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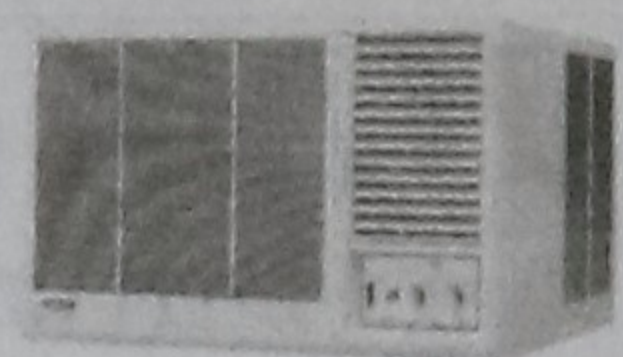
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Mirpur, Dhaka  
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Air Conditioner (Window type)

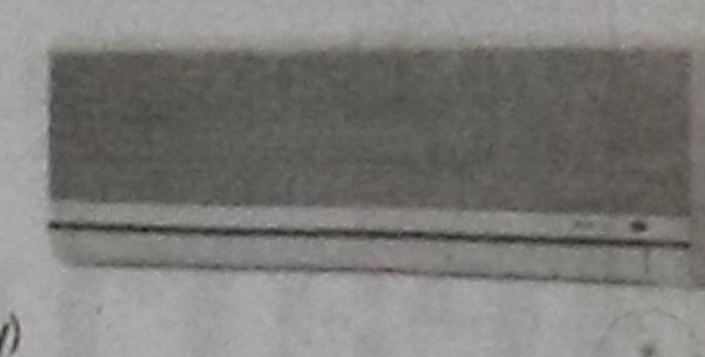


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Air Conditioner (Split type)



**PM begins 3-nation tour Dec 2**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina leaves Dhaka on Saturday (Dec 2) on a nine-day official visit to three European countries - Italy, Germany and Switzerland, reports UNB.

On the first leg, she will tour Italy, December 2-4.

The Prime Minister will fly to Berlin on the night of December 4 to begin her three-day visit to Germany at the invitation of Federal Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder December 5-7.

From Germany, she will go to Switzerland on December 8 on the last leg of her three-nation trip.

In Italy, the Prime Minister will meet Italian President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi and have official talks with Prime Minister Giuliano Amato.

Director General of FAO Jacques Diouf will call on the Prime Minister. She will attend a reception hosted by the Bangladesh community in Rome.

During her stay there, Hasina will visit the historic city of Pompeii and Florence.

In Germany, the Prime Minister will hold official talks with Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder on December 5 and meet President Johannes Rau.

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**Gore challenges Florida vote as Bush prepares to take office**

WASHINGTON, Nov 28: George W Bush took on the work, if not the title, of president-elect yesterday, meeting with a top aide to discuss a transition to the White House. Al Gore challenged his rival's Florida victory in court, arguing that thousands of votes "have never been counted", reports AP.

The American system depends on "an election where every vote is counted," Gore said in a nationally televised conference call with the Democratic leaders of Congress.

The Democratic vice president carried his fight at the same time Republican Bush was sitting down with advisers in preparation for becoming the nation's 43rd president.

"We may just open our own transition office," said Andy Card, Bush's choice for White House chief of staff, as he arrived at the Texas state Capitol on the morning after the Republican ticket of Bush and former Defense Secretary Dick Cheney was certified the winner in Florida's make-or-break election.

The government agency responsible for securing official transition offices in Washington has said it won't yet turn the keys over to the Republicans. But Card said, "We know how important it is to keep moving."

A few hours later, Gore's lawyers went to court in Tallahassee, Florida, formally contesting the election results in Palm Beach, Miami-Dade and Nassau counties. They asked the court to "certify that the true and accurate results of the 2000 presidential election in Florida" show the Democrats as the winners.

"The vote totals reported in the election canvassing commission's certification of Nov 26, 2000, are wrong," the Gore campaign argued.

"They include illegal votes and do not include legal votes that were improperly rejected. The number of such votes is more than sufficient to place in doubt, indeed to change, the result of the election."

The party's Democratic leaders flew to Florida during the day to lend their support to the vice president.

House Democratic leader Dick Gephardt said the proclamation of Bush's victory as Florida Secretary of State was "incomplete and inaccurate, and it's premature for either side to declare victory or concede because the fact is all the votes are still not in."

Gephardt and Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle participated in a nationally televised conference call with Gore and his running mate, Joe Lieberman.

Gore thanked the leaders for their support and said, "Under Florida law, the law says when votes haven't been counted you go to court and say, 'Look, here's the situation: Take a look at it and do the right thing. And that's essentially what we're doing in court,'" he said.

Republicans said in advance that Bush aides would aggressively fight Gore's contests, but not file any of their own.

"This is something that's too important to be decided in a partisan environment," David Boies, a Gore lawyer, said. "This is something that ought to be decided by impartial judges."

An overnight poll by ABC and The Washington Post found that 60 per cent of those surveyed thought the vice president should concede. Thirty-five per cent said he should not.

Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris, a Bush partisan, certified Bush the winner with a 537-vote margin over Gore out of some 6 million votes cast - a 0.01 per cent margin.

If Bush prevails, he would have just one vote to spare in the Electoral College that determines the US presidency. If he retains Florida's 25 votes, he'll win 271-267, assuming all electors vote as they have pledged.

Gore won the nationwide popular vote by more than 300,000 votes, but the electoral votes accumulated by each candidate by winning the popular vote in individual states determine the presidency. Each state has the same number of electors as it has members of Congress.

Electors officially elect the next president on Dec 12.

Reuters adds: President Bill Clinton yesterday came close to siding with Vice President Al Gore in Gore's bitter post-election battle with Republican George W Bush, saying "every single vote" in Florida ought to be counted.

Clinton, who has tried to stay above the fray as attorneys for Gore and the Texas governor

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JSD activists set ablaze a Pakistani national flag in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday to protest the Pakistani Deputy High Commissioner's arrogant remarks about Bangladesh's War of Liberation at a seminar on Monday.

**3 killed, 20 hurt as minibuses collide in Manikganj**

MANIKGANJ, Nov 28: Three people were killed and 20 others injured in separate road accidents on the Dhaka-Archa highway here today, reports UNB.

The dead were identified as Razia Khatun 11, Intaz 65, and the father of ASP, Rajbari district whose name could not be known immediately.

Police said the father of the ASP was killed and 20 others, including the ASP, were injured when two minibuses collided head-on at Sreerampur in Dhamrai upazila at about 3.30 pm.

Others injured include ASP Nuruzzaman, 45, his wife Sultia Begum, 35, daughter Rehana, 18, son Habibur Rahman, 12, a nephew aged about 18 and driver of the microbus Jalaluddin 32. They were first admitted to Manikganj Sadar Hospital and later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital as their condition deteriorated.

Others injured were admitted to Dhamrai health complex and Manikganj Sadar Hospital.

A speeding truck overturned and fell into a roadside ditch at Shibhalaya after its driver lost control over the steering, killing Razia on the spot.

Intaz was crushed under the wheels of a bus at Pukuria early today.

**Kibria terms Saifur's visit to WB office humiliating**

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria yesterday expressed dissatisfaction at his predecessor M Saifur Rahman's leading a BNP delegation to World Bank office here saying, he broke the long standing tradition, reports UNB.

A five-member delegation from the main opposition party reportedly met the World Bank country director Frederick T Temple on Monday and discussed matters of political and socio-economic situation, banking, judiciary, public administration and agriculture sector.

"I was quite surprised to read this news. As far as I'm aware this is unprecedented," he said while talking the news agency at his office.

Normally, he said, neither the government nor the mainstream opposition party goes to the office of a donor institution. He said this is a long established tradition that such body will approach the government or opposition for discussion.

"In my view, this is very humiliating for a political party and also a bad precedent for this country," Kibria added.

He said this political party (BNP) was in office only four and a half years back. They should know that all those who come to this country for any business must themselves approach the appropriate authority.

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**UNDP threatens to withdraw major share of SEMP funds**

The UNDP has threatened to withdraw 22 million dollars grant from the 26 million dollar Sustainable Environment Programme (SEMP) after a row with the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF) which suspended the programme in October alleging irregularities and corruption by the sub-implementing agencies (SIAs).

The SEMP was launched in October 1998.

UNDP representative in Bangladesh Jorgen Lissner in a letter to the MOFE on November 22 threatened to withdraw the grant after it was found that his November 12 letter sent to ERD in this regard remaining unheeded, sources said.

Lissner had written to ERD Secretary Dr Mashur Rahman

seeking his intervention in view of the "unilateral action" by the MOEF Secretary Mamunur Rashid.

In his letter to the ERD Secretary, Lissner had said that the MOEF could not substantiate its allegations against some of the SIAs.

Lissner's letter of November 22 led Finance Minister SAMS Kibria to take note of the situation, urging the UNDP to exercise restraint and asking the MOEF to resolve the dispute with UNDP, the sources said.

Following Kibria's intervention, the matter was discussed at the highest level in the government. An inter-ministerial meeting has been convened on December 3 to resolve it, they added.

The IMED (Implementation and Evaluation Division), the Auditor and Comptroller General and UNDP have also been requested to send their representatives to the meeting.

When contacted yesterday, Mamunur Rashid declined to talk to The Daily Star on the issue. He had alleged earlier that a number of organisations including the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Forum for Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh, ADAB and BIDS were involved in financial irregularities and corruption in the programme.

ERD Secretary Dr Mashur Rahman was also not available as he is out of the country.

Lissner in his letter also said the MOEF Secretary did not even

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**Sirajganj clash 149 opposition activists sued: 4 arrested**

From Our Correspondent  
SIRAJGANJ, Nov 28: Awami League filed a case with Belkuchi thana under Public Safety Act accusing 149 opposition leaders and activists for their alleged involvement in Monday's clash at the thana headquarters.

The accused included thana BNP president Hazi Jamal Uddin Bhuiyan, general secretary Golam Mostafa and joint secretary Abdur Razzak, Jubo Dal leader Altaf Hossain and Manju, Jatiya Party leader Omar Faruque Probat, Jamaat district Amir Moulana Ali Alam, its Belkuchi Upazila Amir Abdur Razzak and Upazila unit general secretary Golam Azam.

Police arrested four of the accused identified as Nasiruddin Pramanik, Zahurul Islam, Abdul Latif Pramanik and Tariq Hussain at around 10 pm today.

In the FIR, AL leaders alleged that the accused in a planned way attacked and set fire to a hotel and a medicine shop belonging to the AL leaders.

Meanwhile, in a joint statement, BNP, JP and Jamaat leaders, in a joint statement today condemned filing of the case and alleged that the miscreants belonging to the ruling party had attacked their peaceful procession.

At least 50 people were injured in a clash between the activists of AL and opposition alliance at Belkuchi upazila headquarters on Monday.

**3 ministers review ZIA situation Decision to prepare list of 'patrons' of smuggling**

By Shahriar Karim

In the wake of a rising trend in smuggling, three influential ministers yesterday held a meeting at the finance ministry with the heads of departments concerned to devise a plan for curbing the trend.

As many people believe that Zia International Airport has become a major smuggling point, the meeting mainly focused on gearing up vigilance at the airport and also improving its overall management, meeting sources said.

The meeting decided to prepare a list of persons who finance and patronise smuggling and directed the airport authorities to tighten security so that they can check excesses of 'baggage party' before the Eid.

The sources said that when the issue of specific responsibilities of different government agencies as regards checking smuggling came up at the meeting, the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) and the Customs authorities blamed each other for smuggling.

They also gave two different reports on the overall situation at the airport.

Finance Minister SAMS Kibria, Home Minister Mohammad Nasim and Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Mosharraf Hossain attended the meeting. The others present included the home secretary, civil aviation secretary, Chairman of National Board of Revenue (NBR), Director General of BDR, Chairman of CAAB and Managing Director of Bangladesh Biman.

A section of officials of different government agencies working at the airport are reportedly "involved in smuggling. The smuggling syndicates expanded their network at the airport by providing cellular telephones to cleaners, sweepers and trolley men," a report by Dhaka Customs House said.

Customs authorities also said that security guards of CAAB, trolley men and cleaners illegally

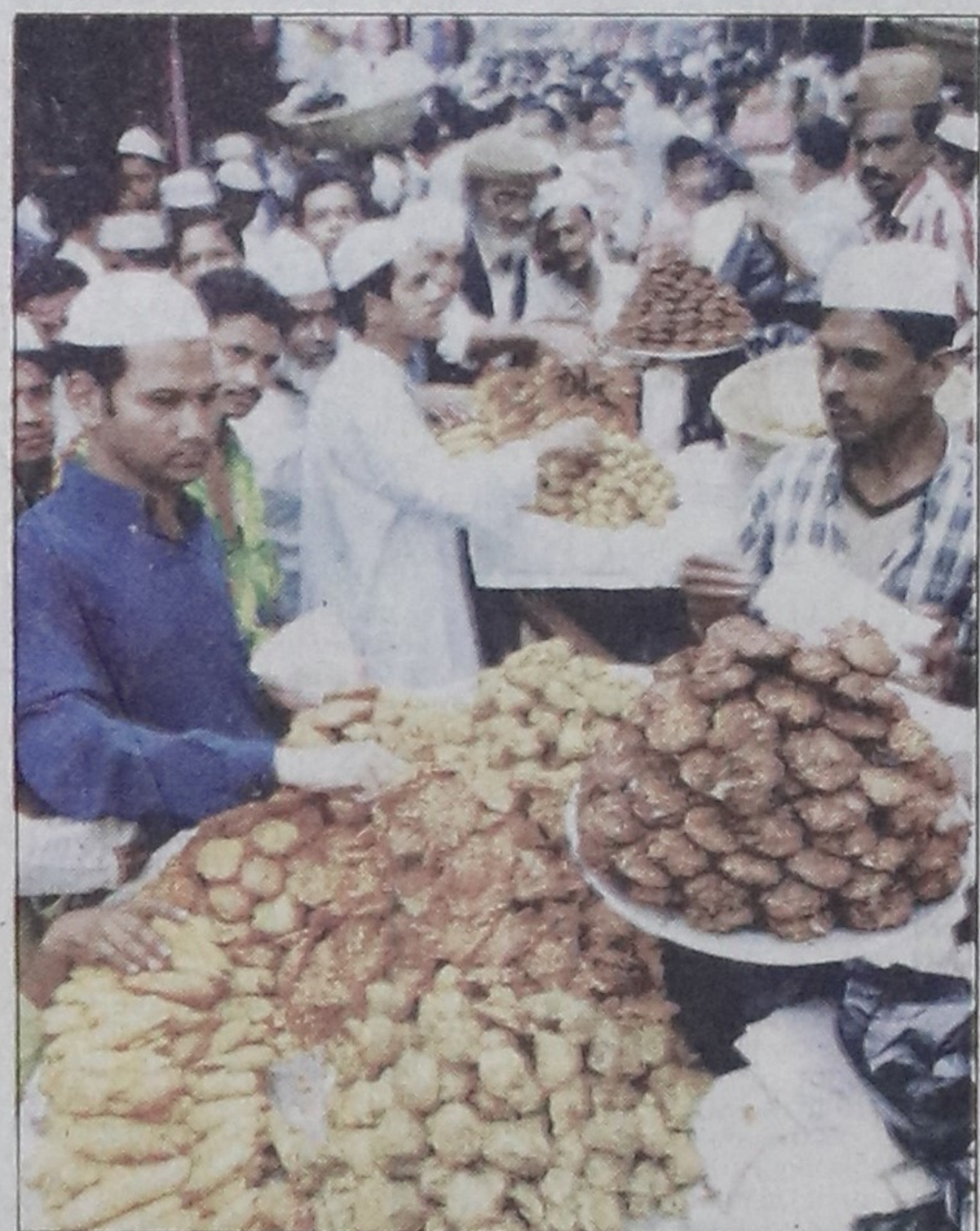
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**3rd anniversary of CHT Peace accord Saturday**

BANDARBAN, Nov 28: The third anniversary of Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord will be observed in three Hill districts, including Bandarban on Saturday, reports BSS.

For the first time, the day will be observed officially. The last two anniversaries were observed by Bangladesh Awami League and Parbatyaya Chattagram Janasanghati Samity.

In this regard, a discussion was held in the conference room of the Bandarban district administration on Monday with Deputy Commissioner Mohsin Ali Sardar in the chair. Tribal and non-tribal leaders attended the meeting.



Ramadan in the air... the buzzing iftaar markets at Chawk Bazar and elsewhere in the capital city could very well make a foreigner wonder whether a food festival was on.

**Malaysia plans to hire 800 doctors**

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 28: The government plans to hire nearly 800 foreign doctors because of a shortage of medical specialists in rural Malaysia, a senior health official said today, reports AP.

The doctors will be recruited from Bangladesh, Indonesia and Myanmar to work in state-run hospitals. Deputy Health Minister Suleiman Mohamed told the lower house of Parliament.

**Five pirates arrested in Khulna**

From Staff Correspondent  
KHULNA, Nov 28: Police arrested five pirates on Monday from Skid Ghat on charge of throwing six others of their gang into the sea on Wednesday last.

Police seized a fishing trawler 'Alahar Daan' from the possession of the arrested Mohammad Hashem (50), Siddique (20), Mir Abul Kashem (22), Noor Mohammad (25), and Mohammad Hossain (24).

All the arrested and missing pirates hail from Cox's Bazar district and the fishing trawler was hijacked from the coastal belt of Patuakhali.

Four of the six pirates thrown into the deep sea with their hands and legs tied up with nylon rope have been identified as Ruhul Amin, 30, Abul, 24, Masum, 28, and Ershaduzzaman, 30. All these six pirates are feared dead, police said quoting confessions of the arrested pirates.

A gang of 12 pirates went to the deep sea with the trawler for fishing. But they were divided following a quarrel over sharing money received from selling fishes caught from the sea and looted from some fishing boats.

The quarrel ultimately resulted in a fierce clash. At one stage, six of them were thrown into the deep sea, police said.

The six others of the gang came to Khulna to sell the trawler, but failed due to a secret information received by police from Skid Ghat.

One of the six pirates managed to escape from police custody from Skid Ghat. A case has been lodged with Khulna thana in this connection.

**Jewellery trader, 2 others murdered in city**

By Staff Correspondent

Three people including a young woman were murdered in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

Miscreants killed jewellery businessman Dijendra Chandra Ghosh alias Bimal, 22, son of Nepal Chandra Ghosh, inside his shop at Siddikbazar in the city's Kotwali at about 1:30pm yesterday by driving an iron rod in his throat.

Kotwali Police recovered the body and sent it to Mitford Medical College Hospital for autopsy. Police also recovered an iron rod from the shop before sealing it.

Local people said Bimal might have been killed by his employee following some business-related dispute. No case was filed till writing of this report last night.

In another incident, Lalbagh police recovered the body of Mohammad Rafiq Uddin, 35, son of Late Abu Sattar, from the bathroom of his 36, BC street residence under the Lalbagh police station in the early hours of yesterday.

Rafiq's mother said three people had come to their house and called him out. Later, finding the bathroom door closed from inside, she called neighbours for help. After breaking the door open, they found him lying dead inside.

Police suspect business rivalry as motive behind the murder. The victim's mother Hamida Begum filed a case with Lalbagh police station in this regard.

Lalbagh police arrested Md. Akbar, Rokhana Begum and Noor-Jahan for their alleged involvement with the killing. The body of the victim was sent to the Mitford Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

In yet another incident, Tejgaon police recovered the body of a 35-year-old unidentified woman from beside the Bangabandhu International Convention Center at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city yesterday morning and sent it to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Hospital sources said the victim was strangled to death. She was wearing a white Sari and a reddish blouse.

Police however could not give any other details about the murder. A case was filed with Tejgaon in this regard.

**International Day of Solidarity with Palestinians today**

International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinians will be observed today in the country as elsewhere in the globe, reports UNB.

Since 1947, November 29 is being observed as the Day of Solidarity at the United Nations Headquarters and in the capitals of all countries by governments, institutions and private groups.

Various programmes are organized on the day to promote deeper understanding of Palestine issue and empathy for the plight of the Palestinian people.

The Day of Solidarity is the occasion to mobilize world opinion on the need to take action to enable the Palestinians to recover and exercise their inalienable national rights.

In message on the occasion Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reaffirmed Bangladesh's unreserved and total solidarity with the people of Palestine in their just struggle for an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital.

"We believe that full and immediate implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 242, 338 and 425 regarding withdrawal of Israeli occupation from all Arab territories and resolution 237 regarding return of Palestinian

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**A year after Humayun Kabir murder Two of three chargesheeted accused still at large**

By Shaikh Nazrul Islam

Human Kabir, a Bangladeshi American engineer living in Los Angeles, USA, came to Dhaka on November 13, 1999 and was scheduled to fly back on November 23.

He was shot and killed by hired hit men on the Central Road under Dhammondi police station at about 8:30 p.m. on November 21, the investigation authorities said.

A murder case was filed with Dhammondi police, but later it was shifted to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

The CID submitted a charge sheet on June 4, 2000 accusing Faisal Alam Ansari, his brother Saiful Alam Ansari Chopol and Fana Ahmed of the murder. Police arrested Faisal but the others

could not be tracked down as yet.

Kabir, also a US citizen and an electrical engineer, was working with the Power and Water Department, Los Angeles, the family members said.

He was killed by one of his friends and business partners only to grab his property in Los Angeles, brother of Kabir said.

The engineer was shot point blank when he was on his way from Mirpur to his brother's residence at Jatrabari by a car. He was accompanied by two of his relatives.

Family sources said Kabir was killed by his business partner Faisal as part of a well thought-out plan. Faisal arrived in the city with Kabir and they were sup

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**Garment worker raped: One held**

By Staff Correspondent

Gulshan police yesterday arrested a teenage boy on charge of violating a garment worker at Titumir College ground in the city Monday night.

Police identified the arrested as Sarwar, 15, a student of class seven.

Police said Sarwar forcibly took the girl aged about 18 years to the college ground at about 7:15pm and raped her.

A case was filed with Gulshan thana in this connection under Woman and Child Repression Prevention Act.