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**Dhaka for 13th Saarc summit in January**  
FM off to Islamabad  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will propose to host 13th Saarc summit in Dhaka in the first half of January, Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan said yesterday before leaving for Islamabad to attend a Saarc foreign ministers' meeting to work out the summit's date.

"That's our suggestion about the summit time; we now need consent from other member nations," he told newsmen at ZIA International Airport.

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**Drop unapproved plans from ADP**  
JS body asks govt  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday asked the planning ministry not to include unapproved projects in the Annual Development Project (ADP) and drop the current ones, terming them as ingredients of financial waste.

The parliamentary standing committee on the planning ministry gave the view while reviewing the ADP of the current FY 2004-05.

Finance and planning minister M Saifur Rahman also echoed the same view during the critique and said unapproved projects were incorporated into the ADP under

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**Flood pushes essentials' prices high**  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prices of essentials have marked another round of increase due to flood and inadequate supply to the city.

Traders of the city's markets cautioned that the prices of all kinds of goods may experience a further rise in the coming weeks if the flood situation does not improve.

In the city's New Market and Karwan Bazar yesterday most of the items were being sold at a higher price compared to last week.

The price of aubergine increased from Tk 20/kg to Tk 24/kg, Karola

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**BURIGANGA DRIVE 39 structures demolished**  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The district administration and Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) on the second day of the five-day demolition drive knocked down 39 illegally set up structures on the Buriganga river yesterday.

The joint drive is part of initiative taken by the authorities to rid the river of thousands of encroachment points and ensure its navigability and free flow of water.

The demolition team yesterday knocked down a concrete and two semi-concrete structures and tinshed shanties. In Keraniganj, the

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Workers fight against time to fill up a crack that appeared in the Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra flood protection embankment at Della in Demra last night sparking off panic among the city-dwellers.

**WMD probe watered down to save Blair**  
Reports UK newspaper  
AFP, London

The newspaper cited an unnamed member of Butler's five-strong inquiry team as saying Downing Street secured changes to a passage in the report dealing with a parliamentary statement on Iraq's WMDs made by the prime minister in September 2002.

The alterations watered down the contrast between the seemingly compelling case for war made to lawmakers by Blair and the thinness of the intelligence he actually had at his disposal, the Telegraph said.

It happened during an agreed process whereby individuals facing criticism in the report were allowed to see sections of the draft relating to this with a view to giving a response.

The passage in question refers to a British government dossier on

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**Highway cops on cards to man 22,000km roads**  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is going to form a highway police force to patrol and keep law and order on around 22,000-kilometre roads.

The regular force would work under the communications ministry and its job will be to curb highway crime and reckless driving to help reduce road accidents and ensure passenger safety, according to sources.

An inter-ministerial meeting held at the Ministry of Communications with Minister Nazmul Huda in the chair took the decision, the source said.

"The government would also take initiatives to change the laws to

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**US airstrike kills 14 in Fallujah**  
AP, Baghdad

The strike was the sixth on the city since June 19. In previous strikes, the United States said it was targeting safe houses used by the network of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the Jordanian militant accused of masterminding car bombings and other attacks in Iraq.

Allawi has promised strong cooperation with the Americans in rooting out terrorism and said after a July 5 airstrike in Fallujah that his government had provided the intel-

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**Intimidators ask Sumon's family not to implicate them in case**  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anonymous callers are reported to have been intimidating family members of Sumon Ahmed Majumder into refraining from pressing any charge against them.

Sumon, a vice president of Tongi municipal ward No. 10 unit of Jubo League, died at a Tongi hospital early Friday allegedly from torture during interrogation in custody of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab).

"Three unknown men called me several times at my cellphone

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**No audit until dispute settled**  
Auditor general's office stops checking railway documents  
SHAKHAWAT LITON

The office of the Comptroller and Auditor General has stopped auditing railway division's financial activities and will not start them until 'the violation of its constitutional rights by railway officials' was resolved.

"It is not possible to scrutinise the accounts and other documents of the railway division as our officials were denied access to their information. We are not auditing their spending for the last two months and will start the work after the issue is resolved," Wazir Ahmed Fateh, in-charge of railway audit, told The Daily Star.

Auditor General Asif Ali on July 7 lodged a petition with the Public Accounts Committee of the Jatiya Sangsad, seeking its protection against violation of the constitutional rights of his office by the railway division.

He accused the railway division under the communications ministry of denying his office staff's access to purchase documents.

The committee decided to summon the communications secretary and railway director general at its next meeting slated for tomorrow to discuss the issue.

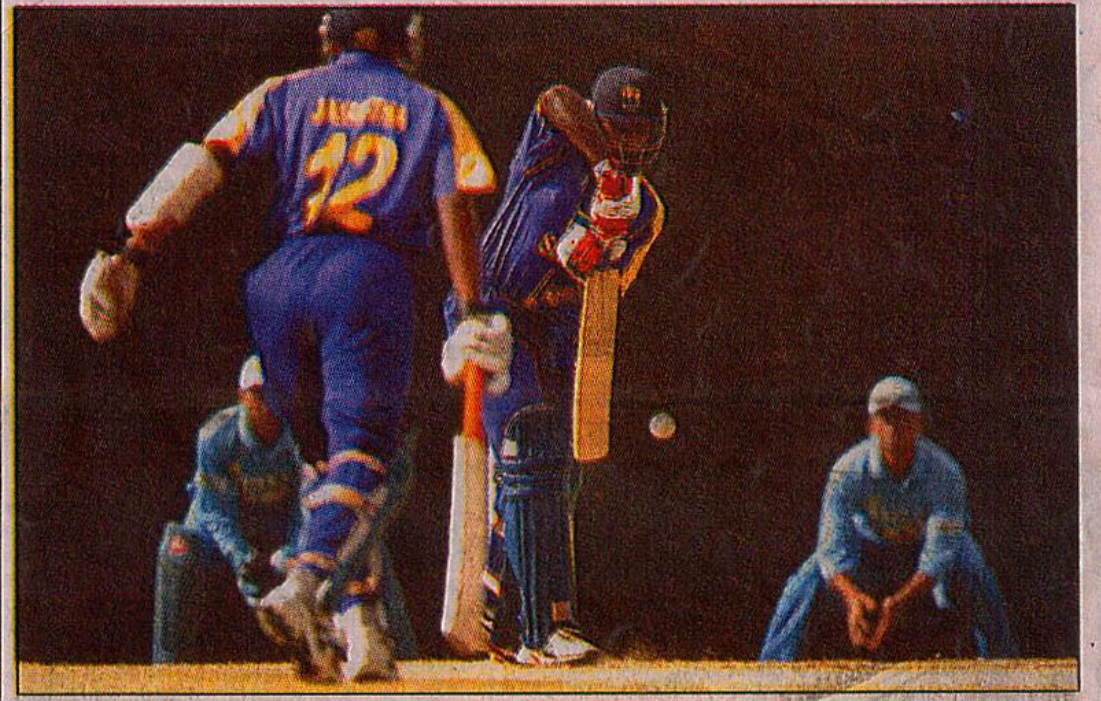
Talking to The Daily Star former auditor general M Hafizuddin Khan said it was the constitutional right of the audit office to access documents of government offices, courts and public authorities.

"If the officials of the railway division denied the comptroller and auditor general's office access to their documents, they would violate the constitution."

"The auditor general can file a case against the officials accusing them of violation of the constitution," said Hafizuddin, also chairman of the public expenditure review commission.

On the auditor general's petition to the parliamentary body, Hafizuddin said the committee had the jurisdiction to resolve the issue as empowered by the constitution.

The parliamentary body is also entitled to summon any government official or any document. It can recommend punitive actions against the persons responsible for irregularities, he added.



Sri Lanka's Aviska Gunawardane (C) shows full face of the bat in playing a shot in the hosts' Asia Cup match against India at Rangri Stadium in Dambulla yesterday.

**Govt to recruit 3,500 teachers**  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The education ministry has decided to recruit some 3,500 teachers for secondary and higher secondary level.

Education Minister Osman Farruk said the government would hold special BCS (Bangladesh Civil Service) examinations to recruit around 1,020 lecturers for colleges.

"The prime minister has approved the proposal of the education ministry," the minister told reporters at a press briefing on the development activities of his ministry.

He said the Public Service Commission (PSC) has taken oral tests of candidates in the 24th BCS exams to recruit 2,275 lecturers and the ministry will recruit 92 lecturers in the 25th BCS. The preliminary examinations of the 25th BCS would be held soon, Farruk added.

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**Tragic!**  
AFP, Kolkata

A debt-ridden family which ran a bakery in the eastern Indian port city of Kolkata committed suicide to escape creditors, police said yesterday.

Bakery owner Sankar Saha, 30, who owed money to several state-run banks and local money lenders, left behind a suicide note detailing the seven-member family's financial woes.

"We have found the suicide note which lists the family's business debts," said police spokesman Subrata Banerjee.

"The maid found Sankar Saha,

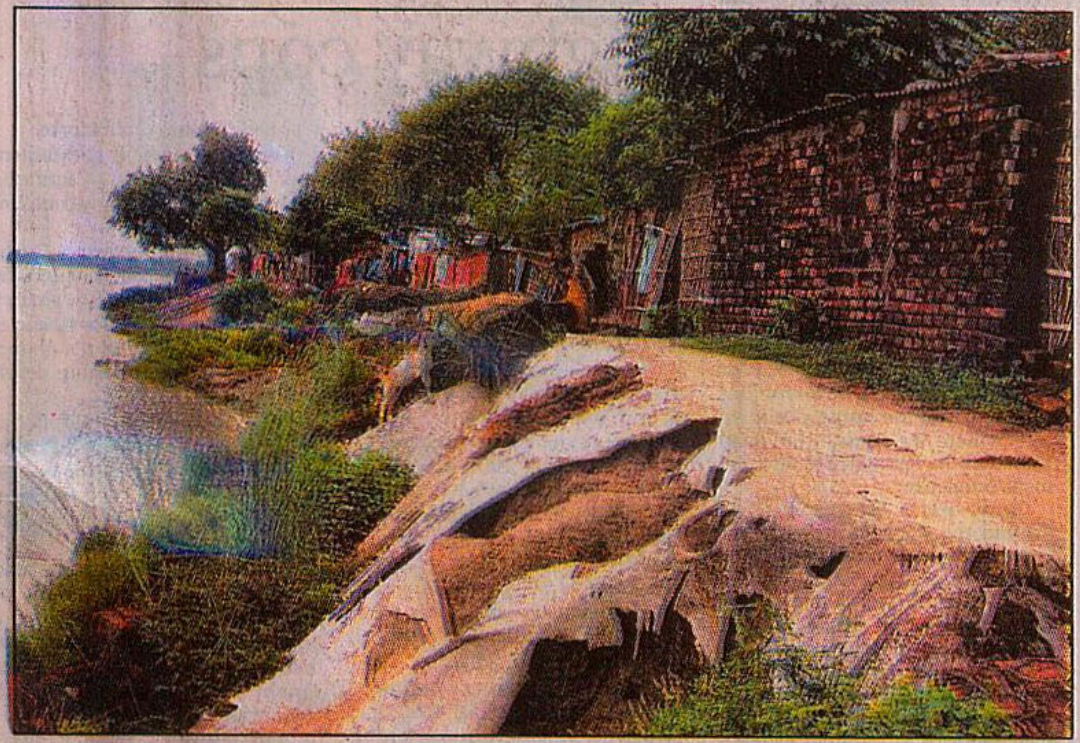
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**Prayer Timing**

July 19

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-54	6-58
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



Plastic covers on Rajshahi city protection embankment wear out because of lack of maintenance, while the Padma swells by the day to threaten the northwestern city.

**Rajshahi town living in danger**  
Poor maintenance of embankment threatens city's safety  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Appalling condition of the Rajshahi Town Protection Embankment along the Padma resulted from alleged misuse of maintenance fund threatens the town's safety.

In last seven years, Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) has renovated only 5.5 km of the 18 km of the levee at Tk 72 crore. Most of the renovated portion, however, by this time, had reached a state of dilapidation with blocks pitching sunk at many points and geotex wrappers got rotten and torn out, sources said.

Cracks and breaches that developed on the main dam due to illegal construction and movement of heavy vehicles like trucks on it are the most alarming. Local people complained that contractors in many cases took public money virtually for no work.

BWDB experts said more than two dozen private nurseries and hundreds of makeshift and concrete buildings on and adjacent to the embankment are severely affecting the embankment.

The embankment's condition worsened even more as sand traders had cut the dam at many points for plying trucks, they said adding that for lack of police support BWDB failed to take action against the illegal grabbers.

At least 13 km of the levee that stretched from Panchabati to Sabbaria due east has been in need of renovation for years. But there seemed to be no immediate prospect, as there was no allocation in

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**Wife-beating imam finally suspended**  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Authority of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) yesterday suspended the BSMMU mosque imam, who allegedly tortured his wife for her denial of his second marriage on July 6.

"The three-member probe committee headed by Prof MA Mannan submitted a primary report last week and recommended the suspension saying it will help carry out proper investigation," said Vice-chancellor MA Hadi of the BSMMU.

Imam Saiful Islam is absconding

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**OBITUARY**

Renowned Doctor, Former Principal of Dhaka Dental College, Rangpur Medical College & Barisal Medical College, Former Director of Health Directorate Dr. Md. Momtazur Rahman breathed his last due to old age complication at 10.45 A.M. on July 18, 2004 at his own residence at Gulshan at the age of 83 (Innallah....Rajeun). He was the father of Zafar Ahmed, Chairman, Zahur Ahmed PhD, Vice Chairman and Zubair Ahmed PhD, Director of Apex Holdings Limited. He left behind his Wife, three Sons, two Daughters, many Grand Children, a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death. He was buried yesterday at Banani Graveyard after Magrib prayer. We pray for the salvation of his departed soul.

**Bereaved Family**