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## 3 more major generals may be made envoys

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Three serving major generals are tipped to be appointed Bangladesh ambassadors abroad, sources indicated yesterday.

Four major generals are already serving as envoys.

Services of the three serving generals have been put at the disposal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Two of them have been serving as Divisional Commanders/Area Commanders while the third was appointed Commander of Bangladesh Rifles in early July.

Those who have been asked to join the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under deputation are Major General Rafiqul Hossain, Div Commander at Mymensingh, Major General Abdul Wadood, Div Commander at Comilla and BDR chief Major General Abu Ishaq Ibrahim.

Brigadier General Rezzakul

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## Seventeen DCs transferred

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday transferred 17 Deputy Commissioners of different districts.

Project Director of PROMOTE of Education Ministry Mohammad Ismail Zabiullah has been made DC of Faridpur, Deputy Secretary of Economic Relations Division (ERD) Shafiqul Islam has been appointed DC of Sunamganj, Deputy Secretary of Cultural Ministry Matiar Rahman DC of Cox's Bazar, Director of RAJUK Dr AKM Helaluzzaman DC of Narayanganj, Deputy Secretary of Defence Ministry Mohammad Shahabullah DC of Gazipur, Chief Executive Officer of District Council of Kusthia DC of Barguna, Deputy Secretary of Establishment Ministry Abul Hashem DC of Jamalpur.

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## 7 promoted for new postings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday promoted seven senior officials and made them OSDs for new postings.

Director General of Anti-Corruption Bureau MA Jabbar has been promoted to the rank of secretary. He earlier enjoyed the rank of an additional secretary.

The six others have been made additional secretaries from joint secretaries. They are: Shafiqul Islam, Joint Secretary for Appointment, Posting and Deputation;

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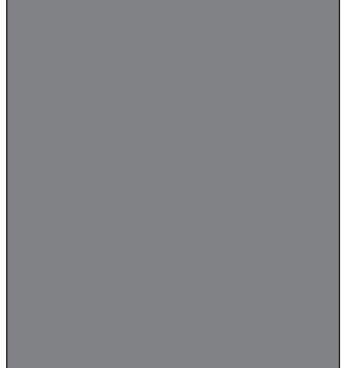
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One page supplement on 'National Day of United Arab Emirates'



Sehri, Iftar timing

Ramadan	Dec	Sehri	Iftar
16	2	-	5-14
17	3	5-01	5-14
18	4	5-02	5-14

## Power sector in disarray but tariff on increase

### Fresh hike by 10 poisa this time likely

RAZIUR RAHMAN

Instead of reforming the power sector to stop theft and improve bill collection, the government has opted for increasing the tariff that will hit both industries and retail consumers alike.

The government increased the power tariff by five poisa per unit for 10 ten out of 11 categories of PDB consumers several times at intervals since 1996 under a donor-prescribed formula. The agriculture sector was however spared.

In 1996, the World Bank suggested the government to increase power tariff by five per cent after every six months to adjust it to dollar rate and to minimise the loss.

The price of power has been increased nine times between October 1996 and November 2000.

But in the last 10 years, the government showed little interest to minimise the system loss, recover arrear bills or to improve the overall management.

PDB's arrears have reached Tk 5500 crore and the amount is increasing by 100 crore taka every four months.

Sources in the sector and experts say the donors,

who are playing a key role in the country's power sector, are also less interested to solve the problem.

If the financial management was improved, the government could easily go without increasing the tariff, which creates a negative impact on the economy, they said.

Out of Tk 5500 crore, PDB owes Tk 4090 crore to Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA). On the other hand PDB is unable to pay about Tk 400 crore to Petrobangla for using gas. Besides, PDB is also unable to pay the huge amounts of debt service liability (DSL) for the last few years.

While PDB sees no hope to earn profit though it is supposed to do so as per estimate, a section of unscrupulous meter readers and ledger writers of DESA and PDB are enjoying unhindered freedom in allowing pilferage of power and devouring hundreds of crore of taka from government's revenue a year.

The government also refrained from taking effective measures against big bill defaulters which include government offices and state owned enterprises like

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## Hartal today: AL torch procession clubbed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Main opposition Awami League enforces an eight-hour hartal in the capital city today protesting the government move for repeal of a special law providing state security for former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 'acts of repression' on the AL activists and the Hindus.

The AL termed the government move to scrap the Father of the Nation's Family Members Security Act, 2001 part of a conspiracy to kill Sheikh Hasina and her sister Sheikh Rehana, two surviving daughters of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The Act provided lifelong security coverage to Hasina and Rehana under the Special Security Force (SSF) Ordinance. The parliament is scheduled to pass a bill seeking repeal of the Act today.

The BNP-led coalition government moved the bill on the 48th day of its tenure, prompting the opposition to go for street agitation.

Meanwhile, police clubbed and tear-gassed leaders and activists at an AL torch procession at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday evening brought out to drum up support for the 6:00am-2:00pm shutdown, according to witness.

At least a dozen AL supporters were wounded during the police action, claimed senior AL leaders.

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Torches lie scattered on Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday after police swooped on a procession of Awami League in support of today's hartal. The picture (inset) also shows police collecting torch sticks, left behind by AL activists, with the help of unidentified boys.

## Fate of CHT accord hangs in balance

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Today is the fourth anniversary of the signing of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) peace accord between the government and the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS).

Unlike in the previous years, the government is ignoring it and the PCJSS is observing it without much fanfare. The accord was signed on December 2, 1997.

The ruling BNP is committed to reviewing the treaty, providing for equal rights to all sections of people inhabiting the 14,200 sq km forest clad hilly region, rich in energy and other resources. It feels that almost half of the over one million people of the region, who are settlers from the plains, have been ignored in the accord.

But the PCJSS thinks that the accord is yet to be fully implemented and sticks to its demand for resettlement of the settlers elsewhere and prepara-

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## CHT situation deteriorating again: Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former prime minister and Leader of the Opposition in the Parliament Sheikh Hasina has called upon the people to be united sinking all differences for building a prosperous nation.

In a message on the occasion of fourth anniversary of peace accord on Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), she said the accord signed on this day in 1997, ushered in a glorious chapter in our national history.

"It is the time to make all out efforts for development of our nation by putting aside all ethnic conflicts," Sheikh Hasina said while greeting the nation on the occasion.

She said that the past misdeeds and violation of basic human rights by dictators in the country had resulted in blood shed and warlike situation in the hill areas for the last two decades. The people of the area were thus pushed towards hunger, poverty, ignorance and illiteracy, she added.

The CHT peace accord had opened scope for peace, stability and development of the region and the country, she observed.

Sheikh Hasina however alleged

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Army personnel have been engaged to help distribute water at different places of the city hit by scarcity of drinking water. The picture shows an army man distributing water among the residents of Kamalapur area yesterday.

## Northern Alliance ready to transfer power to UN-backed council

### 20 civilians killed in US raid on Afghan village?

AP, Koenigswinter (Germany)

Talks on Afghanistan's political future moved into a decisive phase yesterday after the northern alliance in Kabul said it was prepared to transfer power to a UN-backed interim council and allow an international security force, clearing the way for an agreement.

The announcement followed a night of intense diplomacy, with the UN envoy to talks among four Afghan delegations in Germany calling Kabul to press for a breakthrough after northern alliance leaders there said they could not accept a council named in Germany.

Diplomats and participants at the talks said the emerging deal includes only the small national council with executive powers, and not

the envisioned larger supreme council with quasi-legislative functions.

"That's the way things are going right now," a senior US official at the talks said. "There's a lot of discussion about a possible deal."

Under an agreement among the four factions representing the northern alliance, exiles loyal to former King Mohammad Zahir Shah and two smaller exile groups, the interim authority would govern Afghanistan until March, when a national council, or loya jirga, would convene. At that time, a transitional authority would be chosen to govern for up to two years, paving the way for a democratic constitution and possibly elections.

In Kabul, the alliance's foreign minister, Dr Abdullah, told reporters that names for the national council had not yet been decided conclusively.

"We think the results are promising," Abdullah said of the German talks. "All those issues will be worked out in coming days."

Abdullah said the alliance would accept an international security force, but its numbers and mandate had not been decided. Northern alliance leader Burhanuddin Rabbani had earlier dampened hopes for such an international presence, saying he preferred an all-Afghan force with no more than 200 foreign participants.

In Germany, a delegate to the small group of Peshawar-based exiles told The Associated Press, that it appears the former king will lead the smaller interim body. Rabbani will also be on the council, Hafizullah Asif Mohseni said.

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## Humayun Zahir murder Akhtaruzzaman Babu directed to surrender within 30 days

BSS, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday issued a rule asking the respondents to show cause within four weeks as to why the judgement of the trial court in Humayun Zahir Murder Case should not be set aside.

The court also directed Akhtaruzzaman Babu, the prime accused of the case, to surrender before Dhaka District Magistrate within 30 days. Necessary action will be taken to arrest him if he fails to do so, the court said.

A division bench comprising Justice Mohammad Hasan Amin and Justice Mohammad Abdul Hai passed the order upon a criminal revision filed before the court challenging the trial court verdict.

On January 9, an Additional District Judge convicted three out of six accused. Two of them were sentenced to death and one to life imprisonment. The trial court acquitted Akhtaruzzaman Babu and two others of charges.

## Special security for Hasina, Rehana JS sits amid hartal today to scrap law

NAZMUL ASHRAF

The maiden session of the eighth Jatiya Sangsad, which saw an unprecedented crisis of quorum and a treasury bench often playing 'devil's advocate', has its last sitting today.

Scheduled for an 11:00am start, the concluding sitting is set to scrap the law providing special security to former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her sister Sheikh Rehana amid an eight-hour hartal called by Hasina's Awami League against the government move.

Today's hartal, the first one by main opposition AL against the move to withdraw life-long security to two daughters of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, is believed to be the beginning of an AL-sponsored street agitation against the 53-day old coalition government of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

The last parliament enacted the Father of the Nation's Family Members Security Act, 2001 on June 20 this year guaranteeing lifelong security to and official residences for the surviving members of the Bangabandhu family in the wake of growing threats on the lives of Hasina and Rehana.

The bill seeking annulment of the Act aside, the last day's agenda also includes adoption of a thanks motion on the president's address to parliament. Another bill for recasting the Freedom Fighters' Welfare Trust is also on the card. Three other bills were also passed in the House earlier.

According to parliament officials, common items like question-answer and call attention notices have been dropped from the order of the day today. Speaker Jamiruddin

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## SC orders release of KM Obaid

UNB, Dhaka

The Supreme Court yesterday ordered the release of former minister and BNP leader KM Obaidur Rahman MP on bail.

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court issued the bail order effective till April 30 next year.

Obaidur was arrested in connection with the Jail Killing Case on September 22, 1998.

The bench, comprising Chief Justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury, Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury, Justice M Ruhul Amin and Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim, ordered his release yesterday morning.

The court suggested that the concerned court could grant him fresh bail if the case is not disposed of within the period.

However, the Appellate Division instructed that K M Obaidur Rahman would not be allowed to travel abroad during the bail period without permission from the concerned court.

Advocate Khandaker Mahbuddin Ahmed moved the petition for K M Obaidur while Barrister Mainul Hossain, Adv Majid Munshi and Adv Ruhul Kuddus Kajal assisted him.

Attorney General A F Hasan Arif, Adv mahbub-e-Alam and M Anisul Haque appeared on behalf of the government.

Obaidur Rahman was elected Member of Parliament from a Faridpur constituency in the Oct 1 general elections contesting the polls from jail custody.

## 3 including HSC student murdered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three people, including an HSC student, were murdered and three others injured in separate incidents in the city in last 18 hours till 2 pm yesterday.

An alleged mugger was beaten to death and another injured near Kazia Petrol Pump on Dhaka-Chittagong highway under Demra thana while trying to snatch away valuables from an autorickshaw passenger yesterday. Their identity could not be known.

Witnesses said people caught the muggers at about 2 pm and beat them mercilessly, leaving one dead on the spot. Demra police recovered the body in the afternoon and sent it to the DMCH morgue. The injured mugger was admitted to the DMCH.

A case was filed in Demra thana in this connection.

On Friday night, a gang of miscreants slaughtered Kamal Hosain, a second year HSC student of Mirpur Degree College near Birulia Beribandh at Ashulia at about 8.30 pm.

Witnesses said the miscreants halted Kamal near the Beribandh while he was returning to his residence at Block-A, Pallabi riding a motorbike.

The gang took Kamal to the west bank of the Beribandh and slaughtered him. His hands and legs were

his construction materials business.

Rafiq Uddin, father of the victim, filed a murder case with Pallabi police. Police suspected that Kamal might have been killed by extortionists.

Pallabi police arrested five peo

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Mother and relatives of Kamal Hosain (inset) wail after receiving news of his death. A gang of miscreants slaughtered Kamal at Pallabi in Mirpur Friday night.

## Showcause on govt for detention of Shahriar Kabir

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule on the government asking it to show cause within a week why the detention of noted writer and columnist Shahriar Kabir under the Special Powers Act (SPA) should not be declared to have been made without lawful authority.

A Division Bench of the High Court comprising Justice Abdul Matin and justice Marzi-ul-Haq issued the rule following a writ petition filed by the writer's brother Kalandar Kabir, challenging the detention.

Barrister Shawkat Ali Khan along with Barrister Amir-ul-Islam, Shafiqe Ahmed, Rakan Uddin Mahmud, Abdul Baset Majumder,

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