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**Supplement**

Today's 16-page issue of The Daily Star contains a four-page supplement on National Foundation Day of the Republic of Korea.

**NEWS BRIEFS**

**Hema Premadasa meets ladies**

Madame yesterday Hema Premadasa, wife of the visiting Sri Lankan President, yesterday met with the prominent Bangladeshi ladies at the state guest house Karota Sunday afternoon. Madame Hema Premadasa exchanged views with the Bangladeshi ladies on different matters relating to rights and privileges of the women, their development and participation in the development activities in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

**97 more held on various charges**

Police nabbed 97 people from different parts of the city Sunday on various charges, a police press release said. Of the arrested, eight were wanted criminals, two charged in arms case, three for dacoity and one under the anti-terrorism ordinance, reports UNB.

**Polytech teachers' strike continues**

By Staff Correspondent  
 The work abstention of the Polytechnic Teachers' passed its 14th day Sunday. The teachers started exchanging views with the members of the parliament on their 10-point demand. The teachers also sent telegrams to the Prime Minister Saturday for solution to the strike.

**Ties to grow further : Khaleda**

## Dhaka summit may endorse trade treaty : Premadasa

Shri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa has expressed the hope that a draft treaty could be signed in the coming SAARC summit to establish a South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA), reports BSS.

Speaking at a banquet hosted in his honour by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in Dhaka Sunday evening he said following detailed studies, SAARC has worked out to finalise a draft treaty that would establish the SAPTA by 1997 or earlier.

"This would be the first ma-

nor step towards an eventual economic community in South Asia". The Sri Lankan President, who is also the current Chairman of the SAARC, said and added, "we need to look closer also at the feasibility of a payments unit for regional trade and commercial exchanges".

President Premadasa said this would further regional economic cooperation and protect the interests of South Asia.

About his visit to Bangladesh, President Premadasa said visiting Dhaka is

like visiting the Birthplace of SAARC as it is here that the summit of SAARC took place. "I wish to pay Sri Lanka's humble tribute to the memory of President Ziaur Rahman. We owe him a debt of gratitude for his foresight which made his dream of South Asian regional cooperation a reality in SAARC," he said.

About SAARC, President Premadasa said, "Our association has turned its attention to areas of economic and social concern which have a direct bearing on the millions we represent. Despite impressive

gains in all our countries, millions still live in poverty. The vital dimension is the human dimension. A man or a woman doomed to poverty is a life unfulfilled, a hope unrealised," he said.

The SAARC Chairman turned to Begum Zia and said "You have focussed attention on mass deprivation and hunger and on the insidious power of poverty to destabilise societies. This was an important message at the Colombo summit. Your approach to provide the poor with their

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Two leaders talk and dine. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia hosted a dinner for President Ranasinghe Premadasa last night at the Sonargaon Hotel. —PID photo

## 'SAARC getting stronger'

President Ranasinghe Premadasa yesterday arrived in city and said that the SAARC was gradually getting stronger as an organisation with its goal of removing the region's poverty.

"A very dynamic SAARC organisation is emerging... an organisation that is committed to the amelioration of the conditions of the peoples of SAARC," the Sri Lankan President said in an unscheduled, impromptu press statement minutes after his arrival at the Zia International Airport.

The purpose of his visit, Premadasa said, was to let Bangladesh leaders know about the progress made since the Colombo summit last year when he had assumed the leadership of the seven-nation regional alliance. "It is my duty as the current chairman to keep the leaders informed."

The Sri Lankan leader came to Dhaka after visiting

four other SAARC capitals — Islamabad, Kathmandu, New Delhi and Thimpu.

In a departure from tradition, Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman met the Sri Lankan President at the airport. Later, President Abdur Rahman Biswas formally received him at the Bangabhaban.

A 21-gun salute boomed as the Sri Lankan leader, accompanied by his spouse Hema Premadasa, alighted from a red-white Air Lanka Boeing. A bad weather delayed his arrival by an hour.

From the airport, a ceremonial motorcade drove them to the Bangabhaban. Thousands thronged along the 20-kilometre route to greet the Sri Lankan guests.

In the presidential house premises, the Sri Lankan head of state took salute from a President's Guard Regiment contingent. Then Bangladesh

President escorted him into the house where Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, her Cabinet colleagues, bureaucrats, diplomats greeted him.

The brief Bangabhaban ceremony over, he was driven to the State Guest House Karota where he would be staying.

UNB adds: President Premadasa of Sri Lanka paid tribute to the martyrs of the Liberation War by placing wreaths at the National Martyrs Memorial at Savar in the afternoon.

After offering wreaths at the alter, the visiting President stood in silence till the bugle played its last post.

Earlier, Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mian received Premadasa, also current Chairman of SAARC, when he flew in a chopper to the national memorial.

He was accompanied by Minister-in-attendance Dr Khandker Mosharrif Hossain.

**Talks today**

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and President Ranasinghe Premadasa will lead their respective delegations at the formal talks today scheduled at 10.20 in the morning at the International Conference Centre.

Premadasa arrived yesterday on a 48-hour trip in his capacity as the current chairman of the SAARC.

Officials said that both leaders would exploit the opportunity to discuss bilateral issues, apart from the matters related to the regional forum.

On the bilateral plane, they would talk increased trade between the two countries, a commercial agreement between the national airlines.

On SAARC, the leaders would review the progress during the past year and exchange views on the proposals awaiting consideration by the summiteers in their December meeting in Dhaka.

## Move to make Annual Development Plan more pragmatic

By Inam Ahmed

The Planning Commission has started a quarterly exercise to prioritize different projects to bridge the gap between the original Annual Development Programme (ADP) and the actual ADP.

This was for the first time in Bangladesh that such exercises were being undertaken to make the ADP more 'pragmatic'.

The exercise would ultimately "energise the implementing process" of the projects under the ADP, sources said. This year's ADP has been fixed at Taka 8650 crore.

Incidentally, there has always been a big gap between the original ADP, revised ADP and the actual ADP.

During last fiscal year, the original ADP was fixed at Taka 7500 crore while the revised ADP had been down shifted to Taka 7150 crore. But the actual ADP expenditure was Taka 6500 crore.

To lessen the gap, different ministries have already been asked to identify the projects lagging behind in implementation, concerned sources said.

They said that efforts were also underway to gear up the major projects that involved the majority of the ADP expenditure.

About 100 to 150 projects would come under the gear-up scheme. Moreover, the slow moving projects would face slashes in their allocations and the money would be reallocated to other projects that would expedite their implementation, sources said.

There are now 619 investment projects under this year's ADP.

The present quarterly exercises would help the Planning Commission to go for more focused investments in rural sector, small industry, private sector and export-oriented private sector in future years.

During the exercises, poverty alleviation and human resource development sectors would get high priority.

Sources said that these two sectors were being viewed as the major concerns for an economic take off.

Moreover, the government is now thinking of a way for a better utilisation of commodity aid to improve the taka currency situation.

Sources said that the commodity aid use was still not up to the mark and that an improvement would fatten the coffers.

Sources said that there had been a block allocation for emergency release of funds in facing bottlenecks of projects.

This fund was being used to pay VAT, land acquisition and other unforeseen expenditures. Sources said that this fund had helped bring more flexibility to the projects and their implementation.

## Muggers take away Tk 5.4 lakh from merchant

By Staff Correspondent

Pistol wielding muggers took away more than Taka 5.4 lakh from an edible oil merchant in the capital Sunday, police said.

They said a group of seven young men halted the car of Muhammad Yasin, a soyabean oil merchant of Lalbagh, near Sonir Akhra on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway at about 3.30 pm Sunday.

They shoved a pistol through window and ordered Yasin and three other passengers to come out as the car stopped.

When all the passengers were out, the muggers jumped into it and sped away toward downtown Dhaka.

Yasin was returning home after collecting business money from Narayanjanj and the total Taka 5,43,100 was kept in a bag.

None was arrested as yet while officials of the Demra police said that a vigorous investigation was on to nab to muggers.

## Toxic fertilizer Suggestion for legal action against suppliers

By S Y Bakht

The Environment and Forest Ministry has sent a summary on the recent purchase and distribution of toxic fertilizer in the country to the Prime Minister's office proposing various measures including legal actions against the suppliers, according to a ministry source.

The ministry has taken up the issue very seriously and has made specific recommendations (in the brief to the PMO) including identifying the actual areas of distribution and taking legal actions against the suppliers in order to bring them to task," said the source, on condition of anonymity.

Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) imported 3150 tonnes of zinc oxy fertilizer from the United States earlier this year, which were later found to contain toxic lead and cadmium.

BADC went on to distribute 1113 tonnes of the toxic fertilizer before deciding against it although a warning, well before the said consignment reached Chittagong Port, from the US embassy quoting the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that the consignment might be contaminated.

The Environment and Forest Ministry source alleged that the Ministry of Agriculture had done "very little" in dealing with the situation so far. He added that the existing Environmental Pollution Control Act of 1977 is also inadequate to deal with such a situation.

Samples of the consignment, which arrived at the outer anchorage of Chittagong Port in the first week of January, were collected by both BADC and the US embassy for conducting chemical analysis.

BADC sent the samples for testing at the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) and at Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission

(BAEC), the results of which were sent returned on the same month.

Test results at BARI showed that the samples contained 2.3 to 4.17 per cent of lead and 0.18 to 0.195 per cent of cadmium.

BARI went on to note that the quantum of these substances found in the samples were not toxic for plants and would not have any toxic effect on the environment.

The BAEC tests also revealed that the samples contained between 2.01 to 4.02 per cent of lead and 0.034 to 0.043 per cent of cadmium.

The Agriculture Ministry, meanwhile, allowed BADC to release the consignment based on the BARI test results and recommendations.

However, in April, the US embassy subsequently confirmed that the samples were found to be contaminated after tests were conducted by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environment Control. The US test results showed that the lead content was 6.9 per cent while that of cadmium was 0.05 per cent, which exceeded the regulatory limits in the United States.

Following the receipt of this report BADC finally stopped further distribution of the toxic fertilizer.

When contacted, local representatives of the supplier, M/s Trans-Continental Imex Inc, denied having violated the specifications of the contract. They questioned the basis on which the Environment Ministry recommended legal actions against the suppliers without even conducting a proper investigation.

It may be added that a US Federal Court earlier this year indicted four US companies along with three executives for allegedly exporting more than 3000 tonnes of toxic fertilizer to Bangladesh.

One killed, 5 hurt as Indian bandits storm 2 villages in Patgram

LALMONIRHAT, Oct 4: Armed bandits from across the border stormed two frontier villages and shot dead a woman and injured five other villagers while committing dacoity Saturday night, reports UNB.

The people of Jhalangi and Srimampur alleged a gang of 25-30 gunmen sneaked in through the Jhalangi border in Patgram thana Saturday midnight and attacked several houses while the inmates were asleep.

The cross-border marauders fell on the houses of Yasin Ali and Alta Rahman at village Jhalangi and looted goods and ornaments worth about Tk 27,000. The looted goods included 10 maunds of jute.

Police said Momena Begum

JS autumn session 4 ordinances to be placed on opening day

The autumn session of the Jatiya Sangsad beginning October 11 will mainly transact legislative business, Parliament Secretariat sources said here yesterday, reports BSS.

In addition to a dozen of bills pending since the last session, the House is expected to dispose of some more new bills at the session.

Four ordinances including the Anti-terrorism Ordinance, 1992, will be laid in the House on the opening day of the autumn session. The members are expected to discuss the ordinances when they will be introduced in the House in the

Withdrawal of subsidy ups newsprint price

Star Report

Escalating production costs coupled with the withdrawal of government subsidy has forced the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) to raise the price of newsprint recently, according to a Corporation source.

He claimed that rationalising the furnace oil price and lowering the tariff value on certain chemicals alone could help the Khulna Newsprint Mills substantially reduce the current production cost of Taka 25,000 per tonne.

Furthermore, he added, the financial problem of the

Move for consensus on indemnity repeal bill

By Nurul Kabir

The Special Parliamentary Committee on the Indemnity Ordinance (Repeal) Bill will meet October 10 in a bid to reach a consensus on the issue, committee sources said.

This will be the 15th meeting of the committee since its formation August 8 last year and first after it was allotted a 70 day deadline by the last session of parliament to prepare a unanimous report on the issue.

The deadline that expires October 12 was the fourth one while the House earlier granted the committee time thrice but it had failed to reach a consensus.

The 15-member Special Parliamentary Committee headed by the Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz was formed following the Awami League (AL) leader Mohammad Nasim's introduction of a bill in parliament seeking removal

of a constitutional bar on trying the people involved in the killing of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the then President of the country, was killed in a military putsch August 15, 1975.

According to committee sources, the prospect of the committee's unanimity on the issue in the October 10 meeting was very bleak.

The committee comprises seven members from the ruling BNP, five from the AL and one each from the Ganotantri Party, the Jatiya Party (JP) and the Jamaat.

A committee member of the opposition bench in parliament informed The Daily Star that the Special Parliamentary Committee had finalised scrutinizing the bill introduced by Mohammad Nasim long ago.

It was now a matter of a political decision of the ruling

40 rescued from clutches of traffickers

SHATKHIRA, Oct 4: Bangladesh Rifles rescued 40 persons including 10 women and 11 children from the clutches of human traffickers while they were crossing the border at Sonbaria in Kalaroa thana on Saturday, reports UNB.

The victims were picked up from Dhaka, Munshiganj and other parts of the country with an allotment of providing good jobs in India, Pakistan and Middle East.

The traffickers managed to flee and the victims were sent to the local thana hajat. A case has been filed with the local police station.

Nurses reach accord with govt, resume duties

By Staff Correspondent

The nurses' indefinite strike that almost paralysed government hospital services across the country, was withdrawn Sunday following a meeting between the authorities and the nurses' representatives.

More than 15,000 nurses resumed duties Sunday night following the agreement with the government, a leader of Nurses' Action Committee told The Daily Star.

The leader, present at meeting with the authorities at the Health Ministry, said that the Action Committee decided to withdraw the strike as the government agreed to fulfill some of its demands and consider others.

General Secretary of the Assistant Nurses' Association, a component of the Action Committee, Sheikh Nizamuddin said the authorities had ex-

tended the services of 750 ad hoc nurses, granted two increments to the staff nurses, increased remuneration to the students nurses and enhanced laundry charges.

Under the agreement the assistant nurses would be provided diploma training and a ministerial committee had been formed to review the other demands. The committee would submit its report by December 31, he added.

The nurses had started their phasewise agitation from September 19 that culminated into an indefinite strike Saturday.

Before joining work, several hundred nurses brought out a victory procession at the Nursing Institute in the Dhaka Medical College Hospital complex.