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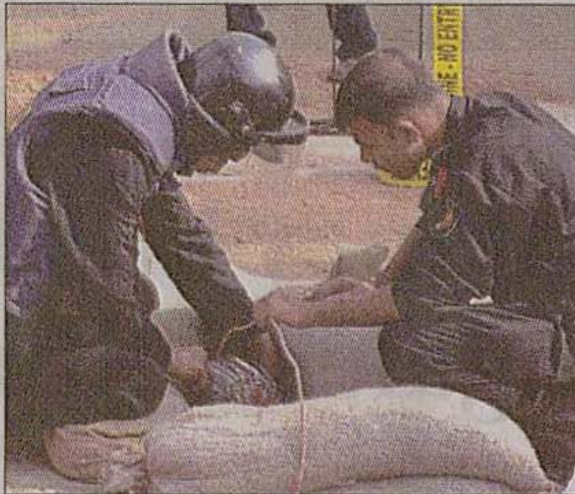
2 more JMB dens busted

Rab seizes bombs, explosives, jihadi books from Mymensingh after gunfight; 5,000 detonators recovered in Rajshahi; 2 divisional, district chiefs captured

BISHAWJIT DAS, back from Mymensingh

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday seized a huge cache of explosives from two Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) dens after a fierce skirmish in Mymensingh and 4,978 bomb detonators in Natore.

Rab teams in the operations arrested two linchpins of the outlawed Islamist terrorist outfit -- its Rajshahi divisional commander Shafiqullah alias Tariq, also a grandson-in-law of Ahab chief Dr Asadullah Galib, and Mymensingh district commander Asaduzzaman. The police and Rab also held two accomplices of Shafiqullah in



From left: Rab members defuse a bomb abandoned by militants during a raid in Mymensingh yesterday; bomb making materials seized from the militant den; arrested Rajshahi JMB chief Shafiqullah.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Bangla Bhai's bodyguard captured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Joypurhat police yesterday arrested a bodyguard of Siddiqul Islam alias Bangla Bhai from his house at Uttar Moheshpur in Khetlal upazila.

Nurul Haq (Kaiser), a Dakhil examinee of Daniapara Kamil Madrasa in Joypurhat Sadar upazila, was promoted as Pabna district JMB commander months before the August 17 serial blasts, police said, referring to his confession.

He was responsible for Bangla Bhai's protection during the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Tough law penned to check terror finance

Provides for separate probe & prosecution body, allows taking foreign assistance to curb terrorism

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The cabinet today is likely to discuss a draft Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Prevention Law that provides for a Financial Crime Investigation and Prosecution Office (FCIPO) and allows the government to take foreign assistance to rout the crimes.

The law crafted by the Bangladesh Bank (BB) defines terrorist acts and prescribes harsh punishments including life imprisonment and death sentence for them.

The finance ministry last week forwarded the draft to the cabinet after incorporating some changes prescribed by a high-power inter-ministerial meeting.

The new law to replace the existing Anti-Money Laundering Act (AMLA) 2002 was penned at the suggestion of the USA in the wake of 9/11 and in the context of the worldwide rise in terrorist activities to prevent and crush money laundering and funding terrorism and militancy.

In the summary of the draft sent

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Drive to clean Shitalakhya starts in Jan

400 illegal structures to be removed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to remove more than 400 illegal structures raised on the banks of the Shitalakhyariver.

A meeting of the taskforce formed to save the Buriganga River decided that Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authorities (BIWTA) would start the drive in the last week of January, meeting sources said.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Rich nations to give LDCs duty-free entry

WTO approves EU plan to cut farm subsidies by 2013

AFP, Hong Kong

Developed countries have agreed to provide duty-free and quota-free market access for 97 percent of exports produced by the world's poorest nations, according to a revised draft WTO text on trade liberalisation released here yesterday.

World Trade Organisation (WTO) members "shall provide duty-free and quota-free market access for at least 97 percent of product originating from LDCs (least developed countries)," said the text, debated by ministers informally overnight, released on the final day of a WTO conference

in Hong Kong.

The trade ministers also agreed to eliminate farm export subsidies by 2013 and provide special breaks for the poorest nations.

The reductions on tariffs and quotas would begin by 2008 or after an overall Doha round framework agreement is completed, the text said.

"Zero to 97 percent is very good," said Indian Trade Minister Kamal Nath.

Bangladesh, Zambia, Cambodia and other impoverished countries had initially demanded an across-the-board to zero reduction on all their export goods in all of the WTO's 149 member countries.

The agreement is still subject to a unified trade liberalisation deal that the Doha Round of trade talks that has yet to be formally approved.

"I'm very sure that we will get to the end of the round because our momentum will only get stronger," Nath said of the negotiations that first began in 2003 and are scheduled to conclude next year.

The proposed new rules would apply to all developed nations but would exempt developing countries such as Pakistan or Malaysia if they were not "in a position" to cut import tariffs.

However, concerns voiced by Japan on rice and the United States

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Bimstec nations sign FTA early next year

Ministers meet in Dhaka today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bimstec commerce ministers will sign a deal on free trade area (FTA) in goods at their Dhaka meeting early next year following conclusion of December 21-27 meeting of Trade Negotiation Committee (TNC).

Senior officials of the Bimstec countries have recommended for implementation of free trade area in the region as per its schedule set for July 1 next year.

Bimstec foreign secretaries at the 10th session of Bimstec senior

officials' meeting, chaired by host Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin, also agreed that the visa regime should be eased for facilitating travels to Bimstec member-countries on a larger scale.

Briefing newsmen after the meeting at Sheraton Hotel yesterday, the foreign secretary said they talked about greater cooperation and progress so far made in six core areas---trade and investment, multi-modal transportation and communications, tourism, energy,

The final agreement calls on wealthy nations to allow duty and quota-free privileges to at least 97 percent of products exported by

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

No gains for Dhaka

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh lost out in the global trade battle as World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiators approved a hard-fought trade agreement yesterday night in Hong Kong (HK), putting some 339 products out of the zero-tariff status.

Officials in the Bangladesh delegation estimated the number which fall into the three percent the agreement left out from market privileges, a Bangladesh delegation member said.

The final agreement calls on wealthy nations to allow duty and quota-free privileges to at least 97 percent of products exported by

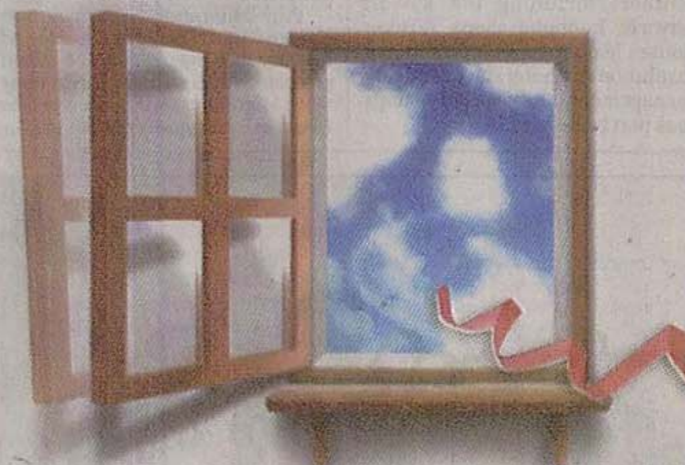
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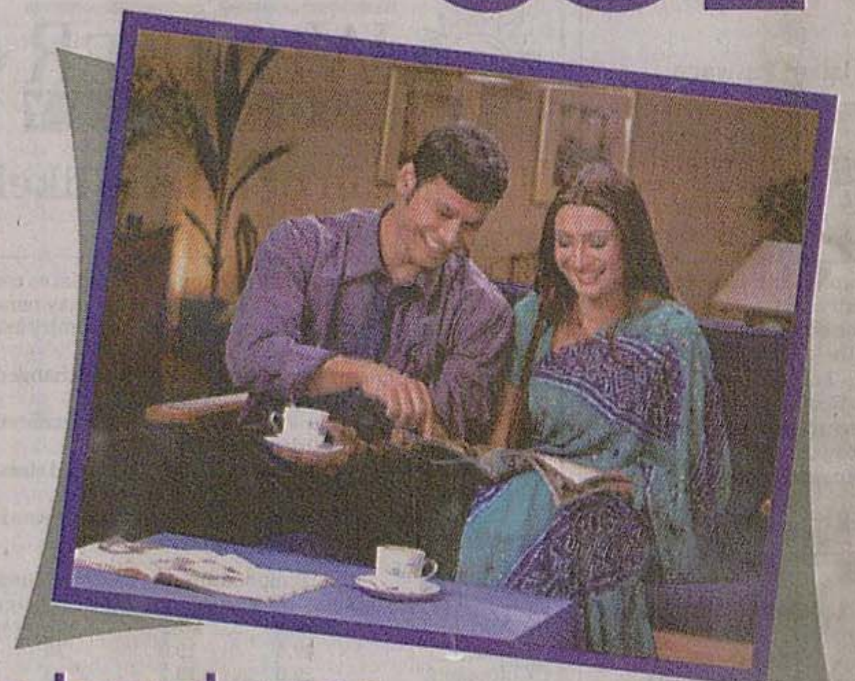
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