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**Put back Baul singers' statues near ZIA**

Demand cultural activists, eminent citizens

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cultural activists and eminent citizens yesterday demanded reinstallation of the sculptures of the Baul singers (folk singers) at the Zia International Airport intersection saying that an attack on the sculptures is an attack on our culture, Liberation War and the country.

The sculptures include a statue of the illustrious Baul, Lalou Shah. They said there is a conspiracy against the country's Liberation War, culture and its secularist character and this is happening as the war criminals have not been punished.

They said this at a discussion organised by Ganosangect

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**BREAKING GENDER BARRIERS IN ASIA**

**'Higher edn, equal role in economy, politics a must'**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Higher education and equal participation in economic and political activities are essential for Asian women to get past the class and gender barriers, speakers yesterday said.

They called for vigorous efforts on the part of governments and international organisations to pave the way for women to access the opportunities.

They were speaking at the inaugural of an international symposium on "Overcoming History: Rethinking Rights and Opportunities for Women in Asia", organised by the Asian University for Women (AUW) at Radisson

Water Garden Hotel in the city. Academics and rights activists from home and abroad are taking part in the two-day symposium.

The speakers said women in Asia historically face a myriad of hardships: female infanticide due to traditional preference for boys, unequal access to quality care and nutritious food, and less access to education and proprietorship.

"Well educated women become active leaders and participants in cultural and political movements that will transform society and engender the changes they themselves will demand," Dr Hoon Eng Khoo, provost and acting vice chancellor of AUW, said.

She said women must take

charge of their own political destinies in order to make real progress in women's rights.

"The Asian University for Women's mission was born from this need and has identified the necessity for its students to be the agents of change their societies need," Dr Khoo said.

Prof Zoya Hasan of Jawaharlal Nehru University in India said a meagre percentage of women make it to the parliament in Asia, adding that most of them owe their seats to dynastic politics.

She said few countries have come up with reserved parliamentary seats for women to make up for their limited participation in politics.

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This ancient sandstone engraved with three figures was recently found at Ghoraghat upazila in Dinajpur. It is now on display at the Mahasthan Museum in Bogra.

**Ancient figures dance together**

Gupta era relics found in Dinajpur

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

The officials of the Department of Archaeology recently discovered an ancient engraved stone believed to be of Gupta era from the bank of a pond near Sura Masjid at Ghoraghat Upazila in Dinajpur.

The sand stone has been preserved and put on display at the Mahasthan Museum in Bogra.

Badrul Alam, field officer of the department's regional office in Bogra, said the sandstone remained unnoticed along with other decorated stones on the premises of Sura Masjid, one of the important archaeological sites in the country.

The stone depicts three figures dancing together holding musical instruments.

Adorned with terracotta, the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

**Statues will be pulled down if Islamists come to power**

Amini threatens

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chairman of a faction of Islami Oikya Jote (IO) Fazlul Haq Amini yesterday said statues built by Sheikh Hasina-led past government will be demolished if an Islamic government is formed in the country.

"If we or an Islamic government comes to power, all statues built by Hasina will be pulled down," Amini, also ameer of Islami Ain Bastabayan Committee (IABC) announced at a news briefing in the afternoon.

IABC organised the conference in Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium.

Amini, however, said he did not know whether Khaleda Zia-led government built any statue.

Alluding to Shikha Onirban, the eternal flame in Dhaka Cantonment in memory of the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

**Pest attack, blight threaten Aman target in N-dists**

PORIMOL PALMA

Insect infestation and blight of Aman paddy in large areas of northern districts are threatening the achievement of 1.36 crore tonnes Aman production target this season.

Farmers are struggling to protect Aman fields as the prices of pesticides are high. However, government officials say that the situation is not alarming.

Experts concerned, however, warned about pest attack, particularly brown plant hoppers (BPH) locally known as "current poka" in northern districts, and said it may cause massive damage to crops if effective steps are not taken immediately.

"We identified BPH on September 10. This was later found in many Aman fields in greater Rangpur," said MA Mazid, principal scientific officer at the regional office of Bangladesh Rice Research



PHOTO: STAR

Blight affects an Aman field in Nabdiganj of Rangpur which will result in low yield.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

**'Voter turnout, not number of parties, yardstick of credible poll'**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) presidium member Amir Hossain Amu yesterday said voter turnout should be the yardstick to measure credibility of an election, not the number of contending political parties.

He made the observation to a query whether the December 18 election would be credible if the BNP-Jamaat coalition opts not to take part in it.

The top AL leader, who returned from Europe Thursday, said, "Why would the election not be acceptable with them standing aside when people are so excited at the prospect of going to the polls."

Speaking to The Daily Star at his Eskaton residence, he said an election might not be credible even with all parties participating in it if voters show up in small numbers.

Meanwhile, AL acting president

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

**Top French bank loses \$800m in bad trades**

AFP, Paris

The French bank Caisse d'Epargne lost around 600 million euros (800 million dollars) in a derivatives trading "incident" during last week's market turmoil, the company said yesterday in a statement.

The dramatic loss suffered by the mutual bank, one of France's biggest and generally regarded as a safe haven for cautious small savers, was the latest blow to confidence in a sector already ravaged by the credit crunch.

It came in the same week that Caisse d'Epargne's directors approved plans to merge it with another bank, Banque Populaire.

"Because of the extreme volatility in the markets and the stock market crash of the week of October 6, the Caisse d'Epargne group underwent a major incident in the derivatives market," the

statement said.

A company official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told AFP that a finance director from the group had been sacked and "half a dozen" members of the team that made the losing trades had been disciplined.

"The necessary steps to close this position and end this activity were taken. Sanctions have been decided upon and the necessary regulatory bodies have been informed," the company statement said.

The bank insisted the loss did not affect its stability.

"Given the level of its equity capital -- more than 20 billion euros -- and its high level of liquidity, this loss does not affect the group's financial solidity and will have no consequence for customers," it said.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

**Govt tenure will end Dec 31, says Hassan Ariff**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Law Adviser AF Hassan Ariff yesterday said tenure of the current caretaker government will end on December 31.

He said, "National and upazila polls will be held as per the dates announced by the Election Commission, and then we'll hand over power to an elected government and go back to work as usual."

The adviser was addressing a relief distribution programme at Sharonkhola upazila in Bagerhat.

He gave away possession of new houses to 120 Cyclone Sidr-hit families at Rajoor village of the upazila. The housing scheme was financed by Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and Islami Bank Foundation.

Besides, 10 women of the village were given cheques of Tk 10,000 each.

Speaking at the gathering at a local auditorium, the law adviser said the country should try not to turn to others for food. It must use every inch of its land to produce rice, fish and poultry to meet the food demand.

**Donors won't cut aid, will try to increase it**

BB governor says on return from WB-IMF meet in Washington

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Bank Governor Salehuddin Ahmed yesterday said multilateral donors like the World Bank and IMF would not cut their assistance to Bangladesh in the wake of global financial crisis.

"They won't cut aid from their commitment, rather they will try to increase it, if possible," he told reporters at Zia International

Airport on his return from Washington, DC, where he attended the World Bank-IMF annual meetings.

On the sidelines of the annual meetings, the governor rang the alarm bell at an international roundtable on "The Impact of Financial Crisis in South Asia" that a slowdown in ODA and bilateral fund flow would mount pressure

**GLOBAL FINANCIAL TURMOIL**

**Asia should consider bank guarantees: IMF**

AFP, Washington

Asian economies may have to consider guaranteeing bank deposits as a defensive option against global market turmoil although the region's financial system remains sound, the IMF's Asia chief believes.

European nations and the United States have moved to guarantee either deposits in their entirety or all bank liabilities to shore up investor confidence in the wake of a credit crunch amid a global stock market meltdown.

"I think Asia needs to think seriously about it (guaranteeing deposits)," David Burton, IMF's Asia-Pacific director, said in an interview with AFP at his Washington office on Thursday.

"It is not necessarily a 'one size fits all' policy but it is something that countries in the region need to consider, and I'm sure are considering," he said.

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**Prayer Timing**

October 18

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-50	5-25
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-38	5-41
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

**Briton jailed for racist murder of Bangladeshi**

AFP, London

A British soldier was jailed for life yesterday for the racist murder of a Bangladeshi waiter in Scotland, in a case which triggered high emotions and which has dragged on for 14 years.

Michael Ross, who went on to serve in Iraq with the elite Scottish Black Watch regiment, was 15 when he killed Shamsuddin Mahmood in a restaurant on the Scottish island of Orkney in 1994.

"This was a vicious, evil, unprovoked murder of a defenceless man. The attack was a premeditated assassination," Judge Andrew Hardie told Ross, who is now 30 years old.

During a six-week trial the court

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**Pak airstrikes kill 60 militants**

AFP, Islamabad

Airstrikes by Pakistani jets killed 60 pro-Taliban fighters in the restive northwest while a Chinese engineer seized seven weeks ago escaped from his kidnappers, security officials said yesterday.

"Security forces destroyed a training camp and hideouts of militants in Pechar in Swat valley, killing 60 of them and injuring scores of others," a senior security official told AFP.

Another security official said fighter jets bombed a big training camp and cave hideouts of Taliban militants deep in the mountains, inflicting heavy casualties.

He said sources from the area

**13th Death anniversary of Late Alhaj Jahurul Islam**

To commemorate the 13th death anniversary of Alhaj Jahurul Islam, the founder Chairman of Islam Group, Milad & Doa Mahfil will be held separately at Jahurul Islam Medical College Campus mosque, his Agro Based Business units and different educational institutions at his birth place, Bhagalpur, Bajitpur, Kishoregonj at 11.30 A.M. on October 19, 2008 (Sunday).

All the relatives, friends and well wishers are requested to make it convenient to attend the Mahfil for the salvation of the departed soul.

Offices of all units of Islam Group will remain closed on the day to mark the occasion & to pay respect to the departed soul.

**On behalf of Family Members and Islam Group.**

Manzurul Islam  
Chairman