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**Bangladesh may lead int'l stabilising force for Somalia**  
UN chief tells CA

UNB, New York

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has said Bangladesh may become the lead country of the proposed international stabilising force for Somalia.

The UN chief expressed the view during a meeting with Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at his office at the UN headquarters on Friday.

Ban Ki-moon said details of the international stabilising force for Somalia will be discussed during his expected visit to Bangladesh on November 1. He also appreciated the role of Bangladeshi peacekeepers in UN missions.

UN millennium development goals (MDGs), food security, upcoming election in Bangladesh, climate change and socioeconomic progress were discussed.

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**Obaidul Qader barred from going abroad**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) Joint Secretary General Obaidul Qader was barred by immigration officials at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) yesterday from leaving the country for India for medical treatment.

Qader was released on September 5 after securing bail on medical grounds from the High Court (HC) in all five cases against him.

The AL leader who spent around 18 months in detention had been undergoing treatment at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

AL sources said Qader, scheduled to leave for New Delhi via Kolkata by a Jet Airways flight at 9:20am, reached the VIP lounge at the ZIA at 7:45am.

When he proceeded towards the airport immigration after collecting the boarding card, immigration officers barred him from boarding.

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**Rejoinder, our reply**

In response to a report titled 'Illegal branches of university bid to attract admission seekers despite ban' published by The Daily Star on September 20, three educational institutes claimed that the news has affected their reputation.

In a statement, International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC) said it has only one outer campus in Dhaka with the official approval of education ministry.

"With due respect to the government's decision to close down outer campuses, the IIUC has appealed for reconsideration of their decision," the statement of IIUC said.

Another statement, from Northern University, Bangladesh, claimed there is no ban on the Northern University Bangladesh on having outer campuses.

"Outer campuses of this university have been permitted by the honourable supreme court to continue their normal activities," the Northern University statement stated.

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## Party registration process hits snag

BNP still in dilemma as its allies object to registration rules barring religion-based parties

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commission's (EC) efforts to ensure registration of the political parties before the December 18 polls have run into difficulties with Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) of the BNP-led alliance opposing some of the criteria.

Despite the EC's latest move to ease the registration procedure, BNP continues to be in a quandary over the issue for its allies' strong objections to the conditions that restrict registration of the religion-based organisations, sources in the four-party alliance said.

It was the opposition of Jamaat

and IOJ that led to retreat from Tuesday's announcement that BNP would get registered on meeting the criteria stipulated in the revised Representation of the People Order (RPO), added the sources.

Against this backdrop, secretaries general of the four parties might meet today to decide on the next course of action.

The uncertainty over registration of the major political parties before the national election might go only if BNP manages to make Jamaat and IOJ change their mind.

According to the EC's new proposals unveiled last week, the political parties will not have to

organise national councils to amend their constitutions to meet the criteria for registration, now mandatory for the parties seeking election to parliament.

Those unable to hold councils at this time can still register by amending their constitutions provisionally. However, they must have the changes ratified at their national councils within six months since the first sitting of the ninth parliament.

Awami League (AL), Jatiya Party and some other political parties have already agreed with the proposals and announced they would apply for registration after Eid.

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PHOTO: STAR

Muslim devotees listen to the sermon being delivered by a cleric at the Baitul Mukarram national mosque in the capital last night on the occasion of Lailatul Qadr.

**Lailatul Qadr observed**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muslims across the country observed the holy Lailatul Qadr last night.

The holy Quran was revealed on this night to show the mankind the path of worldly and eternal emancipation.

Special prayers were offered at all mosques, seeking blessings of Allah for continued peace and progress of the Muslim Ummah. Devotees visited the graves of their near and dear ones and offered munajat (prayer) for the salvation of the departed souls.

They also joined milad, Quranic khawani and religious discussions at mosques and their houses.

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, in separate messages, greeted the Muslims across the world and sought divine blessings for peace and progress of the country.

Newspapers published special articles, while the state-run Bangladesh Television and private TV channels aired special programmes highlighting the significance of Lailatul Qadr.

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## Obama, McCain spar over Iraq war, taxes

AP, Oxford

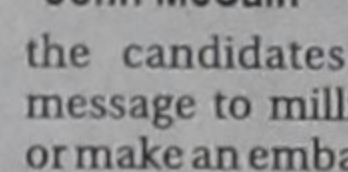
In a faceoff that returned again and again to judgment, John McCain portrayed himself as a battle-tested elder running

against a naive rookie, while Barack Obama suggested the Republican is a hothead who made the wrong choices on the Iraq war, corporate taxes and more.

Now they take the themes from an intense first debate back to the campaign trail, looking for some edge in a tight presidential race. With 38 days left, McCain is headed for Washington and the dispute over a Wall Street bailout, while



Barack Obama



John McCain

Obama plans to visit Republican-leaning states where the Democrat thinks he can make inroads.

The debate presented a huge opportunity for the candidates to deliver their message to millions of Americans or make an embarrassing blunder.

Interest in Friday's debate was amplified by suspense about whether it would even take place. McCain had said he wouldn't take part unless the financial crisis was resolved, then reversed course and decided at the last minute to participate without a deal.

**Khaleda to start party activities from new office after Eid**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday said she would sit in her new office at Banani after Eid to formally resume party activities.

Talking to reporters after iftar yesterday, she said she would talk to party and alliance leaders about election strategies and decide when to start campaigns for the elections.

"Today [Saturday] I just came here for iftar and I will not say anything now. Since the election is nearing, I will meet you again and I will talk a lot then," she told reporters at the Jatiya Press Club auditorium after an iftar party jointly organised there by factions of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ).

A smiling Khaleda also conveyed Eid greetings to people.

Leaders of BNP-led four-party alliance, a number of editors of

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**AL starts work to amend party constitution**

Says Motia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) has started its work to amend the party constitution and is expected to get the amendment approved by a meeting of its working committee to be held after AL President Sheikh Hasina returns home.

After approval of the amendment, the party will submit it to the Election Commission (EC).

"We have started work for preparing a draft to amend the party constitution and it will be finally approved by the working committee after the party chief returns home," AL Presidium member Motia Chowdhury told The Daily Star last night.

"We shall approve the minor amendments to our party constitution through the working committee as no decision can be made in

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PHOTO: STAR

Acids are being sold openly at a small chemical store in Tantibazar of Old Dhaka. Poor government monitoring leads to selling of acids to unlicensed customers. Taking the advantage many criminals buy acid and use it in heinous criminal activities.

**Pay Tk 30, buy a pound of acid**  
Selling continues freely despite stringent law

KAILASH SARKAR and MAHBUBA ZANNAT

Acids are sold freely at the city's Tantibazar, only a quarter of a kilometre away from Deputy Commissioner's (DC) office which is responsible for controlling production, transport, storage, usage and sale of acids.

Taking advantage of the authorities' inactivity, the acid market is running rampant increasing incidents of acid crimes in the country.

"You only have to pay Tk 30 for a pound of sulphuric acid and Tk 40 for a pound of nitric acid. As you have not brought any bottle, you can take this jar for Tk 200," said an acid seller of Gopalnagar in Tantibazar showing a little jar capable of containing five pounds of sulphuric acid.

He said the price of acid is not fixed and they charge as

much as they can from people. He does not face any problem selling acids to those who do not have a licence to use acids or buy acids as the government monitoring is poor.

Sources said like Tantibazar, acids are also sold at Armanitola and Hatkhola in the city and a number of places in the country. Neither a licence nor cash memos are necessary to buy acids from any market.

The Daily Star correspondents went to several acid markets in Old Dhaka and found traders selling the dangerous chemicals.

"You just ask the traders at Gopalnagar, they will provide you with acid as you require," said Gopal of a jewellery shop at Tantibazar.

Gopal, busy cleansing a silver ornament at a tiny shop, said he uses nitric acid to melt gold but since he only needs

very small amount of the acid, he did not bother to get a licence, which is mandatory for acid users as per the Acid Control Act, 2002.

"We just collect acids from those who sell retail," he added. Like Gopal, a significant number of jewellery-shop owners, especially the small ones, are using and collecting acids this way.

A mobile court led by a magistrate raided the area six months ago and since then nobody went there, said Kazi Abdul Hamid of Hasan Chemicals adding the raid was just after he renewed his licence.

"I do not have any licence for selling acids so I do not have acids to sell. But if you want I can manage it for you," said Mohammad Fazlul Haque of Ekata Chemicals at Armanitola.

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**Govt urged to finalise Tk 560cr MRP project**  
18 months left to meet int'l deadline

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

With only 18 months left for Bangladesh to meet an international deadline, the Department of Immigration and Passport has recently requested the government to immediately finalise the five-year project for switching over to machine-readable passports (MRP) and visas.

A total of 1.5 crore machine-readable passports are expected to start being issued by the end of next year under the Tk 560 crore project.

The department last week sent the tender schedule of the project to the home ministry for approval.

The proposal says the winner of the bid will have to ensure printing of 20,000 passports every month with their own logistics, and must develop local expertise during the project period.

It also sent a separate proposal

requesting the government to approve the project budget without delay.

Although officials hope to start issuing machine-readable passports (MRP) and visas (MRV) by the end of 2009, they said it largely depends on the sincerity of the government.

Once the MRPs are introduced the present primitive handwritten passports, for which Bangladeshi travellers quite often face unwarranted hassles at international airports, will be phased out, the officials added.

They also said unlike the previous two attempts the fresh project will not fizzle out halfway.

"It's a do or die situation since we have to comply with the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) April 1, 2010 deadline for introducing the

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**Bomb blast in Delhi market: Two dead**

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

A bomb blast at a crowded flower market in South Delhi yesterday afternoon killed a 13-year-old boy and an unidentified 60-year-old man and injured 17 others, seven of them seriously.

The blast at Mehrauli locality came two weeks after a string of explosions set off by suspected militants that left 24 people dead and over 100 injured in another South Delhi area of Jamia Nagar.

Police said the boy was killed on the spot when he picked up a tiffin box in which the bomb was kept. The unidentified man succumbed to his injuries at a hospital later on.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the blast.

Police quoting witnesses said two young men on a motorbike dropped the black box in the middle of the road in Mehrauli, which has a mixed population of Hindus and Muslims.

The box exploded after it was picked up by the teenaged boy who shouted at the riders that they had left it behind, Deputy Commissioner HS Dhaliwal said.

Blood and shattered glass littered the street and people walked in bloodstained shirts as the explosion created chaos in the market filled with weekend shoppers.

Police cordoned off the area as fire engines and ambulances rushed to the scene.

Ammonium Nitrate was used in the bomb, officials said adding the packing of explosive was very loose thus making it a low-intensity explosion.

The Indian Mujahideen group had claimed responsibility for bombings in Jaipur, Ahmedabad and Delhi between May and September this year that killed a total of 130 people.

News agency AFP quoting officials reported that check posts

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**সদস্য পরিচালন**

ইদের হুজিৎ আপাত পৃষ্ঠিকার জন্য সাইট আবেদন  
প্রতিদিন সেমিনার অনুষ্ঠিত হইবে। আপনি স্বাভাবিক আশ্রিত।

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At Cox's Bazar

কুমিল্লার বর্তমান চিত্র

**ডাইম শেয়ার কি?**

সম্মান, উপভোগ ও অর্থ উপার্জন সব এক সাথে

পরিণত মালিক হিসেবে সম্মান অর্জন করা  
আপনি এবং আপনার পরিবার নিয়ে বিশ্বাসের হোটেলের অর্থবাহন রাখার সুযোগ

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