

WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

SOUL, SOIL AND SYMBOL

Artist Kalidas Karmakar's 72nd solo at National Museum

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TAMING NORTH KOREA

Obama, Asian allies vow steep price for nuclear test

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IOJ splits again, quits 20-party

'Pressure factor' behind decision of Nejami's faction; Raquib-led group assures Khaleda of allegiance

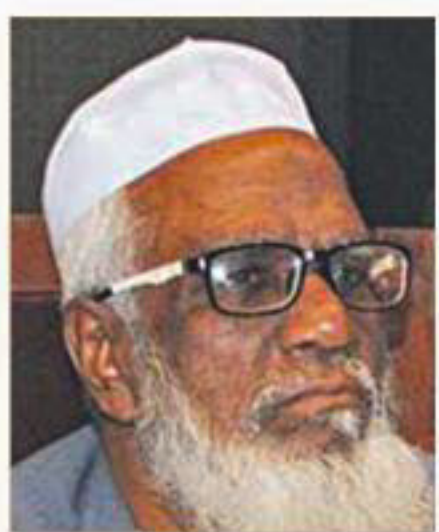
RASHIDUL HASAN and PRABIR BARUA CHOWDHURY

Ending its 17-year ties with the BNP-led alliance, a faction of the Islami Oikya Jote led by Abdul Latif Nejami yesterday quit the combine.

Nejami, chairman of the Qawmi madrasa-based IOJ's faction, made the announcement at its triennial council at the capital's Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh.

Talking to The Daily Star, several leaders of the Islamist party faction said they had no alternative but to quit the BNP-led alliance, as the government put "huge pressure" on them to quit the opposition combine.

"Otherwise, the government would have forced us to change the two principals of the



Abdul Latif Nejami



MA Raquib

capital's Lalbagh and Boro Katra madrasas -- the faction's stronghold and the main source of its income," said one of its leaders, wishing anonymity.

Two leaders of the faction -- Abul Hasnet, son of late IOJ chief Fazlul Huq Amini, and

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JSD LEADER KAZI AREF MURDER

Three killers executed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Three convicted killers of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal leader Kazi Aref Ahmed were executed last night.

Shahjahan Ali, superintendent of Jessore Central Jail, told The Daily Star that Safayat Hossain Habib and Anwar Hossain Anu were hanged at 11:03pm while Rashedul Islam Jhantu at 11:45pm inside the jail.

The trio were top cadres of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Laltu).

Kazi Aref, a liberation war organiser, along with four Kushtia JSD unit men was killed after a rally at Kalidaspur in Daulatpur upazila of Kushtia on February 16, 1999.

The convicts shot Aref several times after he had finished

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TOP QUOTE

"Jamaat will be banned through legal process by this year. There is no doubt about it."

FOOD MINISTER
KAMRUL ISLAM
AT AN ANTI-HARTAL HUMAN CHAIN
PROGRAMME IN FRONT OF THE
JATIYA PRESS CLUB



Thousands of tents pitched on the bank of Turag to house pilgrims as Biswa Ijtema, one of the biggest Muslim congregations in the world, begins here today. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

First phase of Biswa Ijtema begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first phase of three day-long Biswa Ijtema, the second largest congregation of Muslims after the Hajj, begins on the bank of the Turag river at Tongi in Gazipur today.

Defying yesterday's countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal, called by Jamaat-e-Islami, thousands of devotees have already reached the venue to join the first phase of the Ijtema, which will end with Akheri Munajat or final supplication on Sunday.

Jamaat called the hartal on Wednesday, protesting the government's "conspiracy to kill" its armeer Motiur Rahman Nizami after the Supreme Court

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INTERNET TV SERVICES

Netflix comes to Bangladesh



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Streaming pioneer Netflix significantly expanded its global footprint making its Internet TV service available in 130 new markets, including Bangladesh.

The internet TV network expanded to more than 130 countries apart from China, Syria, Crimea and North Korea. The company made the announcement Wednesday --

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Saudi airstrike hits Iranian embassy in Yemen

Claims Tehran, bans all products from Riyadh after ties cut

AGENCIES

Iran yesterday accused Saudi warplanes of deliberately bombing its embassy in Yemen, in a new escalation of diplomatic tensions that have reverberated across the Middle East.

Shia-dominated Iran also announced a ban on imports of all products from its Sunni-ruled rival,

following a dramatic chill in relations that has triggered international alarm.

It comes days after Saudi Arabia broke off diplomatic ties with Iran in response to an arson attack on its own embassy in Tehran by protesters infuriated by Riyadh's execution of a prominent Shia cleric.

Tehran said an unspecified number of embassy staff had been wounded in

the raid on the rebel-held Yemeni capital Sanaa, which has been targeted by months of air strikes by a Saudi-led Arab coalition.

"This deliberate action by Saudi Arabia is a violation of all international conventions that protect diplomatic missions," Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Hossein Jaber Ansari

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Not every star is a superstar. Not every sweetener is Sugar Free.

- Riaz Ahmed (Actor, CEO, Entrepreneur)

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