



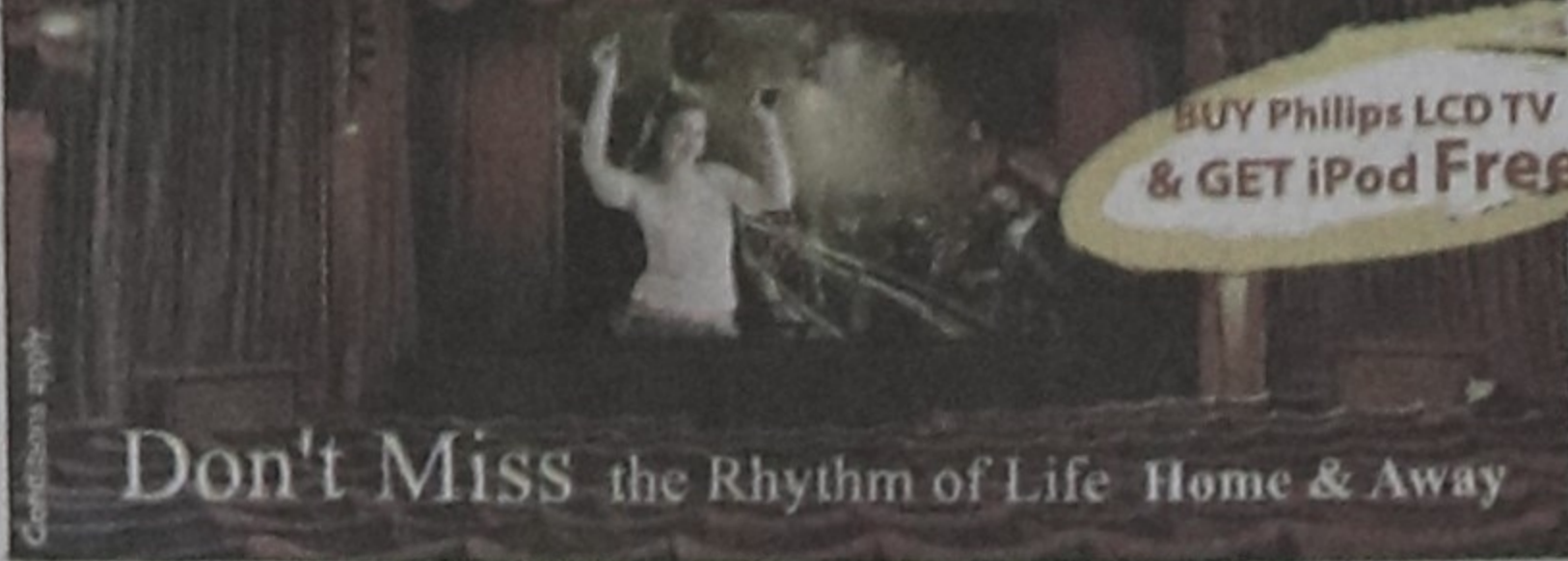
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**Strengthen democracy for continued US support**  
Says Crowley

Congressman Joseph Crowley, co-chair of the US Congressional Bangladesh Caucus, has stressed the need for strengthening democracy in Bangladesh through a free, fair and transparent election for receiving continued US support. He was speaking at a meeting at the Capitol Hill in Washington DC on Wednesday morning, said a press release issued by the Bangladesh embassy in Washington yesterday. Referring to the ongoing anti-corruption drive, he stressed the need for maintaining due process of law during trials of the arrested leaders. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson mentioned about the vastness of

**CA urges united efforts to face challenges for Muslim Ummah**

OIC Summit opens

UNB, Dakar

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed has called for addressing the challenges facing the Muslim Ummah unitedly, urgently and effectively. "We face an attempt to undermine the message of peace brought to humanity by Prophet Muhammad (SM). This has to be dealt with immediately and unitedly," he said while giving vote of thanks on behalf of the Asian group in the opening session of the 11th summit of the Organisation of

Islamic Conference (OIC) at King Fahad Complex here yesterday. "The issues of our own times--the problems of ending occupation, expanding the welfare of our peoples, protection of environment, preservation of global peace and stability--must be resolved with unity, solidarity and strength," he said. The CA, citing from Sura As-Saff of the holy Quran, said: "Allah loves those who fight in His cause united in one column, like the bricks in one wall." He appreciated the preparation

of a report on "Islamophobia", enhancing intra-OIC trade, upholding the image of Islam, preserving the heritage of Muslim Ummah, and strengthening the Muslims' capacity in science and technology and in the eradication of poverty. At the outset of the two-day conference, Senegal was elected chairman of the 11th summit of the OIC and took over the leadership from outgoing chair Malaysia. Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade addressed the

**MIG-29 CASE Hearing on Hasina's plea concludes**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The hearing on detained Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina's application for staying the High Court verdict that revived the MIG-29 scam case filed against her concluded yesterday at the Supreme Court. The full bench of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, headed by Chief Justice Mohammad Ruhul Amin, could deliver judgment any day since it has completed hearing from counsels of Hasina and the state. Former attorney general Mahmudul Islam and barrister Shafique Ahmed moved for Hasina's appeal in the apex court while Additional Attorney General Mansur Habib moved for the government.



Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed during the opening session of the 11th OIC Summit held in Senegalese capital Dakar yesterday gives vote of thanks on behalf of the Asian group.

**Barge-mount plant case hearing deferred**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The hearing on charge framing against Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina in the barge-mounted power plant graft case was deferred till March 17 as she could not appear at the court yesterday due to illness. Judge Firoz Alam of Special Court-1, set up at MP hostel on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises, ordered the adjournment following a prayer by the defence arguing that the proceedings should not go on without the detained AL chief.

**Indian customs bar rice exports despite Delhi's approval**

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Indian customs at Petrapole did not allow lorries loaded with rice exported to Bangladesh at \$510 per tonne to cross the border despite the Indian government's approval for the export. These lorries arrived at the border until March 6 and have been stranded there although their bills of entries were submitted to the Indian customs. On March 5, the Indian government imposed a fresh restriction on exporting rice to Bangladesh at

**DMC students take to street to protest power outage**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several hundred students of Fazle Rabbi Hall of Dhaka Medical College (DMC) blockaded the city's Bakshi Bazar intersection for about three hours last night protesting frequent power cuts. There was no power at their dormitory from 6:00pm to 11:30pm. They took to the streets around 9:00pm and stayed there until 12:00am. During the demonstration, the students set fire to tyres on the street and blocked all four roads of



Haphazardly parked three-wheelers and cars and snack hawkers' occupation of a part of the street in front of Willes Little Flower School in Kakrail create tailbacks yesterday. Most educational institutions in the capital do not have their own car park.

**NGO SWINDLING Tk 22 lakh seized from house in Natore**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) recovered Tk 22 lakh in cash and ornaments worth Tk 70,000 from the house of an NGO director's relative in Bharatmaria village in Puthia, Rajshahi yesterday. Meanwhile, NGO victims in Natore demanded arrest of the deputy commissioner and social welfare officials for "helping" the frauds in exchange of bribes. Acting on a tip off, a Rab team raided the house of Aroz Mollah, 55, father-in-law of Joyntal Sheikh, director of Probhati Grameen Unnayan Sangstha, and found Tk 14.5 lakh in a trunk. Following Aroz's confession, the elite force dug out a polythene-sack full of money and gold ornaments worth Tk 70,000 at his cowshed, said Rab sources.

Probhati officials in recent NGO scam in Natore disappeared with around Tk 100 crore from 2.5 lakh members. Several hundred NGO victims under the banner 'Protarok NGO Birodhi Sangram Committee' staged a demonstration at Natore Bar Bhaban auditorium yesterday demanding arrest of Natore Deputy Commissioner SM Ehsan Kabir in seven days. They said in a news conference the DC and other government officials including the Sadar upazila nirbahi officer and some policemen patronised the fraud NGOs in exchange of huge bribes. The victims also demanded arrest of the five suspended Social Welfare Office staffs in addition to the fraud NGO officials. The agitators announced a

**Import of 20,000 MT Myanmar rice okayed**

UNB, Dhaka

The Advisers' Committee on Public Purchase yesterday approved two tender proposals for the import of 20,000 metric tons of non-boiled (atap) rice from Myanmar as part of the government's bid to control soaring rice prices. The food and disaster management ministry will import the rice to be supplied by two private firms of Myanmar. Each firm will supply 10,000 tonnes of rice at US\$ 395.50 per tonne. Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul

**Hannan demands Khaleda's release before Mar 26**

UNB, Dhaka

Adviser to BNP Chairperson Brig Gen (ret'd) Hannan Shah yesterday demanded release of party chairperson Khaleda Zia and her two sons before the Independence Day as a mark of respect to late president Ziaur Rahman. Talking to reporters at his New DOHS home, Hannan said since Ziaur Rahman proclaimed independence and the government has failed to prove any allegation against her and her sons in the last one year, they should be released before March 26. "We hope we'll get them

**Airstrike, rocket fire end Gaza lull**

AFP, Gaza Strip

Israeli warplanes hit Hamas-run Gaza yesterday after militants rattled the Jewish state with rocket fire, ending a five-day lull and threatening efforts to push forward Middle East peace talks. The violence flared within hours of an Israeli operation on Wednesday in the West Bank town of Bethlehem where undercover special forces killed four Palestinian militants, including two senior commanders. Militants in the Hamas-run territory fired a dozen rockets into the Jewish state during the night, Israeli warplanes struck targets in northern Gaza early in the day and gunmen fired another dozen rockets afterward, according to the army and the militant groups. There were no casualties, but the renewed tit-for-tat attacks put at risk international efforts to broker a more permanent deal to end the violence and the isolation around the impoverished territory.

They also come a day before the Israelis and Palestinians are to meet with a US general to resume peace talks that Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas suspended amid a week of strikes in Gaza that left more than 130 people dead. In a rare harshly-worded statement, the Palestinian presidency accused Israel of "barbaric crimes." "These barbaric crimes reveal the true face of Israel, which speaks loudly about peace and security all the while committing murders and executions against our people," it said. But Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak vowed to keep hitting militants. "Yesterday in Bethlehem we proved again that Israel will pursue and hit all assassins with blood on their hands. No matter how much time has passed, Israel will be waiting for them," he said. And the Jewish state said it held Hamas, which violently seized

**Tigers play final ODI today**

SPORTS REPORTER

All-rounder Forhad Reza is set to replace left-arm spinner Mosharraf Hossain as Bangladesh go for further damage limitation today in the third and final one-day international after conceding the series 2-0 to the visiting South Africans. The match will be telecast live on BTV and NEO Sports from 9:30am from the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. Mosharraf will give away his

**Sector commanders denied permission for convention**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sector Commanders' Forum (SCF) postponed the national convention it planned for tomorrow as the government yesterday refused them the permission to hold the gathering. Originally scheduled for December 13 last year, the programme seeking to assemble freedom fighters and pro-Liberation War organisations was postponed before on December 10.

The organisers then claimed they had to call it off since the government go-ahead came at the last moment. A platform of the commanders, who led the war against occupying Pakistan forces in 11 sectors, the SCF later rescheduled the event to be held on March 15 at the city's Bangladesh-China Friendship Convention Centre. The war heroes first declared they would hold a national convention to mobilise public support in

demanding trial of the war criminals in August last year. Briefing reporters at the police headquarters, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Naim Ahmed yesterday said, "Law and order might deteriorate if the permission was given to hold the convention." Besides, he alleged, there was discrepancy between the invitations and the letter seeking permission.

**Prayer Timing**

March 14		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-05	5-40
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-12	6-15
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

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