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Delhi assures Dhaka of removing trade barriers

Altat seeks concessions before signing FTA

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India yesterday assured Bangladesh of addressing the issues of non-tariff and other barriers to facilitate greater exports from Bangladesh with a hope to touch \$5 billion-mark in the bilateral trade in a couple of years.

The present level of bilateral trade of about \$2 billion "is certainly not commensurate with the potential that exists," Indian Commerce Minister Kamal Nath told a dialogue on Bangladesh-India Trade and Investment Relations.

The Federation of Indian

Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) organised the interactive session in the Indian capital marking the visit of Bangladesh Commerce Minister Altat Hossain Choudhury.

Altat earlier at a meeting with his Indian counterpart raised the issue of tariff and non-tariff obstacles to boosting exports to India. Talking to reporters he also said a free trade agreement with India was "inevitable" to benefit both the countries.

The Bangladesh commerce minister however sought some concessions from India for Bangladesh exports before reaching

a free trade deal.

"Given the complementarities of our economies and the geographical juxtaposition, the actual level of trade should be many times more, higher by an order of magnitude. In a couple of years, we can easily reach five billion dollars if we really set out sights on it with single-minded devotion," the Indian commerce minister said.

Nath said he was sensitive to Dhaka's concerns over a sizeable imbalance in bilateral trade and would like Bangladesh to have greater access to Indian market making full use of concessions

under South Asian Free Trade Area (Safat) and Bimstec grouping.

On Bangladesh's concerns over non-tariff barriers, he said India has all along been fully committed to the fundamental principles of MFN and national treatment and would address any such barrier to further boost bilateral trade.

Nath said the issues of requirement of mandatory standards and testing of goods from Bangladesh would be "addressed appropriately on receipt of required response from Bangladesh and India's decisions in these matters would be in mutual

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'Bangladeshi trucker not among dead in Iraq'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday said that abducted Bangladeshi truck driver Abul Kashem Faruk was not among the two foreign nationals found dead in Iraq recently.

On the fate of Kashem reportedly held hostage by Islamic Army in Baghdad last month, Morshed told reporters at his office that the government has adopted multi-pronged approach in order to trace and rescue him.

Morshed's statement came after Iran-based radio 'Voice of the Mujahidin' broadcast a report on November 14 that bodies of two nationals from Indonesia and Bangladesh were found on a roadside in Al-Lidj area near Al-

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Rice replaces Powell as secretary of state

Armitage quits State Department

REUTERS, AFP, Washington

President Bush reached into his inner circle on Tuesday and nominated a trusted confidante, national security adviser Condoleezza Rice, to replace Colin Powell as secretary of state.

Rice, 50, who was born in Birmingham, Alabama, and once harbored hopes of becoming a concert pianist, would become the first black woman to be secretary of state. Tears welled up in her eyes as Bush talked about her late parents.

She appeared likely to gain easy Senate confirmation. But her choice raised some concerns in Washington -- dismissed by the White House -- that Bush was

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US President George W. Bush named National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, right, to succeed Secretary of State Colin Powell, left, who resigned November 15 during a press conference at the White House Tuesday.

Eid celebrated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muslims across the country celebrated their biggest religious festival, the Eid-ul-Fitr, on Monday with due fervour and rejoicing.

Gathering in thousands at different eidgahs, mosques and open places they offered prayer in the morning seeking divine blessing and continuous peace, progress and prosperity of the Muslim ummah as well as development of the country and social progress of the nation.

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After the prayer, the devotees embraced each other irrespective of rich and poor, old and young, and friends and foes, and exchanged well wishes and eid greetings.

The main eid congregation in the capital was held at 8:30am at National Eidgah, where President Iajuddin Ahmed along with the speaker, ministers, members of

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Opposition to announce new anti-govt agitation today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mainstream opposition parties will announce fresh agitation programmes today demanding the resignation of the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition government.

Key opposition leaders in a meeting at the office of Samyabadi Dal last night discussed possible programmes for the out-government movement and ways to give the ongoing movement of different opposition parties a concrete shape.

They agreed to go for a simultaneous movement demanding resignation of the alliance government

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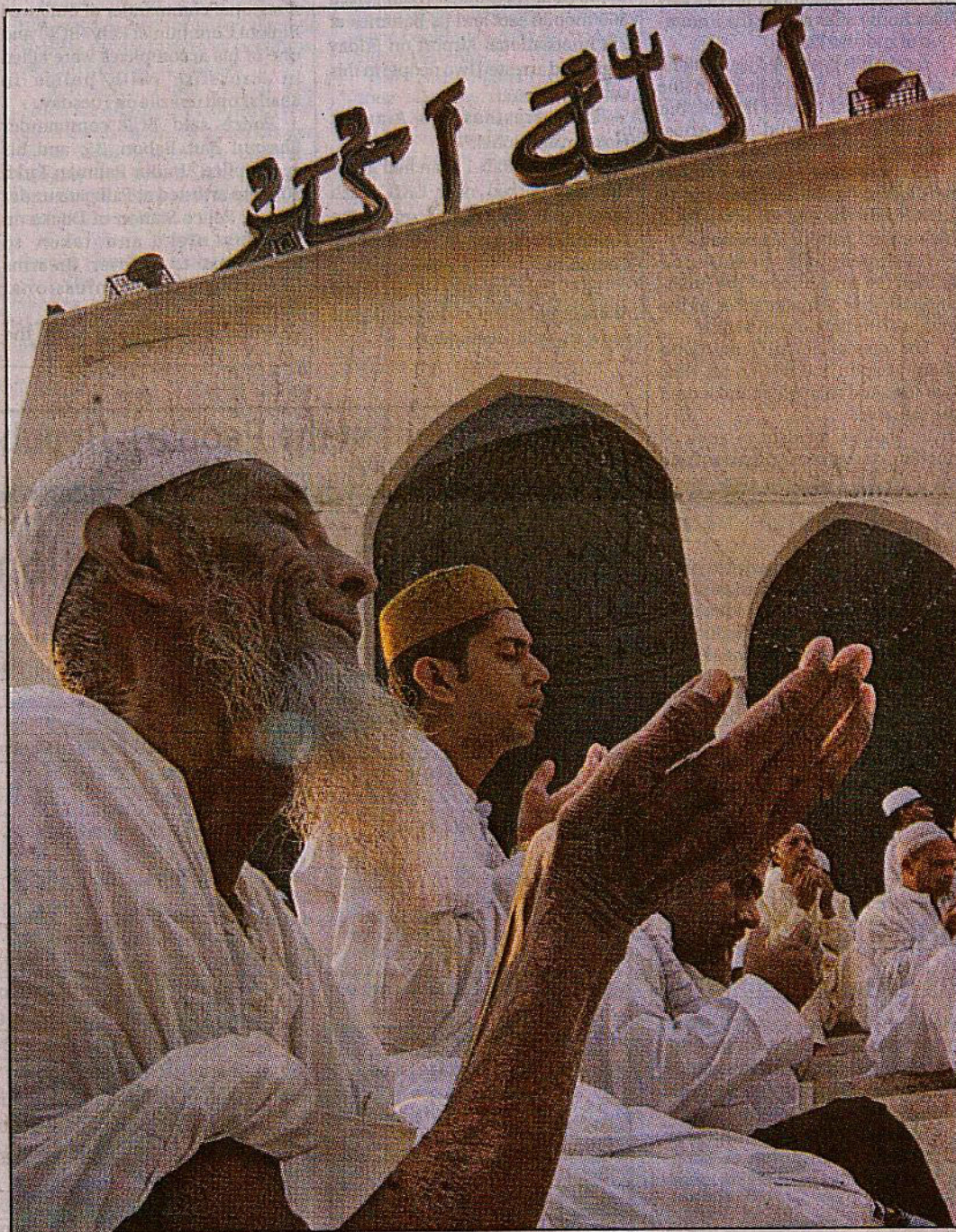


PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Devotees offer prayers after an Eid congregation at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque on Monday morning in downtown Dhaka.

Pakistani woman held with forged notes

IOJ MP's daughter released after quizzing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on Sunday arrested a Pakistani woman and nine others including a daughter of a ruling coalition lawmaker in the city's Ramna area with about Tk 2 lakh in counterfeit local currency besides Indian, Pakistani, Thai and

local currencies worth Tk 8.9 lakh. Of the 10 people arrested for fabricating and marketing counterfeit currencies, the Rab later released four girls including the lawmaker's teenage daughter after taking undertakings.

Law enforcers believe the

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ZIA toilets without water

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Passengers and staff of Zia International Airport (ZIA) are facing trouble due to lack of water supply in the toilets.

There was almost no supply of water in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors of the airport building during Ramadan, sources said. "Finding no water in the ladies' toilets, I went to a gent's toilet, where I fortunately got a small amount of water," a woman passenger said yesterday.

All the toilets have become dirty due to severe shortage of water supply, she added.

"We cannot even wash our faces as very small amount of water is being supplied for over a month," said a ZIA official, adding, "It is a total mess in the airport where 15 to 20 flights operate everyday."

ZIA Director Humayun Kabir admitted the situation and said the crisis was due to problems in old supply lines.

"We have set up a new water pump as the water pumped out from the old pump was not sufficient to meet the increasing demand due to establishment of a new police station and establishments for

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Manmohan offers Kashmiris peace, prosperity

First batch of troops quit valley

AFP, Srinagar

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh yesterday offered Kashmiris peace and prosperity as he pulled an army battalion out of the troubled state and held out hope of further troop cuts.

"I have a dream and a firm belief that we can and we shall build a new Kashmir which will become a symbol of peace, hope, prosperity," Singh said on his first visit to the Himalayan valley since taking office in May.

"I have already given instructions to reduce troops in Kashmir and if violence goes down and if infiltration (of militants) ends it will become easier for me to reduce forces further," he told students in Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar.

He repeated the message in an address to thousands of people gathered at Srinagar's main cricket stadium and announced 5.3 billion dollars in "economic revival plan".

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Holiday hangover yet to go

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Capital Dhaka yesterday reeled under holiday hangover even after six long days of Eid vacation although public and private offices went back to operations.

The holiday in government offices began on November 13, but the vacation started a day ahead because of weekend on Friday (November 12) when most of the city dwellers started leaving the city to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr in outlying

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Powerful explosives seized from Gaibandha train

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Railway police seized 24 Gelatin 'high-speed explosive bars' and 124 'electric detonators' from a compartment of a Shantahar-bound local train at Bonapara station, some 20 kilometres south of Gaibandha, on November 12.

The powerful explosives are generally used to blow up hard rock, bridge and culvert and may cause heavy damage to buildings and concrete structures, a police official said quoting army experts.

"The bars bore 'Made in India' seals and detonators 'Made in China' seals," the police official said, preferring anonymity.

They arrested Anisur Rahman, 22, who hails from Barokona Abdullahpur village in Shaghata upazila. On squeezing information from him, police arrested Amjad Hossain, said to be the 'regional commander' of Jamaat-ul-Mujaheed, an Islamist outfit, and Sajjadur Rahman Sabuj at a hostel of Fakirpara in Gaibandha town.

Amjad hails from Jogodishpur village and Sabuj from Koregachha village in Gobindganj upazila.

Sources at the Government Railway Police (GRP) said they launched a thorough search of 484 Down local train as soon as it arrived at Bonapara Railway Station about

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6 criminals lynched in Chittagong

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Six criminals were lynched and a police constable was bullet-hit in separate incidents in Korbaniganj and Fatikchhari in the last two days.

A mob beat up four muggers to death in Korbaniganj under Kotwali Police Station yesterday afternoon. Their identities could not be known immediately.

Police and witnesses said four muggers stopped Julekha, her sister Alekha and friend Mimu -- all workers of Gold Star Garments -- when they were returning home by a rickshaw.

A patrol team of police arrived on the scene and challenged the muggers, who immediately opened fire on the cops. Constable Rafique, who received bullet in his head, was admitted to a police hospital in Dampara.

Over 100 locals and pedestrians chased the muggers, held and lynched them on the spot.

Police recovered two guns, one LG and nine bullets. In Fatikchhari, alleged criminals

Altat Hossain alias BDR Altat, 28, and Sirajul Islam, 30, were lynched in crime-prone South Kanchan Nagar area Tuesday.

Altat and Sirajul were held in the act of abducting a businessperson. They were reportedly close aides of Kashem Chairman, prime accused in Jamal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury abduction case.

Altat, Sirajul and their accomplices tried to abduct Ahmed Hossain, a former UP member, as he refused to give them toll.

Locals rushed to the spot and held Altat and Sirajul with one LG and 13 bullets when they were forcing Ahmed into a microbus in Malek Shah Bazar at around 11:30am. They gouged out their eyes and left them dead on the spot.

Meantime, muggers killed a person in Miankhan Nagar Mazar under Bakolia Police Station in the city Saturday.

Mostafa, 30, was stabbed to death, as he tried to resist the muggers at 11:30pm, said his uncle Badshah, who was with him.



PHOTO: STAR

Only two staff man a Secretariat office like most of government and semi-government offices that witnessed a poor attendance yesterday after a six-day Eid vacation.



We Mourn

With deep regret we announce that Mrs. Anowara Begum, mother of Mr. Gaus Uddin Khan, Chairman of Moni Group passed away peacefully in the night of holy Eid-ul-Fitar i.e., Tuesday 16th November 2004 at her residence in Dhanmondi R/A. (Innalillahi Rajeun). At her death she was 75 years old and left four sons, five daughters, grand sons, grand daughters and huge well-wishers.

Her Quikhwani will be held on Friday 19th November 2004 after Jumma Prayer at her own village at Galimpur (Khanhati), Nawabganj.

All relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the occasion and pray to the Almighty Allah for the salvation of her departed soul.

Family members of the late
&
All employees of Moni Group

The one time paint for many seasons...

• anti-fungal
• anti-fading
• anti-flaking

BERGER Weather Coat