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# The Daily Star

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Today's issue 24 pages

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## Contrast in RPO stances

With only eight days remaining for political parties to get registered with the Election Commission (EC) for contesting in the December 18 parliamentary election, the largest two parties of the country, Awami League and BNP, took opposing stands on the

matter yesterday.

AL decided to collect the registration form today while BNP reiterated its demand for scrapping the newly framed electoral laws including the one demanding parties' mandatory registrations.

Meanwhile, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday announced that political parties willing to participate the poll must apply to the EC for registration by October 15, saying the deadline will not be extended, and no more

amendment will be brought to the Representation of People Order (RPO).

He also said the EC is not worried about any political party's hard line, as he has information that all major parties are 'actually' preparing to be registered.

## AL to disband fronts, pick EC form today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) is ready to sever links with all front and associate organisations and foreign chapters in a bid to get registered with the Election Commission (EC) and will collect the registration form today.

The Central Working Committee of the AL will sit Saturday to bring amendments in the party constitution for registration.

But before that the AL will hold a meeting with the chief election commissioner and two other commissioners today at the EC Secretariat at 11:00am.

The issue of severing links with the associate organisations was discussed elaborately at a meeting of the AL Presidium at acting party

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## Scrap RPO first, reiterates BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP will not contest in the election if the government fails to meet its five-point charter of demands including the demands for scrapping the amendments brought to the Representation of People Order (RPO), and total lifting of the emergency.

The party standing committee yesterday in a meeting also decided to sit for a dialogue with the military backed caretaker government, if the party is invited.

Adviser to the Government Anwarul Iqbal told The Daily Star last night that they wanted to have the dialogue with BNP at 10:00am today but the

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## Emergency for voters' security, no bar to polls

Says Hossain Zillur after 4 advisers meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is contemplating continuing with the state of emergency until the general election to ensure voters' security and thwart poll violence, Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman yesterday said.

He said the emergency rules would not be a bar to electioneering. Zillur was talking to reporters after a meeting of four advisers at the communications ministry.

He said the emergency rules have already been relaxed to such an extent that it exists only in name.

Even then if there is any obstacle to election campaigns, the government will take further steps to

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## SCRAPPING POLL RESULTS EC unaware of its inherent power

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commission (EC) seems unaware of its inherent power to cancel election results on grounds of gross irregularities in the polls.

According to a landmark verdict of the Supreme Court (SC), the EC has this inherent power. In a few other judgments, the apex court also explained the EC's inherent power to ensure free and fair elections.

But Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda on Monday said the commission does not have the jurisdiction to do that.

"We cannot cancel election results sent by returning officers," Huda replied to a query at a press briefing.

Election Commissioner

Muhammed Sohel Hussain echoed him and said it is the election tribunals that would decide post-election disputes.

Interestingly, erstwhile CEC Justice MA Aziz also came up with the same view in April 2006 when he said the EC is bound to publish official gazettes of poll results sent by returning officers.

Justice Aziz termed this task of publishing election results a routine work of the commission which he compared to a postbox.

But the Appellate Division of the SC explained the inherent powers of the EC regarding cancellation of election results in the Noor Hossain vs Nazrul Islam case in 2000.

"We cannot but reiterate that if there was contemporaneous

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## Upazila poll dates won't be deferred

Says CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amidst the growing demand from political parties for deferring upazila parishad polls scheduled for December 24 and 28, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday ruled out any possibility of meeting the demand.

"We are not re-thinking about the upazila election dates," Huda told reporters emerging from a meeting of the Election Commission that discussed preparations for upazila polls.

Replying to a question, the CEC said the political parties must apply for registration with the commission within October 15 for contesting the upcoming parliamentary polls to be held on December 18.

He said the Election Commission will not extend the timeframe for party registration as

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## Taskforce formed to check import of unregistered powdered milk

UNB, Dhaka

An eight-member taskforce has been formed to monitor how powdered milk of several Chinese companies is being imported or marketed here without registration.

The taskforce, headed by Additional Secretary of the Commerce Ministry Golam Mostakin, has been asked to submit reports with recommendations to the ministry by 15 days, according to a handout.

It also said the taskforce will identify which brands of imported powdered milk from China are flooding the local markets without registration and who are the importers.

The taskforce has also been asked to identify whether the imported powdered milk was or is being unloaded on the basis of examined certificates prescribed in the present import policy.

If irregularities are found during monitoring, the taskforce will put forward recommendations to the authorities concerned about future

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## Global financial crisis deepens

Nationalisations, rescues pile up

AFP, Paris

International finance chaos deepened Tuesday as Russia set up a huge rescue package, Iceland was forced to nationalise another bank and markets enduring another volatile helter-skelter.

Russia also agreed to negotiate a four billion euro (5.4 billion dollar) emergency loan to Iceland, which is battling against the whole country going bankrupt.

While European banks frantically sought dollars at exorbitant interest rates, an emergency meeting of EU finance ministers said they would coordinate their response to the financial crisis.

Ministers also agreed to increase a bank deposit guarantee ceiling to 50,000 euros from 30,000 euros -- short of earlier expectations of a 100,000 euro savings guarantee.

In Russia, President Dmitry Medvedev promised up to 36 billion dollars in credit to support its

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banks, telling an emergency meeting of ministers and bankers that loans could last for up to five years.

It was Russia's biggest move to stabilise the financial system after huge falls paralysed the Moscow stock market for several days.

Iceland's central bank said it expected Russia to grant a four billion euro emergency loan and that negotiations would start in a few days.

Prime Minister Geir Haarde said representatives would leave for Moscow on Tuesday or Wednesday to discuss conditions. Russia takes a "positive view" of the Icelandic request, Russia's Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin said.

Iceland, where the economy has been frozen by debt and the credit crunch, nationalised second biggest bank, Landsbanki, and gave its biggest bank Kaupthing a 500-million-euro (678-million-dollar) loan. Glitnir bank, the third largest, was nationalised last week.



Finding no other work, Liton, 25, has taken up a barber's life. He sets up his makeshift barbershop under roadside trees. The picture was taken at Amin Bazar yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## 30 HC benches reconstituted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirty benches of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court were reconstituted yesterday.

This was done at the order of Chief Justice (CJ) MM Ruhul Amin. Activities of the benches will start on October 12.

According to the SC rules, the CJ holds the authority to change authorisation of any bench or reconstitute any bench. If he wants, he can do it anytime. But the CJ usually changes the authorisation of any bench or reconstitutes the benches at the end of the annual vacation.

The court reopened on Sunday.

## Deal signed to skip double taxation

Dhaka, Yangon also discuss road link, sea border, Rohingya refugees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and Myanmar yesterday signed an agreement to avoid double taxation, a barrier to boosting trade between the two neighbouring countries.

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed and Myanmar's Vice-senior General Maung Aye signed the deal on the first day of bilateral

talks between the two nations.

Aye, Myanmar junta's second-in-command, who arrived in Dhaka yesterday morning on a three-day visit is leading a 55-member delegation that includes seven key ministers and business leaders.

Important issues including direct road link between the two countries, demarcation of mari-

time boundary, repatriation from Myanmar and reimport of Rohingya refugees were discussed during the inaugural talks at the CA's office.

"The chief adviser raised the issues during the talks and requested his counterpart to expedite the process to resolve those," Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed

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## Giant leap in bilateral ties

CA says about Myanmar leader's visit

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed has said his government firmly believes that Bangladesh visit of Vice-Chairman of the ruling State Peace and Development Council of Myanmar General Maung Aye will generate a giant leap in bilateral relations of the two countries.

"The strategic location of Bangladesh grants us a legitimate claim to act as a bridge between South and Southeast Asia, and we solicit extended cooperation from

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## BARAPUKURIA GRAFT CASE

## Saifur asked to go to lower court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday asked former BNP minister M Saifur Rahman to appear before trial court within four weeks to face Barapukuria coal mine graft case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

After hearing a petition filed by Saifur, a vacation bench of the HC comprising Justice AKM Fazlur Rahman and Justice Sheikh Abdul Awal also directed the government not to harass or arrest the peti-

tioner within this period in this case.

Another vacation bench of the HC granted ad-interim bail for six months to former BNP lawmaker Nazimuddin Alam (Bhola-4) in a criminal case filed with Ramna Police Station on charges of obstructing public safety.

Saifur appeared before the HC bench yesterday as Metropolitan Sessions Judge Md Azizul Haque on Monday issued arrest warrants against nine accused including

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## Telenor defends stake in GP

Md HASAN

Norwegian telecom heavyweight Telenor has reiterated its stand on controlling Grameenphone (GP) as a majority shareholder, saying the majority should remain in its hands because of its higher financial contribution to the largest cellphone operator in Bangladesh.

"It's not a problematic issue. We had discussions with Dr Muhammad Yunus in Oslo last month," said Telenor Chairman Harald Norvik on Monday in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star.

READ MORE IN STAR BUSINESS

## 2 top army officials made peacekeeping force chiefs

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Two senior army officials, including one who was placed at the foreign ministry for diplomatic assignment, have been appointed force commanders in UN Peacekeeping Missions in Liberia and Georgia.

A highly placed source told The Daily Star last night that Lt Gen Abu Tayob Mohammad Zahirul Alam, who was placed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on deputation for appointment as ambassador, has now been placed under the Armed Forces Division for appointment as Force Commander in UN Peacekeeping Mission in the war-torn Liberia.

Zahirul Alam, former commandant of the National Defence College, who spent over four months since June 2 at the foreign ministry, will soon fly to Liberia to take up his new assignment.

Presently, over 3,000 Bangladeshis

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## Dolphins in distress

STAR REPORT

The mammal was probably best portrayed in Alexander Beliaev's famous novel -- The Amphibian Man. Ichtiandr, the Fish Man, had his loneliness shared with his pet dolphin under the sea. And then they got into prominence again in The Hungry Tide by Amitav Ghosh as an American girl comes to the Bengal to research the Irrawaddy dolphins.

The loving mammals however have few friends in Bangladesh to survive and their numbers are dwindling fast. Known as Shishuk in Bangla, the mammals were once a common sight in any rivers -- their humpy backs suddenly breaking the water surface and then vanishing in a flash.

But then pollution and indiscriminate killing for their

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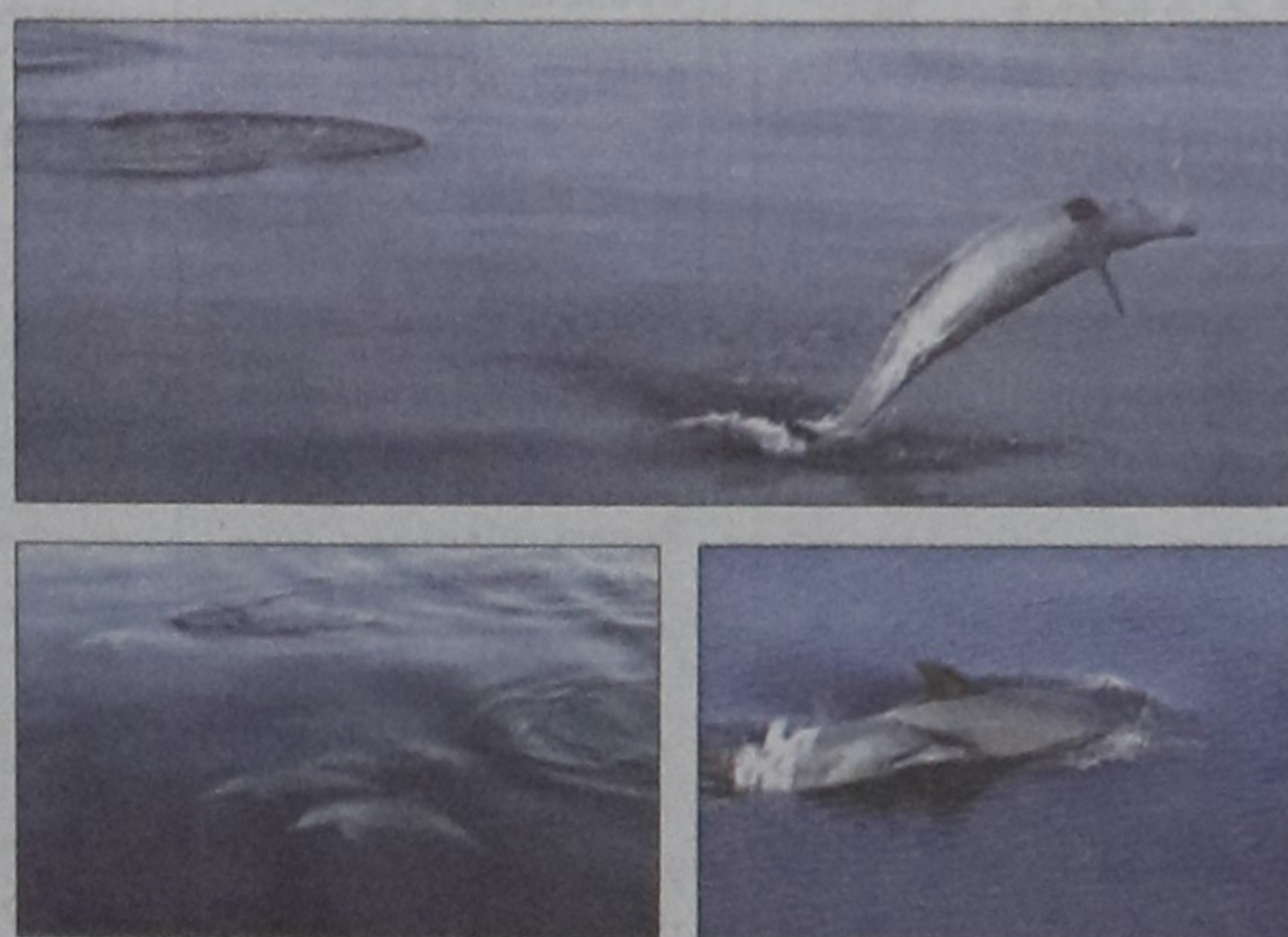
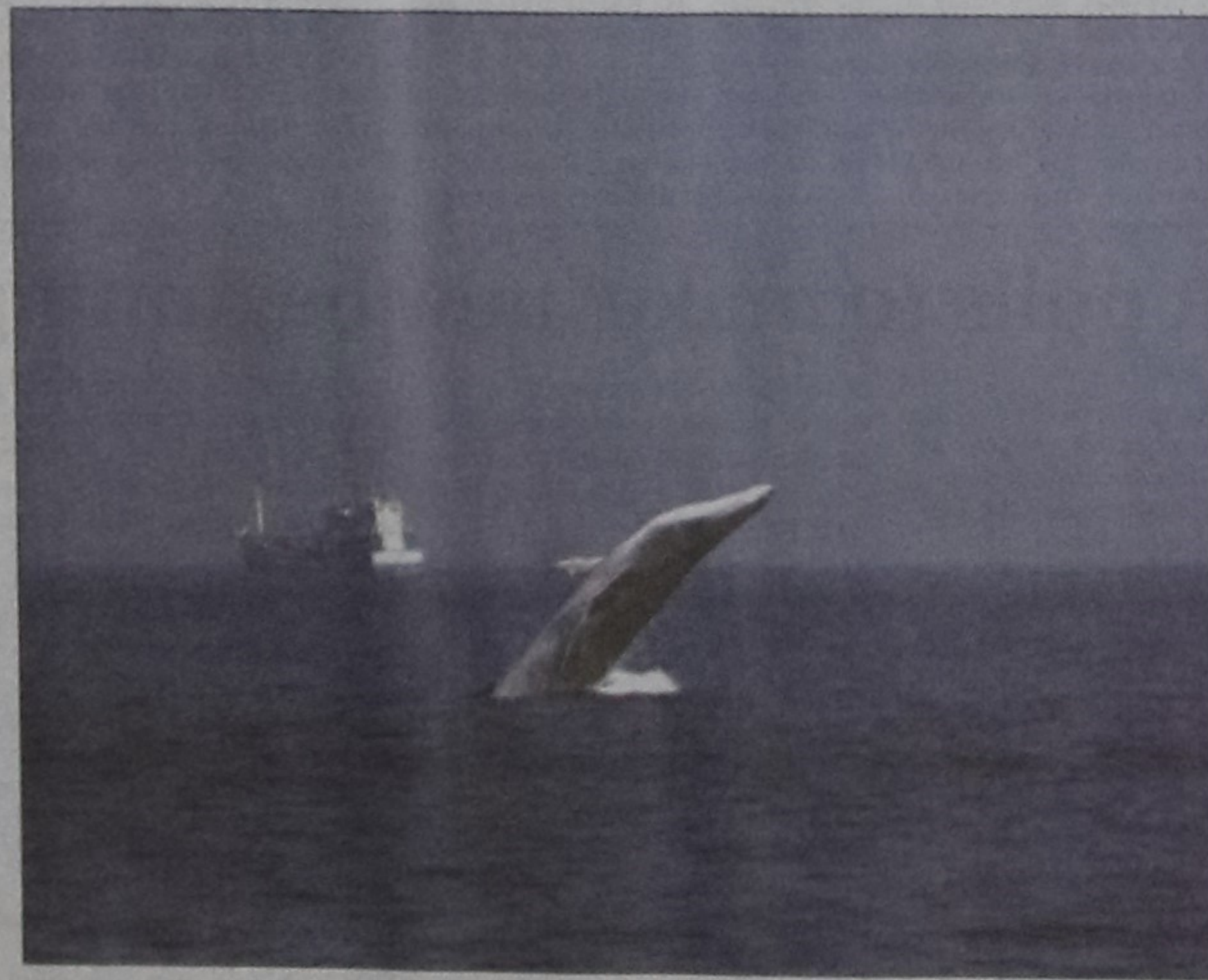


PHOTO: RUBAIYAT MANSUR

Whales and dolphins are struggling to survive in this region, but the Swatch of No Ground in the Bay of Bengal is still a safe place for them.

## Announcement

The Daily Star organised a roundtable on September 20 entitled "Bangladesh Cricket: Steps Forward." Today's Star Sport carries a two-page supplement on Pages 18 & 19 scripting the discussions of the meeting.

## Hajj flights to start Oct 31

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

This year's hajj flights will begin on October 31, an inter-ministerial meeting decided yesterday.

A Boeing-747 aircraft of Biman Bangladesh Airlines Ltd, which will operate 75 hajj flights this year, will fly for Saudi Arabia from Dhaka carrying 542 hajj pilgrims at 4:00pm on October 31, said a press release of the religious affairs ministry.

Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed is expected to inaugurate the hajj flight.

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