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Inside Today

Article

Interview with Imam Bukhari of Jama Masjid, Delhi

'Every Muslim Youth is now a Suppressed Volcano'

by Mahfuz Anam Page 4

International

Delhi rejects tripartite talks to solve Kashmir crisis



Deputies raise their hands in Iraqi parliament to support a motion calling on UN to stop 'unfair action' to Iraq Page 5

Business

Full text of report on Uruguay Round agreed at Tokyo summit

W. Rahman Jute Mills resumes production after 5 years Pages 6, 7

Weekend Magazine

Brotherhood of heart and hand, Marriage without love, Neighbours with foreign passports, rise and fall of communism and My World Pages 9, 10 & 11

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



New Lease of Life for Jamdani Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

Rally on Bosnia today

A mass rally under the auspices of Bangladesh-Bosnia Solidarity Front will be held at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram Mosque today at 4 pm to protest against the history's most heinous violations of human rights in Bosnia, reports BSS.

189 bottles of Phensidyl seized

By Staff Correspondent
The Detective Branch of Police recovered 84 bottles of Phensidyl and arrested six persons in this connection from Sayedabad Bus Terminal under Demra Thana Wednesday night. The arrested persons are: Md Selim, Dorhan, Bappi, Rafique, Ruzi Das alias Jori and Tapan Krishna Pal. Earlier, on Tuesday the DB police recovered 105 bottles of Phensidyl from Roy Shaheb Bazar market under Kotwali thana.

Dhaka to receive French wheat

Bangladesh will receive 20,000 metric tons of wheat from France as part of French assistance in 1993. An agreement concerning the grant of food aid by France to Bangladesh for the year 1993 was signed in Paris yesterday, reports UNB.

G-7 political declaration No concrete action to protect Bosnia

TOKYO, July 8: Despite eleventh hour moves to toughen their language, leaders of Group of Seven (G-7) rich nations issued today a declaration on Bosnia that was less muscular than its 1992 threat to consider using force, report Reuters, AFP.

The document summing up the G-7's latest collective thinking on tackling the world's troubles was also weaker than last year's on extending a treaty to control nuclear proliferation.

The 10-paragraph statement went through some rapid re-working early today before being adopted about 45 minutes late on the second day of the Tokyo summit in a form which one French official described as follows, "We tightened it up a notch."

"Among the leaders, there

was a feeling that the statement could be made clearer and more understandable," said Japanese Foreign Minister Kabun Muto, who read out the declaration. He said there was a 'strong feeling' that Bosnia's borders should not be changed without the agreement of all of the three parties — Serbs, Croats and Muslims.

"We will not accept any territorial solution unless it has the agreement of the three parties," the final declaration said.

"If the Serbs and Croats persist in dismembering Bosnia through changes of border by force or ethnic cleansing, they will place themselves 'beyond the pale' of the international community and cannot expect any economic or commercial assistance, especially reconstruction aid."

During the discussions, French President Francois Mitterrand told his co-leaders from the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Italy and Canada, "It might perhaps be tomorrow that Sarajevo falls. Sarajevo and may be other towns. Who will defend them? It must be done."

Mitterrand told official that it offered little concrete action to protect beleaguered Muslims in the former Yugoslavia.

"We are unbeatable on diplomatic formulas but we are not yet Olympic champions on achievements in the field," Mitterrand was quoted as saying.

Adding weight to his plea, the World Health Organisation in Geneva said on Thursday

See Page 12 Col 3

US stand-by force for UN action proposed

TOKYO, July 8: President Bill Clinton told leaders of the other Group of Seven (G-7) industrial nations the United States could set up a military unit that would be permanently on call for United Nations action, a French official said today, reports Reuters.

Briefing reporters on a working dinner for G-7 leaders on Wednesday night, presidential spokesman Jean Muestelli said: "We heard with pleasure the American President suggest setting up a permanent system of forces that would be at the disposal of the United Nations".

He said France was particularly glad to hear the suggestion as President Francois Mitterrand had, in January 1992, said France would hold 1,000 men ready for UN duties.

Since then France had committed thousands of troops to relief operations in Yugoslavia, Muestelli noted.

He added that Mitterrand told Clinton he hoped something concrete would come of his suggestion soon. There have been discussions within the Clinton administration about assigning US troops to be available when needed by the U.N.

Opposition returns to Jatiya Sangsad Hurt Speaker refuses to chair probe

The Opposition in Parliament last night demanded revival of the Speaker's proposal to form a special parliamentary committee to probe alleged corruption by the Irrigation and Flood Control Minister and his ministry, reports UNB.

But the government rejected the demand saying, "There is no scope for revival of the proposal already declared by the Speaker to have died a natural death."

The unscheduled debate, lasting about four hours, at times led to even personal vilifications that virtually killed all legislative and other business of the day.

Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali, who was apparently sick, however, allowed the discussion to continue.

The pandora's box was opened by Jatiya Party leader Barrister Maudud Ahmed who argued that the matter did not 'die' as the chair had declared Tuesday night.

He was referring to the abortive attempt by the Speaker to form a special par-

liamentary committee to probe allegations by Awami League leader Tofael Ahmed against Irrigation Minister Maj Gen (ret'd) Majid-ul Haq and his ministry.

The proposal of the Speaker was abandoned on Tuesday as the Opposition did not agree to the terms of reference set by the Speaker.

Taking part in the debate, Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda said that opposition's "so-called" allegations of corruption are "politically motivated" to discredit the government of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia which believes in transparency, honesty and sincerity.

He said BNP of late President Ziaur Rahman believes in politics of development and none could raise any question of corruption against the BNP in the past.

In an oblique reference to the Awami League, the Information Minister said that they have been bringing baseless allegations like "Saipem", the construction at 30 Hare

See Page 12 Col 1

BNP, AL call each other corrupt

By Staff Correspondent

Both the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the largest opposition in Parliament the Awami League (AL) yesterday demanded in Jatiya Sangsad (JS) that a date be fixed to discuss once another 'history of corrupt practices'.

Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali, however, did not entertain the idea last night.

The proposal was made by State Minister for Communications Fazlur Rahman following Opposition chief whip Mohammad Nasim's assertion that the government had indulged in widespread corruption.

Mohammad Nasim also said former President Justice Abdus Sattar had himself confessed, in one of his television addresses to the nation in 1982, that he had been unable to run

See Page 12 Col 1

Withdrawal of agri subsidies a conspiracy, says Jamaat

By Staff Correspondent

The central body of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh yesterday termed the withdrawal of subsidies on agriculture a "deep conspiracy" against the economy of the country and observed that the peasants were frustrated as cultivation of paddy had become a losing exercise.

On the second day of the three-day session of the central Majlis-e-Shura of the Jamaat, presided over by acting Ameer Abbas Ali Khan, its leaders also criticised the disinvestment policy of the government, saying, "There is no reason to believe that all problems will be solved by handing over the public sector to the private sector at a rock bottom prices".

The Majlis also observed that the country's economy was largely affected by the Farakka barrage and criticised the government for not raising the issue at the United Nations.

"No nation can depend on NGOs for economic progress and social development," the

See Page 12 Col 8

Egypt hangs 7 Muslim militants

By Staff Correspondent

CAIRO, July 8: Seven Muslim militants condemned to death in April for attacking foreign tourists and conspiring to topple the government were hanged in a Cairo prison today, military prosecution sources said, reports Reuters.

The sources said the men were hanged one after another, beginning at about 7.00 am (0400 GMT) and ending after 10.00 am.

This was one of the largest numbers of people executed in one group for a political crime in Egypt's modern history in 1982, five men found guilty of assassinating President Anwar Sadat were executed.

The Egyptian government, fighting to suppress a campaign of violence by Muslim militants that has devastated the tourist industry, has transferred scores of suspects to swift-acting military courts that have imposed a total of 22 death sentences.

The first sentence was carried out on June 13 — the first execution for a politically-motivated crime since the Sadat assassins were punished.

A second militant was hanged on June 23.

Maid murder Karim, Salma sent to jail

By Staff Correspondent

Yusuf M Karim and Salma Karim, arrested on charge of killing their teenage maid Wednesday, were sent to the Dhaka Central Jail after being produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday.

Salma, a housewife, reportedly beat maid Hafiza, 15, to death for allegedly stealing Tk 500 from their Barabagh residence under Mirpur thana Tuesday afternoon.

Hafiza, daughter of Abdur Rahim of Dohaura thana under Mymensingh district, had been working at Karim's house for the last two months.

Labour Minister calls SKOP leaders to talks

By Nazmul Ashraf

Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has called on the SKOP and other labour bodies to return to the negotiating table instead of going ahead with their planned July 19-20 strike and blockade.

The strike would be illogical and politically motivated. It is not necessary since we can settle the labour issues through discussions... And a blockade is illegal under the laws of the land," he said in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star on board M V Bogdadia while returning from Chandpur Wednesday.

"We settled most of their demands through negotiations and we prefer to resolve the rest in the same process," the Labour Minister, who led the government side in several rounds of talks with the agitating labour leaders, said.

During the interview, Mannan Bhuiyan dwelt on the government's stance on the SKOP demands, the government-SKOP accord, labour unrest and growth of industries.

Speaking on the SKOP's five-point charter of demands that provide for 78 issues, Bhuiyan observed that none of those could be met overnight. Most of them had already been imple-

mented and time was needed to materialise the other conditions.

Replying to a question, he expressed the optimism that the government would be able to settle all the pressing labour issues through bilateral talks.

The government is expected to invite the strike callers to fresh talks sometime after July 10, the minister informed this correspondent.

Regarding increasing the workers' salaries, he said the government had offered the best it could afford.

During previous talks, the government agreed on a minimum wage of Taka 950 for the public sector employees and Taka 900 for those in the private sector. The Wage and Productivity Commission recommended minimum wages of Tk 1000 and Tk 900 for the two sectors respectively, the minister added.

The Labour Minister said the government could not exceed these figures because it was already burdened with huge losses incurred by the public enterprises.

About the demand for a national minimum wage, he said the authorities were working on fixing the minimum wages for

See Page 12 Col 7

Suharto's visit as NAM chief ignored

By Staff Correspondent

TOKYO, July 8: The Group of Seven (G-7) will refer to the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) in its economic statement, Japanese Foreign Minister Kabun Muto said today explaining why it was ignored in the G-7 political declaration, reports AFP.

No reference was made to the visit here by Indonesian President Suharto in his capacity as NAM chairman, just ahead of the G-7 summit.

Greeted by Japanese Prime Minister Kichi Miyazawa in his capacity as the G-7 chairman, Suharto was told the NAM's concerns would be conveyed to the other leaders of the world's richest industrial democracies during their summit here.

Suharto earlier tried without success to obtain a collective meeting with the G-7 leaders, arguing that the 108-member NAM is now committed to a constructive dialogue with the developed countries.

A number of the G-7 countries remain wary of the organisation, however.

US President Bill Clinton did meet with Suharto here, but US officials stressed that it was in Suharto's role as the Indonesian President, not as NAM chairman.

PM opens tree plantation programmes

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday inaugurated the tree plantation programmes of Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Air Force and the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), reports UNB.

Begum Zia inaugurated the Bangladesh Army's programme by planting a 'Nageswar' sapling at the premises of Senakunja in the Dhaka Cantonment.

The army's massive plantation campaign to observe the national tree plantation programme will be spread in all garrisons by planting about 5 lakh saplings of different fruits and timber.

Bangladesh Army planted 2,28,380 different saplings last year of which 1,73,618 survived.

On her arrival at Senakunja, the Prime Minister was received by the Chief of Army Staff Lt General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan. Senior army officers were present on the occasion.

Begum Zia inaugurated the Air Force programme by planting a sapling of 'Christmas tree' at the Air Force headquarters in Dhaka Cantonment.

Bangladesh Air Force has taken up a programme to plant

Three killed in road mishaps

By DMCH Correspondent

Three people were killed in separate road accidents in and around the city yesterday.

A tempo, three-wheeler helper was killed when his tempo turned turtle near Science Laboratory in the city at around 7.30 am.

The victim, identified as Mohammed Billal Hossain, 13, was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where attending doctors declared him dead.

In another road accident, an unidentified person was killed when a speeding bus ran over him at Amin Bazar, Savar, at around 11 am.

A minor girl was killed when a speeding minibus knocked her at Keutala on Dhaka-Chittagong highway last morning.

The victim identified as Halena, 8, died on the spot.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday inaugurated the tree plantation programme of the Bangladesh Army in 'Senakunja' at the Dhaka Cantonment by planting a 'Nageswar' sapling. Chief of Army Staff Lt General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan is seen on her left. —PID photo

Asia-Pacific chambers for tariff cut in 3rd World

By Staff Correspondent

A two-day summit meeting of the heads of member countries of the Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI) in Singapore has regretted 'visible and disguised' trade barriers in developing countries, reports UNB.

They said while countries of the Asia-Pacific should bring down tariff rates further and open up markets to each other as well as to countries outside the region, the developed countries of Europe and America should likewise reduce trade barriers and desist from taking unilateral recourse to protectionist measures.

The summiters observed that the trade barriers and protectionist measures work against the interests of consumers in the countries of the region and bring about frictions

in international trade relations.

The meeting, held at the historical Goodwood Park Hotel in Singapore recently, reviewed the current global economic situation and major issues and developments in the region, according to a message received in Dhaka yesterday.

It was attended by 18 member countries — Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, Papua New Guinea, South Korea, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam, Taiwan, Brunei, Hongkong and Malaysia.

President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry Mahbubur Rahman led a two-member Bangladesh delegation in the meeting. The other member was Moazzem Hossain of

See Page 12 Col 4



This truck, along with three others, was involved in a serious collision near the Paltan crossing late Wednesday night. Miraculously, although all four vehicles turned turtle on impact, not one person suffered serious injury. —Star photo

Pak opposition urges Ishaq to dissolve NA, save country

By Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD, July 8: Pakistan's opposition is preparing for a political showdown by stepping up demands for the removal of Premier Nawaz Sharif, who has now lost influence in his own home province, reports AFP.

A multi-party conference attended here by major opposition alliances urged President Ghulam Ishaq Khan late Wednesday "to act promptly" to save Pakistan from a political crisis that has brought the country "on the verge of total collapse."

The All Party Conference (APC) called upon the President to dissolve the National Assembly again if Sharif failed to respond positively to its four-day ultimatum given Monday to

announce an election date.

The 73-year-old President dissolved the assembly in April, but his order was struck down by the Supreme Court.

The APC meeting was held at the main opposition leader Benazir Bhutto's residence, to consider its programme for storming an empass on the capital Islamabad.

After three hours of discussions on the situation it decided to hold another meeting in the Punjab capital Lahore at the expiry of the four-day deadline on Saturday.

Sources said the leaders, determined to demonstrate 'people power,' would chalk out a strategy and fix a date for a march on the capital to force

Sharif to call mid-term polls.

Reports from the opposition circles indicate the marchers in a caravan of hundreds of vehicles would start on July 15 from Lahore, 270 kilometres (165 miles) long journey to Islamabad.

This would be a second 'long march' after a similar attempt in November was crushed by Sharif's government as police and paramilitary troops laid a virtual siege around Islamabad, unrolling coils of barbed wires to block all entry points in the city.

But the proposed march this time follows weakening of Sharif's hold in the key province of Punjab, home to more than 60 per cent of Pakistan's popu-

lation of 120 million.

Sharif's federal government no longer controls police in the Punjab and North-West Frontier provinces, where hostile governments were supporting Ishaq Khan in his several months old fight for power.

The Chief Ministers of the two provinces, national flags fluttering on their Limousines, attended the opposition meeting Wednesday, assuring support to APC plans, sources said.

Newspapers said Sharif's government was planning to deploy some 3,000 troops, but their commander, Major General Saifur Ali, denied having received any such request.

As the marchers were likely to have an easy time in the Punjab, the Islamabad adminis-

tration was planning to equip federal police with riot gear.

However, Bhutto told a press conference after the APC meeting that she had told Ishaq Khan that "any attempt made by Sharif government to resist the march would be disastrous for the nations."

Bhutto held a 90 minute meeting with Ishaq Khan prior to the APC session.

She said she had told the President that dissolution of the national assembly and holding of fresh polls was the only way to end the current stalemate.

The president should use his authority once again as the situation has worsened since the Supreme Court reversed his earlier dissolution order.

The federal government has

ceased to exist and was indulging in violations of the constitution," she said, claiming that Sharif was buying time.

He would prefer a military takeover rather than holding elections to save the system, she said.

Sharif's top aide Chaudhru Nisar Ali had earlier charged that Bhutto's call for a march would result in chaos and open the door for intervention by the army.

Concern was growing in the army which has imposed Martial Law three times in Pakistan's 45-year history. But its current chief General Abdul Waheed so far seems reluctant to involve the military in politics.