

Poverty cut in S Asia possible under SAARC

PM, Pak envoy express same view

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka and Islamabad firmly believe that tremendous success in alleviating poverty in South Asia is possible maintaining peace and stability in the region under the SAARC umbrella.

The two sides expressed the unanimous views when the newly appointed Pakistan High Commissioner, Manzar Shafiq, made a courtesy call on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office here yesterday.

They noted that different regional blocs in the world made significant strides, improving the situation of their respective regions during the last two decades—much the same period of time the SAARC has passed through.

The prime minister and the envoy held the views that the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), through complementary and supplementary use of its available resources, can improve the lot of the people of the region.

"Massive economic achievement can be generated through the SAARC," the two sides agreed.

Turning to OIC, the forum of world's Muslim countries, Khaleda said its members should give emphasis on science and technology for advancement.

In this regard, she hoped that the OIC-members countries would continue and increase their commitment to the Islamic

University of Technology in Gazipur.

Manzar Shafiq conveyed warmest regards from Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Jafarullah Khan Jamali to the Bangladesh leader.

Reminding her of the invitation for a bilateral visit to Pakistan, the envoy said the leaders and the people were eagerly waiting to receive her in Islamabad.

"The Pakistani people hold Khaleda in the highest esteem," Manzar Shafiq said.

Khaleda in this regard expressed her willingness to pay a bilateral visit to Pakistan, apart from attending the SAARC Summit scheduled for early next year in Islamabad.

Conveying her regards to the Pakistan president and the prime minister, she said a very cordial relationship existed between the two countries.

The Pakistan High Commissioner said there was an ample scope for expanding trade, commerce, education and cultural relationship between the two countries.

He recalled the contribution of late President Ziaur Rahman to the formation of the regional cooperation forum SAARC and paid rich tributes to him as he said it was Zia's brainchild.

Dwelling on the recently concluded OIC Summit, the Pakistan high commissioner reiterated his country's support to Bangladesh candidature for the post of OIC

Secretary General.

Shafiq conveyed Pakistani president's gratitude to Bangladesh prime minister for supporting

his proposal for enlightened modernisation of the OIC. The Pakistani diplomat also appreciated Bangladesh's success in improving its image abroad and lauded its success in different international forums.

Khaleda, through the High Commissioner, conveyed warm regards to the Pakistani President and the Prime Minister.

The High Commissioner's wife, Rehana Shafiq, and PM's Principal Secretary, Dr Kamal Siddiqui, were present on the occasion.

President, PM greet Czech counterparts

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia have felicitated their Czech counterparts on the occasion of Independence Day of the Czech Republic.

They wished good health, happiness and long life of their Czech counterparts and continued peace and prosperity for the people of the Czech Republic.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

With Ramadan beginning today, traders started producing vermicelli in huge quantity to do a brisk business ahead of Eid. But most of them do not follow hygienic norms in making the product. The picture shows vermicelli being dried near a pile of garbage in the city's Lalbagh area.



Film director Salahuddin passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A H Salahuddin, an eminent film producer and director, passed away on October 26 at a nursing home in Valparaiso, Indiana, USA.

He was 79. Salahuddin had suffered from brain haemorrhage in January 1998 and was in comatose for the last five years and nine months.

He is survived by his wife Ruhia Salahuddin, only daughter Dr Sigma Salahuddin, four sisters, two brothers and a host of relatives.

Salahuddin was known for his legendary folk movie 'Roopban' which made a big splash throughout erstwhile East Pakistan, especially in the rural areas in the mid 1960s. He was one of the few creative film directors who made classic movies of Bangladesh like 'Je Nadi Morupathe', 'Dharapat', 'Suryasnan' and 'Tero Number Feku Ostagar Lane'.

Salahuddin started his career as a science demonstrator at Victoria College in Comilla in the early 1950s.

He left Dhaka for London in disguise during the War of Liberation in 1971 as Pakistani military junta was hunting him down for publishing Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib's famous speech at Ramna Race Course on March 7.

Hailed from Brahmanbaria, he immigrated to the USA in 1992 and was leading a retired life.

Alhaj Abul Hossain

Alhaj Abul Hossain, former forest ranger, died at his residence on Sunday night at the age of 73, says a press release.

He left behind five sons, two daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

He was laid to rest at his family graveyard at Pipulia village of Pubail under Dhaka district.

A milad mahfil will be held at his residence at 15, Uttar Basabo in the city after Asr prayers on October 31.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the milad mahfil.

1696 more held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested a total of 1696 people, including two listed criminals, during their countrywide drive in last 24 hours ending at 6am yesterday.

During the drive, they recovered five firearms, four other weapons and 26 bullets and filed four cases against seven people under the Arms Act,

Higher pays, perks for MD, two directors in 3 gas cos

Experts say pay hike for three key posts won't generate efficiency

UNB, Dhaka

The government yesterday confirmed appointments to key posts in three gas companies who will enjoy higher pays and perks than usual as per a donor agency's suggestion, official sources said.

Objective of such higher salaries against the top posts is to ensure efficient services. However, concerned circles apprehend that it could create anomaly in overall salary structure.

The appointments to the posts of managing director, director (operation) and director (finance) were given to fulfil the conditions of Asian Development Bank (ADB) for its Dhaka Clean Fuel Project, sources said.

In providing credits for the 113 million US dollar project, the ADB put a condition that recruitment to the key positions of three gas companies would have to be made on competitive basis, offering higher salaries.

Main objective of such appointments in Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd., Gas Transmission Company Ltd. (GTCL) and Rupantarita Praktik Gas Company Ltd. (RPGCL) is to ensure efficiency in the potential energy sector, sources added.

Experts, however, have a different opinion. They say pay hike only for three key posts will not generate efficiency unless all the officials and employees are well paid and get incentives.

"Our government pay scale is ridiculous. It's more frustrating

for the people working in the energy sector which is a strategic one and very important for country's overall development," said Prof M Tamim of BUET.

About the appointments to the key posts against high salaries, he said it is meant for infusing efficiency into the companies. "But it'll not bring any good unless others are paid properly," he said.

Since the companies cannot change the government pay scale, he suggested developing some alternative arrangements for encouraging pay for officials-employees of the strategic sector.

As the BUET teacher made the observations on Sunday at a roundtable marking the government's two-year performance in the sector, State Minister for Energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain maintained the views.

The highly paid new MDs are M Abdullah (Titas), Monjur Morshed Talukder (GTCL) and MA Wadud (RPGCL). The newly appointed directors (operation) are Aminur Rahman (Titas), Kh. A Saleque (GTCL) and Kamruzzaman (RPGCL).

They were selected by a government committee that made recommendation for the appointments after interviewing a number of applicants working with different government organisations, mainly in the energy sector.

Bus boycott in Sylhet continues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

People of three upazilas have vowed to continue boycott of bus and minibus until the BRTC resumes its full service on Sylhet-Tamabil route.

Residents of Jaintapur, Kanaighat and Gowainghat started their boycott programme on October 13 protesting the activities of the owners and workers of buses and minibuses who forced the administration to stop the BRTC service on Sylhet-Tamabil highway.

BRTC had been operating four buses on Sylhet-Jaintapur, Sylhet-Kanaighat and Sylhet-Gowainghat routes since September, but its service was suspended in the face of agitation by transport owners and workers.

The transport workers also enforced a strike from October 22 to press home their demand for curtailment of BRTC buses. They withdrew the strike after three days when the BRTC agreed to ply only one bus.

The decision to reduce BRTC service has sparked off adverse reaction among the people of three upazilas who had been agitating against the transport owners and workers.

At a rally at the Jaintapur upazila headquarters on Sunday evening, the Brihatar Jainta Samannaya Samity announced that the boycott will continue in protest against the reduction of BRTC buses.

Chaired by the ex-upazila chairman of Jaintapur, the meeting was addressed by leaders of all political parties and chairmen of different union parishads.

Ruling party lawmaker Dilder Hossain Selim and Director (Admin-

istration) of BRTC Shahjahan Talukder, also spoke.

Meanwhile, the Greater Sylhet Ganadabi Parishad has demanded reintroduction of adequate BRTC buses in different routes in Sylhet and protested harassment of passengers in private buses and minibuses.

The leaders of the organisation placed their demand at a public rally in the city's court area yesterday evening.

They strongly protested the suspension of BRTC bus service.

2 listed criminals held in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two listed criminals were arrested with illegal fire-arms and ammunition at Salkania in the district on Sunday night.

The arrested identified as Abul Bashar and Abu Taher, were reportedly Shibir cadres having a good number of criminal cases against each.

Sources said, Salkania police raided Ali Nagar village of Aeoehia union under the upazila to arrest them. Police also recovered one 303 rifle, 22 bullets and two daggers from their possessions.

The criminals were preparing for a robbery, police said. Bashar is wanted in 20 cases including seven murders.

The cases include murders of freedom fighter Yusuf Quaderi, Jubo League leader Golam Hossain, Hafez Ahmed and former local UP chairman Nurul Kabir,

President, PM felicitate Muslim leaders on Ramadan

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in separate messages conveyed their sincere and heartiest felicitations to the Heads of State and government of Muslim countries on the occasion of Ramadan.

They also prayed to the Almighty Allah for divine blessings for greater unity, solidarity and prosperity of the Muslim Ummah.

They have also expressed that the preaching of Ramadan will help in further strengthening and consolidating the unity, significance and solidarity of the Muslim Ummah for the greater interest of Islam.

They further prayed for the good health, well-being and long life of the leaders of the Muslim world and for the continued peace, progress and prosperity of their people.

Feature writing workshop begins

DU CORRESPONDENT

A five-day workshop on 'Journalistic Feature Writing' began in the city yesterday.

Organised by the British Council, the workshop aims at building the capacity of young journalists in the area of feature writing for print media and to establish link with their British counterparts.

Dr June Rollinson, director of the British Council, formally inaugurated the workshop at the council auditorium.

Bangladesh, India natural friends

FM tells high commissioner

UNB, Dhaka

The outgoing Indian High Commissioner, ML Tripathi, paid a farewell call on Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan at his office yesterday.

The foreign minister appreciated the Indian High Commissioner for his contribution and tireless efforts to strengthen the bilateral relations between the two countries.

Bangladesh and India are natural friends, said Morshed Khan adding that economic ties must be strengthened to ensure mutual benefit of the two peoples.

He, in this regard, emphasised on working together without any delay on Free Trade Agreement

(FTA). Both the foreign minister and the high commissioner observed that there was a greater scope to further expand cooperation in the fields of culture and education for enrichment of the peoples of the two countries.

They hoped that the excellent bilateral relationship that exists between the two countries would be maintained and cemented further in days to come.

The Indian high commissioner expressed gratitude to foreign minister for extending sincere cooperation to him during his tenure in Bangladesh.

3 get life term for raping girl

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Three people have been awarded life term for raping a minor girl.

Judge of the Women and Children Repression Control Tribunal Md Shahinor Islam gave the verdict yesterday.

The convicts are Shahidul Islam alias Shahid, Ershad Sana and Dabiruddin Dabu. Shahidul Islam and Ershad Sana are absconding.

According to the prosecution, Rokeya Khatun, her son Haroonar-Rashid and daughter Manjura were working in a paddy field at Naksha village under Koira upazila at noon on

December 22, 1999.

At one stage, Rokeya and her son Haroon came back to their house leaving Manjura in the field to complete the remaining work.

The accused then went to the field and committed rape abducting Manjura, 12, to a solitary place.

On January 1, 2000 Rokeya filed a FIR with Koira thana accusing Shahid, Ershad Sana and Dabiruddin for raping her daughter.

Investigation Officer S I Akhtaruzzaman pressed charges against the accused on April 30.

Anti-drug human chain at DU

DU CORRESPONDENT

Madak Birodhi Chhatra Parishad (students council against drugs) of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday formed a human chain to protest the use of drugs on the campus.

The parishad also held a rally at the foot of the Aparajeyo Bangla.

Addressing the rally, the parishad leaders expressed their concern over the increasing number of drug addicts on the campus.

They said the students, who are the future leaders of the country, have been damaging their career by taking drugs.

"We shall launch movement to build up social awareness about the harmful effects of drugs," said Mohammad Habibur Rahman Pappu, convener of the parishad. The programme of the movement would be announced soon, he added.

Assistant Professor of nutrition and food science department Dr Abdus Zaher, Bashir Ahmed, Abdul Momen, Mohammad Enamul Islam Shantia and Mohammad Arifuzzaman Happy also spoke.



PHOTO: STAR

Students of Dhaka University form a human chain on the campus yesterday to raise awareness about the dangers of drugs. Madak Birodhi Chhatra Parishad

WEATHER TODAY

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Dhaka and Khulna divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions till 6pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 34.7 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakunda and the lowest 20.4 degree Celsius at Sayedpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:23 pm today and rises at 6:03 am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	31.2	23.6	81	94
Chittagong	34.0	24.8	69	77
Rajshahi	28.4	23.2	100	92
Khulna	33.0	24.0	83	97
Barisal	32.2	24.4	86	96
Sylhet	31.0	22.0	93	92
Cox's Bazar	34.2	24.5	71	80