

November-8-2005

## Mirza Fakhrul given Biman's rein

Nasir tells of poor health for his ouster

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Agriculture Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday replaced Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin, a day after he was axed from the portfolio of state minister for civil aviation and tourism amid a growing hajj flight fare fiasco.

The change came when the national flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines with its dwindling fleet is in a bad shape but still showing the luxuries of operating many loss-making flights both on domestic and international routes.

Addressing a press briefing at his official residence at Minto

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## Seoul eager to join Saarc as observer

UNB, Dhaka

Republic of Korea (Rok) is willing to join South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) as an observer after China and Japan, diplomatic sources told the news agency yesterday.

The sources said the Korean ambassadors posted in seven South Asian capitals will meet in New Delhi next month to discuss the matter and make a recommendation to their foreign ministry in Seoul for taking the initiative to join the Saarc.

Seoul, a member of Asean, got interested in Saarc, particularly after Japan was given the observer status by the 13th summit in Dhaka. Japan and China are also

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## Question leak taints again BCS test

### Involvement of ruling parties' student wings alleged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A countrywide leak of questions marred the 27th Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) preliminary test held by the Public Service Commission (PSC) yesterday.

This was the fourth consecutive time, beginning from the 24th BCS exams, that the questions had been widely leaked, which puts the very recruiting process in question.

Many a candidate alleged a vested quarter in connivance with some PSC staffs and leaders of Jatayatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS), the student wings of ruling BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, was behind the leakage.

Examinees were taken aback by discovering that the question paper distributed at the exam centres and the leaked one made available at dormitories of universities and colleges across the country hours ahead were almost identical. In some instances as many as 98 of the 112 multiple choice questions (MCQs) leaked were found true.

A huge number of candidates, who had managed a copy of the leaked questions in advance, was found leaving the examination halls only halfway through the one-hour test.

"I completed the exam in just 11 minutes and spent the rest of the time by helping out my neighbours," said Jakir Hossain, a former Dhaka University (DU) student of political science, who sat the exam at Azimpur Girls High School in the city.

Instead of studying in preparation for the test, thousands of BCS

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PHOTO: STAR

Candidates of the 27th Bangladesh Civil Service sitting in front of the Dhaka University Teacher-Student Centre check if their answers were correct or not after yesterday's preliminary test. But little do they know that some of their more resourceful competitors had the questions in their pockets in the early hours yesterday.

## JMB chief's son-in-law nabbed

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Police yesterday arrested six Islamist militants including the son-in-law of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) chief Shaikh Abdur Rahman in Thakurgaon.

Plainclothesmen also nabbed Golam Mohammad Bhuiyan Manik, president of Islami Chhatra Sena, student front of Islami Oikya Front, in connection with August 17 country-wide bomb blasts from Dhaka.

Tipped off, police raided a Dinajpur-bound bus when it reached Thakurgaon old bus stand in the afternoon and nabbed Abdur Rahman's son-in-law Awal, one of

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## S African visa restricted for Bangladeshis

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The citizens of Bangladesh and six African countries must meet certain visa requirements before travelling to South Africa on transit visa from December 1, 2005.

"All foreigners are exempted from transit visa requirements except travellers from Bangladesh, Nigeria, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Egypt, Ethiopia and Ghana," said a report published in the Daily Independent of Nigeria.

Other countries whose nationals must fulfil the visa requirements are India, Kenya, Pakistan, China, Russia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Ukraine and Zimbabwe, the report said.

## At least 67 killed in twin strikes on Iraq mosques

### 6 more die in car bombing outside Baghdad hotel

AFP, Baghdad

At least 67 worshippers were killed in suicide attacks on two Shia mosques in eastern Iraq near the border with Iran yesterday, hours after suicide bombers killed six people outside a Baghdad hotel.

The carnage came as the US military warned of rising violence in the run-up to the December 15 legislative elections.

At least 75 people were wounded when two suicide bombers, wearing

explosives belts, blew themselves up amid worshippers during Friday's weekly prayers in two Shia mosques in the town of Khanaqin, officials said.

Ambulances were sent from Sulaimaniyah, two hours away, to pick up some of the wounded.

The local authorities immediately imposed a curfew in the majority Shia Kurdish town of Khanaqin, some 170km from the capital.

Just hours earlier at least six people were killed, including a woman and two children, and 40 hurt in

Baghdad when suicide bombers detonated an explosives-laden minivan and a car outside the Hamra hotel, frequented by foreigners, and near an interior ministry complex.

The complex, in southern Baghdad's Jadriyah district, came to public notice on Sunday when US troops discovered there some 179 mostly Sunni detainees, several of whom had been tortured.

The discovery led to an international outcry, a stern warning by US

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## Barisal intelligence lists 25 potential bombers

### Bangla Bhai got out of jail with bond carrying no signature of lawyer

STAR REPORT

Local intelligence agencies have listed 25 members of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh's (JMB) suicide squad as operating in six districts of Barisal division.

Police yesterday recovered two powerful bombs and arrested two suspected militants in Chuadanga while a JMB operative was held in Jhenidah.

In another development, lawyers on Thursday unearthed that Jagrata Muslim Janata, Bangladesh (JMB) Operations Commander Bangla Bhai and his two associates had been released from Bagerhat jail on a bond

that did not have any lawyer's signature. The militant kingpin and his accomplices were captured in the district in August 2002.

Intelligence agencies have also listed 45 people as the hard-core members of JMB in Barisal region. Of them, 25 are suspected to be in the suicide squad of the banned Islamist outfit, reports our staff correspondent Rafiq Hasan, now on a visit to southern districts.

A high official of local unit of an intelligence agency yesterday acknowledged that they have prepared the list of

J M B A C T I V I S T S  
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## JMB cadres infiltrate Ctg in disguise

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

On the intelligence that Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) operatives and killing squad members have infiltrated into the port city in guise of vendors and rickshaw-pullers, Chittagong police have started raiding bachelors messes and rickshaw garages from Tuesday.

Investigations by the police and intelligence agencies into the August 17 countrywide orchestrated bomb blasts and the October 3 bomb attacks on Chittagong courts have revealed that JMB activists typically work in various disguises. The militants, who were held in connection with the November 14 Jhalakathi bomb

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PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

The arrival of the guest birds is much less this season than in previous years even into the third week of November.

## Migratory birds start to arrive in JU sanctuary

### Bird flu scare-ridden govt to prevent hunting

EMRAN HOSSAIN EMON

With the advent of winter, migratory birds of different species have started to flock to evergreen Jahangirnagar University (JU) campus amid the government's instruction to its livestock officials to be on strict vigil to prevent killing of these birds that have the potential of transmitting avian flu virus to the local poultry.

More than two lakh small and medium scale poultry farms are operating across the country that employ five million people directly. The industry added nearly Tk 8,000 crore to the GDP during the last fiscal.

The World Organisation for

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## HAJJ AIRFARE

## Foreign airlines reject Biman's revised rate

REAZ AHMAD

Uncertainty still looms large over the fate of thousands of intending Hajj pilgrims, a day after the axing of civil aviation minister, as foreign airliners once again declined to operate Hajj flights at Biman's revised fare of \$1,050.

Amidst renewed threats of movement waged by 363 Hajj agencies responsible for making arrangements for 56,000 non-ballotee pilgrims, the Biman management in a meeting yesterday slashed down the fare from the earlier \$1,150.

However, the foreign airliners, that have been asking for \$1,350 all along and finally agreed at a Biman board meeting on November 14 to fly at least 8,000-10,000 pilgrims at a fare of

\$1,150, yesterday declined to accept the newly fixed rate.

"I have talked to other operators after hearing the news of further reducing of the Hajj flight fare and we all agreed to disagree with the rate," Qatar Airways Area Manager in Bangladesh Shamshad Ahsan told The Daily Star last night.

Following the resignation of Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin from the helm of civil aviation ministry, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia assigned Social Welfare Minister and Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mujahid to resolve the Hajj flight deadlock.

At a prolonged meeting with the Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (HAAB) leaders on

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