

Modi, Sharif

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 row at dinner and were chatting with each other, said a diplomat, adding that it was very personal and not substantive. Both Modi and Sharif also briefly shook hands after the inaugural session of the summit as well as in the holding room adjacent to the Saarc summit hall. Pakistan on Wednesday played spoilsport by blocking three major Saarc connectivity projects initiated by India. While Modi, who gave a forceful maiden speech at the summit on the need for seamless connectivity, met his Bangladeshi and Bhutanese counterparts Sheikh Hasina and Tshering Tobgay, and later the presidents of Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Maldives — Ashraf Ghani, Mahinda Rajapaksa and Abdulla Yameen — Sharif was not on the list. External affairs ministry spokesperson Syed Akbaruddin Wednesday said there was "no structured meeting" planned between the two leaders as India has not received any request for such a meet from Pakistan.

Try 'killer'

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 His ultimate sacrifice strengthened the movement and expedited the regime's fall in December 1990 and restoration of democracy. Jatiya Party Chairman Ershad is currently a special envoy to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Selina said Milon sacrificed his life for democracy, but it is a matter of great regret that the political parties rehabilitated Ershad after establishing democracy. Alluding to Ershad's autocratic regime, Nasim defended holding the January 5 national election which is alleged to be one-sided and which saw over half of the 300 parliamentarians being elected uncontested, saying that otherwise martial law might have been imposed.

Mamata's tribute

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 inaugurate it," Mamata told PTI news agency in Kolkata. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman studied at Kolkata's Islamia College (now known as Maulana Azad College) under Calcutta University and obtained a Bachelor of Arts in 1947 from there.

31 members

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 Obtaining information from Mizanur, detectives held the 30 others. The DMP spokesperson said the tablets have no odour and colour. So, victims cannot realise when these are mixed with food. A section of a gang dopes people at bus stands, rail stations, crowded public places or inside vehicles by feeding them food mixed with sedatives. Other members of the gang start following the people who took the food and finally rob them when they become unconscious. "At least 10 more such groups remain active in the capital. Police are trying to arrest them," said the DB official. Earlier, all the convicts were arrested in different times and were released on bail. After getting bail, they commit the same crime, Monirul added.

Scientist Qadri

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 The UN General Assembly had made a request during the 68th session for a panel to examine the scope and functions of Technology Bank, its organisational aspects and institutional linkages with the UN. The Istanbul Programme of Action for the least developed countries (LDCs), adopted during the UN conference in 2011, emphasized the need for the LDCs to acquire new technologies and build domestic capacity and a knowledge base to be able to fully utilise acquired technologies and to promote indigenous capacity on a sustainable basis. Ban Ki-moon asked the panel to prepare practical recommendations on the matter, which can provide a strong impetus to accelerating structural transformation and sustainable development of the LDCs.

Nisha Biswal

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 the election did not credibly express the will of Bangladeshi people. "I want to state very clearly that our interest in holding new elections is to ensure a free and fair process," she said in her opening remark at a fresh hearing on the prospects of democratic reconciliation and workers' rights in Bangladesh at the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in Washington in February. The United States, said Biswal, has not taken sides or played favourites in who should lead the country. Decision should be left to the Bangladeshi people, whose voices were not fairly heard on January 5, she added. As the assistant secretary, Biswal oversees US foreign policy with India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, the Maldives, Bhutan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan.

New cop shooting video

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 Meanwhile, the governor of Missouri has reportedly rejected calls for a new grand jury to decide whether to charge Wilson, reported BBC. A spokesman for state governor Jay Nixon said he would not entertain the idea of bringing in a special prosecutor to present the case to a new grand jury, the St Louis Post reports. The simmering fury led a small group of protesters to attempt to storm St Louis city hall Wednesday. After they were rebuffed, extra police and a National Guard Humvee were drafted to protect the building. In Ferguson late Wednesday, the group of mostly young people -- bundled up against the cold -- shouted, "This is what democracy looks like." One or two taunted and swore at the 50 National Guard in riot gear who stood on duty at the police department. Witnesses said police took one person into custody. During the day volunteer clean-up crews swept the streets of Ferguson,

where angry crowds on Monday torched businesses and looted stores. Heavy security -- police, state troopers and National Guard troops -- was still visible in the streets Wednesday, but the situation was stabilizing. Already, Tuesday night did not see the scale of destruction that followed Monday's decision. In Britain, where thousands of sympathizers angered by Brown's treatment marched in London chanting the same slogan: "Hands up, don't shoot." "We need to send a message to Mike Brown's family," said Carol Duggan, the aunt of Mark Duggan, a 29-year-old black man whose shooting by British police in 2011 sparked riots in London. US civil rights leaders have called for more protests tomorrow. Similar rallies were held last year after the acquittal on murder charges of neighborhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman, who shot dead another unarmed black teen, Trayvon Martin, in Florida.

Energy deal salvaged

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 Nepalese Prime Minister Sushil Koirala, also the Saarc chair, said in his address at the concluding session of the 18th summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. Under the energy deal, a Saarc Market for Electricity will be developed on a regional basis. It will explore a regional power market involving Saarc countries that already have interconnection, as well as those that have planned interlinks. The framework energy pact will enable cooperation in the power sector among the eight member countries. It will also facilitate integrated operation of the regional power grid and create a regional energy market aimed at enhancing cross-border electricity trade among the South Asian countries. Foreign ministers from all Saarc countries signed the electricity deal aimed at trading electricity from one country to another and installing trans-boundary power grids. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Maldivian President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom, Nepalese Prime Minister Sushil Koirala, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa witnessed the signing at the City Hall in the Nepalese capital. Diplomatic sources said negotiations for the Saarc motor vehicle and railway accords might be completed in three months and signed at the next meeting of the Saarc Council of Ministers six months later. MODI-SHARIF MEETING PM Narendra Modi and his Pakistani

counterpart Nawaz Sharif met briefly and shook hands during a retreat at the Saarc Summit at Dhulikhel in Kavre district, 30km east of Kathmandu. South Asian leaders gathered there for the traditional Saarc retreat on the concluding day of the two-day summit. Syed Akbaruddin, spokesperson for the Indian external affairs ministry, told the media, "The two leaders exchanged pleasantries when they met for the first time after arriving here [in Nepal]." HASINA SKIPS RETREAT Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina skipped the Saarc retreat as she had caught cold, reports our staff correspondent Hasan Jahid Tusher from Kathmandu. She, however, joined the concluding session of the summit at 4:00pm (Nepal time). CURTAINS ON SUMMIT The summit came to an end with the issuing of a 36-point declaration. Nepalese Prime Minister Sushil Koirala announced the closure of the 18th Saarc summit. The member states agreed to strengthen the Kathmandu-based Saarc Secretariat and set up a mechanism to curb terrorism, religious fundamentalism and religious extremism. Several sub-committees will be formed to implement the past accords and agreements. The next Saarc summit will be held in Islamabad, announced Koirala. "Pakistan will host the 19th Saarc Summit in Islamabad in 2016," he said. The Nepalese PM also thanked Pakistan for offering to be the host of the next Saarc summit. The Pakistani prime minister gave vote of thanks for selecting his country as the venue of the next summit.

It's so easy to grab lands

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 No Objection Certificates (NOC) signed by them. Contacted, a top police official of the district said they had sent some of their officers to the scene recently to look into the matter and found the land had actually been sold by the Marma families. Asked, Thank Pre, headman of the mauza, claimed that the organisation committed forgery during signing of the papers. Anisur denied the allegation too. Mohammadia Jamia Sharif is involved in rubber, tree plantation and horticulture and has illegally purchased 2,000 acres of land in Sangumouza, locals say. The mouza headman claimed that he approached Bandarban Deputy Commissioner KM Tariqul Islam several times in this connection. "But he could not assure of our safety," he claimed. Contacted, The DC said, "We have heard about the eviction. The concerned UNO has already been told to look into the matter." Asked about the alleged paper-forgery, he said, "Action will be taken if anyone is found guilty." In 2012, 17 indigenous Mro families

of Amtali Mro Para, and another 17 families of Chariggyo Karbaripara in Lama upazila were also reportedly "evicted" by the same plantation company. Indigenous people of five other villages -- Muktaram Karbari Para, Goyalmara Para, Nitichandra Tripura Karbari Para, Keranijiri Para, and Banfur Painchaprue Para -- are also under threat, the headman alleged. Since the 1997 signing of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord, people of 10 indigenous villages of the district have been evicted by Bangalee settlers, private rubber plantation owners and horticulturists, said Jumlian Amlai, president of Parbatya Chattagram Forest and Land Rights Protection Movement (Bandarban Chapter). "The administration is yet to take action against the land grabbers," he added. "Mohammadia Jamia Tree Plantation has violated the Hill District Council Act of 1989 and CHT Manual of 1900 as they have purchased khas land, and played a trick to receive no demand agreements from the innocent people," said KS Mong Marma, a member of Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council.

Stop entry of militants

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 its three-day stay in Kolkata. "If they [India] remain active on the border, the militants and criminals will not be able to flee there in the face of our drives against them here," Monirul told reporters at DMP Media Centre before leaving Dhaka yesterday. He said the two sides would share information on the activities of militant outfits in the two countries and the lists of criminals exchanged between the two sides during the recent NIA visit to Dhaka. Bangladesh has handed over to India a list of 51 -- 10 militants and 41 top criminals -- reportedly hiding in India. The NIA team, on the other hand, gave the intelligence agencies in Dhaka

a list of 11 suspected militants thought to be behind the Burdwan blast. Monirul said Dhaka in the Kolkata meetings would seek Delhi's help in bringing home 25 Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) men who could be hiding somewhere in India. The JMB men include the two leaders of the banned outfit said to be behind the ambush on a police van in Mymensingh's Trishal last year. "We have worked on the list and information the NIA officials shared with us during their two-day visit. We will update them about it. At the same time, we will also want to know if there is any update about their investigation into the Burdwan blast," a member of the team told The Daily Star, wishing anonymity.

GP agent staff shot, Tk 28 lakh snatched

A CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj
 Muggers shot a Grameenphone agent's staff and snatched Tk 28 lakh from them in Shornopotti area of the district town last night. Kazi Jinnat Alai, the GP agent, said his two staffs Ferdaus Kazi, 22, and Korban Ali Kazi, 28, were going to Pubali Bank at Kaporpotti by a rickshaw from his office on College Road to deposit the money. Four to five masked men stopped the rickshaw at Sornopotti, shot the two, snatched the money and left the scene by motorcycles. Locals took the injured to the district sadar hospital. Ferdaus was later moved to Khulna Medical College Hospital with bullet wounds in his neck and left side of the body. Zakir Hosain, officer-in-charge of Gopalganj Sadar Police Station, confirmed the incident.

Unilever boss visits Dhaka

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 Bangladesh for the second time. It has been a very energising and inspiring visit," Polman said. The Unilever boss said he was pleased with the manner in which Unilever Bangladesh has delivered on the commitments of Unilever Sustainable Living Plan and that the company brands were at the forefront of making a positive impact on the lives of millions of people in Bangladesh. "In order to realise sustainable growth, we are integrating sustainability into our strategy, brands and innovation. This means sustainable, equitable growth is the only acceptable model for our business," he added. "We believe growth and sustainability are not in conflict. In fact, in our experience, sustainability drives growth." "I am happy with the progress we have made on driving our sustainability agenda in our Bangladesh business and this has contributed significantly to the strong growth of our business here. We are fully committed to further strengthening our business in Bangladesh," he said. Unilever Bangladesh has consistently delivered double-digit growth over the years and is also one of the top taxpayers in the country. Polman also met various industry leaders, development partners, government officials and prominent personalities of the country.

Ailing Biman wakes

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 Biman just sat on the letter for months even though several other hauls were seized at the airport afterwards. Its managing director could not even remember the letter. "Neither the Biman management nor the Biman Board took any initiative to that end," said an official of the civil aviation ministry wishing anonymity. "Biman has its internal security mechanism. Had the management taken any measures to stop smuggling of gold by its staff and officials, the illegal activity could have been stopped," the official added. The official said they wrote again to the Biman management after one of its cabin crew member, Mazharul Afsar Russell, was arrested on November 12 with five gold bars weighing 2.6kg. Following his confession, detectives arrested five people, including three top Biman officials and the alleged godson of Biman chairman. Biman's acting managing director AM Mosaddique Ahmed last night said he could not recall whether he had received such letters. He claimed that they had given instructions to all its officials and staff not to get involved in any illegal activities. In the wake of the arrests of top Biman officials, Civil Aviation Minister Rashed Khan Menon yesterday convened a meeting of the Biman Board at the ministry where Biman Chairman Air Marshal (retd) Jamal Uddin Ahmed was present. In a TV talk show earlier, he had expressed disappointment that he had to learn about the Biman officials being arrested from the media. He had said neither Biman nor its chairman had informed him of the matter. The meeting decided to bring the entire cargo hangar area under CCTV coverage, Biman cockpit and cabin crew members would be allowed to bring in only a fixed amount of goods from abroad, and flight schedule would be strictly monitored. The meeting was told that gold could be smuggled on board Biman planes at airports abroad by delaying the flights and such delays would now be monitored. The Biman Board asked that meetings of the taskforce, composed of different agencies working at the airport, be held every month instead of every three months. Moinal Khan, director general of customs intelligence, said they had seized 677kg gold and arrested 88 people at the country's three international airports in the last 17 months. A section of the arrestees were staff of Biman and Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh. Besides, Armed Police Battalion personnel seized 112kg gold and arrested at least 25 people in the last two years at Shahjalal International Airport, said officials. Last month, a four-member probe body headed by Moinal found that 14 people, including 10 low-level officials and staff of Biman, were involved in the smuggling of 124 kg gold worth Tk 54 crore on July 22.

City caught

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 The grandiose festival, extended this year to five days, will see some of the all-time greats of Eastern classical music and dance -- including Pandit Shivkumar Sharma, Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan and Vidushi Kishori Amnkar -- perform in sessions every day from dusk till dawn. Organised by Bengal Foundation and presented by Square Group, the festival is being supported by Brac Bank, with The Daily Star and The Daily Prothom Alo as strategic partners, and Maasranga TV as broadcast partner. The audience comprised of seasoned classical music admirers as well as first-timers. Talking to The Daily Star, a group of friends shared their varied experiences. Tasnia Rahman, a private service holder who came to the festival for the first time, said she was overwhelmed by the grandiose event while Nuzhat Nueri Islam, an ardent fan of classical music who attended the previous two editions of the festival, said she was looking forward to reliving those unforgettable nights. Zamira Razdan, a recent graduate was at the event for the second time, and admitted she was exploring classical music and dance more closely than last year.

Afghan senate approves foreign troops staying on

AFP, Kabul
 Afghanistan's upper house of parliament yesterday approved two agreements with the US and Nato allowing about 12,500 troops to remain in the country next year as concerns grow over the worsening insurgency. The Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) with the United States, and a similar pact with NATO, were approved by the lower house of parliament on Sunday before being sent to the senate.

2 cops suspended for helping 'militants' talk over phone

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg
 Chittagong Metropolitan Police yesterday suspended two of its constables for helping five arrested militant suspects talk over the mobile phone. The constables are Khorshed Alam and Md Ayub of Detective Branch (DB) of police. CMP Deputy Commissioner (DB) Kusum Dewan suspended the duo for helping the alleged militants talk over the phone while they were in DB custody, said sources. On Sunday, detectives caught the alleged militants from a hotel in the port city. They are Alam Yasin of Pakistan, and Abdul Majid, Shafiullah, Salamat Ullah and Md Amin of Bangladesh. On Monday, the court of Fifth Metropolitan Magistrate Ahmed Syed placed them on a five-day remand. The five were sent to Dhaka on Tuesday for interrogation by a joint interrogation cell formed by the home ministry, said sources at the CMP.

Opening delayed again

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet
 The construction of the much-awaited Kazirbazar Bridge over the Surma river which again remained suspended for last two months cannot be completed before next March even though the deadline was December 2014, said roads and highways officials. The construction will resume in a week or two soon after the food and railway departments remove their depot and quarter, informed Iftekhhar Kabir, additional chief engineer of Roads & Highways, Sylhet zone, after Road Transportation and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader visited the under-construction bridge yesterday. The construction, which remained incomplete even after eight years against the target of two years due to repeated revisions in the project, delay in land acquisition, unavailability of funds, and a lack of coordination among the relevant government agencies, resumed in full swing in this March. But the finance minister on September 25 ordered to stop the construction after locals, including businessmen, met him to discuss their problems rising as the bridge approach roads have become narrow due to the construction.

Cigarettes worth Tk 30 lakh recovered at Ctg airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg
 Officials of Customs Intelligence recovered 560 cartons of American cigarettes at Shah Amanat International Airport yesterday afternoon. Acting on a tip-off, the officials found the cigarettes, worth around Tk 30 lakh, inside three sofas at around 2:00pm yesterday, said Mostafizur Rahman, deputy director of customs intelligence. One Foysal Ahmed brought the sofas from Dubai on an Air Arabia flight on November 23, he added.

Tareque, Arif

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 in connection with the murder case. The probe report will be submitted to the High Court bench of Justice Md Rezaul Haque and Justice Gobinda Chandra Tagore on December 10. Earlier on November 23, the four-member probe team sent the report to the Attorney General's Office for placing it to the HC, said Deputy Attorney General ASM Nazmul Haque yesterday. He, however, declined to disclose contents of the report.

US proposes stricter ozone limits

AFP, Washington
 The US Environmental Protection Agency announced plans Wednesday to strengthen emission regulations for ozone, a smog-causing pollutant blamed for respiratory ailments affecting millions of Americans. But the measures prompted immediate criticism from Republicans and industry groups, who said they would be too costly, without much benefit. Recent scientific studies, the EPA said, show current standards leave too much harmful smog in the air. Exposure at those levels, and at levels below the current maximum, "can pose serious threats to public health," including causing asthma and other lung diseases and can even be linked to death from respiratory and cardiovascular causes, the agency said.