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Bimstec FMs fly in today

Meet starts tomorrow

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT
The foreign ministers of the seven-member Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (Bimstec) arrive in Dhaka today to attend the eighth ministerial meeting tomorrow.
The member states' entering the Free Trade Area (FTA), scheduled for July 1, 2006, will dominate the meet besides other issues of trade, poverty alleviation and terrorism.
The Bimstec members -- Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand -- are firm to make the

Another JMB cache found at Rangpur

Seizure list includes 24 grenades, huge bomb-materials

STAR REPORT
Law enforcers yesterday recovered yet another large cache of explosives and bomb-making materials and equipment from an abandoned sack on Lalbagh College Road in the northwestern town of Rangpur.
The haul included 24 homemade grenades, two time bombs, 50 power gels, 62 detonators, 20kg ammonium nitrate, three full and

147 empty cans of picric acid, 1,465 bullets, 3kg lead balls and 20kg of iron weights used in fishing nets. Besides, 25 books on Islamic theology and an assortment of laboratory equipment including a weighing machine were also in the sack.
The police yesterday also arrested two Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) members in Natore and one in Chapainawabganj, while Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) netted six suspected militants in Bogra.
In Rajshahi, the four JMB operatives arrested on Friday confessed to the police yesterday that they would have made some bomb strikes in the immediate past if a number of JMB linchpins including its Military Commander Aatur Rahman Sunny had not been arrested.
RANGPUR HAUL
Shamsul Islam, owner of Hasan Polythene Store on Lalbagh College

Ershad in sticky stew over polls alliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman HM Ershad appears to be in a quandary as the ruling coalition is reportedly pressing him for an electoral alliance with it while most of his party colleagues remain opposed to the idea.
The JP chairman at this time prefers to gloss over the anti-government sentiment of the party's rank and file, fearing probable repercussions of worsening relations with the government for a dozen cases that are pending against him, said party sources.
But faced with immense pressure both from the government

DEAL MINUS DHAKA, PHNOM PENH

Pro-poor WTO package to lose 15pc benefits

AP, Hong Kong

Up to 15 percent of the benefits of a WTO package of measures to help the world's poorest countries could be lost if textiles imports from Bangladesh and Cambodia are excluded from a final deal, the United Nations said yesterday.
The proposal at World Trade Organisation talks in Hong Kong grants duty-free and quota-free access to all least developed countries.

A complete package would bring benefits of up to \$8 billion a year for the economies of the 50 least developed countries, with \$6.4 billion of that attributable to increased exports, said Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, UN under secretary-general for least developed countries, which have a per capita income of less than \$750.
"It means a lot," Chowdhury told a news conference. "Trade is the engine for development."
But the US has raised objections

over textile imports from Bangladesh, and Japan also has concerns over rice imports.
A draft agreement circulated Saturday includes no specifics on when the measures would be implemented or what products would be covered.
"They (Bangladesh) are extremely competitive, globally competitive, and that creates an issue for us domestically that I don't think we'll be able to

Huji helped JMB carry out Aug 17 blasts

Ctg arrestees say letter for assistance sent last year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg
Outlawed Hurkatul Jihad (Huji) had helped another banned Islamist outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) carry out the August 17 bomb blasts across the country.
Four arrested JMB leaders on Friday night told police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) the Huji helped them theoretically and provided training until August 17. The JMB top tier in 2004 sent letters

Bangladesh choke India celebrate their third SAFF trophy with 2-0 win

India dethroned Bangladesh to regain the SAFF football title after six years with a 2-0 win in the final of the Fourth SAFF Championship at the People's Sports Complex Stadium here yesterday.

AL MUSABBIR SADI from Karachi
India dethroned Bangladesh to regain the SAFF football title after six years with a 2-0 win in the final of the Fourth SAFF Championship at the People's Sports Complex Stadium here yesterday.
Midfielder Mehraj Uddin, the most impressive player of the final and captain Baichung Bhutia, the player of the final and the tournament, struck either side of the break to end Bangladesh's superb run in the eight-team meet before a capacity crowd.
Taking the third SAFF trophy



A man along with a child walks along the Dhanmondi Lake to attend a rally held yesterday as part of 'Save Dhanmondi Lake' campaign.

DHANMONDI LAKE Govt urged not to lease it to water bottling company

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Three organisations yesterday urged the government to save the Dhanmondi Lake from commercial invasion alleging that the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) is planning to lease the lake to a water bottling company.
Members of Dhanmondi Residential House Owners Association, Bangladesh Poribesh Bachao Andolon and Nagorik Sanghati also asked the authorities concerned to sit with the people

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