficial to all," he said. See page 11 col 1

Wasteful energy ministry

Tk 74.20 crore misspent in a single year

By Shahriar Karim

Officials of different utility organisations under Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources squandered Tk 74.20 crore in a single year through corruption and inefficiency, revealed the latest annual audit report.

The comptroller and Auditor General's office conducted a partial audit of 1996-97 accounts of Power Development Board (PDB) and Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) and some donor funded projects under the ministry and submitted the report to President

Shahabuddin Ahmed and to the parliament secretary recently.

Of the misappropriated amount, PDB and DESA account for Tk 45.30 crore and three utility organisations Power Development Board, Rural Electrification Board and Petrobangla Tk 28.90 crore in 46 donor funded projects under Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources.

PDB and DESA gave house rent allowance to its officials and staff more than they are allowed

and some officials of the utility organisations also drew house rent with their salary in spite of the fact that they resided in official quarters.

Officials concerned also failed to realise pending bills from subscribers whose lines were disconnected and also mysteriously did not realise fines imposed on people who took electric lines illegally, the report said.

The major cause for loss in See page 11 col 6

19 children rescued in city

By Staff Correspondent

Police yesterday rescued 19 children and arrested seven alleged traffickers from a bus counter at Shyamoli in the city's Mohammadpur area.

Police said the seven who were taking the children to Ranganmati were arrested as they could not give any satisfactory answer.

The arrested were identified as Mangal Tiki, 24, Montu Ekka, 25, Sudhir Ekka, 21, Budha Lokra, See page 11 col 7

Jamaat, Shibir clash with police in Ctg

100 hurt, 73 arrested

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 10: Activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chhatra Shibir clashed with police at Sirajuddowla Road and Andarkilla here today, leaving more than 100 people including 20 policemen injured.

The trouble began at around 1:30 pm when police prevented activists of Jamaat and its student front Shibir from taking out a militant procession from Andarkilla Jame Mosque after Juma prayers. They tried to bring out the procession in support of their earlier announced tafsir mahfil by Jamaat central leader Delwar Hossain Saidi at Parade See page 11 col 4



Nineteen children were rescued from a bus counter in the city's Shyamoli area yesterday. They were being boarded on a Ranganmati-bound bus when police intervened. The alleged traffickers, seven of them, were nabbed. --Star photo