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## President pays tribute to martyrs

UNB, Dhaka

President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury paid tributes to the Liberation War and language movement martyrs as well as late President Zia.

"The National Memorial is the victory minar of our unfading history of Liberation War. The martyrs are the pride of the nation forever," he wrote in the visitor's book while paying tributes to the independence martyrs at the National Memorial yesterday.

President Chowdhury, who took  
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## Apparel export to US dips dangerously

BGMEA study predicts a 60-70pc plunge this fiscal

SHAHRIAR KARIM

The country's apparel export to the US markets in the current fiscal could plunge by 60 to 70 per cent, should the recessionary trend in global economy continues, says a Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) study.

The study gives an export outlook against the backdrop of recession in major economies, which has been compounded by the September 11 terrorist attacks on the US and its retaliatory strike on Afghanistan.

"The initial estimates are that Bangladesh could lose as much as 60 to 70 per cent of the export market in the US," it said.

If the BGMEA apprehension proves right, the country's total apparel export will drop in the range between

600 and 800 million US dollars in the current fiscal from a record 2.19 billion US dollars in the last fiscal.

Forty-five per cent of the country's total earnings (US\$ 4.86 billion) from apparel export last fiscal came from the US markets.

Export has shown a downtrend from the beginning of the current financial year. The Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) figures on September show a whopping 280 per cent drop in apparel export to the US markets.

The country has earned US\$73.34 million from the US markets in September this year, down US\$131.93 from US\$205.27 million recorded in the same month last year.

According to EPB sources, the RMG export to the US market dropped by eight per cent in July 2001 compared to the same period of the previous year. In August this

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Northern Alliance soldiers sit in their position on the frontline near Banghi between Taloqan and Kunduz in northern Afghanistan yesterday.

## 50 injured as pickets clash with police during hartal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 50 people were injured in sporadic clashes between police and pickets in the capital and across the country during the half-day hartal enforced by the Left Democratic Front (LDF).

Police clubbed pickets amidst chase and counter-chase during hartal hours in different parts of the city. Twenty-three people were arrested on charge of their involvement in incidents of violence and damage of motor vehicles across the country - 15 in the capital and eight in the Chittagong city.

Section 144 of the CrPC was imposed by district administration at Naogaon following a clash between businessmen and pickets in the district.

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## Saifur blasts AL for forcing govt to consider gas export

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday said the government is considering gas export to fulfil contractual obligation created by the immediate past government.

He however said any decision will be taken after ensuring gas reserve for 30 to 35 years and 10 per cent contingency reserve.

The minister was speaking at a "Meet the Reporters" programme at

the Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) office in the city.

DRU President M Anwarul Haq introduced the minister to the function. DRU General Secretary Motaheer Hossain Masum, its office bearers and newsmen from the print and electronic media were present there.

Saifur said the previous government signed a number of produc-

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## Gripper gives tourists firm grip on day one

HASAN MASOOD, from Chittagong

Opener Trevor Gripper smashed his maiden Test hundred to put Zimbabwe in a commanding position against Bangladesh at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday, the first day of the second and final Test of the Coca-Cola Series.

Riding on Gripper's 112, Zimbabwe, surprised at being put into bat on a benign batting wicket, scored 236 four at close of day's play.

The 26-year-old celebrated his return to the Test fold after a year

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## Taliban still defiant Plan to destroy US going ahead, says Mullah Omar

AFP, Kabul

The Taliban were cornered in their southern Afghan bastion and surrounded in their last city in the north yesterday but still defiant they would pursue the anti-US war.

"The current situation of Afghanistan is related to a big cause - that is the destruction of America," recluse Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omarsaid in an interview with the BBC Pashto language service.

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## Fakhruddin takes over as BB governor on Nov 23

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fakhruddin Ahmed will join Bangladesh Bank as governor on November 23. He will replace Dr Farashuddin Ahmed.

Family sources said Fakhruddin, who is serving in the World Bank, has taken preparations to take over as BB governor.