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Ashraful fears attack on Hasina on her return

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League acting General Secretary Syed Ashraful Islam yesterday asked the caretaker government to ensure special security for party chief Sheikh Hasina ahead of parliamentary polls.

He apprehended that Hasina, on her return from the US, and Awami League followers might come under 'militant and other terrorist attacks' at the time of the elections.

Ashraful said this while talking to reporters after a meeting with French Ambassador Charley Causseret at his NAM apartment.

Current political and economic issues as well as election and security matters were discussed

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IMF, WB meeting overshadowed by financial crisis

AFP, Washington

The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank were meeting Sunday as the most severe financial crisis since the 1930s threatens to undo recent progress made by developing countries.

With donor aid programs under pressure as the crisis bites into budgets, the World Bank estimates that up to 100 hundred million people are at risk of falling into poverty because of higher food and

energy prices.

"The large surge in food and energy prices -- and an associated rise in inflation -- present major policy challenges for most countries, further compounded by the uncertain global conditions as the financial crisis unfolds," an update for the IMF and World Bank Development Committee said.

The Development Committee advises the World Bank and IMF on how to promote economic development in developing countries,

many of whom feel neglected as a crisis they had no responsibility for threatens them directly.

Sierra Leone Finance Minister David Carew said the plight of the poor countries has been "largely forgotten" even though their recent development gains are at risk as the crisis bites.

"We expect to see a reduction of inflows to Africa and that is of concern to us," Carew said, citing likely falls in remittances, foreign

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Govt can now buy electricity from small power plants

UNB, Dhaka

The Council of Advisers yesterday amended the policy guidelines for Small Power Plants (SPP) enabling the private producers to sell their surplus output to government's power distribution companies, as the country runs short of electricity.

A meeting of the council with Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed in the chair approved a proposal placed by the Power Division for amending the policy guidelines for SPP.

A provision that the government may purchase power from SPP was inserted in the SPP policy guidelines.

The meeting also approved the

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SHILPAKALA ACADEMY PROJECT

Ministry, academy at loggerheads

ERSHAD KAMOL

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) and the Ministry of Cultural Affairs have locked horns over implementation of the second phase of a project titled Training on Fine and Performing Arts.

Last week, mid-level ministry officials led by a joint secretary along with the contractor who is also the consultant of the controversial project went to the office of the BSA secretary and scolded him for reporting to the ministry gross irregularities in awarding the contract to Sunrise Engineers, alleged the BSA authorities.

The Tk 24.99 crore project

includes completion of the second phase construction of Rajbari Acrobatic Centre in Rajbari, and construction of a high rise administration building on the premises of BSA headquarters in the capital.

Soon after the issuance of the work order in favour of the contractor on October 22, 2006, several newspapers published reports that there had been irregularities in awarding the contract.

Following the news reports, the erstwhile cultural adviser to the caretaker government first suspended the project temporarily and later on July 18, 2007 the succeeding cultural adviser, Ayub Quadri, scrapped the project altogether

ordering an investigation and punitive actions against persons involved in the alleged corruption.

The investigation subsequently found that to bypass an approval from the Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase (CCGP) the original project cost of Tk 26.22 crore had been corrected by the project director, lowering it to Tk 24.99 crore just before issuing the work order, and Tk 1.15 crore of that was paid to the contractor on the same day.

According to government rules any government project costing Tk 25 crore or more must be approved by CCGP.

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Hiron, 30, with one arm since birth, works on a street at Sayedabad in Dhaka. He has been working as a labourer for 13 years, supporting his family of four with Tk 250-300 he earns a day.

PHOTO: STAR

Ershad expects 60 seats from grand alliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman HM Ershad yesterday said his party will seek to share 60 seats with Awami League-led grand electoral alliance in the upcoming parliamentary poll.

"Today, Jatiya Party is very much united where Ershad is not a minus, Ershad is very much a plus. We are ready for the election," he declared.

"The previous grand alliance

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HASINA'S BAIL SC defers hearing for two weeks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday deferred for two weeks the hearing on a petition filed by Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina seeking a stay on the High Court (HC) order rejecting her bail prayer in an extortion case.

She had also appealed for bail in the same case.

Following a time prayer moved

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Nat'l grid gets more gas from Fenchuganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration Company (Bapex) yesterday started supplying additional 20 million cubic feet of gas per day from Fenchuganj Gas Field of Moulvibazar to the national grid.

This is expected to help industries that depend on gas. Bangladesh consumes around 1,750 million cubic feet of gas per day and the total demand for gas is even higher.

According to a Bapex source, the national grid will get the additional gas from well-2 of Fenchuganj Gas Field. Experts say that this is

another success of the native gas exploration company.

MA Mutalib, general manager (production) of Bapex, told The Daily Star over telephone yesterday that the additional gas is being supplied from the third zone of well-2. Successful firing of the gas well and other preparatory work were completed Thursday. No technical problems appeared during the preparations, he added.

He said the supply was delayed due to Eid and Puja vacations.

The Fenchuganj Gas Field is at Bhatara under Kulaura upazila in Moulvibazar. Bapex started work at the Fenchuganj Gas Field in 1985.

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Subrata Bain arrested in Kolkata

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dreaded criminal Trimoti Subrata Bain was arrested in Kolkata, India.

A top official of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) last night said Indian Special Force

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Prayer Timing		
October 13		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:45	5:20
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:15	4:30
Maghrib	5:45	5:50
Esha	7:15	7:45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Missile strikes from US drones kill 5 in Pakistan

Pak forces gun down 14 more militants

AP, AFP, Dera Ismail Khan

The latest in a barrage of suspected US missile strikes in Pakistan's northwest killed five people, but none were believed to be foreign al-Qaeda fighters, officials said yesterday.

Two unmanned drones were seen above the town of Miran Shah in the North Waziristan tribal region minutes before missiles hit a house near a matchbox factory Saturday, two intelligence officials said.

US pilotless spy planes on Sunday flew over a Pakistani tribal town bordering Afghanistan just hours after a missile strike killed at least five people, residents said.

Two missiles from suspected US drones overnight struck a compound just outside Miran Shah, the main town in the restive North Waziristan district, which is seen as a safe haven for al-Qaeda and Taliban militants.

The targeted compound was the residence of Taliban militant Omar

Daraz, a security official told AFP, giving no further details.

There was no reaction to the attacks from the Pakistani government, though the military said they were aware of the strike.

"We have reports about an explosion incident in Miran Shah," chief military spokesman Major General Athar Abbas told AFP.

Residents on Sunday said they could see three drones overhead as they sifted through the remains of the destroyed compound searching for further casualties.

Some tribesmen fired at the drones, but there was no damage to the aircraft or any return fire.

Pakistan has been protesting recent missile strikes blamed on US forces based in Afghanistan and has termed them a violation of its sovereignty.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak to the media. They said reports from local informants so far said none of the

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Unforeseen situation to arise if polls disrupted

Predicts EC Sakhawati

UNB, Dhaka

Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret) M Sakhawati Hossain yesterday said an unforeseen situation would evolve in the country if the upcoming polls were disrupted.

"Those for whom the election

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22 lakh banned sedatives seized in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday seized 22 lakh banned sedative and addictive tablets raiding a house at Sabujbagh in the capital last night.

Police estimated the value of the

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Fierce race row rocks White House race

AFP, Chicago

A war of words with racial undertones marked the White House race Sunday after civil rights icon John Lewis accused Republican John McCain of sowing "hatred" against Barack Obama.

McCain, who has been trying to tamp down abuse of the Democratic nominee at his campaign events, reacted furiously, lashing out against Lewis, who only a few weeks ago he described as one of the Americans he most admired.

The latest political turbulence came just over three weeks before the November 4 election, with Obama building a steady lead over McCain on the national level, and on the state-by-state electoral map.

It also overshadowed another controversy, the legislative probe finding in Alaska that state governor and Republican vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin had

abused her power in a feud with her ex-brother-in-law.

Congressman Lewis, revered as one of the key figures in the 20th century US civil rights movement, ignited a political firestorm by issuing a statement about McCain's recent searing character attacks on Obama.

"As public figures with the power to influence and persuade, Senator McCain and Governor Palin are playing with fire, and if they are not careful, that fire will consume us all," Lewis said.

Republicans "are sowing the seeds of hatred and division, and there is no need for this hostility in our political discourse."

He also appeared to suggest attacks on Obama were reminiscent of late segregationist Alabama governor and presidential candidate George Wallace, whose rhetoric in 1963 was blamed for a church bombing in Birmingham.

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Govt suspends use of Miltefosine

Decides to get WHO report on the medicine for Kala-azar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following a row over the effectiveness of Miltefosine capsules and several deaths, the government has decided to halt treatment of Kala-azar (Visceral leishmaniasis) with Miltefosine.

Amphotericin B or injection of Sodium Antimony Gluconate (SAG) would be used in treating Kala-azar instead of Miltefosine, said Health Secretary AMM Nasir Uddin at a press conference at Bangladesh

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Crying mother of Saikat hugs her son's body at Dhaka Medical College morgue yesterday. Saikat drowned in a pond at Shahidullah Hall of Dhaka University. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: STAR

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