

Reaz says Dhaka open-minded to grant observer status to China, Afghanistan

**UNB, Dhaka**  
Foreign Affairs Adviser Reaz Rahman has said Bangladesh "is open-minded" about granting observer status to Afghanistan and China in the Saarc.

"Bangladesh is open-minded," he told a group of diplomatic correspondents at his office yesterday afternoon.

Reaz, however, said it will need formulation of modalities by the

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SAARC SUMMIT  
Security beefed up in Ctg

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg**  
Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) have beefed up security measures in the city ahead of the 13th Saarc Summit.

Members of the two forces were seen searching passengers, their luggage and other goods at bus terminals, railway stations and in

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Prayer Timing		
November 10		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	5-00	5-35
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-25	5-30
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

## First signs of slowdown in French violence

**AFP, Paris**  
For the first time in nearly two weeks France saw a clear fall in the number of overnight attacks yesterday, raising cautious hopes that the worst wave of urban unrest since May 1968 might be receding.

According to interior ministry figures, there were 617 car-burnings across the country, compared to more than 1,100 the night before.

"It is a very significant drop," said Claude Gueant, a senior aide to Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy.

The easing-off came after the government of President Jacques Chirac invoked emergency powers dating from the Algerian war to allow

regional governors -- or prefects -- to impose curfews, conduct house searches without warrants and ban public meetings.

The measures came into force overnight but were only put into effect in one place -- the northern city of Amiens where authorities imposed a curfew for unaccompanied children under the age of 16.

Three other towns -- Orleans in the centre and the Paris suburbs of Raincy and Savigny-sur-Orge -- have decreed nighttime curfews for minors under a different administrative procedure.

In the southern city of Toulouse -- which saw serious unrest at the start of the week -- police reported only 21

torched cars and six arrests. "The intensity has fallen markedly," said a senior official.

Police in major cities such as Strasbourg, Lille, Nantes and Rennes recorded a sharp decrease in the number of attacks, while the Paris suburbs -- where the trouble erupted on October 27 -- were also relatively calm.

In another hopeful sign, reinforcements for the fire service who were brought to the capital to cope with the violence have been withdrawn, according to the interior ministry. This was due to the "extremely clear" fall in the number of arson attacks in the Paris region, a spokesman said.

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Asia's top terror suspect killed in Indonesian shootout

**AFP, Jakarta**  
Master bomb-maker and Islamic radical Azahari Husin, one of Asia's top terror suspects and most wanted men, blew himself up after being cornered by Indonesian police on Wednesday, local TV said.

Azahari, a Malaysian national from the al-Qaeda linked Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) militant network known as the "Demolition Man," reportedly set off explosives after a shootout with police in his remote hideaway of Batu in East Java.

If confirmed, his death would be a major coup for Indonesian secu

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PHOTO: AFP  
Chelsea Clinton and Shamima Khatun, a winner of Global Microentrepreneurship Awards in Bangladesh, attend the UN gala Tuesday in New York. A wholesaler of vegetables, Shamima has been adjudged the winner of the "Most Innovative Business of the Year" organised by Citigroup Foundation, and UN Capital Development Fund. Shamima represented Bangladesh at the closing ceremony of the International Year of Microcredit.

## Minorities vulnerable despite religious freedom in Bangladesh

Says US report

**BDNEWS, Dhaka**  
A US report has generally appreciated the religious freedom in Bangladesh, but said religious minorities are vulnerable due to their relatively limited influence with political elite.

"Like many citizens, they are often reluctant to seek recourse from a corrupt and ineffective criminal justice system. Police are often ineffective in upholding law and order and are sometimes slow to assist religious minorities. This promotes an

atmosphere of impunity for acts of violence against them," it said.

The report said relations between religious communities in Bangladesh generally are amicable.

"Nevertheless, clashes between religious groups occasionally occur. Violence directed against religious minorities continues to result in the loss of lives and property, but the motives -- religious animosity, criminal intent, or

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## ROHINGYA REFUGEE CAMPS EU-UN team decries lack of hygiene, schooling

**PORIMOL PALMA, Back**  
*From Cox's Bazar*  
A high-profile team of EU diplomats and UN officials yesterday expressed grave concerns at the highly unhygienic living conditions it had seen at two Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar and the lack of access to education of a few thousand Rohingya children there.

The delegation also criticised the government for not letting some

6,000 unregistered Rohingya refugees to shift their living quarters from the shabby and unhealthy shacks on the bank of Naf river in Teknaf to some safer places.

At a meeting with Refugee Relief Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) Shoyebur Rahman at his Cox's Bazar office yesterday, the diplomats said they will meet Sunday to discuss the issues and will place a set of recommendations

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ACC becoming inactive body

Says British envoy

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet**  
British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Choudhury has said the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is yet to start functioning properly, becoming an almost ineffective body.

The ACC was constituted about a year ago, but its performance is not at all satisfactory, Choudhury said at a press conference at Sylhet regional office of the British High Commission yesterday.

He however expressed the hope the government would take measures to make the ACC an effective anti-corruption body.

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Japan vows support for Saarc

**BDNEWS, Dhaka**  
Japan has vowed to continue support for South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) and its member countries in various fields and wished good outcomes from November 12-13 summit.

In a message to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia who is going to take over the chair of the Saarc in the summit, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi hoped that her

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Rejoinder

The Regional Director of Bangladesh Betar at Rangamati radio station, Suraiya Bilkis, has protested a news item headlined "Threat to blow up radio station in Rangamati" published in The Daily Star on November 8.

In a statement, she termed the report "baseless" and claimed that

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