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Ambassador Scholtyssek Is Confident

'Bangladesh Can Count on Germany'

By Sabir Mustafa

"SOON after the cyclone of April 29, I went to Kutubdia and saw the devastation wrought by the storm. From there I went to Cox's Bazar and stayed at a beachside hotel. In front of the hotel all the plants and trees had been uprooted. The destruction was terrible. But amid all that, one rose bush had somehow survived, and I saw one single was coming out, in the process of blooming. To me, that was symbolic of the re-birth of the cyclone-hit region. It gave me a great sense of optimism for the future."

Karl-Heinz Scholtyssek, the German ambassador to Bangladesh for the past two years, spoke those words of hope during an interview given to the Daily Star.

Germany, which today celebrates its first anniversary of unification after 45 years of existence as two separate states of vastly contrasting social, economic and political systems, has always been one of Bangladesh's most sincere well-wishers and friends. Germany's post-1945 economic revival and a growing sense of responsibility among the German people towards the well-being of the people of the less developed nations of the world, befitting Bangladesh to a great extent.

Since the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the economic and political union between the two Germanys last year, concern has been growing in the developing world about Germany's ability to continue to play a major role in the process of world development.

Germany's massive commitment towards the re-development of Europe's formerly communist states would naturally put Bonn's budget under some serious constraints. Under such circumstances, could Bangladesh, for instance, hope for continued German assistance? Ambassador Scholtyssek's reply to that and other, equally important questions was unambiguous:

KARL-HEINZ SCHOLTYSSEK (KHS): There's been economic development cooperation between Bangladesh and Germany for a long time. For the past 20 years that has been our top-most priority.

Far from reducing our commitment to this country's development, Germany has increased its aid to Bangladesh for 1991. This year aid — all of which is given as grants — stands at DM130 million, or about 300 crore taka.

A substantial portion — around DM30 million — will go towards rehabilitation of cyclone victims while a separate grant will be made for the cyclone-shelter building programme.

An important aspect of our

aid programme is health and population-related projects. We make this a point that population programmes should have an integrated approach, taking in primary education, hygiene awareness, behaviour pattern etc.

Our technical or project aid is also a substantial one. It ranges from a rural development project in Tangail to the Ashuganj power station training centre. We also have railway car repair programmes at Syedpur and Chittalaong.

Our fish-farm project at Jayashakha in Bogra is also a most worthwhile one, as it tackles the root of the problem, meaning poverty. Only the poorest can take part in that project, which helps to alleviate poverty.

Our new commitments in Europe will not affect our aid policy towards Bangladesh. Our efforts have been successful so far and we will continue to support Bangladesh.

DAILY STAR: How do Germans see Bangladesh? Is there a lot of individual or non-government German participation in Bangladesh's development process?

KHS: There is wide interest and enthusiasm among the German people to assist Bangladesh in raising its standard of living. As you know there was a quick and positive response from the German public to appeals to help victims of the April cyclone. A great deal of contributions were made on a voluntary basis.

There are German non-government organisations (NGOs) working in Bangladesh, such as Andheri, the German Red Cross and various church organisations. All of them work with Bangladeshi partners. Andheri, for instance, which has carried out over 500,000 free eye-operations in Bangladesh so far, is staffed and managed entirely by Bangladeshis.

There are 200 Germans currently spread-out across the country. Young people doing some great field work to help Bangladesh. We also offer 60 scholarships every year to Bangladeshis to go to Germany for higher studies and technical training. This helps mutual understanding between the peoples of the two countries a great deal.

DS: Are you involved in any flood-related projects? Are you concerned about the environmental impacts of some of those projects?

KHS: Germany is taking part in two projects of the Flood Action Plan mapped out by the London Conference of 1989, and being coordinated by the UNDP.

We have made it clear that we will attach great importance to environmental aspects of any projects. Every project Germany funds will have to be compatible with the surrounding environment. There is no question about that. The Group of Seven industrialised countries made a special reference to environment protection at their meeting in June this year. The G-7 made a call to find ways to finance developing nations to undertake environment protection programmes.

DS: What is the current situation in the trade sector? Does Bangladeshi products have a good prospect in the German market?

KHS: Bangladesh is currently running a trade surplus with Germany, which is not bad at all. During fiscal year 190-91, we've imported around US\$127 million worth of goods from Bangladesh, mainly garments, shrimps, leather goods and ceramics. Our exports to Bangladesh for the same period amounted to some US\$110 million. At the same time, Bangladesh is constantly im-

something that has to be looked into. But overall there are good possibilities ahead.

DS: How about direct German investment in Bangladesh. Joint ventures and stuff like that?

KHS: Direct German investment is still rather small. The private investor will only go to a place where the climate is right and profit can be made.

However, political stability and strengthening of democratic institutions in Bangladesh in recent months have certainly contributed to the growth of confidence among German investors. The new government has made it clear it will encourage foreign investment, and the new industrial policy, which offers incentives, bears this commitment out.

Purely economic questions, relating to productivity and consistency of product quality, will also be important factors.

I recently opened a factory in Bogra which will produce oil-filters made of German components. I was very im-



President Dr Richard von Weizsacker

been here for two years now and travelled all over the country, and one of my main aims is to foster people-to-people

come regularly and give lectures at the Institut. We also organise visits to Germany which helps to cultivate a human dimension to our bilateral relations.

The Institut also promotes Bangladeshi artists by holding regular exhibitions, while promoting Germany through conducting German language courses. It really is a centre for the two cultures.

DS: How do you see bilateral relations developing in the future?

KHS: I am very optimistic. Our relations are based on mutual respect and sympathy and they are warm and friendly. Main task of the future will naturally be concentrated in the areas of economic development cooperation, but we could establish more contacts in the fields of culture.

I have seen most of this country, and my stay here has been a happy one. The process of German re-unification also showed the sympathy Bangladesh people have for Germans. Their expressions of joy on that occasion was one of the most moving experiences I have had.

This country is a self-generating one. I am always impressed by how firm and resolute the people of this country are in overcoming their problem. The people of Bangladesh are capable of overcoming extreme distress and continue with their lives. In doing so, they can also count on Germany.

DS: Thank you, Ambassador Scholtyssek, for your time.



The Chancellor's Message

October 3, 1991 marks the first anniversary of the day on which the German people achieved the official unification of Germany in free self-determination. This was the day for which millions of Germans in both East and West had longed for decades. We owe the fact that we were able to experience it first and foremost to the people of the former GDR, who by virtue of their love of liberty peacefully overcame the communist dictatorship and caused the Wall to come tumbling down. But we are also grateful to our neighbours and partners in Europe and throughout the world for their solidarity and support.

The chance for a reconciliation in freedom does not only represent a chance for Germany but also for the whole of Europe. The love of liberty and respect for the dignity of one's neighbour form the basis for a future all-European peace order in which people and nations live together in freedom.

The vision of a "United States of Europe" of which Winston Churchill spoke in his famous Zurich speech in 1946, remains our goal in the task of European unification. The achievement of a single European market and the realisation of both economic and monetary union during the nineties mark the way ahead for the European Community. Let us seize the chance which history has presented in the last decade of this century with the ending of the division of Germany and Europe — the opportunity to secure peace and freedom for the future of Europe and, building on these founda-

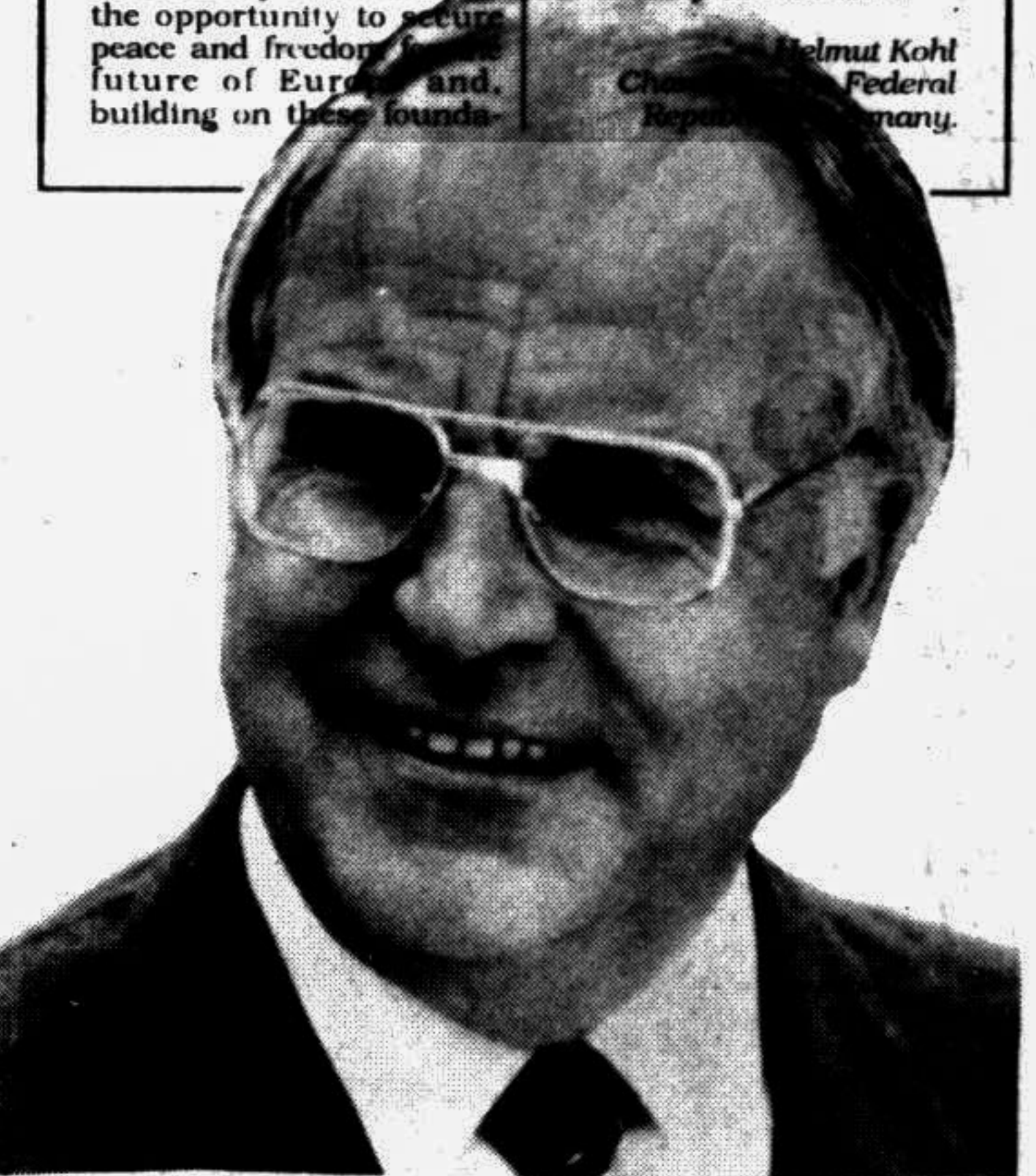
tions, to point the way towards partnership and peaceful cooperation in the world.

Yet the united Germany would be failing to live up to its increased international responsibility if we were only to concern ourselves with problems and challenges in our own country. The role of Germany in international politics must now be adjusted to the changed situation. Freedom entails commitments. Thus I am not only in favour of open and free world trade and intensive economic contacts with the countries of the Third World, it is also the time to live up to this increased responsibility through a strengthened commitment within the framework of peacekeeping measures of the United Nations.

The united Germany will remain a reliable and steadfast partner in international affairs. We shall thus continue to make our contribution towards solving the increasingly urgent problems now affecting the world as a whole. The countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia can count on the solidarity of Germany. We Germans were able to seize the unique historic chance of restoring the unity of our country in freedom. This gives us a moral obligation to support people's desire for freedom and democracy all over the world.

Thus the significance of October 3, the anniversary of German unification, will also extend beyond the borders of Germany — as a symbol of the aspiration for freedom, peace and democracy in the world.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl
Federal Republic of Germany



Chancellor Helmut Kohl



Ambassador Scholtyssek

"There is a lot of interest in and sympathy for Bangladesh in Germany. I have been here for two years now and travelled all over the country. One of my aims is to foster people-to-people contact between our two cultures. There are so many beautiful aspects to Sonar Bangla that need to be pointed out..."

proving its export performance and doing very well at German trade fairs. To boost trade relations further, we will be organising a seminar here in November on how to do business in Germany. This will help to acclimatise Bangladeshi businessmen with the German market.

One of the main problems is that, after a successful visit to Germany by a Bangladeshi trade delegation, there is often no follow-up, and consequently no good use is made of available opportunities. This is

pressed by what I saw there. Many young people are involved in various cottage industries all over the country, which helps to build up skill and entrepreneurship. It needs initiative and cooperation. But there is certainly potential for Bangla-German business interaction.

DS: Is there a lot of cultural interaction between the two countries? Does Bangladesh interest the German people?

KHS: There is a lot of interest in and sympathy for Bangladesh in Germany. I have

contact between our two cultures. There are so many beautiful aspects to Sonar Bangla that need to be pointed out to the German public.

We established our first cultural link with this country in 1921, through the Dhaka University. Rabindranath Tagore is a very well known personality in Germany.

We have the German cultural institute called the Goethe Institut in Dhaka, which does some great work in promoting cultural ties. Professors from Germany

1989 AD

Starting in July: Refugees from the GDR are in the German missions in Berlin (East), Budapest and Prague.

Since September: 50,000 inhabitants of the GDR flee to the Federal Republic of Germany via Hungary.

September 20: Around 6,000 refugees from the GDR at the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Prague are allowed to leave for the Federal Republic.

October 7: Official celebration of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the GDR. Thousands of people demonstrate against the dictatorship of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED). The demonstrators are broken up by the police.

October 9: "Monday Demonstration" in Leipzig: 100,000 people chant, "We are the people!" Further large-scale demonstrations follow in other cities.

December 18: After holding the reins of power for 18 years, SED General Secretary Erich Honecker is removed from office. He is succeeded by Egon Krenz. November 4: In Berlin (East), the largest protest demonstration in the history of the GDR draws roughly one million people.

November 7: The government of the GDR resigns. November 9: The Berlin Wall is opened and additional crossing points to the Federal Republic of Germany are created.

November 13: Hans Modrow (SED) is elected the new president of the GDR Council of Ministers.

December 1: The People's Chamber strikes the SED's monopoly on the constitution of the GDR.

December 3 and 8: SED General Secretary Egon Krenz resigns from all his party and government offices.

Historical Journey Through Time

December 7: The "Round Table" talks between the governing parties and the opposition begin in the GDR. Free elections are announced.

December 9-9: European Council in Strasbourg: The heads of state and government declare that the unification of Germany must be achieved in harmony with the Helsinki Final Act and must be embedded in European integration.

December 19-20: Chancellor Kohl holds talks in Dresden with Prime Minister Modrow on the prospects for developing relations between the two German states and speaks to the people of Dresden in front of the "Frauenkirche".

December 22: The Brandenburg Gate in Berlin is opened in the presence of Chancellor Kohl, Prime Minister Modrow and other politicians of both German states.

1990 AD

February 10: Kohl and Foreign Minister Genscher meet in Moscow with Mikhail Gorbachev, who assures the Germans that they may live together in one state.

February 13-14: Prime Minister Modrow visits Bonn. Chancellor Kohl suggests negotiations on an economic and monetary union.

March 18: The first free elections are held in the GDR. The "Alliance for Germany" (consisting of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Democratic Awakening and the German Social Union) wins the elections.

April 12: For the first time in its history, the People's Chamber of the GDR elects a democratic government. A grand coalition is formed consisting of the "Alliance for Germany", the Liberals and the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Lothar de Maiziere is elected prime minister of the GDR.

April 19: The policy statement by de Maiziere declares a commitment to German unity.

April 28: The European Community heads of state and government welcome German unification at a special meeting in Dublin and prepare the way for integrating the GDR into the Community on achievement of German unity.

May 6: Local elections are held in the GDR. The CDU continues to be the strongest party.

May 18: The Treaty Between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic Establishing a Monetary, Economic and Social Union is signed in Bonn by the government of the Federal Republic of Germany and the government of the GDR.

June 21: The Bundestag and the People's Chamber approve identically worded resolutions on the border between the united Germany and Poland. They announce their willingness to reaffirm the definitive nature of the border on the basis of an international treaty.

June 27: The government of the Federal Republic of Germany and the government of the GDR approve a reciprocal agreement on the elimination of border checks along the intra-German border as of July 1,

1990

July 1: The monetary, economic and social union between the Federal Republic of Germany and the GDR enters into force.

Previous emergency recognition procedures for resolutions from the GDR are eliminated.

July 14-16: Chancellor Kohl visits the Soviet Union and reaches an agreement with President Gorbachev that the united Germany shall have full sovereignty, be able to decide freely on its alliance membership in the future, and will reduce the strength of its armed forces to 370,000 men. The Soviet Union agrees to withdraw its forces from the GDR in three to four years.

August 2: An election treaty is signed between the Federal Republic of Germany and the GDR establishing the modalities for the all-German election to take place on December 2, 1990.

August 23: The People's Chamber in the GDR resolves to accede to the Federal Republic of Germany on October 3, 1990.

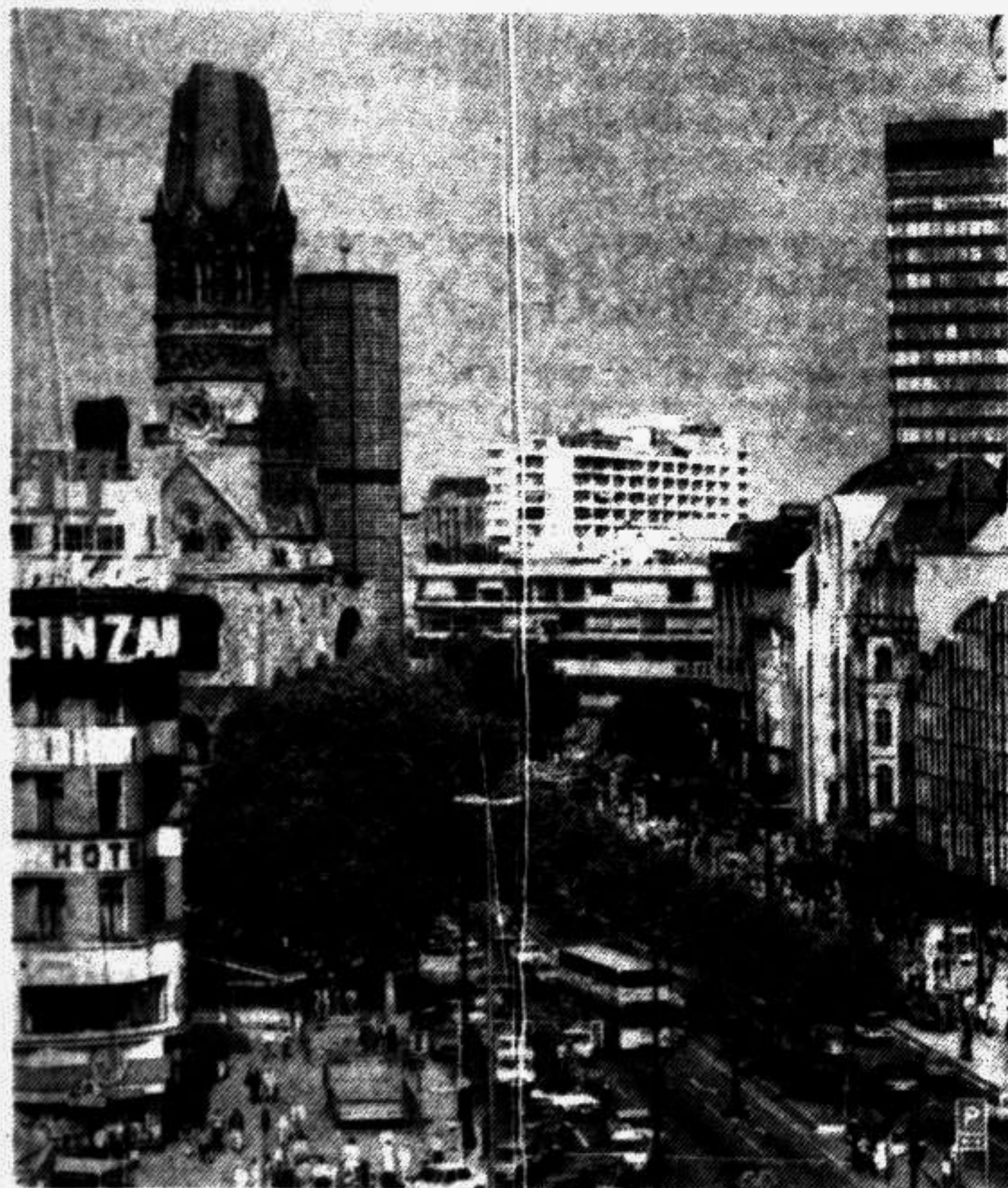
September 12: Talks between the foreign ministers in Moscow are concluded. The Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany is signed.

September 19: The People's Chamber of the GDR ratifies the Unification Treaty.

September 26: The German Bundestag ratifies the Unification Treaty.

October 1-2: The document suspending Four-Power rights is signed in New York.

October 3: The GDR accedes to the territory of application of the Basic Law in accordance with Article 23 of the Basic Law. Five new states are formed in the territory of the former GDR (Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, and Thuringia).



Berlin: Soon to be capital of Germany again.