

PDB Crisis

A total of Tk 568 crore unrealised revenue for as ailing a body as the Power Development Board (PDB) is like adding insult to injury.

One remarkable fact is that the big defaulters in the public sector are the ministries — 16 to be precise — and the Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) on the one hand; and industrial units and commercial enterprises on the other.

When the government's most vital — and equally responsible — organs continue to fault, it loses the moral right to accuse anyone else for the same mistake or offence.

It is exactly at this point, the PDB's argument for adopting a tough measure against defaulters suffers either from double standard or is simply suspect.

It goes without saying that this is a wrong notion. If illegal connections of electricity demands action against them without favour, so does any defaulter irrespective of his standing.

The lesson therefore is that the government must first of all bring its own house in order to put pressure on others to behave.

Apathy and Narail Fishes

A report from Narail says the fish population in the various areas of Kalia thana has been attacked by a fatal disease on an epidemic scale.

This is not a news that will raise an alarm in the nation at large. Diarrhoea has been taking a regular toll of citizens' lives all around the country for months on end without disturbing a good night's sleep of anyone not affected by the disease.

Compared to the prevailing nation-sized apathy what are the Narail fishes? But helplessness is helplessness — irrespective of the size of the victim.

Will the Narail fishes get some meaningful attention in the end? This is not a question of Ershad going to the interior and coddling some poor ailing girl — or some 'democratic' follow up of those putup tele-acts.

THE Commonwealth has set itself here a politically tricky and somewhat unfashionable target: to capture the international high moral ground.

They tightened the rules of the club and started lecturing each other about raising the quality of their democracy.

Limassol showed the Commonwealth developing the new role that it began to define for itself in the Harare Declaration in 1991.

This was a summit of consolidation for a Commonwealth that was more at one with itself than at any time since it took on its modern form in 1949.

The consultants have also opined that there will likely be some production costs and revenues resulting from the changed transport situation in the north-west.

An estimated quantity of 9,36,000 and 3,12,000 tons of consumer products in the respective years of 1998 and 2020 will be transported across the Jamuna.

Table with 3 columns: Year, Passenger/day, Freight (Ton/year)

To the Editor...

Operation clean-up

Sir, Why the operation clean-up of the govt and semi-govt agencies is being delayed, and top-most priority is not being accorded?

The people-backed BNP government is all the time hammering at public meetings that it was pledge-bound to clean up the administration and introduce good governance.

War against corruption

Sir, Mr Kibria's suggestion, in the light of his experience and studies as a top international civil servant executive, published in your paper (4.7.93) and some follow up suggestion of a reader (Mr Jalaluddin Iqbal) were good.

What specific programmes have been drawn up to clean up the administration? The master plan and the line of action should be explained to the public, to create confidence.

Why the human system loss is not coming down rapidly? It does not necessarily mean wholesale sacking. The rules and regulations are adequate for detection and punishment.

Leaders Tighten up on Democracy

Derek Ingram writes from Limassol, Cyprus

The leaders of the 47 Commonwealth countries have just ended their summit with calls for strengthening democracy in the developing world.

ably in the new elections in Nigeria.

South Africa is invited to return to the Commonwealth. Tanzania will continue its moves towards multi-partyism and the pressure will be kept up on Sierra Leone to switch from military to civilian rule.

This was a quietly constructive Commonwealth summit that had only one dramatic highlight: the decision to send a

global ministerial mission to press governments to meet the December 15 deadline for the completion of the Gatt Uruguay Round.

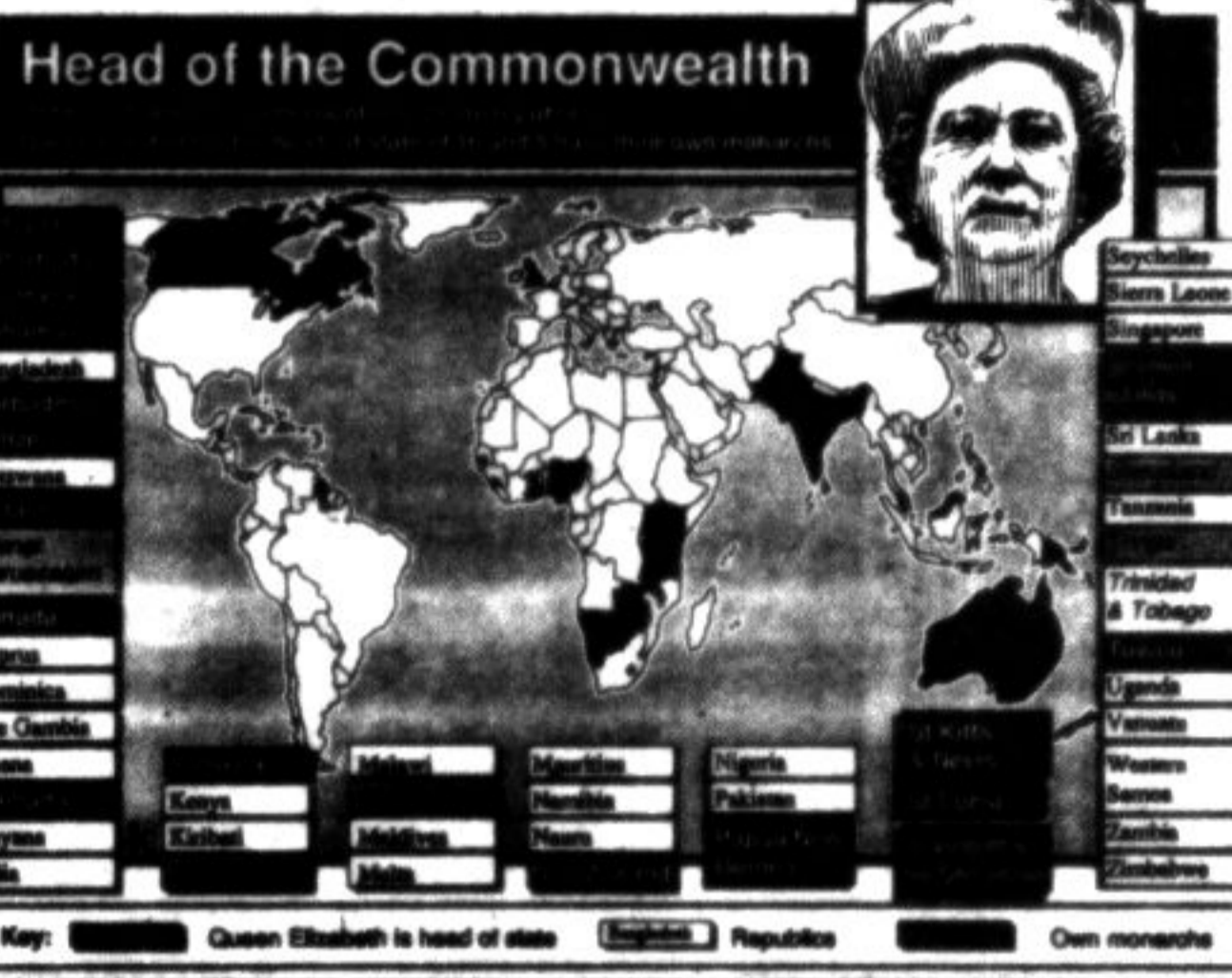
Ministers from Barbados, Canada, Ghana, Malaysia and Mauritius will go to Paris, Washington, Geneva and Brussels in an exercise that is really aimed at shifting the rigid French position that is holding up the Round.

Minister Paul Keating was said to have suggested the mission, but the British claim it was their idea.

If the mission does succeed in breaking the deadlock it will be a good example of the use to which the Commonwealth can be put in tackling a major global issue.

The Cypriots should be pleased with the summit. They have persuaded the Commonwealth to take a stronger stand on their problem against Turkey, despite the reluctance of the Muslim members such as Pakistan, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Brunei.

They called for the speedy withdrawal of all Turkish forces and settlers, the return of refugees to their homes and the accounting for those missing. They said nothing should be done which would result in the changed demographic structure of Cyprus.



Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge is Beneficial to the Whole Economy

by Abdur Rahman Khan

THE development of physical infrastructure like transport and communication is a pre-condition for accelerating economic development of a country.

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The country's balance of trade is normally negative with a gap of some 30 to 35 billion Taka per year and it is likely that imports and exports will be effected equally by improved working efficiency.

It may be noted here that the availability of power/energy is also an essential pre-requisite for economic development.

The Jamuna bridge will have a significant effect by saving travel time which can contribute in human resources development.

In addition to direct benefits in the transport/communication and power/energy sectors, the bridge will understandably provide unquantifiable benefits which may help achieve the long-term goal and will act as the catalyst in bringing about an inter-sectoral compatibility.

It has earlier been mentioned that the main objectives of the construction of the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge is to stimulate the economic growth of Bangladesh by providing transport and energy connections be-

tween the north-west and eastern parts of the country.

According to a prima facie estimate the cost of Brahmaputra barrage (which is now suggested by so called economists and experts) stood at around US \$ 7 billion in mid eighties.

It has also been revealed from the Task force report of February, 1991, that the experts have reviewed a large number of studies made by various consultants and they have firmly expressed their views that Jamuna bridge is viable both technically and economically.

Moreover, the proposed Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge will be a 4-lane road-cum-power bridge with the provision to accommodate metre gauge rail, gas pipe line and telecommunication facilities.

It is noteworthy to remember that the construction of the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge at 9 km south of Sirajgonj will also be a boon to the Asian Highway which will usher in a new era not only for the transportation network of Bangladesh, but also for that of the South East Asian region.

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Administrative duties

Sir, The last three decades have seen enormous proliferation of management ideas and practices. It is the excellence of continuous education and practices, strengthened by personal integrity and discipline of the top managers, that has created the 'Asian Tigers'.

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An advice for Taslima Nasreen

Sir, Though I have not gone through any book by Taslima Nasreen, I have read many articles for and against her books. I have also observed many news items condemning her critical views.

She is an extraordinary feminist leader; She is very successful in the sale of her books, specially in India; She is very forceful in writing against all the injustices done to women folk in the patriarchal society, especially ours.

I have a humble advice for this controversial writer. I earnestly desire that Taslima Nasreen should pay a visit to Meghalaya of India to study the matriarchal family system of the Khasi society.

Even the birds have left our city, but we have to stay," Saracevic told the audience. She explained that what has kept her going is "the fight against fascism."

When asked what the West could do to help, both re-

Bosnian Reporters Journey from Hell to Heaven

WASHINGTON: "I feel I'm in heaven here," a Bosnian woman reporter whose most recent beat was the killing ground of Sarajevo told an admiring group of journalists October 29.

Yesterday (November 3), 1,000 bombs hit Sarajevo," said Mirsad Sakic-Hatibovic, a radio/television journalist in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as she acknowledged the plaudits of the group, which included Katherine Graham, owner of the Washington Post newspaper, and CNN Washington Bureau Chief Peter Arnett.

She and fellow reporter Arijana Saracevic had received "Courage in Journalism" awards from the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) the week before in New York City.

Sakic-Hatibovic spoke at a luncheon in Arlington, Virginia, across the river from Washington. She said that only the deaths of 50 of her colleagues and the wounding of 200 others were "what has kept me going as a professional journalist" during the past year.

The Bosnian journalist spent almost nine months in the besieged city of Sarajevo, which is shelled almost daily by Bosnian Serb artillery ranged in the hills surrounding the city.

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Others argued that it was salutary for presidents and prime ministers to be confronted with such realities. Mugabe was moved by the demonstrating women and broke away from the text of his speech to appeal for action by the Commonwealth to end the Turkish invasion.

Of other subjects, the meeting was much exercised by money laundering which it saw as a serious threat to financial systems worldwide.

This was a Commonwealth summit with a new generation of leaders but fewer stars than of old reflecting perhaps the lack of charismatic leaders, around the world.

Some said they missed the Kaundas, Myereres, and Lee Kuan Yew — even the historians of Margaret Thatcher. It is a different Commonwealth in 1993, though not a less active nor less influential one.

DEREK INGRAM is Editor of Gemini News Service.

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