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The Daily Star

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Commonwealth Summit begins in Cyprus today

Queen Elizabeth concerned at hardship caused by Farakka



Queen Elizabeth II listens to Commonwealth Secretary General Emeka Anyaoku (R) as Cypriot President Glafkos Clerides (C) looks on yesterday during the Queen's visit to the press centre in Limassol's Hawaii Beach hotel.

LIMASSOL, Oct 20: The Queen of England and Head of the Commonwealth Elizabeth II today expressed her concern over the hardship being faced by the Bangladeshi people due to the Ganges water problem, reports BSS.

Her Majesty the Queen was talking to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia who called on her aboard the 'Britannia', the royal yacht anchored at the Limassol Port. The Queen is in the island nation of Cyprus to grace the occasion of the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting between October 21 to 24.

The Queen and the Prime Minister had more than a half-an-hour's talk which touched mainly on the issues related to the welfare of the people of Bangladesh.

The Queen said she was aware of the hardship caused to the people of Bangladesh by the Ganges water problem which was creating floods in the rainy seasons and droughts in the dry seasons. She enquired from the Bangladesh Prime Minister about the present situation relating to the water

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Dollar-denominated bonds soon

By Staff Correspondent

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman said yesterday the government would very soon introduce dollar-denominated bonds for the wage-earners to accelerate investments in the country.

The wage-earners would be paid the interest on the bonds in foreign exchange, the minister said.

Saifur Rahman was addressing as chief guest a seminar on 'Convertibility of the Taka' organised by the IBA Alumni Association yesterday at Hotel Purban.

The seminar, presided over by the Director of the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), was addressed, among others, by the Chairman of Tariff Commission Dr Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir and general secretary of the association Arifur Rahman, while the keynote papers were presented by the Executive Director of Bangladesh Bank Abdur Raquib and Research Director of the BIDS Abdul Gafur.

The Finance Minister said the introduction of bonds would not only help boost investments, but also help sustain the present state of foreign exchange reserves.

He said the foreign exchange reserve during the past autocratic regime was quite discour-

aging and was not conducive to the convertibility of the Taka. The present democratic government has improved the situation and brought stability in the macro-economy through pragmatic measures and economic reforms.

'Now the foreign exchange reserve position is excellent. We now have the capacity to pay the bills for seven months' import requirements,' he said and added that the situation is quite favourable for the convertibility of Taka.

Rahman termed the announcement making the Taka convertible a 'milestone' for the country's economy and said it is an indication of good management in the country's financial sector.

He, however, stressed the need for maintaining financial discipline in the country, saying that the convertibility of the Taka would accelerate the economic development providing there is fair competition, good governance and corporate governance in the economic sector.

Minister Rahman expressed concern at the huge capital outflow every year in the name of meeting the expenses of students studying abroad and said the government would look into the matter since most of the

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Professionals announce fresh programmes

By Staff Correspondent

Non-administrative government officials including doctors, engineers and agriculturists began their 72-day agitational programmes yesterday to press for a 17-point charter of demands for administrative and judicial reforms.

The first phase of the staggered programme is a five-day token protest by the heads of departments, autonomous bodies and sector corporations in the form of ignoring orders given by the Secretaries of ministries and making them accountable directly to the ministers. However, no such instance of violation was reported from anywhere in the country.

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ECNEC approves Tk 444 cr project for road dev

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) yesterday in its meeting okayed a Taka 444 crore road overlay and development project for better maintenance of various roads all over the country, reports BSS.

Chaired by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, the meeting also decided to provide an additional Taka 10 crore fund to help develop dairy farming in the private sector under a credit programme. Under this credit programme, a farmer will get credit support of 25 per cent for the purchase of one to 10 cattle while 20 per cent for 11 to 25 cattle.

The meeting also underscored the need for developing the rural based agro-economy which, the ECNEC pointed out, could be the engine of rural development.

It also directed the Communications Ministry to expedite the implementation of the 'second Buriganga Bridge at Babubazar point.

The ECNEC, however, did not give approval to a project relating to the purchase of cargo vessel by the Bangladesh Shipping Corporation taken up during the autocratic regime and asked the Shipping Ministry to take appropriate actions against those who had committed omissions and commissions.

The Finance Minister said he could not approve this year project which had so many omissions and commissions from its initiation to the completion and had raised many a questions.

More people condole S M Ali's death

By Staff Correspondent

People from all walks of life, including diplomats, journalists and readers, continued to visit The Daily Star office yesterday to offer their condolences and to sign the condolence register opened to mourn the death of S M Ali, the founding editor and publisher of the newspaper.

Among those who signed the condolence register were Dr MacArthur Corsino, First Secretary of the Philippine

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NOTICE

Today's issue of The Daily Star contains a 2-page supplement on 'IDLC Lease Financing in Bangladesh' and a 4-page UNICEF supplement on Round Table on The Girl Child. Therefore, some of our regular pages, as well as our regular feature Dhaka Day by Day, have been dropped due to space constraint.

Condolence book

In view of the continuous stream of visitors and requests received, the condolence register opened at The Daily Star office to mourn the death of S M Ali, the founding editor and publisher of the newspaper, will remain open today from 10 am to 10 pm.

Inside Today

In Memoriam

... When We Needed Him Most' Page 4

International

Rabin doubts PLO's ability to govern Palestinians



Rumours and denials on the Arenas' affair with Fidel Ramos hit the newspapers in Manila Page 5

NEWS BRIEFS

Banglabazar Patrika editor sued

From Our Correspondent SYLHET, Oct 20: Warrants of arrest have been issued against Matur Rahman Chowdhury, editor, the daily Banglabazar Patrika and Chowdhury Montas Ahmed, Sylhet Bureau chief of the daily today by first class Magistrate's Court of Sylhet sadar. The Magistrate Luthfunnahr issued the warrants in a defamation suit filed earlier by the secretary of the Sylhet District Bar Association, Advocate Abdul Hai Khan.

Australian envoy calls on Hasina

Outgoing Australian High Commissioner Richard K Gate paid a farewell call on Awami League president and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina at her Parliament office yesterday. Hasina lauded the role of the Australian envoy in promoting relations between Bangladesh and Australia, reports UNB.

SPGRC greets Benazir

Stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh yesterday warmly felicitated Benazir Bhutto, Co-Chairperson of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) on her assumption to the office of Prime Minister of Pakistan. In a message, chief patron of the Stranded Pakistanis General Repatriation Committee (SPGRC) Alhaj M Nasim Khan expressed hope that the newly elected Prime Minister of Pakistan would start the on-going process of repatriation of the stranded Pakistanis, reports UNB.

CIRDAP meetings

The 15th meeting of CIRDAP's executive committee and 9th meeting of its Governing Council will be held here on December 11-12 and 14-15 respectively.

Ministers, secretaries of concerned rural development ministries of the 11 member states and high officials from different international organizations will attend the meetings, reports UNB.

Housewife electrocuted

By DMCH Correspondent A housewife was electrocuted in Pallabi area of Mirpur in the city Wednesday morning. The victim Farida Begum, 25, wife of Mohammed Abdul Latif was electrocuted at her residence at Barontek, at about 10 am. She died on the spot.

Benazir pries open Sharif's hold on Punjab

LAHORE, Oct 20: Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's nominee Manzoor Watto was today elected Chief Minister of Punjab, demolishing former premier Nawaz Sharif's hold on the politically crucial province, reports AFP.

Bhutto's nominee in Sindh, her powerbase, has also been elected Chief Minister while Sharif's candidate defeated Benazir's nominee in North West Frontier Province.

The situation in Baluchistan remained confused where 11 parties share 43 seats and independents make up the largest single group with a total of 8 seats.

In the 248-member Punjab provincial assembly, Watto polled 131 votes while Shahbaz

Sharif, brother of Nawaz Sharif and a nominee of his Pakistan Muslim League (PML) got 105.

It is the first time in 16 years that Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has held power in the country's most populous and richest province, control of which is considered crucial to the stability of the federal government.

Some 238 members were present in the House when the voting took place. Two members of the Pakistan Islamic Front (PIF) did not cast their vote.

Watto is a member of the splinter PML-Junejo group, led by Hamid Nasir Chattha, which is allied to the PPP.

As Speaker of the previous Punjab assembly, Watto had

revolted against Sharif and sided with former President Ghulam Ishaq Khan in July when the two top men were locked in a bitter power tussle.

Sharif's nominee today defeated Bhutto's candidate for the post of Speaker in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) assembly.

Amid heavy security, Hidayatullah a joint candidate of Sharif PML and its electoral ally, the Awami National Party (ANP) polled 40 votes against 37 secured by rival Abdul Akbar of PPP, the assembly secretariat said.

In the 83-member house, 78 cast their vote, while four members of the fundamentalist Pakistan Islamic Front ab-

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Newly-elected Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto chats with Chief of Army Staff Gen Abdul Waheed (L) after the oath-taking ceremony in Islamabad Tuesday.

Doctors abstain from work

By Staff Correspondent

Doctors in eight government medical college hospitals and medicare centres in 64 districts across the country yesterday observed a day-long strike, bringing misery to thousands of patients.

The doctors, at the call of the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), did not attend any section of the hospitals except the emergency units where a limited number were present.

The doctors observed the strike in protest against the killing of three persons, including a doctor, and injuries to 30 others at the Chittagong Medical College Hospital Monday last. About 16,000 doctors across the country demanded punishment of the terrorists responsible for the murders.

Meanwhile, in the absence of doctors at the hospitals, the sufferings of the patients mounted beyond description.

Witnesses said, many patients left the outdoor departments of the hospitals in despair.

Our Medical College Correspondents said, no scheduled operation took place at the city's Dhaka Medical College Hospital and the Mitford Hospital.

A BMA member told The Daily Star last night, the doctors were well aware of the inconvenience to the patients. 'Yet uprooting terrorism from the medical colleges and hospitals is very important. We do not want any terrorism in these places,' he said.

A BMA press release said a rally of the doctors will be held at the PG Hospital Battala premises at 11 this morning.

On Monday last, a group of miscreants opened indiscriminate fire with automatic weapons on the people inside the doctors' cafeteria of the Chittagong Medical College which left Dr Mizanur Rahman, 26, Borhan Uddin, 24, and Faridul Islam, 20 dead.

Political parties rule out talks with Jamaat

By Nurul Kabir

The mainstream political parties yesterday ruled out any scope for negotiations with the Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh over the party's alleged terrorist activities across the country.

The leaders of different political parties expressed this opinion yesterday when they were asked to comment on the Jamaat's recent decision to open dialogues with them, reportedly to defuse political tension emerging out of widespread political violence in the country.

The Jamaat's central working council resolved Monday that the party would send emissaries to different political organisations with a view to putting an end to the present

crisis born out of the spate of violence across the country.

Mohammad Nasim, Organising Secretary of the Awami League (AL) and Chief Whip of the Opposition in Parliament, yesterday said that there is no scope for negotiation with the Jamaat, especially when the party had resorted to violence against all the democratic forces of the country.

Replying to a question, the AL leader also said, 'We shall not sit with the Jamaat emissaries.' Regarding his previous stand relating to the demand for banning religion-based politics, Nasim told this correspondent that his party would stick to the demand.

The Jamaat, however, told

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Industrialists demand 'trade union holiday'

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) has suggested introduction of a 'trade union holiday' like tax holiday to help the growth of the industrial sector because labour unrest was one of the main reasons for the underdevelopment of the sector.

At a press conference yesterday on the occasion of publication of a series of recommendations for creating a better atmosphere for investment in the country, the DCCI also suggested the rule of law must be ensured in order to promote industrialisation.

The recommendations were made at a seminar on 'Environment of Investment: Problems and Remedies' organised by the DCCI Saturday last.

Yesterday's press conference, mainly addressed by DCCI president A T M Wazullah, was

attended among others by FBCCI president Mahbubur Rahman, DCCI vice presidents Syed Jamaluddin Haider and Khورشed Ali Mollah, director Ali Ashraf, Dr A F Dowla of the Independent University and Managing Director of MIDAS Mahmudul Haq.

Wazullah said, to create a dynamic investment system, the government must strengthen the cooperation between the public and the private sector by setting up a government-business consultative committee.

The DCCI recommended that

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Storming of Hazratbal Mosque 'not ruled out'

Troops gun down protester near shrine

SRINAGAR, Oct 20: Indian paramilitary forces gunned down a young Muslim man here today when Kashmiris defied a curfew and tried to march on the besieged Hazratbal Mosque, police said, reports AFP.

Border Security Force (BSF) personnel killed the man when he attempted to snatch a rifle from one of them at Rainwari, a residential area near the shrine, senior Superintendent of Police Ram Lubaya said.

It was the first death in protests against the siege by the Indian army of the Hazratbal Shrine since it was taken over last Friday by Muslim separatists.

Earlier dozens of Kashmiri Muslims were injured as Indian troops fired warning shots and used tear gas and clubs to prevent thousands of protestors

from marching on the besieged Hazratbal Mosque.

The Indian army general commanding the siege of the holiest, Islamic mosque in Kashmir said 'meanwhile that

Kashmir Governor K V Krishna Rao ruled out an assault on the Hazratbal mosque. 'Security forces will not enter the holy shrine,' Rao said in a broadcast over Radio Kashmir today, contradicting Lieutenant General S Padmanabhan, reports AFP.

The military did not 'rule out an assault' to flush out the 50 armed Muslim rebels who have been held up in the complex for five days.

But Lieutenant General S Padmanabhan told a news conference that he was optimistic the Muslim separatists barricaded inside the white-marble lakeside mosque would give themselves up by Friday at the latest.

Kashmir administration spokesman Mehboob ur-Rehman also indicated that the siege could be brought to an early conclusion. 'I think this drama will end on a happy note

soon and people will not have to wait until Friday,' he said.

Rehman said government negotiators held two rounds of talks with the masked, gun-toting guerrillas inside the mosque today but he declined to reveal any details of the discussions.

General Padmanabhan for his part rejected giving safe passage to the Muslim separatists inside the revered mosque, which houses a single

hair that Kashmiri Muslims believe comes from the beard of the Prophet Mohammed (SM).

A protest strike paralysed the Muslim-majority valley today and anti-Indian demonstrations rocked Srinagar and other Kashmiri towns, witnesses and officials said.

Border Security Force (BSF) troops rushed from one neighborhood of Srinagar to another through the day to break up scattered protests against the siege and attempts to march on the mosque 10 kilometers from the city centre.

Maulvi Abbas Ansari, who heads the All-Party Freedom Conference, an umbrella group of political and militant organisations opposed to Indian rule over Kashmir, urged Muslims to march on the shrine after Friday prayers.

Pakistan ready for talks

ISLAMABAD, Oct 20: Pakistan's new Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto told her Indian counterpart P V Narasimha Rao today that her government was prepared for serious talks on the troubled state of Jammu and Kashmir, reports Reuter.

She conveyed her message in a reply to a congratulatory message from Rao after her election on Tuesday. Rao offered talks on disputed Kashmir and other outstanding issues between the two longstanding rivals.

Bhutto described Kashmir as the main obstacle to better relations. Reuter adds: India and Pakistan have agreed to hold official-level talks on a tense standoff over an Indian army siege of Kashmir's Hazratbal Mosque.

An Indian Foreign Ministry official said senior diplomats of the two countries would meet in Cyprus to discuss the issue.

Qul khwani of S. M. Ali

Qul khwani of the Founder-Editor of The Daily Star will be held on Friday, 22nd October, 1993, after Asr prayers at the Old DOHS (Banani) Community Centre, Street No. 2.

All friends, relatives and admirers are requested to join the qul khwani and pray for the salvation of the departed soul.