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Inside Today

International



Islamabad behind Uttar Pradesh bomb blasts, fumes the Times of India Page 5

Article

The Gulf War vanquished Israel's strongest foe and weakened its other sparring partners. That could mean the Jewish state is finally ready to make a deal Page 4

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



In keeping with its great Mughal heritage Dhaka is again becoming a city of flowers Page 3

Feature

Environment

World Park Under Threat Page 8

Sport



India beat Pakistan by 60 runs in Wills International Trophy cricket match in Sharjah Page 11

Business

Britain will unilaterally give extra debt relief to the world's poorest countries Page 6

European Commission mission arrives tomorrow Page 7

NEWS BRIEFS

Razzak calls on Biswas

The Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad, Sheikh Razzak Ali, called on President Abdur Rahman Biswas at the latter's residence Friday, reports BSS.

Yeltsin aide resigns

MOSCOW, Oct 18: A top adviser to Boris Yeltsin submitted his resignation from two parliamentary posts Friday in a gesture of support for the Russian president, whose appeal to postpone local elections was rejected by lawmakers, reports AP.

New Pak Navy chief

ISLAMABAD, Oct 18: President Ghulam Ishaq Khan has appointed Vice-Admiral Saad Mohammad Khan as new Commander of the Pakistan Navy, an official announcement said Thursday, reports AFP.

Khaleda holds talks with Mugabe, Mwinyi, Gayoom, Nawaz Sharif, Hurd

Transfer of Tinbigha soon, Rao tells PM

HARARE, Oct 18: Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao today said the Tin Bigha corridor would be handed over to Bangladesh "at the shortest possible time," reports BSS.

"All the legal obstacles are over, now it is a matter of time," Rao told Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia when the two leaders met at the Harare International Conference Centre here.

The two premiers stressed the need for strengthening the

SAARC activities to the benefit of the people of this region.

Rao paid rich tributes to late president Ziaur Rahman and described him as "father of SAARC". He said president Zia had initiated the idea of SAARC and as such Bangladesh has a special role to play in carrying forward the SAARC spirit.

Begum Zia underscored the need for resolving the outstanding issues with a view to creating a congenial atmo-

sphere to strengthen the spirit of SAARC.

Begum Zia and Rao also discussed various bilateral, regional and international issues of common concern.

They discussed the role of Commonwealth in assisting the developing countries to help improve the quality of life of their peoples.

Both leaders extended invitations to each other, they accepted the invitation. See Page 12 Col. 4



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia held a meeting with African nationalist leader Nelson Mandela at the Harare International Conference Centre Thursday night. —PID photo

Saifur, now in Bangkok, talks The Daily Star WB's early 'green signal' to Jamuna bridge

From Moazzem Hossain

BANGKOK, Oct 18: The World Bank President Lewis Preston has given a positive indication about the Bank's early "green signal" for implementation of the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Project.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman said this here today at an interview with The Daily Star. He had an hour-long meeting on Wednesday with the WB President and other senior bank officials including Myeen Quorshi, Abilla Karasamanglu and D Craxi.

The World Bank President and other officials told the Finance Minister that they would eagerly look forward to the report to be prepared by a Bank appraisal team which visited Bangladesh recently to examine different aspects of

the bridge.

The World Bank side now fully appreciates the vital importance of the project, the Minister said. "The Bank's response as far as I see is quite positive and if we can mobilise the matching Taka resources for its implementation, the project should be delayed", he added.

The World Bank, he stated would like to see that the domestic resources for the project could be "afforded" by Bangladesh within its overall resources availability situation and requirements for other development needs.

Saifur Rahman said that he had made it quite clear to the World Bank President that the Jamuna Bridge Project was "the long-felt desire of the

people of Bangladesh, irrespective of party affiliations". "Its feasibility has already been established by the World Bank through its appointed consultants. There is no justification for delaying the arrangements for its implementation," he added.

During the discussions with the World Bank President and his aides, the Finance Minister explained the "excellent potentials" of the project for developing the northern parts of the country as "the bread basket" and providing favourable opportunities for developing agro-based industries through its linkage with the eastern parts having gas reserves.

The Finance Minister stated that environmental protection See Page 12 Col. 8

Mandela's courage inspiration for freedom-loving people

HARARE, Oct 18: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and the African nationalist leader Nelson Mandela had an exclusive meeting here last night at the Harare International Conference Centre, reports BSS.

Begum Zia expressed her deep appreciation for his courage, attitude and sagacity and the sufferings in the struggle he had been waging against apartheid and for the freedom of his country, South Africa.

She said it was a source of great inspiration for the freedom-loving people of the whole world, particularly Bangladesh.

The Prime Minister said Nelson Mandela was a very familiar and respected name in Bangladesh.

She said the people of Bangladesh always stood resolutely by the side of the people of South Africa in their struggle against apartheid and for freedom.

Begum Zia voiced her country's total support to the current phase of their struggle for "one man one vote" and expressed the confidence that they would very shortly achieve their long cherished freedom. See Page 12 Col. 3

Paksey ferry suspended Withdrawal at Farakka dries up the Ganges

By Mostafa Kamal Majumder

Movement of ferries between the ghats (terminals) at Paksey (Hardinge Bridge point) has been suspended for the last two days as the water level of the Ganges has fallen suddenly affecting its navigability.

The people of the area are simply stunned that the same river had caused devastating floods in the greater Rajshahi region only little over a fortnight ago. Experts attribute this sudden fall in the level of the river to withdrawal of water at Farakka.

The Teesta has also registered a drastic fall from the

very first week of October, as the monsoon is over and water in being diverted from upstreams.

As a lower riparian country Bangladesh is affected by any kind of water development activities at the upper reaches of the common rivers. But since 1988 there exists no basis for sharing water of the Ganges, as a memorandum of understanding signed between Bangladesh and India during the rule of former President Ershad, expired.

Against this backdrop, the government of India is learnt See Page 12 Col. 7

Hasina urges unity of pro-liberation forces

By Staff Correspondent

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina Friday stressed the need for solid unity of all patriotic forces including freedom fighters to protect the country's sovereignty and ensure national progress.

Addressing a group of politicians, lawyers, journalists and freedom fighters from Bogra who joined the Awami League at the Bangabandhu Bhaban at about 11 am, Hasina said disunity of the pro-liberation forces helped revival of the anti-liberation forces.

The Awami League leader alleged that the Ziaur Rahman government had started rehabilitating the anti-liberation

forces socially and politically and the process was continued by Ershad. President Zia brought home Golam Azam, architect of the intellectuals killing at the end of the Liberation War, she said.

The opposition leader accused the government of not fulfilling its election pledges. Hasina alleged that there was social insecurity, famine and deaths in the country but the government was silent. This was "most shameful" in an independent and sovereign country, she said.

Awami League would continue its struggle until the economic emancipation of the masses was attained and the See Page 12 Col. 3

Middle East peace conference in Madrid on Oct 30

JERUSALEM, Oct 18: The United States and Soviet Union today invited Arabs and Jews to a peace conference in Madrid on October 30 in a historic breakthrough in Middle East diplomacy, reports Reuter.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said he would recommend to his cabinet that Israel attend. Arab states and Palestinians had already said they would take part.

US Secretary of State James Baker, who has been trying since the Gulf war to bring together Israel and its Arab enemies, told a joint news conference in Jerusalem with Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin, "that conference is to be followed by direct negotiations designed to achieve real peace."

US President George Bush will open the Middle East peace conference which will also be attended by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

The White House said US and Soviet ambassadors in the Middle East would jointly deliver the invitations and Bush "very much hopes all those invited will respond quickly and affirmatively."

Israel delayed a final answer until Shamir, who held lengthy talks with Baker on Friday over Palestinian representation at the conference, could consult his cabinet on Sunday.

The stage we have come to represents a very important turning point for the Middle East," Pankin said. "History is handing out an opportunity that we must not pass up."

The conference will be held in three phases. There will be a formal opening, Baker said. See Page 12 Col. 4



The image of Goddess Durga being carried in a boat for immersion in the Buriganga on the last day of the Hindu community's greatest religious festival, Durga Puja, yesterday. —Star photo

Y'slav peace conference breaks up

BELOGRADE, Oct 18: The European Community-sponsored peace conference on Yugoslavia in the Hague broke up today over an incident between the pro-Serbian bloc and conference chairman Lord Carrington, the official Yugoslav news agency Tanjug said.

Tanjug quoted Yugoslav Vice President Branko Kostic of Montenegro as saying the rep-

resentatives of Serbia, Vojvodina, Kosovo and Montenegro walked out of the hall after Lord Carrington cut off Kostic in mid-stream, preventing him from speaking on behalf of the Collective Yugoslav Federal Presidency.

Lord Carrington then closed the session.

Earlier story said: Yugoslav's warring leaders today ordered an immediate

ceasefire in Croatia and the withdrawal of Serbian-dominated federal troops from the breakaway republic, it was announced here.

At a rare meeting here under European sponsorship of all 14 of Yugoslavia's federal and republican presidents, Croatia agreed to end immediately a week-long blockade of Yugoslav barracks and other federal facilities on its terri-

tory in exchange for the troop withdrawal.

A communique, issued shortly after the start of the EC-sponsored summit, said the parties agreed to immediately instruct their forces to carry out:

— An "immediate and unconditional ceasefire."

— The immediate lifting of a Croatian blockade of Yugoslav See Page 12 Col. 7

\$ 1m Belgian grant lapses due to Govt's delayed action

By Staff Correspondent
Long delay in finalising a scheme by the government resulted in losing of one million US dollar grant from Belgium to the country's health sector. About two and a half years ago the Belgian government sanctioned the amount for financing a project in Bangladesh for prevention, control and management of hepatitis, caused by the deadly B virus.

A vaccination programme against Hepatitis-B, was already undertaken during that period with the help of a multinational pharmaceutical firm. But the cost involved in completing a course of three vaccines for each individual at the rate of Taka 1,200 was beyond the reach of our common people.

The Belgian grant was sanctioned to set up a laboratory for research on Hepatitis-B, train local doctors and medical technicians to handle the cases and provide vaccination to the people against this serious ailment.

A scheme was quickly prepared by the local experts for utilising the Belgian grant and was duly submitted to the Health Ministry for approval. The doctors and other technicians in the medical profession who belong to the 'risk group' were particularly mentioned in See Page 12 Col. 8

Cop killed in clash with BCL

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 18: A clash between police and Awami League backed Chhatra League this afternoon resulted in injuries to a dozen of people, one of them later succumbed to his injuries, witness and police said, reports UNB.

The victim police constable Shakhwat Hossain (35) who received multiple stab injuries was declared dead on his taking to the sadar hospital.

The clash ensued when police arrested Haider Ali, an accused in the Jamaat leader Shahabuddin's murder case. Haider was nabbed from a local hotel at 4 pm.

The arrest angered Chhatra League activists who immediately mobilised a group of supporters and brought out a procession to denounce the police action.

The processionists who paraded the main roads of the town set on fire two motor vehicles and clashed when resisted by police on Suhrawardy Sarak, witnesses said.

Police resorted to lathi charge and arrested two young men from the spot.

Soon the activists organised at Government College premises and attacked constable Shakhwat who was on duty at a nearby fair. The constable was assaulted and stabbed several times. He was rushed to the hospital immediately where doctors declared him dead.

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