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## Secretariat on top alert

### Even ministers must go through security check

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Everyone even the ministers will have to go through security checking at the entrance to the Bangladesh Secretariat as the government has decided to make it fully secure in the wake of rising apprehension of bomb attacks and the movement of militants.

Explosive detectors, closed-circuit television and scanner will be installed and dog squad will be deployed at the Secretariat, the government's administrative headquarters. Several explosive detector archways have already been set up there.

The rush of visitors to the Secretariat will be controlled and no one will be allowed to enter the Secretariat with entry pass, an emergency meeting of secretaries decided yesterday, apart from taking other decisions to tighten security.

The meeting was convened in



Security men examine bags with a scanner installed at the main entrance to Bangladesh Secretariat as part of beefed up security measures yesterday.

## JS SESSION BEGINS

### Rules violated to greet PM as Saarc chair

#### AL continues boycott

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Ignoring the rules of procedure, the 19th session of parliament that began yesterday spent about half an hour congratulating prime minister on her being elected the Saarc chairperson.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar instead of going into the day's business allowed the unscheduled congratulatory discussion to take place at the beginning of the sitting. Whereas the question-answer session should have been held first as the rules of procedure of Jatiya Sangsad says unless the speaker otherwise directs, the first hour of

## Foreign airlines decline to carry pilgrims at \$1,050

**REAZ AHMAD**

The aircraft crisis continued to haunt thousands of intending Hajj pilgrims as six foreign airlines yesterday declined to fly Bangladesh pilgrims to Saudi Arabia at Biman's revised fare of \$1,050.

The officials of Qatar Airways, Saudi Arabian Airlines, Kuwait Airways, Emirates, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and Gulf Air held a joint meeting at the Emirates' Gulshan office yesterday, all disapproving of the new fare.

With its dwindling fleet-size, the national flag carrier, Biman

Bangladesh Airlines, has already expressed its inability to fly more than 18,000 of the 60,000 intending Hajj pilgrims to Saudi Arabia.

Now, the foreign airlines "no" to the decreased fare, fixed two days ago by the Biman to the satisfaction of the agitating Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (HAAB), came as another blow to the agencies.

HAAB President Abdus Shakur and General Secretary Jinnur Ahmed Chowdhury Dipu told The Daily Star yesterday that their representatives will discuss the matter with all concerned at the inter-ministerial meeting on Hajj

to be held at the religious affairs ministry today.

Qatar Airways Area Manager in Bangladesh Shamshad Ahsan told The Daily Star yesterday evening, "Our head offices fixed the Hajj flight fare at \$1,300. But upon the request of the host country's government, all of us--except the Saudi Arabian Airlines--agreed to slash the fare down to \$1,150. The Saudi airlines kept its fare static at \$1,300."

The foreign airlines will not be able to lower the fare any further, Ahsan added.

The foreign airlines' meeting

## Bush, Hu wrestle over trade, rights

**AFP, Beijing**

Chinese President Hu Jintao yesterday rebuffed US President George W. Bush's calls to allow greater religious and political freedom but promised to show more flexibility on Sino-US economic disputes.

On day two of his Beijing visit, Bush took his human rights pitch

from a church service near Tiananmen Square to a public appearance with Premier Wen Jiabao, and finally to an impromptu exchange with reporters.

"I talked about both political and religious freedom," the US president told reporters, adding that he had raised the issue with Hu

## JOURNALIST BELAL KILLING

### Jamaat leader, 5 outlaws involved

#### Charge sheet submitted

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna**

Charge sheet in journalist Belal murder case accusing President of Ward 24 unit of Jamaat-e-Islami Shahabuddin Lashkar alias Dhira and five outlaws was submitted to

the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) here yesterday.

Dhira has been named prime accused in the charge sheet. He is absconding.

The other accused are extremists

## JMJB raised its head during AL regime

### Says BNP lawmaker Nadim Mostafa

**BDNEWS, Rajshahi**

BNP lawmaker Nadim Mostafa yesterday said the present government is not responsible for the rise of Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB), rather the Islamist militants raised their heads during the previous Awami League rule.

Exchanging views with journalists at his residence in Rajshahi, the ruling party lawmaker from Rajshahi-4 constituency said some ambitious and over-enthusiastic administrative officials are responsible for the rise of the JMJB.

Nadim said the militants would

## JMB threatens to blow up Ctg railway station

### Jhalakathi judge gets death threat

**STAR REPORT**

A Jhalakathi judge who narrowly escaped death on November 14 received death threats yesterday while an anonymous caller claiming to be a Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) operative threatened to blow up Chittagong Railway Station.

Meanwhile, three JMB operatives arrested in Panchagarh Saturday were remanded yesterday.

Senior Assistant Judge of Jhalakathi MA Awal, who avoided being another casualty in the November 14 suicide bomb attack,

received a letter containing the threat yesterday, UNB reports. The blast left his colleagues Sohail Ahmed and Jagannath Pandey dead and three others injured.

Badshah Mia using the address 14, College Road, Rajshahi sent the letter to the already perturbed judge.

The letter accused Awal of 'committing acts of injustice and indulging in wrongful activities'. It was posted from the secretariat post office in Dhaka two days after the killing of two judges.

Terrified on receipt of the letter, the judge immediately informed

## State minister allegedly assaults reporter

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

State Minister for Housing and Public Works Alamgir Kabir allegedly assaulted a reporter yesterday at his Secretariat office.

The reporters present at the Secretariat immediately met the minister and protested the incident.

When contacted for his comment, Kabir categorically denied to The Daily Star of assaulting any journalist.

"A journalist from the daily Janakantho entered my chamber without permission and began asking all sorts of ill-motivated baseless questions," the minister said, terming the incident "pre-planned and conspiratorial".

## NOV 22 RALLY

### Opposition vows to paralyse country if govt attempts to foil

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Just a couple of days before tomorrow's planned 'grand rally' of the 14-party opposition coalition, its leaders yesterday threatened to paralyse the entire country if the government continues to 'conspire to foil the rally by resorting to repression'.

The rally was called by the coalition in an effort to launch a fresh spell of united 'oust the government' movement.

Senior leaders of the opposition coalition at a news briefing yesterday said so far 4,000 grass roots

level leaders and activists of the coalition have been arrested across the country in the last few days and termed the incidents as 'government's bid to foil the rally'.

As all preparations had nearly been completed for tomorrow's rally in Dhaka, opposition leaders at the briefing alleged that in many places police and 'government-backed goons' had been threatening people with dire consequences if they join the rally.

"Wherever there will be obstruction, there will be sit-in demonstrations, and thus we will



Members of Rapid Action Battalion inspect Paltan Maidan, venue of the 14-party opposition combine's rally tomorrow, with trained dogs yesterday.

## Armed Forces Day today

**UNB, Dhaka**

The Armed Forces Day is being observed today to mark the counter-offensive against the Pakistani occupation army during the Bangladesh Liberation War.

On this day in 1971, the army, navy and the air force jointly attacked the Pakistani forces and their combined counter-offensive quickened the nation's victory.

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia gave separate messages greeting the members of the armed forces on this occasion.

The president said, "Armed forces are symbol of dignity for a nation."

The president prayed for the salvation of the departed souls of the martyrs who laid down their lives for the country's independence and sovereignty and also

## Bangladesh Shines in Colors

### 368 Thanas of 61 Districts

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