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Canada to deport convicted Nur

The Bangabandhu killer's passport seized by Canadian police, says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Canadian government has decided to deport Lt Col (retd) SHMB Nur Chowdhury, a convicted fugitive killer of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, to Bangladesh, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed told journalists yesterday.

"The Canadian police have seized the passport of Nur Chowdhury since he has been illegally staying in Canada," he told a press briefing at his Secretariat office after his



return from Canada yesterday. "The Canadian police have submitted Nur Chowdhury's passport to the Bangladesh High Commission in Canada in July last year. The police also kept him under a security vigil as part of deportation process," he said. Nur Chowdhury has to report to the local police station every week, the minister added.

Shafique also said he learned that Lt Col (retd) Shariful Haque Dalim, another convicted

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Probe finds overcrowding as key reason

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Preliminary investigation into Friday's launch disaster in Bhola has identified overcrowding as the main reason behind the accident.

"The launch was carrying passengers beyond its capacity and capsized when the passengers were in a rush to get down at a time," inspector of shipping department in Barisal reported to his director general in Dhaka.

In a fax message on Sunday, he said MV Koko-4 was carrying 2500 passengers but failed to mention its capacity or loss of lives and properties.

The inspector blamed the

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BHOLA LAUNCH CAPSIZE

Death toll rises to 76

Rescuers fear more bodies still trapped inside MV Koko-4

RAFIQUL ISLAM, Barisal

The death toll in Friday's launch capsize in the river Tentulia near Nazirpur launch terminal about 40 kilometres from Bhola district town under Lalmohon upazila, rose to 76 yesterday, official sources said.

Rescuers feared that many more victims were still trapped inside MV Koko-4 which capsized with around 2,000 passengers on board, almost three times the capacity.

Rescue operation was suspended yesterday evening due to a lack of illumination at the accident site, and was scheduled to resume today. Seventy-two of the rescued bodies were identified and handed over to their family members while four could not be identified immediately.

The overcrowded launch was sailing to the coastal town of Bhola from the capital, with passengers most of whom were going home to celebrate the Eid-ul-Azha. The launch left Sadarghat terminal in the capital at 11:00am on Friday and its hull was damaged severely when the vessel was around 50 feet away from Nazirpur launch terminal around 11:30 at night.

Rescuers suspect that the vessel might have hit a submerged shoal, but it has not been confirmed yet.

Dozens of passengers were injured as they tried to jump off the capsizing launch.

"It was about 11:25 at night. I felt a heavy jerk. The launch tilted to one side. Then I witnessed the horror, the rear of the launch went under water," said Abdur

Rahim a surviving passenger.

Helal Uddin, another passenger who swam to safety after the accident, said about 70 to 80 passengers jumped into the river as the launch began to sink.

"My 16-year-old son is dead. He was a fruit seller on his way back from buying fruit in Dhaka," said his mother Rahima Khatun. Her elder son and husband had also died recently, she added in tears.

DEATH COUNTRY NOT CONCLUSIVE There has been no official word yet on how many passengers were on board. But district administration sources said the launch was licensed to carry 600 passengers during the day and 446 at night.

Officials near the spot of the capsizing said most of the passengers were either rescued or swam ashore.

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Eid-ul-Azha celebrated

UNB, Dhaka

The holy Eid-ul-Azha was celebrated in the country on Saturday with the spirit of sacrifice in commemoration of Prophet Hazrat Ibrahim's complete submission to the will of Allah almighty.

On the holy occasion, devotees offered Eid prayers and sacrificed animals. They also shared the feast on sacrificial meat with their relatives and neighbours and distributed meat among the poor.

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NOTICE

The Daily Star has suspended its four-page pullout on business news for today because of lean market activities. The Science & Life page has also been dropped because of Eid holidays.

Trees plundered again at coast

Some 5,000 trees felled in Sitakunda to clear space for ship-breaking yard

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

About 5,000 trees were razed in over half a kilometre of the forest belt at Sonachhari coast under Sitakunda upazila in Chittagong on Sunday night.

According to officials, the wholesale felling of the trees was carried out with instructions from some local influential people who would like to set up three to four ship breaking yards at the clear cut section of the forest.

On July 3 this year the influential quarter had cleared off over 15,000 Keora and Bain trees on 40 acres of land in the same coastal area.

The officials said some 300 hired workers, who most probably had arrived at the coast by boats to evade the eyes of law enforcers, were engaged to cut down the trees on some 20 acres of land since Sunday evening.

Sitakunda Police Station Officer-in-charge (OC) Nazrul Islam said they rushed to the spot immediately after being informed of the incident and arrested five persons -- Md Shahed, Md Joinal, Alambir, Rubel, and Dilip Chandra Dash from the spot.

"After the felling of the trees a good number of locals also joined the plunderers to collect logs and fire woods increasing the size of the crowd," he said.

"A few police men could do a very little against such a big crowd of over 1,000 people, when the plunder was backed by local influential people from both sides of the political divide," the OC said.

"There has been a dispute over the land between the people who want to set up the

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PHOTO ON PAGE 16



Relatives and friends of victim passengers of MV Koko-4 wait along the banks of the river Tentulia near Nazirpur launch terminal. Overloading by operators made this lady [inset] sacrifice much more than she had ever thought of.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Worst victims must get separate funds

PM demands as she shares climate-change woes with Commonwealth leaders

UNB, Port Of Spain

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina sought separate financial assistance for Most Vulnerable Countries (MVCs) like Bangladesh for enabling them to cope with the threats stemming from climate change and calamitous weather conditions.

She made the demand while addressing the executive and retreat sessions of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2009 at the National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA) in this capital city of Caribbean island country Trinidad and Tobago Friday afternoon.

Hasina, who happens to be the only female head of government attending the Commonwealth meeting, attended the executive and retreat sessions after the opening ceremony of the CHOGM.

In the sessions, she reminded the world leaders about the disastrous impacts of the global warming on Bangladesh for no fault of its

own. "Our contribution to the greenhouse-gas emission is negligible, but the fact is that we are the worst sufferer of the global warming," the prime minister said.

She categorically said all financial assistance to be provided to the MVCs must be distinct from the ODA (Official Development Assistance) handed out to all of the poorer countries.

Hasina explained to the global leaders how climate change casts serious negative impacts on food production. She said universal food security would be difficult to achieve unless the people and economy are safeguarded from the climate risks.

"Climate change is affecting agriculture, food production and thus affecting the initiatives for attaining the food security," she said.

Sheikh Hasina pointed out that Bangladesh and other developing and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) need financial assistance

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INDIA TOUR
PM to visit Santiniketan

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

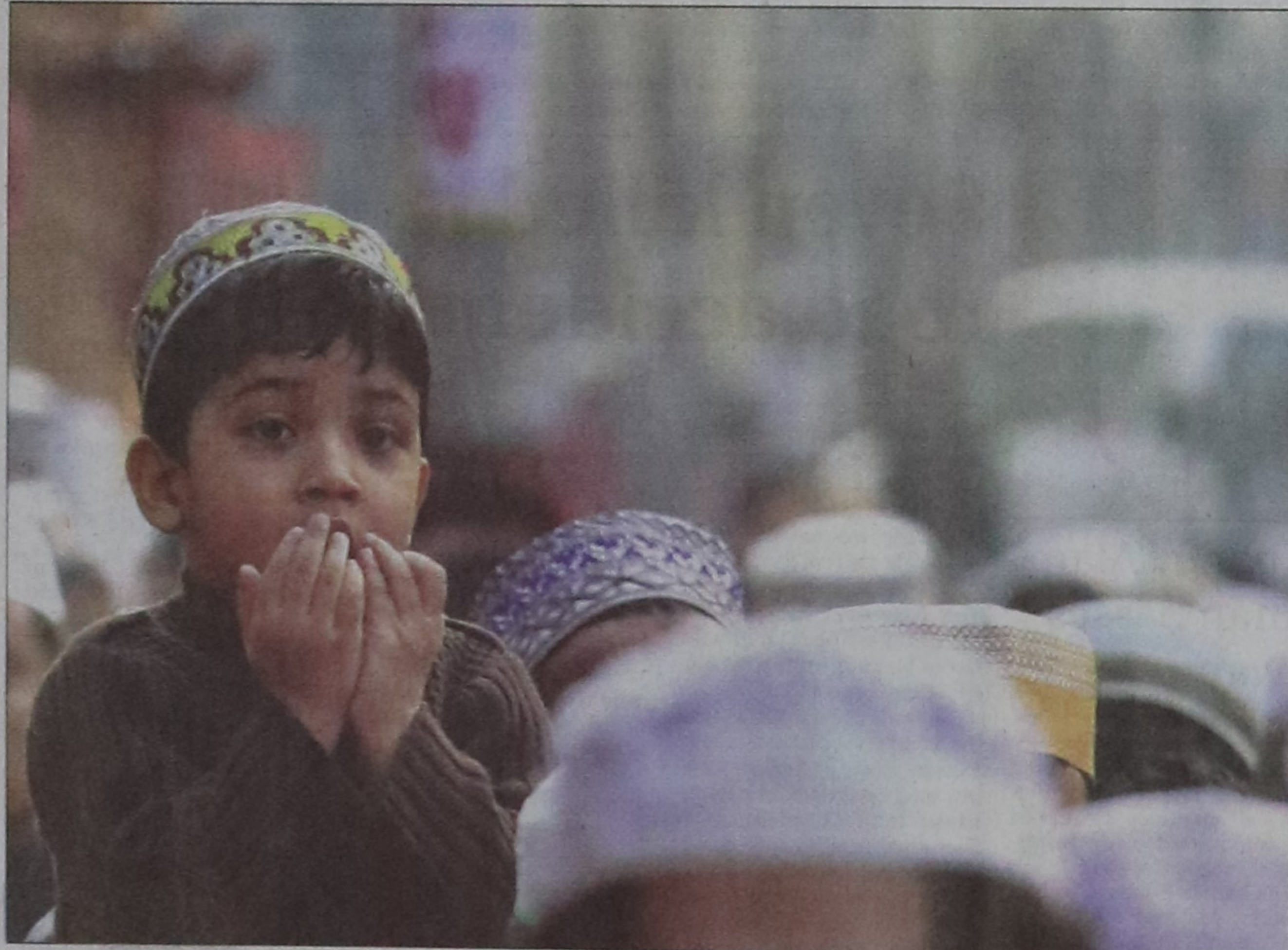
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will visit Visva Bharati University in Santiniketan, West Bengal, during her visit to India between December 18 and 22, university sources said yesterday.

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty, who is in Santiniketan for talks with Visva Bharati authorities prior to Hanisa's trip, said she will be visiting the university to

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Today's issue contains a two-page supplement titled "Roundtable on Linkages of Sexual and Reproductive Health in Prevention of HIV in Bangladesh" jointly organised by The Daily Star and UNFPA.



A young boy offers Eid prayers at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque last Saturday morning.

PHOTO: SHAFIQUL ALAM

HOME SECY-LEVEL MEET Dhaka, Delhi finalise 3 key agreements

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India and Bangladesh yesterday finalised three key agreements, including transfer of prisoners, to be signed during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India next month.

Treaties on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters, transfer of prisoners and bilateral agreement on combating international terrorism have been finalised on the first day of the three-day home secretary-level talks that began here yesterday.

"All the three treaties will be signed during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India," an Indian home ministry official said.

Hasina will arrive here on December 18 for a three-day official visit.

Home secretaries of India and Bangladesh began talks on

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No doubt about Dec 8 BNP council

Says Khaleda; slates govt for failing to run country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has categorically said the national council of her party will definitely be held as per schedule on December 8.

The national standing committee, the highest policymaking forum of the party, on Sunday night reviewed the latest developments for the upcoming council. All the conveners of the sub-committees formed for the council were present in the meeting.

Insiders say they have completed 70 percent district councils and the policymakers will decide about what would happen to the rest.

They add the party will publish a voter list within a day or two on completion of all the

process of district councils. The election commission of the party is set to declare the schedule to elect the chairperson this morning, they say.

Talking to reporters, Khaleda, also leader of the opposition, lambasted the government saying that the common people now cannot celebrate Eid due to a miserable state of law and order and socioeconomic condition as the government has failed to run the country properly.

"They could not do anything in the last 10 months. The ruling party men are busy with tender terrorism and corruption."

Asked about the national council of the

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আপনার স্বপ্ন নীড়কে করুন সত্যি, আমাদের হোম লোন নিয়ে।

আপনার স্বপ্ন নীড়কে সত্যি করতে প্রাইম ব্যাংক দিয়ে সহজ শর্তে হোম লোন। যা দিয়ে আপনাকে সুবিধামত সময়ে ঋণ পরিশোধের সহজ উপায়। তাহলে আজই আসুন আমাদের যেকোন শাখায়। শুরু হোক আপনার দীর্ঘদিনের স্বপ্ন নীড়ের সার্থক রূপায়ন।

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