

US ready to mediate Kashmir dispute

Star Report

The United States is willing to mediate in the Kashmir dispute provided both India and Pakistan seek its good offices for resolving the 45-year-old problem, according to the Office of the US Assistant Secretary of State.

However, in a briefing paper on the subject from the State Department in Washington, just made available in Dhaka by the USIS, the Clinton administration reaffirmed that it is frequently keeping in touch with both New Delhi and Islamabad on the disputed issue, and at senior levels.

Answering a question, the paper observed that "India and Pakistan should work together to resolve the dispute, taking into account the wishes of the people of Kashmir."

Following is the text of the briefing paper on a question-and-answer format:

Q: Has the US offered to mediate in the Kashmir dispute?

A: The United States has discussed Kashmir with India and Pakistan frequently, and at senior levels. We believe that India and Pakistan should work together to resolve the dispute, taking into account the wishes of the people of Kashmir.

If both sides were to request it, we would be prepared to be helpful in this process, but we have not offered to mediate this long-standing dispute.

Q: Has the US contacted Pakistan about a possible one-time inspection of its nuclear facilities?

A: We have long urged the Government of Pakistan to accept International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards on all its nuclear facilities.

This would naturally include periodic IAEA inspections. However, we have had no contact with Pakistan about a possible one-time inspection of its nuclear facilities.

Meanwhile, another briefing paper from Geneva reported that representatives of some 160 governments attending a conference on the protection of war victims called on the international community to "ensure that war crimes are duly prosecuted and do not go unpunished."

Delegates to the

Maneka Gandhi

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Maneka said Third World nations should make all-out efforts to alleviate poverty which was one of the main reasons for environmental imbalances in those countries.

She was also against the adoption of the Western model of education, saying education should be technical and functional.

She said the sub-continent had inherited a colonial bureaucracy and ideology which was not appropriate for the region.

"After 30 or 40 years, we have realised that almost all the government policies are wrong and environmentally unhealthy. We must formulate policies according to our culture and economy."

Regarding the major environmental problems existing in the sub-continent, she said each and every development process was ecologically unfit.

She also said women in South Asia should involve themselves in active politics for their own emancipation.

Maneka Gandhi, who entered politics after the death of her husband Sanjay Gandhi, younger son of former Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi, and later involved herself in environmental activities, called upon the women to participate in politics but "not as a widow or a daughter of a politician."

The women from the grassroots level should take part in politics as individual entities," she said.

Women in India and Bangladesh play a significant role in environmental management but she regretted that the girl children are not getting opportunity for schooling because they have to do household chores all the day.

Maneka termed the relationship between Bangladesh and India "wonderful", saying that the people of both countries had almost similar cultures and good contacts among them-selves.

The press conference was also attended by Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelly and Hasna Moudud of National Association for Resource Improvement (NARI), an NGO.

Earlier in the morning Maneka Gandhi, a former State Minister for Environment under VP Singh, said the Farakka is-

International Conference for the Protection of War Victims adopted a draft declaration September 1 condemning the increasingly widespread violations of humanitarian law, especially violence against civilians.

The conference's final declaration reaffirms the principles of the humanitarian law embodied in the 1949 Geneva Convention — international treaties intended to safeguard respect for both combatants and civilians in times of conflict.

It calls on governments to take "resolute action" against states bearing responsibility for violations for international humanitarian law.

The Swiss government, the depositary state of the Geneva Conventions, has been asked to convene an open-ended intergovernmental group of experts to study practical means of promoting full compliance with the conventions, which most of the world's nations have signed.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata told the conference, "We have passed the threshold of what is tolerable in modern warfare, especially as regards the treatment of civilian populations."

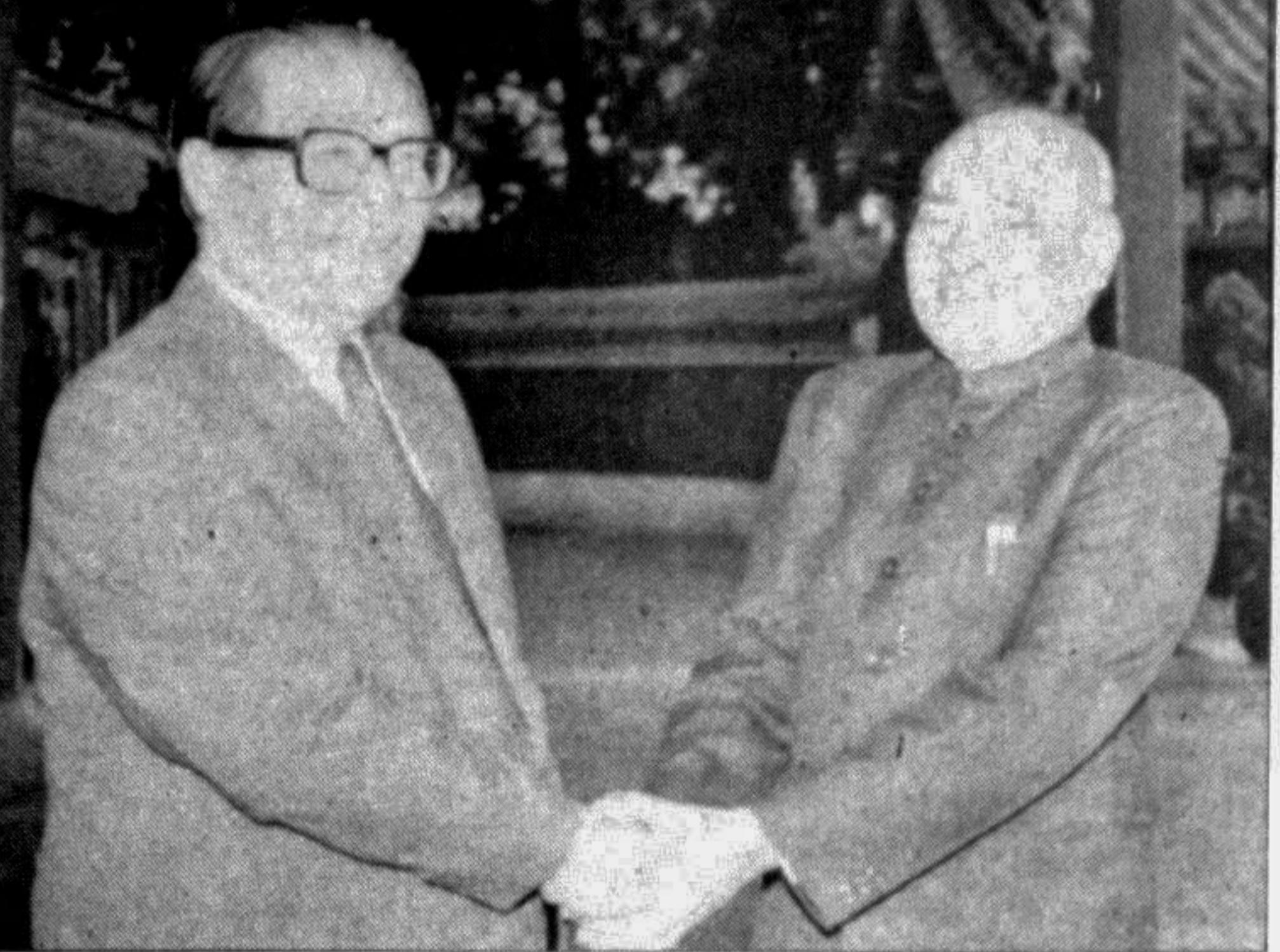
She said the ICRC and her own agency are now faced with "shockingly frequent and blatant disregard of the most elementary humanitarian principles."

Warren Zimmermann, the director of the State Department's Bureau for Refugee Programmes, said he believes the conference succeeded in focusing international attention on the plight of war victims.

"I think we are seeing a new level of violence and atrocity that we have not seen in a long time," the former US ambassador to Yugoslavia said in an interview following the conference.

He attributed the increase in violence in part to the rise of nationalism, "Which is in itself a kind of doctrine which creates hostility to other national groups."

Zimmermann led the US delegation to the three-day conference, which was convened by the Swiss government and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).



Chinese President Jiang Zemin (L) welcoming visiting Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao at the Zhongnanhai leadership compound yesterday. — APP photo

DU punishes 628 students for cheating

By DU Correspondent

The Dhaka University disciplinary council recently took various punitive measures against 628 students for cheating in different examinations under the university.

Of the 628 examinees, 329 students of the Dhaka University itself will not be able to appear in any examinations for a year for adopting unfair means while eight others have been barred for two years.

Seven accused of adopting unfair means, however, were found not guilty and acquitted.

Those punished include 189 students of the Jagannath College, 158 of the Karatia Sadat College, six of the Eden Girls' College, 21 of the Mymensingh Ananda Mohan College, one student of the Dhaka College, three of the Barisal B M College, 10 from different halls of the Dhaka University, 244 external candidates, seven of the Government Homeopathic College and nine examinees of the Bangladesh Homeopathic College.

The punished students took part in the 1990 degree Honours Examinations under the traditional system, the First Part Masters Examinations of 1990, the Final Year Masters of 1989, the First Part BHMS Examination and Final Year BHMS Examination of 1986.

GF's campaign

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the party, held at a local hotel last night, expressed deep concern over the recent incidents which forced closure of some universities and colleges.

The meeting, presided over by Forum president Dr Kamal Hossain, discussed different aspects of the five-point demand.

The GF has already given an ultimatum to the parliamentary committee, constituted for curbing campus' violence, for taking a decision towards ending the menace by October 11.

The meeting also discussed the interim constitution of the party and programmes presented at the national grand convention to pinpoint the problems and their possible solutions.

In a press briefing Dr Kamal said personality cult in politics was the main obstacle to development of the Third World countries.

Taking this into account, we have to break this trend. The Gano Forum has adopted the policy of collective leadership to implement a new-third programme for development of the workers," he said.

Dr Kamal said, "Democracy in the party is our principle and team work is our main strength".

Speaking on the duties of the members of the President and the Secretariat, the Forum chief said the meeting was working for distribution of responsibilities which would be announced today.

According to party insiders, the petition will accuse the government of completely ignoring the interests of the peasants and blame the government's agriculture policy for the present 'miseries' of the farmers.

AL central working body members and party MPs have already left for their respective localities on September 6 to make today's programme a success.

According to sources in the party, the AL policy-makers believe the peasants movement is not only important for the country's economic uplift, it would also help the party win the next parliamentary polls.

Peasant's Day

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farmers, reduction of diesel oil price, availability of quality seeds and fair prices and a sound marketing system for agricultural products.

The text of the memorandum, drafted by the AL leaders working with the party's peasant front, received approval of the AL's central working committee (CWC) on September 1.

According to the CWC decision, the memo will be signed by AL chief Sheikh Hasina and addressed to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

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On a prayer by Ramna police, the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate granted a two-day police remand for each of the five accused — Mohammad Jamal Uddin, Sultan Ahmed, Gofur, Hakim Mohammad Elias, and Hafez Abu Bakar.

A customs intelligence team recovered 300 kilos of gold from Jamal Uddin at the Daudkandi ferry-ghat when he, along with the four others, was going to Feni from Dhaka by a car. Sunday. Jamal Uddin returned from Jeddah Saturday.

They were arrested by Ramna police under customs law.

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Zahir tells BEA seminar

Less bureaucracy means more development

By Staff Correspondent

Planning Minister A M Zahiruddin Khan yesterday said despite the free market economy pursued by the government, the country still needs some degree of planned approach to development because of infrastructure problems and social reality.

At the same time he warned that the country could not afford laissez-faire.

However, he made it clear there was no way of going back to a centralised economy as envisaged immediately after Liberation by the policy planners.

He also castigated the then economists for failing to formulate proper policies during the formative stages of the country which, he said, was responsible for slow growth of the economy.

The minister was speaking at a workshop on "Structural Reform for Self-reliant Development of Bangladesh" organised by the Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA) at the Planning Academy here.

The political parties did not think of the people and the economists failed to formulate policies that would create an environment for growth", the Planning Minister said.

He also blamed the bureaucratic system for failing to give any positive direction to the country saying that less bureaucratic control encourages more development.

"The bureaucrats always assume that they know all the answers while others know nothing," Khan said. "But please, take the people into consideration", he appealed to the civil servants.

He blamed inward-looking policies and over control for sluggish growth in the region.

"We need reforms to get rid of this over intervention", the minister said.

Time has come for us to decide our own policy for development," Prof Rahman said. "Self-reliance is the best way of development and no country in the world has ever prospered by beggaring."

He also urged the country's economists to play their due role in development.

The minister said the workshop discussed a technical concept paper on poverty alleviation and self-reliant development by Prof Rahman.

(See summary of the concept paper by Prof Anisur Rahman on Business Page)

10 recruiting agencies' licences cancelled

and Messrs Babu Bhat and Co Dhaka.

Agencies whose activities have been suspended are: Messrs Young Star Syndicate, Dhaka, Messrs Sunrise International, Dhaka, Messrs Khwaza Recruiting International, Agency Bangladesh, Dhaka, Messrs Rajdhani Overseas, Dhaka, Messrs Okister, Dhaka, Messrs Famous International, Dhaka, Messrs Happy International, Dhaka, Messrs Babu Associate, Dhaka, and Messrs Red Rose International, Dhaka.

The government has cancelled licences of 10 recruiting agencies, suspended those of nine and served show cause notices on 37 agencies for harassing, cheating and misappropriating money of the workers going abroad, reports BSS.

On the other hand 13 best recruiting agents have been recognised as CIP (Commercially Important Person) for their good work.

These information were revealed at a meeting of the standing committee on the Labour and Manpower Ministry with Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuyan in the chair.

The meeting was also informed that 1,53,453 persons went abroad from January to July of the current year and during this period the wage earners' remittances worth Tk 2,247 crore were received. During the same period last year 104,518 persons went abroad and they remitted Tk 2,080 crore, the handout added.

The recruiting agencies whose licences were cancelled are: Messrs Popular Trade (Bangladesh) Ltd, Dhaka, Messrs Palash Enterprise, Dhaka, Messrs M A F International Enterprise, Dhaka, Messrs Wiener International, Dhaka, Messrs Al-Farid Trade International, Dhaka, Al International, Dhaka, Messrs Al-Nakir International, Dhaka, Messrs Al-Maher International, Dhaka

and Messrs Babu Bhat and Co Dhaka.

RANGPUR, Sept 7: Awami League (AL) leader Abdus Samad Azad today said the key thrust for the development of Bangladesh should be given to the agriculture sector.

At a rally organised by the AL as part of its "Bachao Krishak Bachao Desh" (save the farmers, save the country) programme held at the Rangpur District Public Library premises, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament demanded the withdrawal of certificate cases and warrants of arrest against loan defaulting farmers.

The rally was also addressed, among others, by Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, MP, Zillur Rahman, Siddique Hossain, Abdul Jalil and others.

Saifur seeks Bonn's help for poverty alleviation

BONN, Sept 7: Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman today met German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Carl-Dieter Spranger and congratulated him for the unification of Germany and the success with which the German government has overcome difficulties inherent in the process, reports BSS.

He also thanked the German government for bilateral cooperation with Bangladesh despite its own internal problems.

Saifur Rahman requested for German assistance to priority sectors like poverty alleviation, primary education, rural electrification and the railways.

The German minister pledged continuing German assistance in these sectors and assured to consider the proposals during the forthcoming annual consultations, to be held in December. The two ministers also discussed the Flood Action plan and a proposed credit line for small and cottage industries.

The German Minister appreciated the macro stability in Bangladesh and the success in increasing food production. He assured the Bangladesh Finance Minister of continuing support to sustain the results achieved so far.

Earlier, Monday, Saifur Rahman met Prof. Dr Uwe Holt, chairman Chair of the Bundestag (Parliament) Committee on Economic Cooperation.

Saifur Rahman was later interviewed by the German press and radio.

The parliamentary wings of the Jatiya Party, the Jamaat-e-Islami and the smaller parliamentary group like the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), the Ganatantri Party, the Workers' Party and the JSD (Straj) will also take up the issue for discussion.

Opposition sources believe they might even win support of some treasury benches since, as they put it, many innocent workers of the ruling BNP were also often being harassed by this particular piece of legislation because of intra-party conflicts.

Jatiya Party (JP) leader Barrister Moudud Ahmed said: "We'll fully support the AL-sponsored bill because it's a matter of common concern for the opposition."

Favouring a combined opposition move in the House, Barrister Moudud further said, "Surely, we will have to stand united on the issue as the repeal of the law is a popular demand." I'm hopeful that a good number of treasury benches

The Midnight File

Israelis protest peace deal

JERUSALEM, Sept 7: Thousands of Israeli protesters opposed to the pending Israel-Palestine Liberation Organization peace plan gathered outside the prime minister's office Tuesday, vowing to blockade it for 24 hours. About 10,000 people gathered at the start of the demonstration. Protest organizers predicted that the crowd would swell to over 100,000 as the night wore on, as demonstrators arrived on hundreds of buses from all over Israel, reports AP.

Three more German states ban imperial war flag

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