



The followers of Majibhandari brought out a procession in the city yesterday on the eve of the Eid-e-Miladunnabi.

## Non-collection of BTTB bills will cause huge revenue shortfall

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

Collection of some Tk 400 crore in monthly telephone subscriber bills has become uncertain, as the BUET computer centre failed to supply registers to the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB).

According to sources, a hefty amount of revenue, supposed to be collected from different government offices including all ministries, looks set to remain unrealised, as the BTTB lags behind schedule to prepare monthly bills before the current fiscal ends.

Government and semi-government organisations usually pay telephone bills at the end of the fiscal. Due to non-preparation of bills, several crores of taka collected under such a heading remain unpaid causing a shortfall in revenue collection.

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria is due to place the budget for the fiscal 2001-2002 on Thursday.

The billing crisis of BTTB deepened further as the BUET computer centre

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## Jail Killing Case Cross-examination of third PW concludes

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Cross-examination of A T M Nuruzzaman, third Prosecution Witness in the Jail Killing Case, by Defence lawyers was completed yesterday in the Special Court adjacent to the Dhaka Central Jail.

Judge Ahmed Jamil Mostafa adjourned the hearing till June 14.

Four national leaders Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, Captain Mansur Ali and A H M Quamruzzaman were murdered in the Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975.

During the three-hour cross-examination, Nuruzzaman said that he gave a statement to the

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## Human chain in Ctg to protest terrorism

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Hundreds of people from different walks of life poured onto the city streets here and formed human chains in protest against terrorism yesterday morning.

Activities at the port city came to a halt for fifteen minutes.

The participants spontaneously responded to the wake-up call made by the Chittagong Sangbadpatra Sebi Okkya Parishad, a conglomeration of journalists, and newspaper owners and employees.

As soon as the clock struck 11 a.m., the people showed up at over three hundred city points in front of their respective working places to join the largest such human chain

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## Petrobangla likely to sign 4 PSCs by June 12

SHARIER KHAN

Petrobangla is expected to sign by four production sharing contracts (PSCs) with two oil companies - Shell Oil and Maersk Olie - by June 12 for oil and gas exploration in four blocks.

According to sources, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has instructed the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources to settle all affairs related to the Second Round Block Bidding by June 12. The bid, participated by 21 oil companies, was floated in June 15, 1997 with an objective to round it off by December 15 of the same year.

However, only two PSCs for two blocks have been signed so far. One was with Unocal for Block 7 and the other with Tullow, Chevron, Texaco and BAPEX for Block 9.

On July 19 last year, Petrobangla initialled two PSCs with Maersk Olie for oil and gas exploration in Blocks 19 and 20. Shell Oil also initialled two PSCs for Blocks 5 and 10 in mid-July.

Another PSC was initialled on March 20 this year for Block 8 with Panagea. However, the US company left the country without showing any definitive reason.

Unlike Unocal, the US company which signed the PSC for Block 7 in April 7 last year, both Shell Oil and Maersk seek to conduct seismic surveys and drill some

exploratory wells. The Unocal PSC imposes a five-year moratorium on oil and gas exploration in Block 7, saying the oil company will only start exploration when it is sure that there is enough gas market in the country.

Unocal's PSC was signed at a super fast pace to mark US president Bill Clinton's visit in March last year. On the contrary, the government's approval process of PSCs for both Shell and Maersk has progressed at a snail's pace.

The Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs has cleared Shell's PSCs sometime ago and is now looking into Maersk's PSCs, sources said. These are expected to be cleared within this week.

After the law ministry's vetting, the four PSCs would be sent to the Cabinet Purchase Committee for final approval by early next week. The final signing of the four PSCs between the oil companies and Petrobangla would follow the clearance of the Purchase Committee.

The Maersk PSCs focus on a three-dimensional seismic survey over an area of 500 kilometres each in Blocks 19 and 20 over the first five years. The Danish company would also reprocess existing seismic data covering 1000 kilometres per block. Maersk would drill two exploratory wells in this period.

The BAPEX, the local exploration and production company, will get a 10 per cent carried-over interest in

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## BRAC Bank allowed

STAR REPORT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday allowed the central bank and the BRAC to set up BRAC Bank.

The Appellate Division also set aside a judgement of the High Court that disallowed BRAC Bank to commence its operation.

The matter went to the High Court following a public interest litigation that challenged a 'no objection certificate' issued by Bangladesh Bank and a 'certificate of incorporation' issued by the Registrar of the Joint Stock Companies.

The litigant's contention was that BRAC was registered under the

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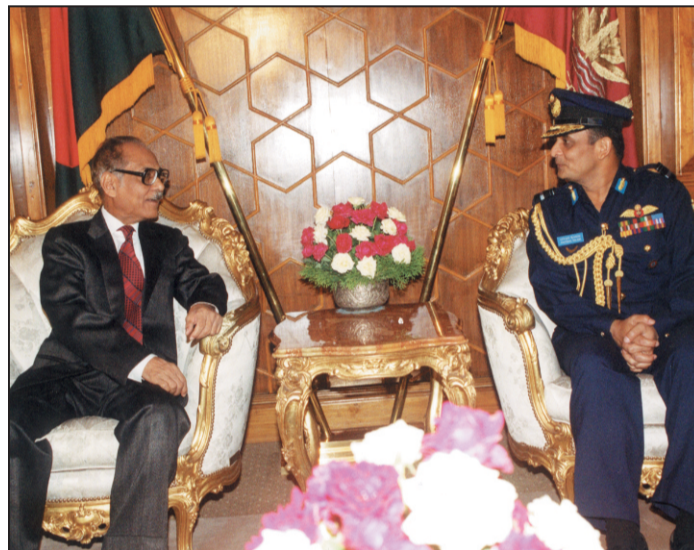
## Anthony Quinn passes away

AFP, Boston

Anthony Quinn, one of the last giants of Hollywood's Golden Age who rose from an impoverished childhood in East Los Angeles to international movie stardom, died in hospital here early Sunday. He was 86.

Best known for classics such as "Zorba the Greek" and "Lawrence of Arabia," the two-time Oscar winner died at 9:29 am (1329 GMT) Sunday, said Brigham and Women's Hospital spokeswoman Maggie Hayden.

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Newly appointed Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshal M Rafiqul Islam made a courtesy call on President Shahabuddin Ahmed at the Bangabhaban yesterday.

## Last JS session to pass budget, take up a large volume of businesses

NAZMUL ASHRAF AND NAZRUL ISLAM

The seventh Jatiya Sangsad will have a tall order when it enters its last session at 9:30 am tomorrow. The historic session is expected to witness a ceremonial end on July 12.

The national budget for the 2001-02 fiscal aside, the House in its final session is also scheduled to take up a large volume of businesses, both legislative and political.

Destined for an automatic expiry of its five-year tenure on July 13, the outgoing parliament is expected to have a kind of outcome that may influence the campaign for the next general election.

The present parliament had its first sitting on July 14, 1996.

"We're going to complete the full term of the seventh parliament and it will become a milestone in the country's democracy and political history,"

said Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid.

To be placed on June 7 and passed on June 28, the nearly Tk 45 crore proposed budget will have a smooth sail thanks to continuous boycott by the mainstream opposition parties.

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## Erratum

In a news item headlined "Shazneen Case: Hearing to resume June 13" published in The Daily Star on Monday it was inadvertently printed "He further said that he did not include the names of Minu and Parveen in the charge sheet of the murder case...". It should be read, "He included the names of Minu and Parveen in the charge sheet of the murder...". The Daily Star regrets the error.



Three nuns along with scores of Christian women brave the rain to register their protest against Sunday's powerful explosion at Baniarchar Catholic Church that left ten people killed and 26 other injured.