

## PM performs ziarat at Prophet's Rauza

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia sought divine blessings for peace, progress and prosperity of the people of Bangladesh and the Muslim Ummah while performing ziarat at the Rauza Mubarak of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) at Madinah Tuesday night.

She arrived in the city of Madinah earlier in the afternoon and took iftar at Masjid-e-Nabbi along with about half a million Muslims from across the world, according to a message received here yesterday.

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## ADB breathes life into clean air project

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Clean Air Project finally breathes life as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) yesterday approved \$72.6 million for it.

Under the project, an elaborate Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) distribution system will be set up in Dhaka and its outskirts. The government would inject another \$31.5 million for the project and the Nordic Development Fund will provide an additional \$9.3 million.

To get the ADB fund, the government has also agreed to some conditions, expected to have positive impacts on the country's gas

sector.

The government has agreed to give full autonomy to three affiliates of Petrobangla. These are Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd. (TGTDC), Rupantarita Prakritik Gas Company Ltd. (RPGCL) and Gas Transmission Company Ltd. (GTCL).

Also, CNG price would also be increased from the current Tk 7.45 per cubic meter.

The GTCL, Titas Gas and the RPGCL would implement the Dhaka Clean Fuel Project (DCFP) that would help improve the air quality of the capital. The project would

increase use of clean and environment friendly natural gas and decrease use of petroleum.

Under the DCFP, a 60-km gas pipeline between Dhanua and Aminbazar of Savar would be laid, two city gate stations would be installed at Ashulia and Savar, and 97-km pipelines would be constructed to improve distribution of gas in Dhaka.

Six large and 20 small CNG filling stations will be set up around Dhaka, 10,000 CNG conversion kits would be purchased for petrol-driven vehicles and 300 CNG-

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## HC stays govt royalty for mobile phones

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A division bench of the High Court yesterday stayed for three months collection of annual government royalty and license fee by mobile phone operators.

The bench of Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury and Justice Md. Nizamul Haque also declared the collection of annual government royalty of Tk 1,000 and license fee of Tk 100 by mobile operators "illegal and without lawful authority".

The ruling came following a public interest litigation filed by one Md. Shamsul Huq Kanchan, a lawyer.

The court also issued a notice to the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) and the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications to show cause as to why the imposition of royalty and license fee upon subscribers of all mobile phones should not be declared illegal and without lawful authority.

The court granted a four-week time to answer the notice and asked the BTRC to ask mobile operators, not to realise the royalty of Tk 1,000 and license fee of Tk 100 from subscribers.

## Violence marks end to spl BIWTA drive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of Buriganga encroachers and their supporters attacked a team of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) demolition drive in Kamrangirchar yesterday.

The attack came when the team went to the area to knock down unauthorised structures along the foreshore of the Buriganga.

On the last day of the seven-day drive, hundreds of attackers threw brickbats, injuring seven workers of the team.

Police teargassed the attackers and held seven of them. Later, an army team joined forces with the policemen to bring the situation under control.

Sources said a team of 140 workers with a backup of 80 policemen reached Kamrangirchar at 12.30pm, equipped with a bulldozer and three tugboats.

The BIWTA team pulled down 38 more unauthorised structures in

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PHOTO: AFP

Indian President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (L) gestures during a meeting with Awami League President Sheikh Hasina in New Delhi yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

Hundreds of passengers flock to the Kamalapur Railway Station for advance tickets yesterday on the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr. Many returned empty-handed as tickets have been sold out.

## AL undermined Mujib's image, Nizami tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer and Agriculture Minister Motiur Rahman Nizami has said Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's role in the Liberation War is 'undisputed' and "his (Mujib) universal acceptability has been undermined by the Awami League (AL) itself due to its narrow outlook."

Speaking in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday during the passage of a bill, the Jamaat chief said he had great respect for Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for his undisputed role in the Liberation War and "blamed the AL for 'demeaning' him (Mujib) in various ways."

Jamaat had opposed the Liberation War and was banned by the AL government after independence.

The AL lawmakers had walked out of the House on Monday protesting his (Nizami) tabling of the bill dropping the word

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## Saifur for fee hike at public universities

SHAHRIAR KARIM

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman has said the public universities have to increase tuition and other fees to offset fund crisis.

"You have to increase your own income by increasing the fees, otherwise it will not be possible for the government to allocate funds for the universities for years," Saifur is reported to have told a University Grants Commission (UGC) delegation.

The delegation, led by UGC Chairman Dr ATM Zahurul Huq, met the minister at his office yesterday to brief him about the financial crisis the public universities have been in for years.

Some members of the UGC delegation were in agreement with Saifur's observation and said steps should be taken towards a reasonable increase in tuition fees, seat rent in halls of residence, and others.

Also, the UGC submitted a paper

to the minister, seeking policy intervention from the government so that the universities enhance their own income in the form of increased fees.

At present, a student pays around Tk 20 in tuition fees and Tk 15 in rent for seats in halls of residence every month.

Besides, he or she has to pay transport, course examinations, library development, sessions, medical services fees of Tk 200, Tk 700, Tk 100, Tk 200 and Tk 50 respectively per annum.

Put together with some other fees for sports and university and hall union fees, a student pays around Tk 2,000 per annum for university education.

In 1998 Dhaka University authorities initiated a move for a fee hike but had to retreat in the face of intense student protest.

In this context, Saifur told the UGC delegation that university

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## Launch fares rise as queues get longer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the Eid-ul-Fitr drawing near, the demand for advance tickets is increasing.

Thousands of passengers are scrambling for advance booking, but many are returning empty-handed as the tickets have been sold out.

This time, ticket touts have left bus stops, train stations and launch terminals due to army deployment.

Meanwhile, launch fares have

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'I don't like pop music'

REUTERS, Berlin

Pop star Michael Jackson, who has sold more than 210 million records in his career, made an astonishing revelation in a rare interview published in a German magazine yesterday "I don't like pop music."

Jackson was explaining to Bunte magazine why he bought two classical music compact discs, but no pop, during a shopping excursion in Berlin last week while in the city to accept a German television pop artist

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## HR violation marks BNP rule: Hasina

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, from New Delhi

The opposition leader and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina has said "repression of religious minorities and political rivals and human rights violations" by law enforcement agencies have characterised the one-year rule of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in Bangladesh.

Delivering a lecture in memory of senior Congress party leader Dinesh Singh at the India International Centre here Tuesday

night, Hasina said, "Religious intolerance, incidents of minorities repression, arrest and harassment of opposition leaders and workers, killing and torture of journalists and excesses by law enforcement agencies marred the one year in power of BNP."

In a clear reference to the ongoing drive by the Bangladesh army against crime across the country, she said the government appeared to have little regard for human rights and in the name of cracking down against criminals, they were target

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## 7 killed as bus, truck collide in N'ganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 11 people were killed in separate road accidents in Narayanganj, Dhaka and Chittagong yesterday.

Our Narayanganj Correspondent reports: Seven people were killed and another was injured in a bus-truck collision on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway yesterday morning.

The accident occurred when a

Dhaka-bound microbus from Debidar, Comilla collided head on with a speeding truck in 'Jangal' area under Bandar thana at around 6-30 am.

Local people and police rescued the bodies. Police seized the truck but its driver managed to flee.

Of the dead, two were identified as Arifur Islam, 22, son of Hafizuddin of Debidar, Comilla, and Sharif, 30, driver of the microbus.

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Sehri, Iftar timing			
Ramadan	Nov	Sehri	Iftar
22	28		5-14
23	29	4-59	5-14
24	30	4-59	5-14

Sun Rises		Sun Sets	
Nov 28			5-10 pm
Nov 29	6-23 am		

Prayer Timings		
Nov 28		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-49	4-59
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-14	5-24
Esha	7-30	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

## AL go for all-out agitation after Eid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League will go for an all-out movement after the Eid to oust the coalition government "as it has lost its moral right to stay in power".

"This government came to power 'through vote rigging', and now it has no right to continue as it is working against the people", said the AL leaders yesterday at a demonstration in the city.

They asked the government to resign immediately and announce a mid-term election.

The Dhaka City Awami League organised the demonstration at Mukhtangan to protest the removal of the portrait of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and a mural on his historic speech of March 7 from Bijoy Ketan at Dhaka Cantonment. City Awami League President Mohammad Hanif led the demonstration.

Abdus Samad Azad, the acting president of the AL, said, "We asked the prime minister in the parliament to explain how it happened, but she remained silent. As she is also the defence minister, she has to shoulder the responsibility of it all."

"Those who are trying to erase Bangabandhu's name are indirectly opposing the nation's liberation. The attempt to distort the nation's history through erasing Bangabandhu's name will not be successful. The people will respond to such activities by erasing their names from the country's politics," he added.

"The people gave their mandate for a civil government, not for army rule," lamented Motia Chowdhury, former agriculture minister. "If the country is run by the army, no government is needed," she said.

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