

G8 asks Iran, N Korea to comply with nuke rules

AGENCIES, *Evian (France)*

Leaders of the world's richest nations have called for tighter control of arms, including nuclear weapons and missiles which could be used by terrorists.

A statement issued at the end of a Group of Eight meeting in France made specific reference to Iran and North Korea, urging them to comply with international nuclear safeguards.

The summit was the first opportunity for many of the leaders to meet since sharp divisions developed over the war in Iraq.

French President Jacques Chirac held talks with his US coun-

terpart George W Bush, after which they said they might have disagreements, but they did not have to be "disagreeable" to each other.

Huge protests which erupted into violence on the first day of the G8 meeting on Sunday were not repeated yesterday.

The closing statement from the summit in Evian called global terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction "the pre-eminent threat to international security".

It said the world community had to use weapons inspections, export controls "and, if necessary, other measures" to tackle the threat of these weapons.

"We strongly urge North Korea to

visibly, verifiably and irreversibly dismantle any nuclear weapons programmes," said the statement.

It added that Iran's nuclear programme could also lead to weapons production.

"We will not ignore the proliferation implications of Iran's advanced nuclear program," it added, appealing to Tehran to comply with its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and accept more intrusive UN inspections without conditions.

Iran recently acknowledged it had a far more extensive nuclear research program -- including uranium enrichment -- than previously declared. But it denies seek-

ing atomic arms.

The Group -- the United States, France, Germany, Britain, Italy, Canada, Russia and Japan -- agreed on a plan to keep radioactive material from falling into the hands of terrorists. It would entail tighter monitoring of the location of materials and confining export to states "that have effective controls."

The G8, which includes the world's main manufacturers of shoulder-fired missiles, urged all nations to do more to ensure terrorists could not get hold of portable anti-aircraft weapons.


The leaders pledged still tighter export controls to ensure WMD

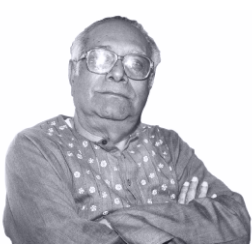
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PHOTO: STAR

The Chittagong Port looks deserted, as foreign feeder vessels declined to resume operation for a third day yesterday to protest the Bangladesh Flag (Protection) Ordinance, 1982. Top business leaders called for an end to the port deadlock that left huge exportables in piles.

 **Exclusive**



The timeless voice of Kalim Sharafi

Kalim Sharafi responds to the readers of The Daily Star

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Business wants flag rule to go

'Economic disaster looms if ordinance not changed'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Top business leaders yesterday urged the government to amend or scrap the Bangladesh Flag (Protection) Ordinance, 1982 to immediately end the deadlock at Chittagong Port.

They said huge exportables have already piled up at the port, which would spell a serious economic disaster if the crisis had lingered further.

The call came at a joint press conference of four top chamber bodies and two leading exporters' associations at the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) conference room.

The chamber bodies are the FBCCI, the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), Chittagong Chamber of Commerce

and Industry (CCCI) and the Bangladesh Chamber of Industry (BCI).

The exporters' associations are the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA).

The business leaders hoped that the government would make a swift decision to end the deadlock.

"We are continuously getting negative letters from our overseas clients following the suspension of operation by the major foreign feeder vessel operators and it may bring disaster to trade," said Yussuf Abdullah Haroon, president of the FBCCI.

He observed that it would be very difficult to bring back a buyer once

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Heat wave to continue for 7 more days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The blistering heat wave baking Bangladesh is set to continue for one more week till the arrival of monsoon, weather forecasters said.

"The advent of monsoon has been delayed by seven days this year," a forecaster said. "It was supposed to make landfall on our coast today (yesterday)."

He, however, said the 'worst part of the summer' was over. The summer is getting ready to give way to soothing rains, he said.

Meanwhile, life in Dhaka and elsewhere continued to wilt in heat, compounded by frequent power outages and high humidity.

The heat wave is also playing havoc with perishable goods, especially jackfruits and eggs, sellers said.

The capital yesterday recorded the highest temperature of 36.1 degrees Celsius. The humidity was 68 per cent in the morning and 50 per cent in evening.

The highest temperature was recorded at 39.6 degrees Celsius in Jessore yesterday.

5-year ban proposed on creation of new municipality

UNB, *Dhaka*

The Public Expenditures Review Commission (PERC) has suggested a five-year moratorium on formation of any new pourasava (municipality) and merger of the Textile and Jute Ministries with the Industries Ministry.

The PERC in its second interim report submitted to Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday also recommended that a single corpo-

ration should replace the existing five corporations that manage state-owned enterprises (SoE) in different sectors.

The single corporation, according to the report, will cover industries now under different corporations in jute, steel, chemical, food and sugar, and forest sectors.

PERC chairman Hafizuddin Khan and member Abbasuddin Khan who jointly briefed journalists said one corporation instead of five

would save the public exchequer.

Since 223 out of 330 SoEs have been closed down and only 107 are now in production, the size of management and head offices of the corporations should also be cut down, their report suggested.

The PERC interim report described each of the enterprise boards of the five corporations as superficial and said they have become practically irrelevant.

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CPD

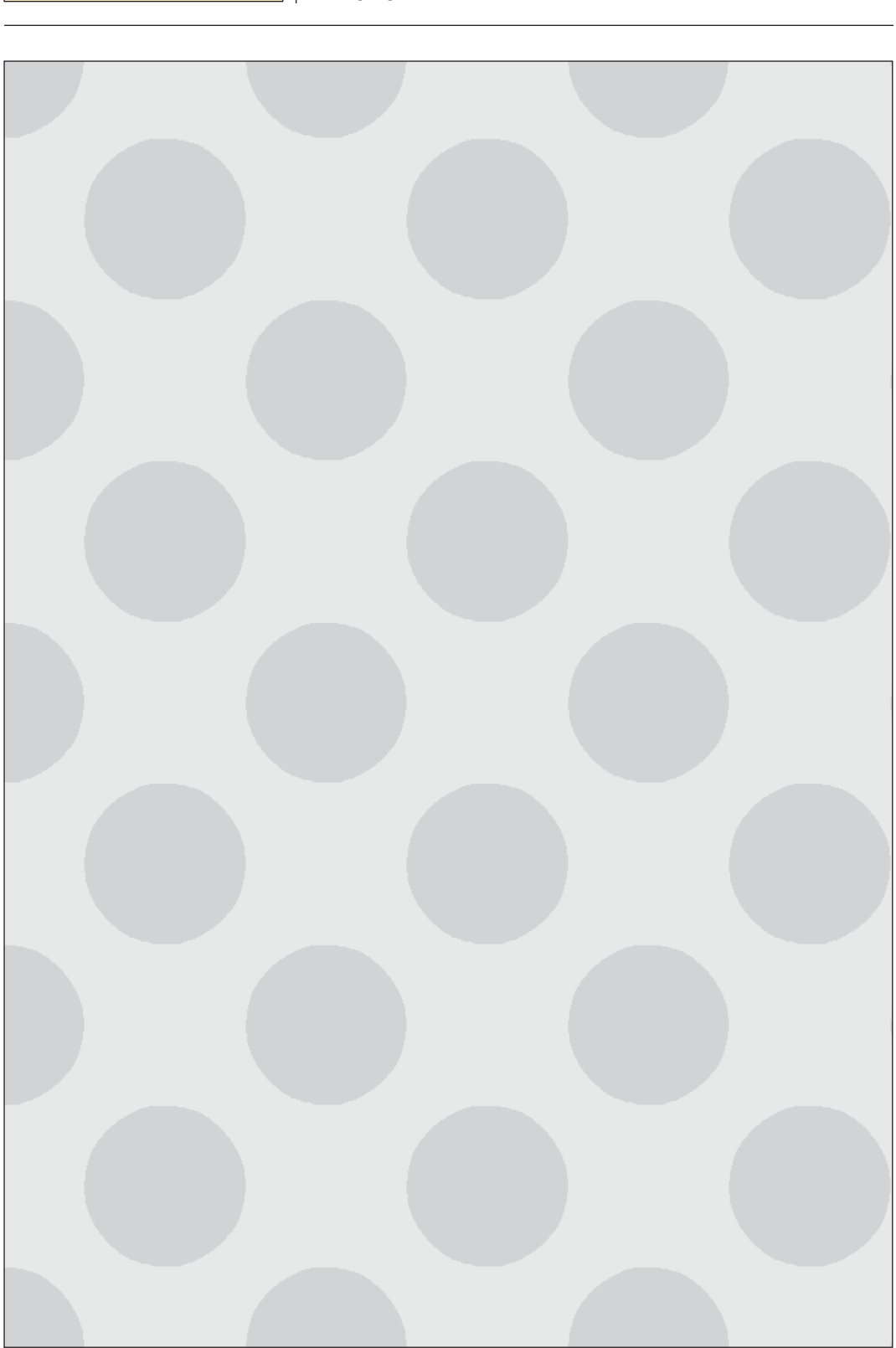
National Policy Review Forum 2003 begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), The Daily Star and the Prothom Alo open the National Policy Review Forum 2003 at a city hotel today and discuss a raft of important national issues in subsequent working sessions.

Finance and Planning Minister

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AL sends letter to govt to drop SQ Chy from OIC job race

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) yesterday urged the prime minister to remove Salauddin Quader Chowdhury from the run for the secretary general of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

The AL concern came in a letter after the alliance government nominated the parliamentary affairs adviser to the prime minister for the OIC top job, as he is accused of anti-Bangladesh activities and misdeeds.

The letter signed by AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil told the prime minister that a person beyond controversy would get support from all.

Meanwhile, Abdul Jalil told reporters that the AL would inform

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Two held for swindling CNG 3-wheeler clients

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two officials of an unregistered organisation, Eximco Group of Companies, were arrested yesterday on charge of swindling.

The officials had allegedly realised Tk 1,42,35,000 to supply 73 four-stroke CNG three-wheelers in January, but did not supply a single.

Two customers, advocate ABM Nurul Islam and Mostafizur Rahman, filed two separate cases with the Motijheel Police Station yesterday.

The accused are Abul Khayer, the company owner, Assistant General Manager Sujaul Islam, and office assistants Nasiruddin and Nurunnabi.

Police later arrested Sujaul and Nurunnabi from their residences in

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PHOTO: STAR

A physically challenged girl holds a placard in a human chain in the city yesterday to call for implementation of the prime minister's pledges for a better life.

Gas supply crunch threatens power generation

STAR REPORT

The gas supply situation has turned critical with the demand exceeding the supply capacity.

Sources in the Gas Transmission Company Ltd. (GTCL) said gas pressure has fallen in Dhaka and if the high demand persists, some of the gas-run power and fertiliser plants might have to be shut down.

On the other hand, the power supply has been hit as the 450 MW Meghnaghat power plant remained inoperative for the last three days.

To cover up the supply shortfall, the Power Development Board (PDB) has increased power generation at the power plants in Raozan and Ghorashal. However, these older power plants consume more gas to produce 450 MW power than the modern Meghnaghat plant does.

While the Meghnaghat plant consumes 57 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) gas, the older plants

consume an additional 30 to 35 mmcf-- putting extra pressure on the saturated gas supply system.

Sources said over the last three to four days, gas demand has shot up to over 1,270 mmcf against a maximum supply of 1,218 mmcf. The additional demand is met by drawing gas accumulated or stored in the pipelines. The gas transmission pipelines naturally store some gas.

"Right now, due to some technical difficulties, the Kafco fertiliser factory is consuming 37 mmcf of gas instead of the usual 62 mmcf. So if Kafco resumes full operation tomorrow, the demand would shoot up to 1,295 mmcf," said a source. "The only thing we can hope to happen now is that the Meghnaghat plant resumes operation soon and thus reduce the gas requirement of the power sector," he added.

For a long time, Petrobangla had been forecasting the current gas

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Give opposition chance to speak in Sangsad

UNDP chief also tells AL walkouts not best way to settle differences

REAZ AHMAD

The opposition should be given the chance to speak in parliament, Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Dhaka Jorgen Lissner told a meeting with the government and the opposition yesterday.

The meeting, held ahead of the upcoming budget session, took stock of the latest situation against the backdrop of the main opposition Awami League's boycotting the last session of parliament in May.

Lissner apart, Chief Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad Khandaker Delwar Hossain and Chief Whip of the Opposition Abdus Shahid took part

in the meeting that lasted for over 90 minutes at the Sangsad Bhaban.

There was an elaborate discussion on a whole range of issues concerning the effective functioning of parliament, strengthening of parliamentary democracy, formation of the remaining parliamentary standing committees and further

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HBM Iqbal, 6 others sued for 'graft'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bureau of Anti-corruption (BAC) has filed three graft cases against seven persons, including former Awami League lawmaker HBM Iqbal, on charge of tampering with tenders of Willes Little Flower School.

Anti-corruption Officer ABM Mahbub lodged the cases with the Ramna Police Station yesterday.

In one case, he alleged that HBM Iqbal and the proprietor of the advertising firm Tarijab Trade and Decoration embezzled Tk 2.30 lakh

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