



Sattar, the snake charmer bringing out seized snakes from boxes at the Mirpur Zoo. — Photo by Mohsin

Seized snakes sent to Dhaka Zoo

Star Report

The 50 odd smuggled snakes seized by the BDR in Jessore on August 31 have found a new home in the Dhaka Zoo.

Customs officials handed over 12 wooden boxes containing the snakes to the curator of the zoo, Abdul Hye, at the Aricha Ghat on Wednesday.

With these officials said, the zoo's snake population more than doubled, from 40 to 90-plus, in a single day.

There are more than 10 unidentified small snakes in the consignment, Hye said, in addition to the 50 documented larger ones. These include 30 Dharash, nine Kalnagh, 10 cobras and one 9-foot long python.

The snakes were taken out from the boxes at the zoo Thursday morning by snake-handler Sattar and were kept inside the snake-house.

BDR personnel seized the snakes at the Sadipur border check post and arrested two persons, Bachhu Mian and Abdus Sattar both identified as professional snake traders from Savar, Dhaka.

Experts pointed out that the snakes are smuggled because of the high demand for both for the venom and the skin.

According to zoo officials, the snake-house contained 40 snakes prior to the arrival of this unexpected batch.

However, it could not be known if the new arrivals would pose any accommodation problems for the zoo's snakes or not.



A victim of the tidal wave that swept ashore along 200 miles of beach following an earthquake in Nicaragua sits in the rubble of the beachfront Hotel Casares. — AFP photo

Bank lending

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this change. It was envisaged that the one per cent reduction would put about Taka 250 crore extra in the hands of the banks for release as loans and advances.

On the other hand, the percentage of the bank reserve of the scheduled banks was also reduced by one per cent and was fixed at 5 per cent with the same motive.

However, figures show that on May 21 the total outstanding credit was Taka 22896 crore. A week later, on May 28, it was 22832 crore. The following week it stood at Taka 22889 crore. The amount had a slight rise on June 10 and stood at Taka 23053 crore. On August 13, the amount was 23660 crore.

Concerned sources said the present trend of loan disbursement does not indicate any "bad sign". They said the establishment of accountability in the banking sector had filtered out the habitual loan defaulters. Sources further said the present loans are being taken by the "genuine" entrepreneurs.

The number of "directed loans" has also should the loan taking process, sources said.

However, the bankers view that if the genuine parties start taking loans, then it would be good signal for the economy. On the other hand, private bankers said they were now facing demands in smaller loans, however, they said demands for long-term loans were comparatively lower.

Delhi pledges balanced trade with Dhaka

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: The scope for setting up joint ventures in Bangladesh with buy-back arrangements as a means of reducing the present imbalance in bilateral trade was stressed during discussions between the visiting Finance Minister of Bangladesh, Saifur Rahman and Prof PJ Kurien, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry here today, reports PTI.

The trade volume between India and Bangladesh in 1991-92 was Rs 823.60 crore of which India had a positive balance of Rs 795.28 crore. Prof Kurien reiterated India's desire to promote trade with Bangladesh in a balanced manner and said that specific suggestions in this regard from Bangladesh would be considered favourably. He suggested that specific sectors could be identified for this purpose.

Rahman stressed that the present level of imports from India could be sustained if there was a commensurate growth in exports from Bangladesh to India.

Rahman earlier had discussions with representatives of the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

BSS adds: Saifur Rahman told Indian President Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma that

Bangladesh sincerely believes in the concept of collective self-reliance among South Asian countries.

Rahman called on Dr Sharma, Wednesday afternoon. He was accompanied by Finance Secretary, Nasimuddin Ahmed and Bangladesh high commissioner, Farooq Sobhan. The Indian President said that Bangladesh and India were bound by many common links.

The Finance Minister said with the restoration of democracy in Bangladesh, there was now very congenial climate for the two countries to work in a better spirit of understanding and cooperation for mutual benefit.

He said that Bangladesh was sincerely working for closer cooperation with all the neighbours and accorded special importance to good relations with India. He also briefed the President on the efforts of the government of Begum Zia to achieve democratic stabilization and greater efficiency in production.

Rahman said that Bangladesh sincerely believes in the concept of collective self-reliance among south Asian countries and that was the basic impulse behind the launching of the SAARC.



Five-Party Alliance arranged a meeting at the Zero Point in city protesting terrorism yesterday. — Star photo

Iraq no longer engaged in N-activity: UN expert

BAGHDAD, Sept 3: The head of a UN weapons team said Thursday that Iraq was no longer engaged in nuclear bomb-related activity, reports AP.

Maurizio Zifferero, an Italian official of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency, stressed that tension arising from the allies week-old, no-fly zone in the south had not affected his mission.

Also Thursday, France said four Mirage 2000 warplanes were en route to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, to help police southern Iraq. They were accompanied by a fuel-resupply plane. They join US and British aircraft in the region.

The Iraqi government, meanwhile, renewed charges that Iran was plotting with the US-led allies to destabilise the south to pave the way for the birth of an autonomous Shi'ite Muslim region that would owe allegiance to Tehran.

Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan, at the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Jakarta, Indonesia, warned Thursday that if Iraq was partitioned, Iran would be next.

Baghdad Radio and the Iraqi News Agency said Iraqi President Saddam Hussein gave awards Wednesday to Baath Party officials and tribal leaders from Al-Qurnah for preventing a recent, "wicked" sabotage attempt by infiltrating cliques from Iran.

Several Iraqi Shi'ite opposition groups have headquarters in Iran, and Iraq has long complained that Iran is sponsoring their efforts to destabilise Iraq. The two countries were at war from 1980-88.

Some 200,000 Shi'ites,

guarded by an estimated 10,000 lightly armed rebels, have been hiding in the southern marshlands since a crackdown last year by Iraqi forces that halted a revolt against his rule.

As he left his hotel in Baghdad to inspect unspecified sites, Zifferero said he told journalists he would not amplify his statements Wednesday indicating Iraq's nuclear programme was finished.

Warrants of arrest against 3 NGO men

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate yesterday ordered the arrest of chairman and two other officials of an NGO, International Christian Fellowship, in a case filed against them for violating the law, reports UNB.

Nazrul Islam, Deputy Secretary of the government, in his petition accused chairman Paul Rothman, Mechanic-Instructor Robert Bruce Little-John and treasurer Jonathan Paul Harland of International Christian Fellowship located at Green Corner Road, Dhaka, for receiving and spending foreign grants without approval of the government.

The Midnight File

Russia, Georgia, Abkhazia agree to ceasefire

MOSCOW, Sept 3: The leaders of Russia, Georgia and the rebel Georgian region of Abkhazia today agreed a ceasefire in a separatist conflict in which at least 150 people have died in the last three weeks. The parties have already signed an agreement on a ceasefire to be introduced on September 5," he told reporters during Moscow talks between Shevardnadze, Russian leader Boris Yeltsin and Abkhazian separatist leader Vladislav Ardzinba, reports Reuter.

EC tightens trade boycott against Serbia, Montenegro

BRUSSELS, Sept 3: The EC on Thursday tightened its trade boycott against Serbia and Montenegro by imposing tougher rules on truck traffic through the two republics and more controls on EC exports to their neighbours. It said exporters to Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina must get from customs officials there an import license and a pledge to verify arrival of the goods at the addressee listed on the import license, reports AP.

5-party stages sit-in outside Secretariat Sept 24

By Staff Correspondent

The five-party alliance would stage a sit-in demonstration in front of the Secretariat on September 24 to protest government "inaction in arresting real culprits" involved in the attempt on Rashed Khan Menon's life.

The three-hour sit-in from 12 pm would also demand removal of the Home Minister, ban on Jamaat-Shibir-Jubo Command politics and curbing of terrorism across the country.

The alliance announced the action in a rally Thursday in front of the GPO which addressed by the Samabadi Dal leader Nirmal Sen. Alliance leaders Hassanul Huq Inu, Haider Akbar Khan Rono, Khalequzzaman, Tipu Biswas, AFM Mahbubul Huq, Sharif Nurul Ambia and Mainuddin Khan Badal were present at the rally.

Thursday was the nationwide demonstration day of the Five-party alliance.

Nirmal Sen said there were plausible grounds that the Jamaat's new front Jubo Command was involved in the attack on Menon.

He said that the Jubo Command leaders threatened Menon in several public meetings before the attack. But the government was trying to shadow the link of the Jamaat-Shibir clique, he alleged.

Sen also questioned the mysterious death of the police official investigating Ratan Sen's murder case and said "the investigation will lose its course as that police officer knew everything of the case."

Nirmal Sen also said that the Saturday's killing in the Polytechnic Institute and armed clash in Dhaka University on the following day indicated which organisations carried arms.

He invited like-minded parties and pro-liberation forces to forge unity against the anti-liberation power and terrorism.

The alliance also organised a procession which paraded Gulistan, Fulbariah and Press Club areas.

DESA employees continue protest against transfer

By Staff Correspondent

A section of employees of the Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (DESA) continued their demonstration in front of the DESA Head Office at Abdul Ghani Road in the city for the second consecutive day yesterday protesting the transfer order of 600 employees.

The DESA issued a notification on August 31 ordering transfer of 600 employees, belonging to three 'anti-government' trade unions.

Leaders of the three unions allege that the DESA issued the transfer order with the connivance of the pro-government leaders of the Collective Bargaining Agent (CBA) to harass their opposition union leaders and workers.

The August 31 notification ordered transfer of 600 employees from the city to Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Narsingdi and some remote areas of the country.

The angry DESA workers on hearing the transfer order thronged the DESA Head Office Wednesday to demonstrate there. During the Wednesday's demonstration, the DESA Head Office also came under attack in which parts of the office building were damaged.

The protesting DESA employees also staged demonstrations at all the DESA offices in the greater Dhaka, said a press release issued by one of the three opposition DESA sramik unions last night.

According to the press release, similar programmes would continue to be held until the transfer orders were cancelled.

Directive to report about complaints by Ershad

A two-member bench of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court yesterday directed a commission to visit Dhaka Central Jail within a month and report to the court about the complaints made by the former President HM Ershad, reports BSS.

Ershad, in his petition, said "he had not only been kept in solitary confinement but also in inhuman condition and deprived of all normal facilities given to a division one prisoner," a press release from his attorney's office said.

Justice AKM Sadeq and Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury, in their order, said that the commission shall report mainly on two points of reference — in what condition the petitioner has been kept with a sketch map, and the facilities he is being provided in jail. The commission shall submit report on the basis of allegations and denials made by both parties.

The commission will consist of Mohammad Moheem Rashid, an advocate of the High Court, District Judge Dhaka, and a law officer to be nominated by the Attorney General. The judges constituted the commission after hearing the advocates of two sides.

Advocate Rashid will coordinate with other members of the commission for visit and the court asked Inspector General of Prison to afford all cooperation and assistance to the commission.

Ershad, convicted and sentenced to 13 years of jail in two cases, he had been in Dhaka Central Jail since mid-May last year.

Hasina

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from administration to trade unions led the country to the present "disastrous" situation.

The administration can not function neutrally, officials are facing illegal transfer or termination and industrial workers are being victimised by the ruling party, Hasina alleged.

Recalling the active contribution of the workers and employees during the anti-autocracy movement, the opposition leader said people's aspiration for better life in a democratic atmosphere has been shattered because of the misrule by BNP.

Irregularities and inefficiency of the government are deepening the crisis everyday in all sectors, she added.

Hasina said Awami League is committed to bring about the wellbeing of the working people by consolidating democracy and bringing about their economic emancipation.

Earlier, union leaders of Titas Gas apprised Hasina of their various problems including indiscriminate termination and false cases.

Acting President of Sramik League Fazlul Haq Mantu, President of Titas Gas Employees' Union Latif Hossain, Vice-President Abdus Sattar, General Secretary Faruq Hassan, Asst. Secretary Abdul Rahman, Publicity Secretary Abdul Moteleb and Social Affairs Secretary Yakub Ali were present.

Uruguay Round

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Bangladesh delegation in Geneva has been seeking to persuade the concerned negotiating parties to appreciate the LDCs' desperate position. The Commerce Minister M K Anwar sought the support of his counterparts in industrialised countries in order to accommodate the request of Bangladesh and other LDCs for special and differential provisions contained in various proposals tabled by Bangladesh on behalf of the LDCs.

Anwar, in his letter to his counterparts in the industrialised countries, also recalled their generous political and material support by appreciating the harsh social and economic realities confronting Bangladesh.

UN veto rights

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which are outside its jurisdiction Almeida said.

He charged there was a current tendency towards distorting the mandate, function and areas of jurisdiction of the main UN bodies, and NAM must reject this.

Iraqi Vice-President Taha Yaseen Ramadhan, whose country came under UN sanctions after a UN force rolled back Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, told journalists the Security Council was now reflecting the world of only one country, the United States.

"The structure and composition of the UNSC has become no longer realistic and no longer reflective of the needs of the world," Ramadhan said.

He singled out the veto right held by the council's five permanent members—China, Great Britain, France, Russia and the United States—for criticism, branding it "an unfair privilege" that should be abolished.

Xinhua adds: United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said here today that the reform of the UN needs the revision of its charter, suggesting that those

countries interested in the issue would negotiate with the five permanent members of the Security Council.

Boutros-Ghali, who came here to attend the NAM summit made the remarks at a press conference held Wednesday at the Jakarta Hilton International Hotel which accommodates NAM leaders participating in the summit.

"If you want to change the composition of the Security Council you have to deal with the revision of the charter," the Jakarta Post today quoted the UN chief as saying.

"According to Article 109 there will be no revision of the charter without the agreement of the five permanent members," he continued.

He pointed out that the only way possible for a revision of the UN charter is by persuading the five permanent members that it is important to do a revision of the charter.

"But this is not my job" he noted.

He said it is the job of the member states who are interested in a new composition of the Security Council to persuade the five to revise the charter.

NAM to achieve goal

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schedules when asked how she divided her time between house aide and a Prime Minister.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia got good coverage in the Indonesian newspapers.

The Jakarta Post, the largest circulated English daily, in Indonesia, published her photographs and news today and yesterday.

The other newspapers which gave the Bangladesh Prime Minister good coverage included Harian Terbit, Indonesia Observer, Suara Karya and Media Indonesia.

Begum Zia today visited historic Bandung, about 180 kilometres from here, as part of the visit programmes of the heads of state and government who are now attending the summit.

Begum Zia had to visit Bandung today as she will leave here tomorrow before the conclusion of the six-day NAM congregation.

Begum Zia said here tonight that the democratically elected BNP government had been making all out efforts for the development of the country.

She was addressing the Bangladeshis living in Jakarta at a dinner hosted in her honour by Ambassador AKM Farooq and Mrs Farooq at their residence.

The Prime Minister said certain quarters were trying to create political instability and indiscipline to hinder the de-

velopment activities and disrupt the democratic process which was established after the end of nine-year long autocratic rule.

The Prime Minister said her government would continue its efforts to implement its development programmes and activities to lead the nation towards progress and consolidate hard-earned democracy.

Rao-Sharif talks

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Kashmir issue through peaceful negotiations and I hope we will be able to make some headway in this regard also," he said.

PTI says, India and Pakistan today failed to make any headway on the vexed Kashmir issue with Nawaz Sharif, persisting to seek a solution to the problem on the basis of the United Nations resolution.

"I still maintain this position," Sharif said after his meeting with Rao.

Rao told newsmen that he raised the question of Pakistan supplying arms to terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab. He, however, did not reveal Nawaz Sharif's reaction to it.

Saying that he had also taken up the question of the Pakistani National Assembly passing a resolution on the Babri-Masjid issue, Rao emphasised that his meeting with Sharif had taken place after a series of setbacks in bilateral relations.

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Published by the Editor on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd, 52 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed by him at The Sangbad Ltd., 36 Purana Paltan, Dhaka. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: 28/1, Toyne Circular Road, Dhaka-1000. Tel: PABX- 246023-4, 245061-2. Advertisement: 245063 & Ext. 20. Fax No. 88-02-863035. GPO Box. No. 3257. GRAM: DAILY STAR, DHAKA.