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## Outlawed parties are raising heads again

NAZRUL ISLAM and ABUL KALAM AZAD, back from south-western region

Several hundred members of outlawed organisations locally known as 'Sarbahara' have ganged up again to launch clandestine operations in the 16 south-western districts, creating tension among people in the region.

Establishing respective commands in different areas, the outlaws equipped with modern lethal weapons had been operating under the banner of Biplobi Communist Party, Purbanga Communist Party (PBCP), Ganomukti Fouz (Sromojibi Mukti Andolon), Banglar Communist Party, Gano Bahini and some other small 'leftist' parties.

Although the new government has directed law enforcing agencies to step up drive against the hooligans throughout the country, some five people were killed and a village was set ablaze by the Sarbaharamen in the south-western districts of Chuadanga, Pabna and Khulna last week.

According to available statistics more than 2,000 people including armed cadres of the extremist organisations were brutally killed in the hand of Sarbaharamen since the groups emerged in this region in early 80s.

They were either slaughtered or gunned down by

the Sarbaharamen for establishing supremacy either in the party ranks or in different command areas.

Local sources said leaders and activists of these organisations have resurged now. They started their groundwork before the October 1 general election. Local units of both Awami League and BNP-led alliance tried to utilise them in the election to capture parliamentary seats.

In most cases the clandestine groups worked against Awami League in the October 1 election as the party during its immediate past rule had launched anti-terrorist drives to improve law and order in violence-prone south-western region.

Being hit hard by the AL government, political insiders in this region believe, the Sarbaharamen extended support to the BNP-led alliance that brought a humiliating defeat for AL in the last general election.

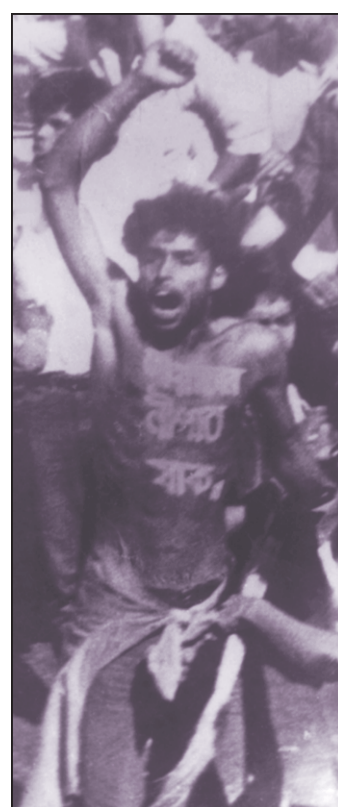
Before extending support to the alliance, they had locally realised promise that unlike the previous government, the alliance would not 'disturb' the outlaws if voted to power.

During Awami League's five-year rule, they could not operate unhindered as the government launched massive drives against them and announced an amnesty

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Deep smoke rises up over the Taliban controlled village of Rahisht, not far from Baghran airport and some 25 kilometres north of Kabul yesterday, after US bombers attacked Taliban positions there.



## Noor Hossain Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shaheed Noor Hossain Day will be observed in the country today.

On this day in 1987, a young pro-democracy activist, Noor Hossain, lost his life in the movement to end the autocratic regime of H M Ershad.

Hossain was killed in police firing near Zero Point in the city. He was participating in a procession with the slogans *Suairachar nipat jak & gonotantra mukti pak* ("Down with Autocracy" and "Let Democracy be freed") painted on his bare chest and back when a bullet pierced through his body.

His death escalated the movement to topple the autocratic ruler and restore democracy in the country.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleida Zia

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## Presidential polls EC to accept nomination papers today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) would accept today nomination papers from intending candidates for the presidential election on November 14.

According to EC sources, Chief Election Commissioner M A Syed will receive the nomination papers from 10 am to 5 pm. The Commission will scrutinise those tomorrow.

Meanwhile, the Commission has completed preparations for the election of a new president for a five-year term. Voting will take place at the Sangsad Bhaban from 2 p m to 5 pm on November 14. The MPs comprise the electorate for presidential polls.

The ruling BNP has already finalised its presidential candidate. The opposition Awami League might not attend parliament sitting on the voting day.

An independent candidate also collected nomination papers from the EC on Thursday.

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Weekly stocks roundup

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Nov 10		5-14 pm
Nov 11	6-11 am	

Prayer Timings		
Nov 10		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-00	5-30
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-23	5-30
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Experts against 'hasty' decision on gas export

SHARIER KHAN

Energy experts and industry insiders are increasingly becoming critical about the way the government is handling Unocal's pipeline gas export proposal, saying that a hasty decision could well prove counter-productive.

The Unocal proposal to export 2.4 TCF (trillion cubic feet) of gas from Bibiyana gasfield actually includes more than 1.2 TCF of gas of Petrobangla's share. But before submitting the proposal, Unocal did not discuss with Petrobangla whether it wanted to export its gas or not.

Though at least half of this gas belongs to Petrobangla, the government did not even think of conducting its own market study to see if the gas export is the only profitable marketing option and if India is a dependable buyer.

To scrutinise the Unocal proposal, the government should take as much time as needed, said a government expert who believes pipeline gas export will be profitable for the country.

"The right approach should be that the Petrobangla committee will scrutinise the proposal while another committee with economists, financial and legal experts should have a good look into the proposal," the expert said. "There is no need to be hurried decision in this regard."

Petrobangla has formed a committee to scrutinise the proposal. It has also set up a sub-committee to look into the proposal. The sub-committee was headed by the former minister and

is examining the proposal and will make its observations and recommendations about the pipeline gas export available within two weeks.

The minister also told the press time and again that the government would decide on gas export in five to six weeks.

"Yet, we don't have qualified people to understand the whole purpose of the proposal, its multifarious implications. Unocal is preparing a world class negotiators and legal experts, but we have not even thought of gathering an international team to counter them in this regard," said a

senior official of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources. He said that a group of miscreants murdered Mostafa in the night and left the body under the bridge.



The deceased was a clerk of Bangladesh Air Force and residing at Mirpur in the capital. A case was filed with police in this connection.

## Only morning cheers for the hosts

AL-AMIN

A crucial century partnership under pressure between a relatively inexperienced pair of Craig Wishart and Douglas Marillier took the touring Zimbabweans to a commanding position against Bangladesh on the second day of the first Test yesterday.

Wishart and Marillier produced 139 runs for the sixth wicket as Zimbabwe recovered from a shaky 89 for five to end the day on 348 for three, a huge lead of 239 runs.

Wishart scored a career-best 94 and Marillier responded from the other end with 57.

The 28-year-old Wishart fell six runs short of what could have been his first century in 17 Tests when the right-hander blindly chased a second run, which was never there for taking. He struck 11 boundaries and two sixes, both against off-spinner Naimur Rahman.

Marillier, playing only in his second Test, reached his first half-century with the help of five boundaries.

The pair made sure that the Zimbabwe innings continued to bloom even after there were no Flowers at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. They led a spectacular fightback after the Flower brothers - Andy and Grant who are

## 3 new income tax zones

RAFIQ HASAN

With a view to increase the revenue collection, the government has introduced three new income tax zones in the country.

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday issued an order introducing the new zones in Sylhet, Barisal and Rangpur.

The government expects that an additional income tax worth around Tk.50 crore would be collected from these new zones.

The income tax commissioners in Khulna, Rajshahi and Chittagong zone-2 have been given the additional charge of the new zones in Barisal, Rangpur and Sylhet respectively.

According to NBR sources, some

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## Rejoinder

The ISP Association Bangladesh in a rejoinder protested a portion of the news item "Shady telecom business robs country of crores a month" published in The Daily Star on November 7. It said that members of the association are not involved in illegal voice termination business.

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## Northern Alliance forces claim entering Mazar-e-Sharif

AP, Kabul

Opposition forces claimed yesterday they broke through Taliban defences around Mazar-e-Sharif and entered the key northern city. The report could not be independently confirmed.

Opposition spokesman Ashraf Nadeem said the Taliban appeared to have abandoned the city. "We are moving through one neighbourhood at a time," he said.

Opposition forces broke through Taliban defences at the Pul-e-Imam Bukhri bridge on the southern edge of the city, Nadeem said. He said the opposition also overran the civilian airport and entered the city.

He said Taliban troops appeared to be fleeing towards the south-east of the city.

He said he was speaking by satellite telephone from a hill overlooking Mazar-e-Sharif. Dostum claimed northern alliance forces killed 100 Taliban fighters and took hundreds of others prisoner during the past four days of fighting. The U.S. bombing "should be accelerated," he said.

largely made up of ethnic Uzbeks and Tajiks, the same minorities as many in the opposition coalition.

Chulam Reza Zada, a spokesman for the Shiite Muslim faction involved in the opposition advance, also said opposition forces were entering the city but did not know whether all Taliban fighters had withdrawn.

At the Pentagon, Rear Adm. Craig Quigley, a spokesman for Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, said the Pentagon had no independent knowledge of the reported breakthrough but said it would be a welcome development if true.

Rashid Dostum, the Uzbek warlord who controlled Mazar-e-Sharif until the Taliban captured the city three years ago, told CNN television in Turkey that the alliance overran the city in a half hour.

He said he was speaking by satellite telephone from a hill overlooking Mazar-e-Sharif. Dostum claimed northern alliance forces killed 100 Taliban fighters and took hundreds of others prisoner during the past four days of fighting. The U.S. bombing "should be accelerated," he said.

killed and more than 30 wounded. There was no immediate Taliban comment on the reports the city has been taken.

In the past few days, opposition forces have credited intense American bombing against Taliban front lines with helping their advance on Mazar-e-Sharif. U.S. warplanes struck Taliban positions around the city yesterday as well as on the other main front, north of Kabul.

Several explosions resounded on the outskirts of Kabul, and huge plumes of smoke rose along the front line about 50 kilometres north of the city. Taliban soldiers fought back with anti-aircraft guns after several days of holding their fire.

Col. Zia Haudidin, an opposition commander, said the Taliban had reinforced the front line with about 2,000 troops, mostly Arab and Pakistani volunteers. The Taliban have also brought in ammunition, tanks and other vehicles, he said.

The U.S. bombing "should be accelerated," he said.

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## 126 more SIs transferred from DMP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One hundred and twenty-six more sub-inspectors of police were transferred from Dhaka Metropolitan area yesterday.

Those transferred are all sub-inspectors who have been serving in the metropolitan area for three to ten years, police sources said.

With this figure, a total of 383 sub-inspectors have been transferred within the last two days. More than 5,000 SIs serve in the DMP area.

Sources in the police said officers serving in the metropolitan area for more than three years will also be transferred gradually. Changes will also be made at the range level, they added.

A top police official said as per police regulation, officers serving in any area for over three years should be transferred. But this policy hasn't been followed for some unknown reasons.

## Theft of imported cargo rampant at Chittagong port

NURUL ALAM, Chittagong

Chittagong port's security system has virtually collapsed with alarming increase of incidents of pilferage and theft of imported cargo from its protected sheds, sources said.

Port sources said imported container cargo worth over several crores of taka were pilfered from the protected areas in last one year.

The latest such incident was detected on Thursday after a consignment of computer accessories worth about Tk one crore was stolen.

"When the container was opened it was found empty. The computer accessories were stolen by breaking the seal," said a senior official of the port on condition of anonymity.

Another such incident occurred about 15 days ago in which imported fabrics worth about taka one crore

were looted due to slackened security system.

"We think such stolen imported cargo are taken outside the port sheds through several vans which are hardly checked at the jetty gates by security personnel," he added.

The pilferage of computer accessories triggered a stormy situation forcing the port authorities to form a three-member committee immediately for investigation, the sources said.

Most incidents of small thefts are hardly reported to the port authorities.

Some syndicated gangs of miscreants in collusion with a section of the security personnel and stevedoring and C&F staff are reportedly involved in such large scale pilferage of imported goods, the sources said.

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## BAF employee murdered in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

An air force employee was murdered by some unidentified miscreants at the western side of the Bangabandhu Bridge on Dhaka-Sirajganj highway on Thursday night.

The victim was identified as Golam Mostafa, 45, son of Mozammel Haq of Ranipara village in Sonapara of Bogra district.

Police recovered the body of Mostafa from under the Jhaoail railway bridge yesterday morning. They also found some documents related to land disputes and an identity card in his handbag.

Police suspect that a group of miscreants murdered Mostafa while he was travelling to his home from Dhaka by bus on Thursday night and left the body under the bridge.

The deceased was a clerk of Bangladesh Air Force and residing at Mirpur in the capital.

A case was filed with police in this connection.

## Harrowing tales of depravity

### Where child marriage is the norm

STAR ROVING TEAM

Despite intensive campaigns by successive governments, child marriage is widely prevalent in Bhola district, particularly in the Hindu community, for what they call "lack of security for female children."

School teachers in Lalmohon, Char Fasson and other remote areas of the district say that most of the female students cannot continue studies beyond class six or seven. Both the rich and the poor parents either get their children married to relatives or friends of the same age or withdraw them from school and send them elsewhere.

Many of these couples, as young as 12, end up having children at an age when they are supposed to study and play. In Annada Prashad village in Lord Hardinge Union under

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## Stories of Shefali and Joyonti

STAR ROVING TEAM

About 10 years ago, mother of two Shefali Rani Das, about 36 now, of Annada Prashad village in Lord Hardinge Union of Lalmohon upazila under Bhola district, slipped and broke her left leg while fetching water from the village pond. Five months later, her entire leg was amputated. Since then, Shefali's world was confined to a set of homemade wooden crutches. Her husband Shuvash Chandra Das, a landless peasant of the village, struggled hard to run the family. On October 2, Shefali found her neighbours fleeing their homes as scores of hoodlums started attacking the Hindu community of the area. She immediately decided to send her 15-year-old daughter to another village. Her husband and 21-year-old son had already fled the village.

In the afternoon on the day, Shefali knew she had to move out of her home. Her neighbourhood was almost deserted. She feared for her safety. It was raining and she struggled on the muddy path to reach the main road near Bentor Bari, a cluster of houses in the middle of paddy fields, where many of her friends had already taken refuge. She gave up hope of reaching Bentor Bari through waist deep water. Helpless, Shefali went to Ganga's house by the road nearby.

At night, she heard screams and saw that most of the inmates were running away from the house.

Shefali grabbed her crutches and struggled out of the house. By then, all others in Ganga's house had disappeared in the paddy fields.

Shefali could not go far. She limped along Ganga's family pond and reached the small area where turmeric (holud) is cultivated. A gang of about 15 men was returning the same way with bundles of looted goods. They caught her. All Shefali remembered was that after two men took her nakphool (nose ring) away (this is how the village women describe being raped), she walked on her crutches.

Shefali was then unconscious for four days. On October 31, when this correspondent arrived at Annada Prashad, women-folk there talked about a comatose Shefali and said she was admitted to Char Fasson State Hospital.

Next day at Char Fasson, this correspondent learnt that Shefali was released from the hospital after nine days and was staying with a relative somewhere in the vicinity of Char Fasson.

A source in Char Fasson agreed to help us find Shefali's whereabouts, but on condition of anonymity. In the evening, the source returned with the news that Shefali was under the care of a relative at village Dashkandi in Jinnaghar Union of Char Fasson, about 10

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Star investigation