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## UK envoy sees attempt at unprecedented political change

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury yesterday said Bangladesh is attempting an unprecedented political and governance transformation.

He said the ambition is high though some say it is too high. "But there is a clear commitment and roadmap to the elections and a better more enduring democracy," the British envoy said while addressing the monthly luncheon meeting hosted by Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Ficci) in Dhaka.

Ficci President Mashul-Karim presided over the meeting.

Choudhury said the country is being overhauled with reforms in governance, public service and public-private sector relationships.

"There is unmatched action on corruption. In fact, there seem to be strategic action on everything

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## ACC to quiz detained Hasina today

UNB, Dhaka

Detained former prime minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina will be quizzed today in connection with a graft case involving a barge-mounted powerplant.

Sources said an investigating team would quiz her at the makeshift jail on the parliament premises sometime after 12:00pm about the Tk3-crore graft case filed by the Anti-Corruption

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## DETENTION ORDER

## SC rules in Moudud's favour

UNB, Dhaka

The Supreme Court yesterday upheld the High Court verdict that had declared illegal the detention order of former law minister Moudud Ahmed.

The apex court, however, partly granted leave-to-appeal sought by the government for hearing the High Court order that had also declared illegal the extension of the detention order under the Special Powers Act.

On September 12, the High Court, upon a habeas corpus petition, declared illegal Moudud's detention along with its extension and directed government to release him, if police does not want him in any other case.

Earlier, on April 13, the army-led joint forces arrested Moudud from his Gulshan residence and reportedly seized 16 bottles of foreign liquors and 32 cans of beer along with 220 pieces of saris of the government relief fund.

However, despite the Supreme Court order, Moudud will not be able to get release from incarceration, as he faces corruption charges, court sources said.

## AUGUST VIOLENCE 19 CU students testify to probe body

CU CORRESPONDENT

A total of 19 students yesterday gave deposition before the probe committee formed to investigate the untoward incidents occurred on Chittagong University (CU) campus on August 22.

Arts Faculty Dean Professor Mansur Uddin Ahmed, leading the four-member committee, said both male and female students gave depositions before the committee yesterday, the second and last day for the students to give deposition.

"We served letters to 15 students

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Prayer Timing		
October 29		
	Azhan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:50	5:25
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:00	4:15
Maghrib	5:32	5:35
Esha	7:15	7:45

Source: Islamic Foundation

# Saarc experts to finalise draft treaty on criminal matters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saarc legal experts have been asked to finalise the draft of the Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) treaty on criminal matters as the member states failed to reach an agreement on an earlier draft prepared by India at the recent Saarc home ministers' conference.

Formation of the regional police forum, Saarcpol, in the style of Europol, has also been deferred as the member states opined that more work needs to be done in this regard.

"We need to examine further before taking any decision regarding the MLA treaty because there are many aspects including huge funding," LGRD Adviser Anwarul Iqbal told reporters at a briefing at

the LGRD ministry yesterday.

Anwar led the Bangladesh delegation at the second home minister-level meeting during October 23-26 in New Delhi.

At their meeting on October 24 the Saarc home secretaries decided to postpone signing of the MLA treaty, an agreement aiming at synchronising legal frameworks to tackle cross-border crimes.

"The home secretaries thought that they did not get enough time to examine the draft treaty prepared by India," said Home Secretary Abdul Karim, who was on the nine-member Bangladesh delegation that returned home Saturday.

On receipt of the inputs on the draft, the Saarc Secretariat will compile them and then the legal experts will meet in Colombo in

April 2008 to finalise the treaty.

Bangladesh's opinion on the draft distributed among the member states before the meeting is almost ready awaiting some final work.

The home ministers' conference discussed various issues, including drugs and human trafficking, and reviewed progress made by the Saarc Drug Offence Monitoring and the Saarc Terrorist Offence Monitoring desks.

"The member states reiterated last year's statement that the desks are not effective," said Anwarul Iqbal, adding that the desks will be made effective and will be brought under a regional information network so that the member states get necessary information easily.

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## 21,400 bottles of local liquor seized in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday recovered 21,400 bottles of locally made liquor and arrested 13 including two women customers from Uttar Badda in the capital.

The arrestees are Lipton, 25, Sharif, 23, Helal Mia, 24, Shilpi Begum, 42, Hamida Begum, 37, Asadul Islam, 23, Md Hossain 22, Anwar Hossain, 21, Kartik Chandra, 26, Hossain, 18, Asadul, 18, Noor Uddin, 32, and Gafur, 45.

A police team led by Assistant Commissioner of Gulshan zone police Shihab Uddin raided LH Company at Hossain Market in Uttar Badda at 6:00am and recovered the liquor after a six-hour drive.

Of the recovered bottles, 1,000 are of 500ml and the rest 250ml.

Two owners of the company are absconding.

Officer-in-charge of Badda Police Station Mominul Ahsan told The Daily Star that the company was selling more liquor than they were permitted under licence.

The company was also selling liquors to unauthorised people, Ahsan added.

A case has been filed with Badda Police Station.

## MALAYSIA

## Returnees didn't get their money back

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladeshi workers who returned from Malaysia after being deceived by their employers are facing problems in getting back their money from recruiting agents.

The returnees said Expatriates' Welfare Secretary Abdul Matin Chowdhury during his visit to Malaysia promised them that he would make arrangements for refunding their money ranging from Tk 2.3 to Tk 2.5 lakh after they return to Bangladesh.

A total of 57 returnees have so far received cheques of Tk 84,000 each while four others received cheques of Tk 84,000 and Tk 80,000 in cash from the recruiting agency.

One of the workers died in Malaysia and 80 others will return to Bangladesh on Monday.

The DG of the Bureau of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## Rajuk demolishes 70 shops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Rajdhani Unnayan Katipakkha (Rajuk) yesterday demolished 70 shops of two shopping complexes owned by former BNP lawmaker Giasuddin at Shimrail intersection in Narayanganj for violating Rajuk rules.

The shops were constructed on the ground floor of the two shopping complexes meant for car parking.

The drive led by Emdadul Dastagir, first class magistrate of Rajuk, continued from 11:00am to 5:00pm.

Rajuk filed a case three months ago for constructing the shops without its permission.

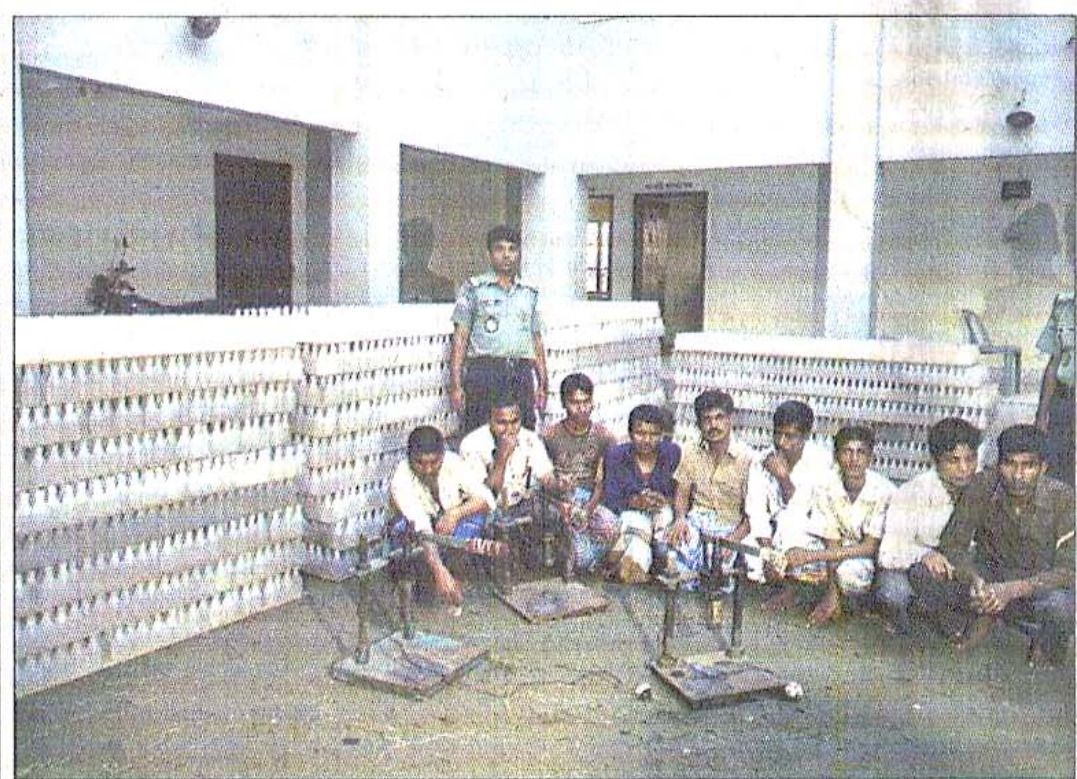


PHOTO: STAR

Police seized two truckloads of local liquor in 21,400 bottles at Uttar Badda in the capital yesterday and arrested nine people in this connection. The photo was taken at Badda Police Station.

# SA media leaders talk of greater duty, freedom

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent media experts of the South Asian nations at a conference in the capital yesterday called for greater responsibilities of journalists, and for ensuring their protection to strengthen democracy, the freedom of expression, and upholding of human rights.

Journalists need to be better equipped to cope with the challenges of covering armed conflicts and violence, and need to stop glamourising violence that might be commercially beneficial for the media, but harmful for the victims, they observed.

Speaking as the chief guest, Law and Information Adviser Mainul Hossain, stressed on the need for earnest cooperation and promo-

tion of free flow of information across borders within the Saarc region, for rapid development and lasting peace.

The two-day Senior Editors' Conference 2007 on Media Reporting -- Armed Conflict and Violence, began at Sheraton Hotel yesterday with the participation of 22 senior editors and columnists from the member countries of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc).

The Department of Mass Communication and Journalism of Dhaka University, Press Institute of Bangladesh, and the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) jointly organised the event.

Some discussants said framing laws to protect journalists from the hands of vested interest groups

involved in illegal trades, insurgents, and even from state machinery is important, while some others felt that a society that ensures rule of law does not need any law of privilege to protect journalists.

The South Asian media leaders said there should be authentic media watchdogs playing manifold roles in improving the media, including playing a role in ensuring transparency and accountability.

Recalling previous agreements among the Saarc leaders on promotion of cross-border free flow of information, Information Adviser Mainul Hossain at the inaugural session said it is important to analyse, without being emotional, how much of those plans have been materialised so far.

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## YABA BUSINESS

## 2 BNP leaders' son, daughter involved

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers have mounted watch on two top BNP leaders' children, who are allegedly involved in Yaba trade for long, said Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) after quizzing some arrested drug dealers.

Akhter Hamid Pabon, son of BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain, is allegedly involved in Yaba business, said a Rab official asking not to be named.

The elite force member said arrested drug baron Amin Huda and three of the six youths of well-off families also mentioned the name of the daughter of an influential minister of the immediate past BNP-led alliance government.

The former minister's daughter along with her husband is reported

to have run Yaba trade, he added.

The media has also carried out reports on the involvement of Pabon and a former minister's daughter in this connection.

Rab sources said Pabon is one of the leading Yaba dealers in the country. He is accused in at least a dozen criminal cases and blamed for other offences including arms and drug dealing, land grabbing and extortion.

He was arrested in March 2005 in an attempted murder case and in June 2006 in a carjacking case.

The Rab yesterday evening started interrogating Huda and his associate Ahsanul Haque Hasan at the Task Force for Interrogation (TFI) cell.

"We are hopeful that identities of the godfathers of Yaba smuggling

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## Fresh clashes kill 27 in Lanka

Tigers had inside information for air base attack

AFP, Colombo

At least 27 Tamil Tiger rebels and soldiers have been killed in clashes in northern Sri Lanka, the defence ministry said yesterday.

The military said it killed four rebels during clashes across the northern defence lines in Jaffna early Sunday.

Elsewhere, security forces said they had killed 20 Tamil Tiger rebels and injured 11 in fighting across northern areas in the past 24 hours, the ministry said, while placing its own troop losses at three dead.

There was no immediate comment from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, who have been fighting for an independent homeland for minority Tamils from the majority Sinhalese community.

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## 15 Kurdish rebels die in Turkey clashes

AP, Ankara

Turkish troops killed 15 Kurdish guerrillas in fighting yesterday far from the increasingly tense Iraq border region where some of the separatists have sought refuge, a news report said.

Turkey's prime minister on Sunday called for unity between Turks and Kurds, and reiterated his government's determination to fight Iraq-based separatist Kurdish rebels.

"As long as we are firmly bound together, the treacherous separatist terrorist attacks will never reach their goal," Recep Tayyip Erdogan said in a message ahead of Oct. 29 celebrations marking the 84th anniversary of the Turkish republic.

"I want to declare this one more time: The struggle we lead against the separatist terrorism that aims

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# US-led forces kill 80 Taliban rebels

AFP, Kabul

Around 80 Taliban fighters were killed when they tried to ambush a patrol of Afghan and international soldiers in the south of Afghanistan, the US-led coalition said yesterday.

The coalition said the troops were forced to call in air support when they were ambushed Saturday in the highly volatile province of Helmand.

"The combined patrol immediately returned fire, manoeuvred, and employed close air support, resulting in almost seven dozen Taliban fighters killed during a six-hour engagement," it said in a statement.

The attackers fled after the clash in the town of Musa Qala, which has been held by the Taliban since February. The statement made no reference to any coalition or civil-

ian casualties.

However, the Afghan commander for Helmand told AFP no troops were killed.

"Our initial assessment is that over 73 Taliban were killed in the direct fire and air bombing," said Afghan general Mohaidin Ghorji.

"The attacks took place at different hours of the day yesterday in different locations. There have been no casualties to civilians and our forces."

International military forces helped to remove the extremist Taliban from government in late 2001 and are fighting the insurgency led by the hardline group and joined by other radical factions.

Much of the opium that funds the insurgency grows in Helmand, and last month about 2,500 Nato and Afghan troops launched a new

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## Firm plans mobile CNG stations to ease rush

JASIM UDDIN KHAN

A private firm has come up with an innovative idea of installing portable CNG filling stations that would ease the acute congestions at existing CNG filling stations throughout the country.

Initially, the firm, Madina CNG Filling Station, sought government approval for the installation of two portable filling units at a cost of Tk 3.5 crore each in Dhaka.

The firm is capable of importing and implementing the project within two months after getting the approval, said sources at Madina CNG Filling Station.

Currently, a CNG-run vehicle has to wait for hours in line at a conventional CNG filling station

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PHOTO: COURTESY

Mobile CNG filling stations, like the one in the picture, could be on the streets of Dhaka shortly, reducing the long queues of CNG-run vehicles at refuelling stations. The private firm that came up with the idea is waiting for the government's approval.