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NEWS BRIEFS

Mozambique FM meets Khaleda

LIMASSOL, Oct 22: The Foreign Minister of Mozambique Pascoal Moscumbi today called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her VVIP hotel suite. Moscumbi expressed thanks on behalf of the people and government to Bangladesh for sending troops in the UN peace keeping mission in Mozambique, reports BSS.

UN Day tomorrow

The United Nations Day will be observed in Bangladesh as elsewhere in the world tomorrow. The Bangladesh 2000, a voluntary organisation in cooperation with the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) will hold a discussion meeting to mark the day at the UNIC auditorium at 10 am tomorrow, reports UNB.

Foreign trawler seized: 21 held

CHITTAGONG, Oct 22: Bangladesh Navy ship Umar Farooq impounded a foreign fishing trawler and arrested all its 22 crew members while engaged in catching fish near the St-Martin's island this morning. The navy ship also recovered huge quantity of mixed fish from the trawler seized during her routine anti-smuggling, anti-piracy and fishery protection patrol, reports BSS.

Mostafiz may visit ROK in Nov

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman is expected to pay an official visit to South Korea in the last week of November, reports UNB.

Troops gun down 31 to quell march on Hazratbal Mosque

SRINAGAR, Oct 22: Indian troops shot dead at least 31 people in Kashmir today when they fired into crowds of angry Muslims marching on the besieged Hazratbal Mosque, police and hospital sources said, reports AFP.

Twenty-four demonstrators were shot dead in the town of Bijbehara, some 40 kilometers south of here, while seven people died during day-long anti-Indian protests which rocked this Kashmir summer capital.

A total of more than 200 people were injured as police used clubs, tear gas and live

ammunition to disperse demonstrators who defied a curfew and attempted to march on the Hazratbal Shrine, according to the police.

Superintendent of Police Mohammed Amin said that 15 people died in Bijbehara when paramilitary Border Security Force (BSF) troops opened fire to break up a 30,000-strong crowd heading for the mosque.

Doctors at Bijbehara's main hospital told AFP that 24 people had died and more than 100 had been injured, including 20 who were in serious condition.

In Srinagar, thousands of

people took to the streets shouting 'break the siege' and attempting to organise marches on the mosque where a group of 50 armed Muslim militants has been holed up for a week.

Most of the protests were swiftly broken up by troops using clubs and tear gas but a crowd estimated at up to 20,000 people formed in the Safa Kadal area of Srinagar and headed for the mosque some 10 kilometers from here.

BSF troops first used tear gas to try to halt the marchers and opened fire when they were about seven kilometers short of

their destination, witnesses said.

Three people were killed and more than 50 injured in the gunfire and a stampede which followed the first bursts of automatic weapons fire, police said.

Maulvi Mohammad Abbas Ansari, a prominent Kashmiri politician who led the marchers, was among the injured, police said.

A government spokesman said that mediators held three rounds of negotiations with the militants Friday but declined to reveal details of the talks.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia talking with Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto during their meeting at Le Meridien hotel in Limassol, Cyprus yesterday. — AFP photo

Rural training project for youths ADB agrees to resume loan disbursement, on condition

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has agreed to resume disbursement of loan for the rural training project undertaken by the Ministry of Youth and Sports on condition that all the preparatory works, pending for about two and a half years, would be completed by October 31 next.

According to official sources, the ADB, after approval of the project in 1991, had disbursed Tk 66 lakh for procurement of necessary equipment. But a very little amount of the fund was utilised during the last two years.

If the pending works are done in time, the ADB would disburse two million dollars (equivalent to Tk 8 crore) in the first week of November for starting works of the 19.35 million dollar project, the sources said.

The ADB, in a tripartite meeting last week with the Ministry of Youth and the con-

ditions of the project, observed that the implementation unit of the project has been lacking efficient and experienced officials. The project implementation unit (PIU) would have to be made effective and efficient by including experienced officials in the unit, the ADB suggested.

The Bank said although the project implementation period has elapsed by 50 per cent, only 15 per cent physical progress has been achieved. "...On the financial side, the liquidation of the first advance of only \$172071, made 11 months ago, has as yet not been submitted by the PIU," the ADB said.

The ADB also insisted the government finalise the credit manual and fill up all the vacant posts at field levels of the project by the deadline it has fixed.

The Bank has also recommended that the Ministry of Youth would issue an executive

order by 31 October defining the proper delegation of authorities and responsibilities for the PIU officials to strengthen project management system, ensure more efficient project/functional interfacing and thereby achieve project objectives within the remaining period of the project duration. The responsibilities of the Department of Youth Development (DYD) and the PIU should clearly be identified to avert uneven interferences, some concerned officials felt.

The other tasks which the government would have to complete by October 31 for availing the ADB credit include acquiring land for the training centres, providing logistic support for the field level staff of the project and integration of the ADB-assisted project with another project which the government initiated in 1987 on its

CIS troops launch offensive against Tajik rebels: 70 die

MOSCOW, Oct 22: Russian forces and other troops from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) carried out a vast offensive Thursday against Islamic Tajik rebels along the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border, leaving at least 70 Muslim fighters dead, Russian military officials said, reports AFP.

Russian military officials were quoted by the media as saying the offensive was ordered late Wednesday after several hundred Islamic rebels crossed the Pyandzh river from northern Afghanistan into Tajikistan.

Colonel Vladimir Masliviets, head of the Russian border troops based in Tajikistan, told the Itar-Tass news agency the offensive involved CIS units, Tajik government troops and elements from 201st Russian motorized division, backed by warplanes and artillery.

He said "isolated groups of armed Islamic rebels" had fled into the mountains and CIS forces were hunting them down. News agencies reported that two more groups of about 100 rebels each had taken up positions along the border Thursday, one in the Moskovsky

region and the other about 50 kilometers (30 miles) further east near Kalaikhum.

Thousands of Tajik Muslims fled into Afghanistan after pro-Communist forces toppled an Islamic-led government in Dushanbe late last year, ending six months of civil war.

Earlier this year Islamic fighters began launching cross-

border raids from camps inside northern Afghanistan, prompting Russia and neighbouring central Asian governments to send troops to the border region.

About 25 Russian troops were killed in a bloody attack on the frontier in July, prompting CIS states to send additional forces to the region.

In the last 10 months, CIS troops have put down about 150 attacks in the border area and have intervened militarily about 50 times, the head of the Russian border guards said in early October.

More than 20,000 have died so far in fighting in the region, according to Tajik sources.

Under the terms of a mutual assistance agreement signed in May between Moscow and Dushanbe, Russian troops are obliged to help defend Tajikistan until 1999.

The Russian CIS offensive follows an action in early October, when they prevented some 300 Islamic fighters from crossing the border into the Shuroabad region of Afghanistan, southeast of Tajikistan.

Delhi assures resolving water issue

LIMASSOL, Oct 22: Indian Finance Minister Dr Manmohan Singh today called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her hotel suite and conveyed Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao's 'all possible assurances' to resolve the water-sharing problem, reports BSS.

Dr Singh, who is attending the on-going Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) as the head of the delegation of India, told Begum Zia that he had listened to her references to the problems of the water-sharing issue with interest and said, "Our Prime Minister has asked me to convey his all possible assurances to resolve this problem (water-sharing)."

Begum Khaleda Zia said she was expecting to welcome the Indian Prime Minister to

Eight years after allotment Handing over of Rajuk plots in Baridhara remains uncertain

By Asiuzzaman

The handing over of plots in the J-block of the city's posh Baridhara residential area remains uncertain, even eight years after the plots were allotted.

A five-member parliamentary committee headed by Awami League MP Kazi Abdur Rashid, which was to have resolved the impasse, has so far managed to hold only one meeting since its formation last August.

The members of the committee formed after the matter was

discussed in Parliament, made just one visit to the spot 16 record statements of affected persons whose lands were acquired and the allottees of Rajuk.

The committee chairman, however, said it would take at other two months to resolve the issue but one committee member termed the deadline 'impossible'.

The problem has been stagnating since 1986 when the

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Benazir will take FP expertise from Dhaka

LIMASSOL, Oct 22: Newly-elected Prime Minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto today expressed her willingness to take technical expertise from Bangladesh to make the family planning programme successful in Pakistan where the rate of population growth is very high, reports BSS.

The Pakistan Prime Minister revealed her plan when she met Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at the latter's VVIP hotel suite.

Bhutto praised Bangladesh's progress in family planning and welfare programmes. The two leaders of the SAARC countries resolved to further strengthen bilateral relations, especially in the field of economic cooperation.

The Bangladesh Prime Minister congratulated Benazir Bhutto on her assumption of the office of the Prime Minister

of Pakistan in a free and fair election held in her country.

Begum Zia said regional development in South Asia could get the desired momentum only when democracy had taken firm roots in all member countries.

The Bangladesh Prime Minister also apprised Benazir Bhutto of the socio-economic programmes taken up by her government during the last two-and-a-half years.

Bhutto, who arrived here this morning to attend the current biennial conference of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), also praised Bangladesh's achievements in the field of economic development, especially in macro-economic management.

The Pakistani leader made special references to the achievements of Bangladesh in

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Illyas Kanchan's wife killed in road mishap

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Oct 22: The wife of matinee idol Illyas Kanchan, died here this afternoon in a road accident at Hashimpur under Chandanaisah thana, 40 miles from the city, police said.

Jahanara Begum, 30, met with a tragic end after being critically injured in the mishap on her way to Banderban district by a microbus accompanied by another film actor A T M Shamsuzzaman and his son, police informed.

She was going to Banderban to join her husband Illyas Kanchan who was on location for shooting.

The accident, a head-on collision between the microbus and a speeding truck coming from the opposite direction, occurred at around 1.30 pm.

The driver of the microbus and A T M Shamsuzzaman were also injured in the accident.

Hospital sources said Kanchan's wife succumbed to her injuries after being brought to the Chittagong Medical Hospital in a critical condition.

Jamaat demands code of conduct for parties, press

The Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday raised a five-point demand envisaging codes of conduct for political parties and the press to curb growing menace of armed violence in and outside the educational campuses, reports UNB.

The demands were spelt out by Jamaat secretary general and its parliamentary party leader Matur Rahman Nizami, MP at a news conference at the Al-Falah Building here in the afternoon.

Nizami called for formation of an enquiry commission headed by a High Court judge on recent acts of terrorism in Khulna and Chittagong and publication of reports of all enquiry commissions set up in the last three years on terrorism on the campus and political arena.

The Jamaat's demands also include publication of a White Paper on those killed and injured in educational institutions and political field since 1972, a halt to political and administrative interference in the maintenance of law and order, and guarantee of independence

of the judiciary.

Nizami announced a "Terrorism Resistance Day" on October 26 when rallies and demonstrations will be held by the district units of the Jamaat.

He blamed the BNP government and the Awami League for the recent spate of violence in different educational institutions in Rajshahi, Khulna and Chittagong.

"The terrorists were inspired in carrying out their acts by a heinous and irresponsible activities of the ruling party and the Awami League, pressing for banning religion-based politics by preventing 20 Jamaat MPs in a terroristic manner from speaking in Parliament on September 20."

Nizami said the 'barbaric' terrorist act in the Chittagong Medical College on October 18 was a reflection of the pre-planned terrorism in Rajshahi and Khulna and an attempt to shift the responsibility on to the Jamaat.

Criticising the non-publication of enquiry commission re-

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Kumari puja held in city

By Staff Correspondent

The 'kumari puja' was held yesterday at the Ramkrishna Mission in the city on the second day of the five-day Durga Puja, the greatest festival of the Hindu community.

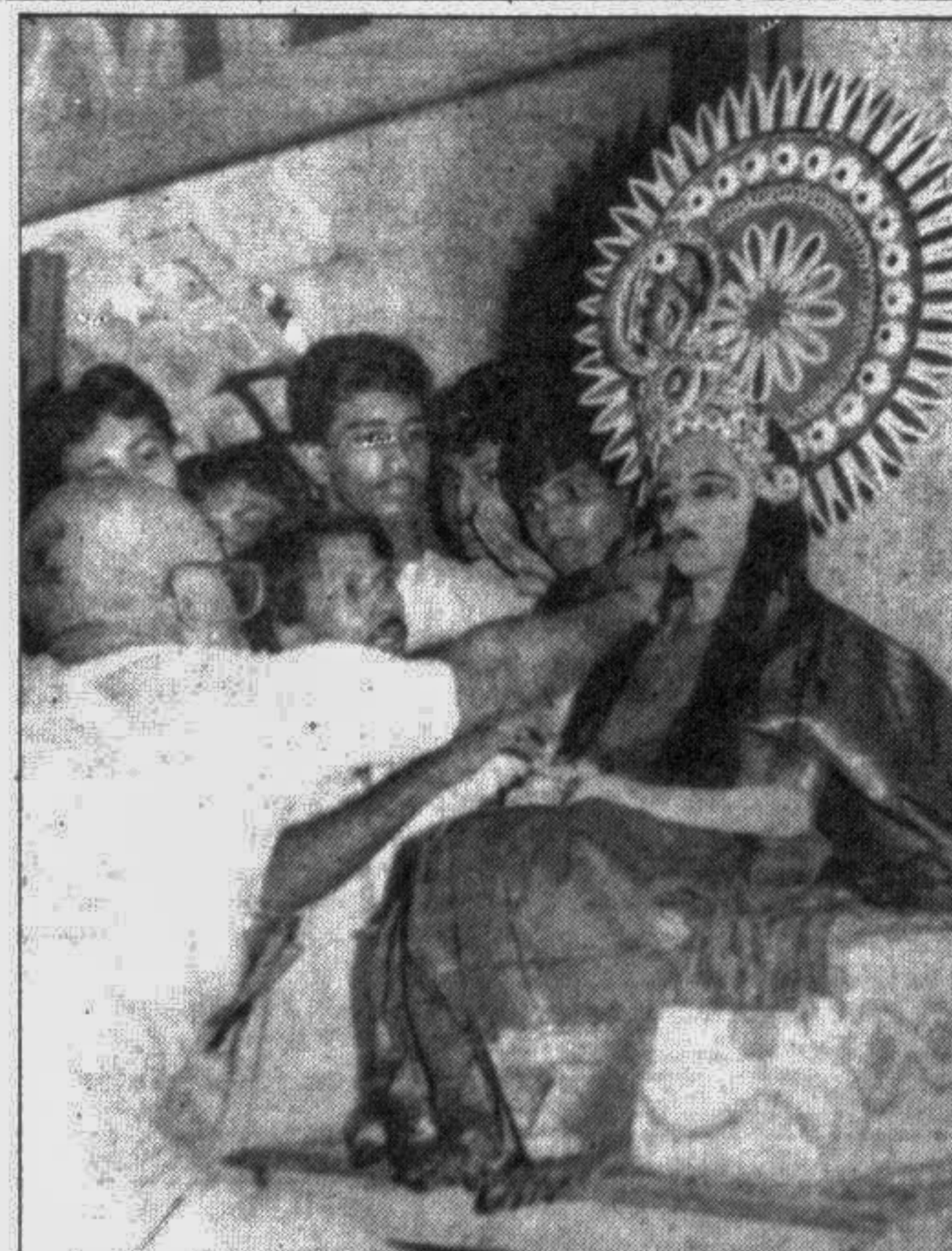
Meanwhile, the puja of the Goddess Durga began at various places in the city—at the Shitla Mandir at Mahajanpur under Sutrapur thana, at the Motijheel colony and other places.

The Mahastami will be celebrated today and immersion of the idols of goddess will be held on Monday.

Leaders of the Bangladesh Hindu, Bouddha, Christian Oikya Parishad Maj Gen (Rtd) C R Dutta, Srimath Bodhipal Mahathero, T Rozario and Dr Nim Chandra Bhowmik, in a joint statement, greeted the people on the occasion.

Similar statements were also issued by the Puja Ujjapan Parishad and the Mahanagar Sarbojanin Puja Committee.

Meanwhile, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz yesterday called upon the people of all sections to maintain communal harmony in the country.



A Hindu priest conducting the Kumari Puja (worship of the virgin), part of the Durga Puja festivities, at the Ramkrishna Mission in the city yesterday. — Star photo

S M Ali's qulkhwani held

By Staff Correspondent

The qulkhwani of S M Ali, founding editor and publisher of the Daily Star, was held yesterday at the Old DOHS Community Centre in the capital.

Relatives, friends, admirers, colleagues from the Daily Star, politicians, former ministers, members of the journalist community, chiefs of foreign missions in Dhaka, diplomats from the Muslim countries, lawyers, intellectuals and academics, and high officials attended a mihad mahfil held after Asr prayers.

The two hallrooms of the fairly large community centre were filled with people, both men and women, with some of them sitting under a wide canopy in the sprawling lawn outside.

The mihad sought eternal peace and salvation of the departed soul.

NZ to host next CHOGM

LIMASSOL, Cyprus, Oct 22: Leaders of the Commonwealth will hold their next summit in New Zealand in 1995, the current meeting in Cyprus agreed today, reports Reuter.

A Commonwealth statement said leaders at the heads of government meeting agreed unanimously to accept a New Zealand offer to stage the meeting.

New Zealand had been the first to offer to stage the biennial summit in Auckland after the current conference on the Mediterranean island. It will be the first time New Zealand will host the gathering of leaders of Britain and 49 of its former colonies.

Mob damages 190 vehicles in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Oct 22: About a hundred vehicles were damaged reportedly by an unruly mob during a clash with some members of the Ansars and the police at Chawkbazar this evening, witnesses said.

Several persons, including three rickshawpullers, were reportedly injured.

Immediately after the occurrence a group of 10 Ansars already posted at Chawkbazar, were withdrawn and held, police and Ansar officials said.

The trouble began when a rickshawpuller was "beaten by some Ansars at Chawkbazar. In protest some rickshawpullers, aided by the public, gheraoed the Ansars and pelted them with stones, witnesses added.

Traffic movement also came to a halt during the melee while many vehicles were indiscriminately damaged.

CDCS at ZIA out of order for 2 months

By Staff Correspondent

The newly-installed computerised departure control system (CDCS) at the Zia International Airport has remained out of order since its commissioning nearly two months ago, airport sources said yesterday.

"We are working manually because the system does not work properly," one official at the counter said during passengers' check-in at an Emirates Dhaka-Dubai flight yesterday.

He showed this correspondent the monitor in front of him which was 'dead' and said switches of all the computers were off.

The CDCS was installed in late August at a cost of Taka two crore to quicken handling of outgoing international passengers.

The source informed that SITA (Society of International Telecommunication Aeronautics) did not properly install the system but a Biman official said "the system is okay but only a few people can operate it."

"Experts are training our people to switch over to the new system," he added. The CDCS was installed in the wake of growing traffic through ZIA. Biman financed the CDCS project from its own resources.

The Zia airport became fully operational in October 1990. Nearly two million passengers travel through ZIA annually with 14 airlines operating flights to and from Dhaka.