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Asian Highway Dhaka for direct links among Bangladesh, India & Myanmar

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh has requested the UN agency ESCAP to moot talks with its member states to install the Bangladesh-India-Myanmar direct transport communications as part of the planned Asian Highway.

Dhaka also called upon the ESCAP to take effective initiatives in development of direct traffic running through SAARC and BIMSTEC nations in South and Southeast Asia.

The call came from Communications Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda as Bangladesh representative.

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Activities of JCD central committee suspended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Activities of the central committee of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student front of ruling BNP, were suspended yesterday following reports of involvement of JCD activists in various criminal activities including capture of halls of educational institutions, toll collection and snatching of tender schedules.

Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in a directive suspended activities of the committee, Haris Chowdhury, Political Secretary to the Prime Minister told newsmen at the PMO yesterday evening. The directive will come into force immediately, he said.

A senior BNP leader and cabinet minister told The Daily Star last night that the decision was taken following reports about involvement of JCD men in crimes, published in national dailies.

"Such reports involving JCD are very much embarrassing for the party... These also tarnished the image of the party," the BNP leader said asking not to be

named.

He said suspension of activities of the central committee clearly means suspension of activities of whole of JCD. "As the highest body of JCD, the central unit usually conducts activities of JCD."

But other sources said other units of JCD will remain operational across the country.

When contacted, Manir Hossain, central Vice-president and Dhaka University unit president of JCD, termed the decision "timely" and hoped that JCD leaders would abide by it.

JCD leaders and workers interrupted in the sale of tender schedules worth about Tk 20 crore at the education ministry's Facilities Department at Shikha Bhaban On October 31. This created a sharp reaction both in JCD and BNP, sources said.

A large number of JCD men led by its central unit president Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu MP, central leader

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2 Bangladeshis killed by BSF in Panchagarh

UNB, Panchagarh

A middle-aged man and his son were killed and another person was critically injured when Indian BSF fired on stone quarry workers in river Mahananda at Banglabandh frontier yesterday.

BDR sources said the BSF personnel from Fulbari camp fired shots on the workers at Jharuapara, adjacent to border pillar No 731, at noon leaving Liakat Ali, 40, and his son Shah Alam, 20, dead on the spot.

The injured, Bashirul Alam, 30, was hospitalised.

BSF took away Liakat's body and did not return it till filing of this report in the evening.

Tension heightened in the area following reinforcement of BDR and BSF.

Principal murder: Two teachers of Nazirhat College arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Police in a pre-dawn raid yesterday arrested two teachers of Nazirhat College in connection with the killing of its principal Gopal Krishna Muhuri.

They are prime accused Idris Meah Chowdhury, assistant professor of Accounting and another accused Tofazzal Ahmad, assistant professor of Zoology.

They are among the three FIR-name accused in the murder case. A UNB report quoting police said they are involved in politics of Jamaat-e-Islami.

The other FIR-named accused, Elahi Box, father of alleged terrorist and Shibir cadre Nasir, was shown

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Tofazzal Ahmad (left) and Idris Meah Chowdhury, suspects in the murder of Principal Gopal Krishna Muhuri, in police custody yesterday.

Newsprint: Earlier LC margin on import retained

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Bank has relaxed the LC margin on newsprint import.

The central bank in a circular yesterday cancelled the 100 per cent margin, imposed recently.

Bangladesh Bank faced criticism earlier after slapping 100 per cent LC margin on 56 items, including newsprint identifying those as luxury and unnecessary items on Tuesday.

INSIDE TODAY

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Including the excluded Column: Between the Lines Kuldeep Nayyar

Business 7&8

Nortel's 1.16 lakh phone expansion programme:

Delay leaves BTTB project in gully DSE, CSE price quotations

Announcement

Read the exclusive interview of Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in today's LAW AND RIGHTS page.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Nov 18		5-12 pm
Nov 19	6-16 am	

Prayer Timings		
Nov 18		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-52	4-58
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-55	4-10
Maghrib	5-15	5-20
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

ACI Ifter

Sehri, Iftar timing			
Ramadan	Nov	Sehri	Iftar
2	18	-	5-15
3	19	4-53	5-15
4	20	4-54	5-15



A makeshift shop, dealing in iftar items, at Chawkbazar in the city is abuzz with consumer presence on the first day of the holy month of Ramadan yesterday.

Northern Alliance obstructing move for broad-based govt

Rabbani tries to allay fears: Taliban vow to retain Kandahar, confirm Atef's death

US mass quiz plan irks Muslims

AP, Dallas

Arabs and Muslims have expressed outrage at the US Justice Department's plan to interview 5,000 young male foreigners, who are not suspected of any crimes, as part of the terrorism investigation.

Civil rights activists say the action constitutes racial profiling. "Unless the government has credible evidence that all these

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REUTERS, AP, Kabul

Afghanistan's embattled Taliban vowed yesterday to fight on and retain their southern powerbase as fresh divisions appeared in the factions and foreign forces aligned against them.

Ousted former President Burhanuddin Rabbani returned to Kabul five years after the Taliban drove him out and tried to allay fears that his Northern Alliance which

swept into the capital Kabul on Tuesday would cling to power.

The Taliban, meanwhile, confirmed the death of Osama bin Laden's military chief, Mohammad Atef, in a US bombing raid three days ago.

The United Nations said the Alliance was obstructing urgent talks needed to set up a broad-based

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The Taliban envoy to Pakistan, Abdul Salam Zaeef, said yesterday that Osama bin Laden had left Afghanistan and that the Islamic militia did not know his whereabouts. "Osama has left Afghanistan with his children and his wives and we have no idea where he has gone," the envoy told AP.

Bashar hits ton but hosts follow on



Habibul Bashar ... 108

HASAN MASOOD, from Chittagong

Bangladesh experienced their batting blues once again as they were asked by Zimbabwe to follow-on on the third day of the second Test of the Coca-Cola Series at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

Despite a maiden hundred from country's number one batsman Habibul Bashar (108), Bangladesh were bundled out for 251, 391 short of Zimbabwe's first innings 542 for seven declared.

The home side were 15 for no loss in their second innings at stumps, needing another 276 to avoid an innings defeat. And it is highly unlikely that rain would appear as a saviour like the first Test, where two days were washed out to save Bangladesh's blushes.

On a perfect batting wicket, it was only one-down Bashar and young Ashrafur down the order who played with some purposes.

Dropped on 26 by Stuart Carlisle in the slip, the 29-year-old made no mistake this time in turning his 50s into hundred.

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Dhaka, Delhi need to have close ties for mutual benefits: FM

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Newly appointed Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan has said both Bangladesh and India need each other as close neighbours in the interest of furthering their 'geo-economic interests.'

"Can India afford to have bad relations with Bangladesh? Or can Bangladesh afford to have bad relations with India? As close neighbours, it is in each other's benefit to maintain good relations."

Morshed Khan was briefing newsmen yesterday morning at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs shortly after taking charge of the ministry.

Dwelling on export of gas and giving transit facilities to India, the foreign minister said, "These are issues which will be dealt from a practical and pragmatic perspective."

He went on, "So far as I am concerned, we will sell gas after ascertaining our reserves and meeting our requirements. And if we do so, we will sell it to the highest bidder—to one who offers the highest

price. "If and when we decide to sell, it might be India which would be in a position to offer the highest price because of its geo-physical proximity, where costs of transportation or transmission will be less."

Morshed Khan however cautioned that Bangladesh will have to follow a three-stage policy regarding gas. The first is to quantify the reserve the country possesses and the second is contingent on the gas policy, which includes estimate of its stock and projection of domestic utilisation over a period of time. Decision to export gas will depend on having a positive response to the first two aspects.

Khan also said Dhaka will decide whether it is profitable to export gas through conversion into CNG, LNG or sponge iron or through other means.

He emphasised that decision to export gas is like decision to give zakat. "One can give zakat only when surplus can be ensured."

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BNP men now control Skid ghat, set to capture other points

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

BNP activists have taken over Khulna Skid ghat Handling Workers' Union which was once controlled by notorious gangster Ershad Ali Shikder.

Younger brother of city BNP Secretary Nazrul Islam Manju, Badal has become its self-styled general secretary. Earlier, Sramik League leader Sharif Abdul Hannan held the post without any lawful authority from July 1998 until October 3 this year, according to sources.

Badal, 30, entered the union office last month without any obstruction. Nazrul Islam Manju reportedly played the key role in getting his younger brother the office. Some cadres of Ershad Shikder, who raised their heads

after the October 1 elections, helped Badal take over the crucial post, the sources added.

The rate of extortion has gone up since then and most of the money goes to Badal's pocket, according to a good number of handling workers who are increasingly finding it difficult to work at the Skid ghat for not greasing the palms of the BNP men.

The BNP activists always crowd the union office with Badal surrounded by a host of cadres. Minimum income through illegal means stands at nearly Tk 50,000 to 70,000 a day, said one of the security guards at the Skid ghat.

According to some businessmen of Skid ghat and Khulna bazar, BNP is all set to capture the crime points

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Pepsi

Standard Chart

