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Musharraf, Benazir strike power sharing deal

Pak president can stand for re-election, rules court

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf struck a last-minute deal yesterday with former premier Benazir Bhutto that paves the way for power-sharing and clears a key hurdle to his smooth re-election.

Musharraf, a key US ally who seized power in a coup eight years ago, was relieved as the Supreme Court in a crucial ruling said he can run for re-election on Friday and the today's presidential vote can go ahead.

The decision effectively leaves a sword hanging over the head of Musharraf, a key US ally, while the court decides whether it will validate the result of Saturday's crunch



vote, which he is widely expected to win.

Opponents challenged the validity of the election, but the Supreme Court's ruling clears the



way for the vote, carried out by an electoral college of the national and federal parliaments, to go ahead.

But the deal with Benazir's

opposition party takes a huge amount of pressure off Musharraf, who is controversially standing for another five-year term in office while still holding his post of army chief.

After increasingly frantic negotiations, the government and Benazir Bhutto's party said overnight they had both agreed on a national reconciliation accord, which would be made public later Friday.

The deal gives an amnesty for politicians active in Pakistan between 1988 and 1999 -- effectively clearing Benazir of the corruption charges that forced her into exile eight years ago.

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FNB terms TIB remarks 'sweeping'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In reaction to Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) report on the problems of good governance in NGOs, the Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh (FNB) yesterday vented its disapproval of the "sweeping comments" made in the report.

The TIB report, presented at a discussion on October 4, termed NGOs of Bangladesh "a mid-level corrupt sector", which lacked transparency and accountability towards its beneficiaries.

"The report would have benefited the NGOs if it was prepared based on statistical surveys following scientific methodology, instead of taking accounts of only 20 NGOs," said a statement signed by FNB Director M Tajul Islam.

"There are scopes for debate on a large portion of the report," the statement said adding that the report took accounts of only 20 of

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PHOTO: STAR

Devotees offer their Juma prayers at the Baitul Mukarram mosque in the capital yesterday. Failing to find room inside the mosque many had their prayers outside on the street.

Complainant of extortion case against former MP shot dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Underground operatives gunned down the complainant of an extortion case filed against former BNP lawmaker Moshir Rahman in the district town on Thursday night.

Witnesses said a gang of three sprayed bullets on Subodh Kumar Kundu, 52, while he was talking with some of his friends near Castle Bridge at around 8:45pm and left the scene. Subodh died instantly.

On information, police rushed to the spot, recovered the body and sent it to Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy. They also retrieved six bullets from the spot.

Shimul Biswas, a self-professed regional leader of outlawed Gono Mukti Fauj, phoned local journalists the same night and claimed responsibility for the murder.

Subodh filed a Tk 50.85 lakh extortion case against the former lawmaker with a court here on September 16 this year.

Immediately after the killing, police picked up seven people including Moshir's brother and nephew for quizzing.

The officer-in-charge (OC) of Sadar Police Station said they are yet to unearth the clue to the murder.



PHOTO: STAR

This CNG filling station in Baridhara in the city was closed yesterday as it failed to generate gas pressure due to frequent power cuts, even though the signboard says otherwise.

RECOVERY FROM FLOOD DAMAGE Agri ministry seeks Tk 100cr for seeds

PINAKI ROY

The agriculture ministry sought Tk 100 crore from the finance ministry so that it can distribute seeds of different crops and paddy seedlings to flood-hit farmers across the country.

"We sought Tk 100 crore from the finance ministry. But it is just as a proposal, we do not know how much we would get," says a high official of the agriculture ministry.

Earlier, the government had allocated Tk 65 crore which was spent to supply paddy seedlings and vegetable seeds to farmers. But the second spell of floods this year ruined many farmers' crops again and the agriculture ministry is trying to compensate for their losses, the ministry sources said.

A chunk of the fresh allocation would be spent as fertiliser subsidy so that the farmers can get those at a lower price, sources said.

However, the finance adviser on Tuesday told journalists, not being specific about the agro sector, that overall loss caused by floods would be around \$200 million.

Sources in the agriculture department had initially said the agro sector suffered loss of a few hundred crore taka due to floods. But, the second round of flooding this year severely damaged crops again in 39 districts of the country.

Agriculture experts said even though flood damage was severe, it would not be impossible to make up for food shortages and the loss to crops. Many farmers who

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RMG workers demonstrate for arrears, Eid bonus

UNB, Savar

Workers of three garment factories here yesterday staged demonstrations demanding their arrears and Eid bonus.

Police said some 1,500 workers of Panna Textile went on work abstention in the morning and then demonstrated demanding festival bonus and other arrears.

At one stage, the angry workers ransacked the factory office. Later, police swung into action and brought the situation under control.

The workers resumed their duties after the factory owner assured them of meeting their demands.

Besides, workers of Shanta

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Fresh extortion case against former MP Giasuddin

UNB, N'ganj

Another extortion case was filed against former BNP lawmaker Mohammad Giasuddin on Thursday.

Police said Abu Taher, a contractor of Shiddhirganj Power Station, filed the case against Giasuddin and his four associates with Shiddhirganj Police Station.

Other accused in the case are Shiddhirganj BNP President Abdul Hye Raju, and BNP activists Salauddin, Jahangir and Zaman.

In the FIR (first information report), Abu Taher stated that Giasuddin demanded Tk 10 lakh in toll from him and sent his four associates to his office on August 13, 2004 to take the money.

Taher further said he later gave the money to the former lawmaker through a cheque.

Get Prayer times from Warid Menu

Iftar 5:44 PM 4:33 AM

Sehri 5:44 PM 4:33 AM

Ramadan	Oct	Sehri	Iftar
23	6	5-44	5-44
24	7	4-33	5-43
25	8	4-34	5-42

Prayer Timing		
October 6		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:33	4:43
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:15	4:30
Maghrib	5:44	5:59
Esha	7:30	8:00

Source: Islamic Foundation



Tale of an unsung tree lover in Bogra



PHOTO: STAR

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

Brick kiln labourer Alimuddin Pramanik of Dupchachia upazila set an imitable example by planting 15,000 trees, mostly palm and date, on government land out of his caring thoughts for the environment.

Alimuddin died in 1992 at the age of 64, leaving behind a big family of 12 members. His trees are still standing on both sides of the Bogra-Naogaon road from Dupchachia to Choumuhoni, a 3km stretch. He also planted trees in the 2km area comprising Masinda, Kamargachhi and Chhatagari villages.

Alimuddin planted trees for the sake of clean environment for the next generation, his family members said, adding that the "environmentalist" day labourer planted the trees on

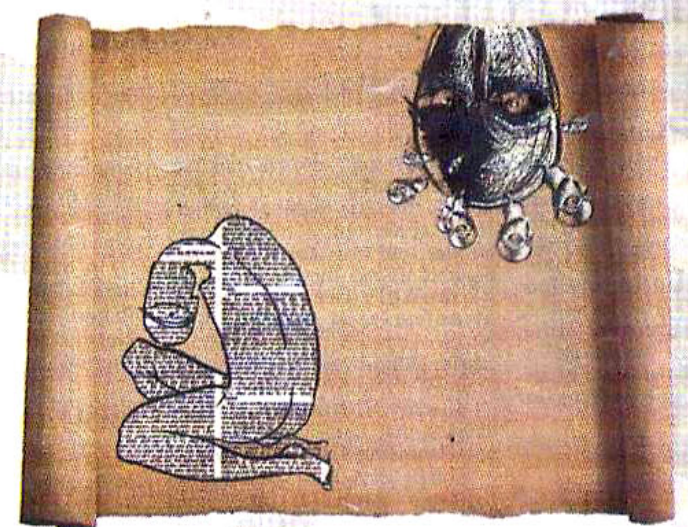
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