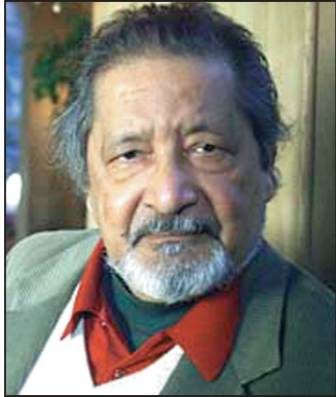


Naipaul wins Nobel for literature

AFP, Stockholm



VS Naipaul

VS Naipaul, the Trinidad-born British author, whose restless quest for roots in a post-colonial world redefined outdated notions of identity, won the Nobel Literature Prize yesterday for works that "compel us to see the presence of suppressed histories," the Swedish Academy said.

"VS Naipaul is a literary circumnavigator, only ever really at home in himself, in his inimitable voice," the Academy said in its citation.

"Singularly unaffected by literary fashion and models he has wrought existing genres into a style of his own, in which the customary distinctions between fiction and non-fiction are of subordinate importance," it said.

Born in Trinidad, the son of an Indian civil servant, Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul, 69, has been based in England since the 1950s yet has spent much of his life travelling around the world seeking answers and inspiration.

Much of his writing, in the form of novels and short stories but also documentaries, examines the traumas of post-colonial change, which he

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Lankan parliament dissolved, snap polls on December 5

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka President Chandrika Kumaratunga Wednesday sacked the legislature to avoid a crushing defeat of her Marxist-backed government and scheduled elections for December 5, a minister said.

Kumaratunga in a gazette notification ordered the dismissal of the 225-member assembly, which earlier in the day saw dramatic defections to the opposition, leaving the government fighting for its life.

Officials said Kumaratunga ordered that nation-wide parliamentary elections should be held on December 5 and the new assembly must begin its six-year term from January 1, 2002. The constitution requires elections must be completed within three months.

Opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe said the sacking of the assembly was an admission by Kumaratunga that she had been defeated.

"The president is running scared," Wickremesinghe said. "But

the people will give her party a fitting reply at the elections."

Justice Minister Batty Weerakoon said an overwhelming number of government MPs felt that the president must dissolve parliament and go for early elections.

Kumaratunga's move scuttled opposition plans to overthrow her minority government at a no-confidence vote in parliament.

In a day of high drama in the 225-member assembly, Kumaratunga's People's Alliance (PA) saw eight of its legislators defect while another four signalled they were pulling out of the government.

Wednesday's crossovers came hot on the heels of another ruling party MP joining opposition ranks on Tuesday, pushing the government towards the precipice.

Another blow came with the resignation of Livestock Development Minister Arumugam Thondaman, whose Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) commands four seats which had earlier provided crucial support to the PA

government.

Former parliamentary affairs minister SB Dissanayake led Wednesday's defections, plunging Kumaratunga into an unprecedented crisis.

Former justice minister and one-time confidant of Kumaratunga, GL Peiris, was also among the defectors Wednesday.

"It is a decision that was taken after a lot of careful thought. It is with a heavy heart that we took this decision," said Peiris shortly after he announced his move.

Four former cabinet ministers of Kumaratunga's government were among the nine defectors. They vowed to support the opposition-sponsored no-confidence vote and topple the government.

When faced with a similar ouster threat in July, Kumaratunga suspended parliament for two months and later accepted a lifeline from the

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Muslim women hold placards during a peace rally at Churchgate station yesterday in south Bombay. The women's organisation urged for peace and an end to the bombing of Afghanistan.

70 hurt in clash over control of market in Tungipara

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

At least 70 people, including two policemen, were injured in a clash between two rival groups of villagers over control of a local bazar under Sadar union of Tungipara upazila yesterday.

Of the injured, 23 were admitted to Gopalganj sadar hospital and 10 others to Tungipara red crescent hospital.

They are Enayet Biswash, 40, Ahmad Sheikh, 33, Rahmat, 16, Mofiz, 20, Waliur, 23, Iqbal, 18, Najir, 20, Moyeen, 22, Badsha, 17, Sentu, 32, Faisal, 25, Anis, 28, Kamal, 30, Tota Mian, 45, Reaz, 20, Shahid, 18, Amir, 33, Musa, 23, Felan, 40, Nasir, 22, Sonu Mian, 48, Dulal, 18, Imdad, 48, Sohrab, 28, Selim, 20, Rabiul, 25, Milu, 40, Anwar, 33, Hasan, 22, Imdadul, 23, Nasir, 40, Shahid, 18, and Enamul, 33.

Sources said about several hundred people from Nokhair Char, Singapur, and Parkushli villages under sadar upazila and Banni village under Tungipara upazila were locked in the clash.

The clash erupted when a group led by Milan and Chand Mian forced out Monju Sheikh of Parkushli from Banni Bazar.

Both the groups used lethal weapons during the fight that started in the morning and continued till 11 am.

ASI Kalam and ASI Shah Alam of Gopalganj thana were injured when police tried to bring the situation under control.

So near, yet so far

Close contest in 23 constituencies

ABUL KALAM AZAD

Twenty-three nominees of different political parties won the recent parliamentary election defeating their nearest rivals by less than 3,000 votes.

Close contest in the 23 constituencies took place mainly between candidates from the Awami League and the BNP-led four-party alliance.

Alliance nominees won 12 of the seats defeating their closest rivals from the AL or the Islamic Jatiya Oikya Front (IJOF) led by the Jatiya Party (Ershad). AL candidates won nine seats and their nearest rivals were from the alliance or the IJOF. The IJOF secured two seats with alliance candidates being the nearest rivals of its nominees.

The toughest contest took place in Kishorganj-1 where AL candidate Dr Alauddin Ahmed came out victorious, defeating alliance nominee Idris Ali Bhuiyan by only 122 votes. Alauddin polled 86,621 votes and Idris 86,509.

Next to that, the closest contest was witnessed in Jessore-6. ASHK Sadek of the AL won this seat defeating BNP dissident and independent candidate M Sakhawat Hossain by only 166 votes. Sadek secured 57,457 votes while Sakhawat got 57,291 votes.

Abdul Hye of the AL came out successful in Jhenidah-1 getting 92,638 votes against his nearest rival alliance candidate Abdul Wahab's 92,304. Wahab was defeated by 334 votes.

Concern over violence against minorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ten social and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in a joint statement yesterday expressed concern over the post-election violence particularly targeting the minorities.

They also demanded of the government to immediately render necessary financial assistance for rehabilitation of the minorities who lost their homes and to ensure their social security.

They observed that dwellings of the minorities were set on fire and they were systematically singled out for torture.

"Even women and children were not spared," said the statement, adding that many of the minority groups were evicted from their homes and forced to take shelter in other areas.

They also urged the political leaders to go to their respective areas and take initiatives to stop the violence against minorities.

The organisations are Asian Network for the International Criminal Court, Nari Pakkha, Nijera kori, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Nagarik Samaj, Society for Environment and Human Development, Nari Progati Sangha, Ain O Salish Kendra, Bangladesh Jatiya Mahila Ainjibi Samity, and Proshika Manobik Unnayan Kendra.

India won't join US-led strike

AFP, New Delhi

India yesterday said it would hold talks on expanding cooperation on anti-terrorist measures with the United States during US Secretary of State Colin Powell's visit here next week.

However, New Delhi said it would not participate in the US-led military action in Afghanistan and ruled out offering permanent military bases on Indian soil to the United States.

Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh, who met with Powell on October 2 during a visit to Washington, spoke of a "renewed sense of urgency" for increased cooperation with the United States.

"We will take further the discussion that we had in Washington. We will also discuss Indian-US cooperation in combating global terrorist networks wherever they exist," said Singh, who is also India's defence minister.

"This counter-terrorism cooperation between India and the US predates the unfortunate and tragic events of September 11 which both sides recognise to be a key component of the broad and expanding bilateral agenda.

"There is a renewed sense of urgency and purpose behind this now," Singh told a news conference in the Indian capital.

He ruled out military cooperation

with the US in its strikes against Afghanistan.

"We will not participate in any military action. The support we are giving will continue and there is no need for Indian forces to go there (Afghanistan)," he said.

"It (India's support) does not include the granting of permanent US bases in India," Singh added.

India has made an open offer to provide logistical support to US operations, but Washington is not believed to have used Indian airspace for its raids on Afghanistan.

India is staunchly opposed to the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, long

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EU team places polls report to CEC

BSS, Dhaka

European Union Election Observer Mission yesterday submitted a preliminary report on the October 1 polls to the Election Commission.

Paolo Salvia, the Deputy Chief of the European Union Election Observation Mission in Bangladesh handed over the report to the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) M A Syed at his office at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

Election Commissioners Safiur Rahman, M M Munsif Ali, A K

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Hepatitis B vaccination to be launched next June

STAR REPORT

A Hepatitis-B vaccination programme will be launched in the country in June next year.

The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) will provide Hepatitis-B vaccines worth about US\$40 million for five years free for all children under one year, official sources said.

The vaccination programme will start on a pilot basis in six districts still undecided.

Later, it will be expanded into a nationwide programme and eventually be incorporated into the

National Immunisation Programme (NID).

The Bangladesh government will take up the programme on its own after the expiry of GAVI assistance. An agreement on this has recently been signed.

The nationwide vaccination programme is expected to save an estimated 22,000 lives of children a year. Several studies in the country showed that about five per cent of the population is chronically infected with Hepatitis-B virus, and the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that about ten

lakh people would die of liver cirrhosis and cancer.

"The vaccination programme would reduce the rate of mortality and morbidity associated with chronic Hepatitis-B infection, including cirrhosis and cancer," said an official of Expanded Programme of Immunisation (EPI) recently.

The EPI currently uses only ten-dose vials of diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTP) vaccine. To facilitate the addition of new vaccines into the EPI, a combination of (DTP-H e p - B)

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Bank official shot, robbed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A bank official was shot and robbed of Tk 2500 in front of Balda Garden in the city's Sutrapur area yesterday evening.

The victim was identified as Mohammad Fahim, 30, son of Mohammad Mostafa, an assistant officer of Motijheel Corporate Branch of Uttara Bank. The incident occurred when he was returning to his Banogram residence from office in a rickshaw.

Three muggers stopped his rickshaw when it reached in front of Balda Garden at about 4:45 pm. They asked Mostafa to hand over his valuables.

As he refused to oblige, the gang shot in his belly and took away Tk 2500 from him.

Fatally injured Mostafa was sent to nearby National Hospital and later shifted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) as his condition deteriorated.

Sutrapur police said that they were not aware of such incident.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Oct 12		5-35 pm
Oct 13	5-55 am	

Prayer Timings		
Oct 12		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-25
Juma	12-15	1-20
Asr	4-10	4-25
Maghrib	5-43	5-50
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

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Relatives mourn the death of Liton Ahmed Bhutto, a Jubo League leader who was chopped and shot to death at East Shewrapara in the city in the early hours of yesterday.

Jubo League leader slain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Jubo League leader was chopped and shot dead allegedly by BNP activists at Jamtala in East Shewrapara in the city in the early hours of yesterday.

The victim was identified as Liton alias Bhutto, 24, of Purbapara in the area.

Liton along with a friend was returning to his residence in an auto-rickshaw at about 2:30 am. As the vehicle came near the primary school at Jamtala, the attackers stopped it, chopped Liton and then shot him in the chest.

Fatally injured Liton was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead.

The victim's brother Anwar

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Screening for detection of childhood blindness stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday strongly recommended screening services across the country for early detection and treatment of childhood blindness and visual impairment.

The speakers suggested that eye banks and corneal graft surgeries be strengthened; the number of cataract surgeries be increased; and rehabilitation services extended to the unavoidably blind children.

They also called for a greater role and partnership of the media for awareness-building and information dissemination.

More than fifty discussants joined the roundtable on the issues

of blindness in observance of the World Sight Day yesterday at the BRAC Centre Inn auditorium. The roundtable was organised by World Sight Day Observance Committee.

It is estimated that one person goes blind every five seconds and a child goes blind every minute across the globe. The economic burden of global blindness has been estimated at US\$25 billion per year.

In Bangladesh, there are about 42,000 blind children surviving with corneal scar, cataract and tumour; and over 200,000 visually impaired children with refractive errors, power defects and squints live today without any treatment.

Blind is about 1.4 per cent of the population of Bangladesh, of which 0.6 million people with cataract. The

ratio of ophthalmologist to patients is 1:2,60,000.

The speakers identified inadequate infrastructure, manpower, instruments and above all, an insufficient national eye care policy responsible for poor services. A better planning and management could double the services.

Today, there are 15 million blind people in South Asia against the global figure of 45 million and 135 with low vision. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), there were 7 million blind people in the region in 1975. It is estimated that the number would double by 2020.

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2 kidnapped, killed in Fatikchhari

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

The bodies of two persons kidnapped from two places in Fatikchhari upazila were recovered by police yesterday morning and the night before.

The victims were identified as Akbar Hossain, 20, of East Haichakia and Ayub Ali, 45, of Dantmara union.

According to Fatikchhari police, Akbar was abducted by a gang of armed youths from his house on Tuesday night. Since then his whereabouts could not be known.

Akbar's bullet-riddled body was recovered from Halda river near Jugnighata bridge, five km from his house yesterday morning.

Ayub was abducted on Wednesday night by some unidentified elements. His body was recovered from a place about half a km from his house on Wednesday night.

Police however could say if the victims had any political connection or what was the motive behind the killings.

Two cases were filed with Fatikchhari thana.