



Health workers stretch away a dead body (left), while others attend to a victim of food poisoning that left 11 policemen killed at the Paglipara camp in Rangamati late Sunday night. Relative of a victim (right) at Chittagong Medical College Hospital breaks down after being told about the tragedy.

PM reiterates pledge for good governance

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday reiterated her government's pledges to establish good governance and ensure people's welfare through united efforts and productive innovations.

"I call upon all to perform their respective responsibilities with honesty and sincerity," she told officials of the Prime Minister's Office in a meeting at the International Conference Centre yesterday afternoon.

This was Khaleda Zia's first formal meeting with officials and employees of her office after her assumption of the office of prime minister.

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Amman now to host NAM Summit

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has finally scuttled hosting of the 13th NAM Summit in Dhaka after duly informing the NAM Coordination Bureau in New York.

The Summit of the 114-member organisation was due to be held in Dhaka in April next year.

It will now be held in the Jordanian capital of Amman.

The NAM Coordinating Bureau comprising foreign ministers or

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14 more police officials made OSD

UNB, DHAKA

Fourteen more police officials including two DIGs, one additional DIG and 11 SPs have been made Officers-on-Special Duty (OSD) yesterday.

The senior police officials made OSD are DIG of CID Nazrul Islam, DIG Kutubur Rahman and Additional DIG A S M Nuruddin.

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Article 4

Which way the Afghan conflict? Column: Frankly Speaking Faruq Choudhury

Focus 5

Rebuttal of BNP statements on the economy

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Nov 20		5-11 pm
Nov 21	6-18 am	

Prayer Timings

Nov 20		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-53	4-59
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-55	4-10
Maghrib	5-15	5-20
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation



Sehri, Iftar timing

Ramadan	Nov	Sehri	Iftar
4	20	-	5-15
5	21	4-54	5-15
6	22	4-55	5-14

Food poisoning kills 11 cops

27 fall sick in Rangamati camp after taking iftar

NURUL ALAM AND SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Chittagong

Eleven policemen died of food poisoning and 16 others fell sick after taking iftar on Sunday evening at Paglipara police camp in Rangamati.

The death toll may rise as four of the sick policemen are in critical condition at Chittagong Medical College Hospital, doctors at the hospital said yesterday evening.

All the 27 members of the Armed Police Battalion (APBN) posted at the camp were admitted to CMCH at about midnight Sunday night and 10 of them died within about six hours due to "severe" food poisoning, doctors and the sick policemen said. The other died yesterday afternoon.

The dead were Md Zabal Haq, of Ullapara, Sirajgonj; Habildar Md Lal Meah, 33, of Gobindagonj, Gaibandha; Md Abdul Mannan, 26, of Dhuni

Bogra; Shamsuddoha, 30, of Meherpur, Kushtia; Abdur Rahman, 25, of Madhya Bhandaria, Pirozpur; Momtaz Ali, 22, of Kajla, Gaibandha; Md Sajjad, 25, of Garia, Netrokona; Md. Abdul Majid Sirker, 25, of Bil Gazaria, Sirajgonj; Oris Limi Marma, 25, of Chandraghona, Kaptai; Md. Baset, 30, and Abdul Haq, 22, of North Mithakhali, Pirozpur.

Abdul Haq was the cook at the camp who died first at the hospital at about 1:30 am yesterday.

The iftar was prepared by the cook at the camp with supplies from its godown, according to camp in-charge SI Shakhawat Hossain. He was in critical condition and was lying on the floor at Ward No. 14. His voice was very feeble as he tried to talk to The Daily Star correspondents at about 1 pm yesterday. After ten minutes, he was taken to the Operation Theatre.

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Int'l telecom carriers threaten to halt payment to BTTB

Finance Minister agrees to cut TAR rate?

INAM AHMED

As the telecommunication ministry has been dillydallying any decision on reduction of international tariff rates, international telecom operators have threatened to unilaterally withhold payment to Bangladesh Telephone and Telegraph Board (BTTB) and to settle future payments at much lower commercially viable rates.

Meantime, the BTTB held a

meeting with Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman on reducing Total Accounting Rate (TAR) on November 1. TAR is the amount that is shared equally by BTTB and foreign telecom firms through which the call is routed. The minister had reportedly agreed in principle to reduce the rate to fight illegal call-termination business and asked BTTB to prepare a report. Mysteriously, even after 19 days, minutes of the meeting have not

reached BTTB, further delaying the process.

And as days drag on and high call tariffs prevail, the country continues to bleed crores of taka every month in illegal call-termination business, using VSAT and BTTB landlines. Even a BTTB drive to disconnect outgoing calls of some shady internet service providers (ISPs) involved in call-termination did not make significant impact. Sources said the operators are now using mobile phones

with landline connection facility to do the business.

According to international telecom operators, calls routed through them to Bangladesh have been dangerously dipping. British and US operator partners of BTTB such as BT, ATT, MCI and Sprint, which collectively send about 60 per cent of all international traffic to Bangladesh at a ratio of 1:8 (for every one call from Bangladesh, eight calls

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Cabinet debates upazila system

Ministerial body formed to examine its relevance

ZAYADUL AHSAN

The cabinet formed a committee of five ministers to find out whether there is any need for the upazila system following an intense debate on the issue yesterday.

"The cabinet committee will scrutinise the upazila-related laws and file a report within a short time," said Minister for Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) and Co-operatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

Bhuiyan aside, other members of the committee are Health Minister Dr. Khandaker Mosharrat Hossain,

Law Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed, Industries Minister MK Anwar and Information Minister Dr. Moyeen Khan.

The cabinet meeting was held at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) yesterday with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair.

The debate began when a bill on returning the power to the Election Commission (EC) to announce Upazila election schedule was placed before the cabinet yesterday. The bill was placed although it was not in the agenda.

Some ministers at the meeting immediately questioned whether

there was any need for a council at the upazila level.

They argued that when BNP came to power in 1991, it cancelled the upazila system, introduced by the Ershad government. There was no reason to revive the system now, they maintained.

Some other ministers added that if the system was revived, it should be scrutinised to find out there is any need for modification.

On the other hand, the finance, law and LGRD ministers argued in favour of retaining the upazila system.

Moudud said that although BNP

had once cancelled the upazila system, it should now restore it as the Supreme Court had given directives to build the local government structure.

The government is compelled to carry out the directive, he said.

After a long debate, it was resolved that a cabinet committee be formed to see if the upazila system should operate under the existing structure or not.

Meantime, sources said that the EC was taking preparations to hold the upazila elections in February next year.

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Naimur Rahman: Out



Khaled Masood: In

Naimur axed, Khaled Masood captain

SPORTS REPORTER, from Chittagong

Bangladesh selectors yesterday came down hard on captain Naimur Rahman by axing 27-year-old from the New Zealand-bound squad as well as from the team for the first one-day international match against Zimbabwe in Chittagong on November 23.

He will be replaced by wicketkeeper Khaled Masood in the three-match ODI series, but the

Board is likely to appoint a new captain for the next month's tour down under.

Besides, veteran Akram Khan was also overlooked for both the first one-day and the forthcoming tour.

In a major overhaul, the three-member selection panel headed by Mainul Haq also left out former Bangladesh captain Aminul Islam for the first limited-overs game.

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Sustained subsidy to SoEs WB questions govt plea for assistance

SHAHRIAR KARIM

The World Bank yesterday questioned the rationale of the government plea for donor assistance to tackle an economic downturn, aggravated by global recession, as it continues subsidy for loss-incurring state-owned enterprises (SoEs).

Mieko Nishimizu, the bank vice-president for South Asia, raised the issue at a meeting with Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman and other members of the council of ministers, according to finance ministry sources.

The senior WB official started formal talks with the government towards devising a plan for financial assistance for Bangladesh under a poverty reduction strategy programme (PRSP).

Industry Minister MK Anwar, Commerce Minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharrat Hossain and State Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmud accompanied the finance minister in the talks at the finance ministry conference room. WB Country Representative Frederick T

Temple was also present.

After taking over, the four-party alliance government has sought donor assistance, mentioning a fragile economy compounded by the September 11 terror attacks on the United States and subsequent strike on Afghanistan.

In this connection, an IMF Article IV mission ended its visit to Bangladesh Sunday, during which it talked with government leaders and others for a need assessment.

Yesterday's meeting discussed development plans for different sectors linked with industries, commerce, energy and power.

According to meeting sources, Nishimizu observed that it was a riddle for the donors whether Bangladesh really needed any financial assistance, especially when it can sustain huge loss over the years for the SoEs.

She also asked the government to accelerate reforms in critical areas and raise prices of electricity, gas and power. Emerging from the meeting Saifur told newsmen that the WB had expressed willingness to support

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Taliban withdraw from another province

AP, Quetta

Taliban fighters have withdrawn from an Afghan province near the border with Iran, but they retain control of their southern stronghold of Kandahar, an Afghan tribal representative said yesterday.

A group of ethnic Pashtun tribal elders who opposed the Islamic militia persuaded the Taliban to pull out of western Farah province over the weekend, said spokesman Mohammed Yusuf Pashtun.

Reuters from Kabul says, US and British special forces scoured southern Afghanistan yesterday for militant fugitive Osama bin Laden as the Taliban, still holding their key southern stronghold of Kandahar, said he was no longer in their territory.

US bombers were in action in the skies of Afghanistan, hitting the Taliban in Kandahar and their besieged northern redoubt in Kunduz as the campaign to track down the Saudi-born millionaire accused of masterminding the September 11 attacks on the United States entered its 44th day.

While bin Laden evaded the US manhunt among the mountains, caves and valleys of the rugged landlocked country, the Taliban ambassador to Pakistan said he was no longer in Taliban-controlled areas.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell said he believed bin Laden was still in Afghanistan but with less and less room to move. "A lot of reports suggest that his freedom to manoeuvre has become quite lim-

ited," Powell said on US television.

Gul Agha, an anti-Taliban commander deploying fighters southeast of Kandahar, said he doubted reports bin Laden was in his area, believing the fugitive could be southwest of Kandahar.

In Kunduz, the last enclave held by the Taliban in northern Afghanistan, the opposition said it had suspended its ground assault to give the Taliban a chance to surrender. But US bombing continued, pummeling the militia's front lines.

The opposition says 10,000 to 12,000 Taliban troops including

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Pepsi Match report