

**PM offers fateha at Prophet's Rouza Mubarak**  
BSS, Medina

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia arrived in Medina Al-Monowara yesterday from Makkah and offered fateha at the holy Rouza Mubarak of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM).

The Prime Minister prayed for peace, progress and prosperity of Bangladesh and also for the Muslim Ummah.

She performed Umrah at Makkah Al-Mukarrama in the early hours of Tuesday.

The Prime Minister, who arrived in Saudi Arabia on Monday night, was accompanied by her family members, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Meer Mohammad Nasiruddin and Political Secretary to the Prime Minister Mosaddek Ali.

**HC permits two lawyers to meet Shahriar Kabir**  
BSS, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday permitted two lawyers to meet detained journalist and writer Shahriar Kabir.

A division bench comprising Justice Mohammad Hamidul Haque and Justice Mohammad Iman Ali passed the order after a petition moved before the court regarding lawyers consultation with Kabir about the charges brought against him.

The court permitted Barrister M Amirul Islam or his nominee and Advocate Zead Al Malum to meet Shahriar Kabir.

**Ctg edn board Shibir, JCD allegedly buy all 5 tender schedules**  
CU CORRESPONDENT

The Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) and Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) reportedly purchased all the five tender schedules of the Chittagong Education Board worth Tk 50 lakh on Tuesday.

The Shibir cadres led by Iqbal Karim Ripon, who is now in limelight after the death of Humayun, another notorious Shibir cadre and a faction of JCD purchased the tender schedules.

Chittagong Education Board floated the tenders to prepare the answer and question papers of the board for upcoming School Secondary Examination (SSC), and making envelopes in five categories.

On December 10 the Shibir cadres resisted the JCD leaders to buy the tender schedules and manhandled three of them.

When contacted no official of the education board was available for comments.

**Prisoner dies of heart attack at Mymensingh**  
UNB, Mymensingh

A prisoner of Mymensingh Central Jail died of a heart attack yesterday.

Abul Kashem, 35, hailed from village Dapunia of Mymensingh Sadar upazila, was sentenced to life term imprisonment in a murder case.

He fell sick in the morning and died on way to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital at about 9am.

**Rejoinder**

Palki Video in a rejoinder to the news item published in The Daily Star on Sunday under the headline 'Terrorists control cable TV network,' said yesterday that local ward commissioner Abdul Latif was not involved in the incident of snapping of 175 connections provided by it.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Dec 13		5-13 pm
Dec 14	6-33 am	

Prayer Timings		
Dec 13		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-08	5-14
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-16	5-22
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

**Fresh raid on Tora Bora as al Qaida misses deadline**



Anti-Taliban forces guard al Qaida ammunition seized during the capture of a large base in the Melawa mountain. US airstrikes resumed as the fighters loyal to Osama bin Laden holed up in the Tora Bora mountains did not surrender after the deadline passed yesterday morning.

AFP, Tora Bora (Afghanistan)

US bombers were back in action in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan yesterday after besieged al-Qaida forces failed to meet a surrender-or-die deadline and put forth conditions to lay down their arms.

A US B-52 carried out two raids from 8:50 am local time 50 minutes after the deadline expired in the White Mountains, dropping its bombs in a zone further south and closer to the Pakistan border than in previous strikes.

More raids followed around midday. "The al-Qaida fighters had agreed to surrender yesterday but we have received no report to this effect so far," a spokesman for a senior Afghan militia commander told AFP an hour after the deadline passed.

On Tuesday, commander Haji Mohammad Zaman said that all al-Qaida fighters holed up on Tora Bora mountain had agreed to surrender by 8:00 am local time.

In Islamabad, the Afghan Islamic SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

**Army, BDR may be deployed to recover illegal arms**

**Plainclothes police to patrol capital**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is likely to deploy army and paramilitary BDR immediately after the Eid to recover illegal arms and arrest terrorists.

Sources said a demand for deployment of troops created in the rank and file of BNP is being seriously considered by the government in the wake of heightened incidence of terrorism, toll extortion and other criminal activities that is seriously tarnishing the image of the two-month-old government.

They said the government might engage the army alongside police and BDR to combat terrorism and toll extortion.

A government minister on condition of anonymity told The Daily Star yesterday that terrorism and other crimes are on the rise as a large number of illegal arms are in still hands of terrorists.

He said police's apparent failure to combat terrorism and extortion and ineffectiveness in taking legal action against the law-breakers have resulted into the pervasive criminality in national life.

In view of the situation, he said, the policymakers of the government have already discussed the deployment of army to deal with the terrorists and for recovery of illegal arms.

"We will eliminate terrorism at any cost and take whatever steps are needed to recover illegal arms, arrest terrorists and extortionists," he added.

Meanwhile, the government has decided to increase the number of plainclothes and patrol police across the country and especially in the capital city in

the wake of the deteriorating law and order situation.

The decision to increase the number of plainclothes policemen in the city was taken at a meeting of the Cabinet committee on law and order held at Bangladesh Secretariat yesterday with BNP Secretary General and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in the chair.

Sources said the meeting while reviewing the overall law and order situation expressed dissatisfaction over the growing incidents of toll extortion, terrorism and a series of incidents of lynching in the city.

To curb extortion, mugging and terrorism, the meeting decided to deploy a large number of plainclothes police at strategic points while others will patrol the city and different parts of the country where toll extortion and terrorism has taken a serious turn.

It observed that businessmen and shopkeepers, anticipating further trouble, usually refrain from lodging cases against extortionists, and ordered the authorities concerned to deploy plainclothes police so that they can take instant action without the need for cases to be filed by extortion victims.

The cabinet committee also expressed concern over the rise in trucks robberies and toll collection from buses and highways on the road and decided to increase patrol on the highways to immediately stop such crimes ahead of the Eid.

It instructed the police to also deploy forces at all bus, launch and train terminals to check harassment of passengers.

**Enact law to ban use of polythene bags**

**9 million bags dumped every day, meeting told**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday urged the government to enact a law banning the production and use of polyethylene shopping bags all across the country and enforce it at any cost to protect the environment.

They said the government decision to ban the use of polyethylene bags in the capital leaving the rest of the country outside the purview of the ban will not be sufficient to stop environmental degradation.

Speaking at a discussion organised to mobilise support for ban on polythene shopping bags in Dhaka city from January 1, 2002, discuss-

sants strongly hailed the government for taking such a bold and courageous decision.

The Department of Environment (DoE) organised the discussion at LGED Bhaban, which was participated by the members of the civil society, representatives of NGOs, business bodies, shopkeepers' association, journalists, professionals, academics and others.

Speaking as chief guest, Minister for Environment and Forest Shahjahan Siraj said the government is determined to stick to its decision to ban use of polyethylene shopping bags in the city and would not consider any appeal from any

quarter.

He said in previous times, the manufacturers promised to set up recycling units but did not do so. Instead they increased production of shopping bags manifold.

"The manufacturers have also introduced different types and sizes of bags of lower quality. Stop manufacturing of polybags. We have already given enough concessions but no more," he added. He warned that if necessary the government would increase tax on polythene bags in manifold to discourage production and use of it.

Quoting a survey report, he said SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

**Garment cut piece trader shot dead in Mirpur**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A garment cut piece trader was shot dead by unidentified miscreants near Monipur School in the city's Mirpur area yesterday evening.

The deceased was identified as Mohammad Taj, 26, son of Abdur Rashid of Road No 10, Section-6, Mirpur.

Police said Taj was also an extortionist and accused in some criminal cases lodged with Mirpur thana.

Sources said four armed miscreants took him to the west side of Monipur School at 4-45 pm and shot in his head and chest.

He was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the doctors declared him dead. The body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

The reason behind the killing could not be known immediately. No case was filed with Mirpur thana till filing of this report last night.

In another incident, Mirpur police recovered a beheaded body of a newborn baby from a dustbin at Lane 2, Block A, Mirpur yesterday.

**HC issues rule nisi on BRTA for ban on old vehicles**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule nisi on Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) asking it to reply within two weeks as to why its circular, imposing a ban on plying of old vehicles on the city roads should not be cancelled.

A Division Bench of the High Court comprising Justice MA Matin and Justice Marzi-ul-Haq passed the order following a writ petition filed by Mojibur Rahman Badal, President of Staff Paribahan Malik Samity.

Barrister Rokon Uddin Mahmud moved the petition on behalf of the petitioner.

The petition said that a vehicle is not termed 'old' as most of its parts are replaceable. It also said that the BRTA circulation is a violation of the Motor Vehicle Act.

BRTA issued a circular on SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

**Police-terrorists gunfight leaves 30 hurt in Noakhali**

UNB, Noakhali

About 30 people were injured in a gunfight between police and terrorists at Char Clerk yesterday.

Sources said around 200 policemen led by the additional police super and two magistrates raided Banskhal forest at about 10am following Monday's killing of forest official Abul Kashem.

Police admitted the incident. Sensing presence of police, the terrorists set fire to a nearby market SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



Incidents of mugging and snatching have gone up in the city in the last few days. Two alleged snatchers were caught and beaten up by a mob in front of the Shikha Bhaban yesterday and later handed over to police.

**2 alleged snatchers beaten up**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mob beat up two alleged snatchers near Shikha Bhaban in the city yesterday.

Witnesses said two muggers, identified as Jahangir and Ratan, halted an autorickshaw near Shikha Bhaban at about 2 pm and tried to snatch it. They also beat up the autorickshaw driver.

As the driver cried for help, people from nearby places rushed to the spot and caught both the snatchers red handed. They beat the snatchers and handed them over to the police.

They were in Ramna thana custody till filing of this report last night.

A case has been filed with the Ramna police in this connection.

**Bomb incidents during AL rule Govt to hold judicial probe: Home Minister**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury said yesterday that a judicial inquiry be held into all the bomb incidents that occurred during the tenure of the past government.

He also said that the errors of the opposition Awami League was causing the deterioration of law and order as Sheikh Hasina refused to accept the outcome of the October 1 general election.

The minister was addressing a meeting of the district law and order commission here yesterday.

Altaf Hossain said that the AL terrorists had failed to foil the Durga Puja of the Hindu community and

now was targeting the Christmas celebrations. He added that some 'foolish' BNP activists were following the AL workers and getting caught in the process.

Two local BNP leaders at the meeting said that there were some terrorists within BNP as well and if their activities were not controlled then BNP would face a similar fate as the past Awami League government.

The meeting, presided over by Textile Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury, was also attended by Giasuddin Ahmed, MP, DIG Abul Quasem Hawlader, Divisional Commissioner Md Aminul Islam, Shafuli Islam among others.

**BGMEA seeks loan support for backward linkage industry**

UNB, Dhaka

Garment manufacturers yesterday sought loan and equity supports for financing backward linkage industry for the survival of the country's main export-earners.

They called for providing term loans at five per cent interest rate to encourage entrepreneurs in the backward linkage industry.

Led by BGMEA president Kutubuddin Ahmed, the delegation put forward a set of recommendations for the growth of backward-linkage industry to the Textile Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury yesterday.

Half of the 25 per cent cash incentives allotted for the textile sector can be used as interest support for new enterprises in backward linkage while the remaining 12.5 per cent can be disbursed as cash incentives, they suggested. Besides, industrial credits can be sanctioned on the basis of 10 per

cent equity to bring more investment in this support sector.

The RMG sector leaders proposed Tk 2000 crore budgetary allocations every year for the backward-linkage industry so long the country's apparel sector finds a good market abroad.

The BGMEA delegation repeated their long standing demands and proposals.

Despite repeated cries for investment in woven and other linking sectors since the early '90s, nothing has so far been achieved, the leaders of the apex body of apparel sector told the minister, expressing their worry at the slow pace of government initiatives.

The recommendations include immediate setting up of a textile village, assurance of utility connections to factories within 30 days of application, withdrawal of import

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

**Tk 17 lakh snatched in Ctg: 3 held**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Armed muggers took away Tk.17 lakh from in front of a garment factory at Chandonais thana in the district yesterday.

Sources said general manager Noor Quasem and two other staff of Omar Sultan Foundation Garments located in Purba Elahabad area of Chandonais drew the money from the Patiya branch of National Bank at around 1pm to pay the salary and bonus of the employees.

They were attacked by the muggers while returning to the factory in a private car. A group of 12 armed muggers who were waiting there in a microbus followed them all the way from Patiya to the garment factory.

The muggers intercepted the car just in front of the factory gate and snatched away the money at gunpoint.

On information, police went on a SEE PAGE 11 COL 5



The Dhaka-Chittagong-Sylhet highway saw an unusually heavy rush of traffic yesterday as many city dwellers began returning home on Eid vacation. The picture was taken from the Kachpur point of the highway.