

Speaker blames all

From Page 1 Col 7
Sunday that it would submit its primary report, containing the points of discord in the views of the treasury and Opposition members on the issue, during the current session. Six of the 15-member body had also been assigned to prepare the draft soon, the Speaker added.

However, the Speaker categorically told the House that a primary report on the differences of opinion among the committee members would not necessarily mean an end to the committee's tenure.

Shaikh Razzak Ali also informed the House that the members, at a stage, also decided to try to narrow down their differences outside the formal meetings of the committee. But he noted that the members had not made any attempt to hold such negotiations for various reasons.

Earlier, Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah, the Works Minister and a member of the body, accused Tofael Ahmed of making aspersions against the entire committee.

Miah argued that all the members of the probe, irrespective of party affiliation, had been working hard to resolve the stalemate over the terms of reference.

Tofael's statements on the committee's activities were nothing but an effort to belittle the members' sincerity regarding their responsibilities assigned by the House, the minister said. He added that a 423-page minutes of the deliberations held by the members had also been compiled.

Five Opposition members of the body also took part in the discussions on the issue.

PM's comments

From Page 1 Col 8
vate members' day, the discussion will be held on November 28 after the question-answer session.

He said that the members had submitted paper clippings with their notices, which do not necessarily substantiate their claims. Nevertheless he allowed the discussion because the privileges of the members were involved. The opposition members welcomed the Speaker's ruling by thumping their tables.

Meanwhile, Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah yesterday accused the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina of contempt of Parliament and breaching his privilege, both as a minister and as a member of Parliament.

In a notice submitted to the Parliament Secretariat, the Works Minister said that the Leader of the Opposition, on her return from China on November 19, told newsmen at the Zia International Airport that "the ministers tell lies on the floor of the Jatiya Sangsad."

Seeking the Speaker's ruling on the Opposition chief's statement, Barrister Rafiqul Islam observed in his notice that Sheikh Hasina's comments were a clear breach of privilege of an MP as well as a minister.

The Speaker is supposed to give his ruling on the notice

Mostafiz to visit Seoul Dec 9

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafiz Rahman will pay a three-day official visit to South Korea, beginning December 9, officials said, reports UNB.

Hasina manpower

From Page 1 Col 7
Hasina mentioned the Awami League government's initiative to restructure the education system in post-independent Bangladesh and said the Bangladesh government had set up an education commission headed by renowned scientist Dr Qudrat-e-Khuda.

The commission submitted its report to Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on May 30, 1974, but unfortunately, he could not implement the recommendations of the commission. She said the country might be benefited by implementing the important recommendations of the commission.

Hasina was critical of the present government for its claim to have introduced universal primary education in a number of places of the country, saying it was nothing but a sheer bluff to say that universal primary education would be implemented at the mere declaration by head of the government when the number of schools, teachers and enrolment of students were not increased over the years.

The opposition leader said the present government had already proved its failure in many sectors in the past two and a half years of its rule. In view of the present situation, an important sector like education cannot be protected under the "aimless and weak leadership"

of the present government. Hasina said the AL aimed at removing illiteracy within next 10 years and felt the need for proper planning to free the country from the curse of illiteracy.

She also attached importance to women's education for implementation of the universal primary education. Referring to unabated campus violence, the AL leader called for dealing with the terrorists with an iron hand since, she made it clear, terrorists do not have any political ideology.

She criticised the BNP government for giving shelter to its party terrorists and questioned how a democratic and patriotic government could patronise armed goons.

All of them made a direct allegation against Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda for not showing the proceedings of the committee on television.

The Opposition members alleged that despite request from the Speaker's office, the BTV authorities did not cover the probe committee proceedings. They told the House that the Information Minister had been doing this deliberately to keep the people in the dark regarding an investigation into alleged corruption by a minister. The committee members from the opposition who took part in the deliberations included Mohammad Nasim, Moudud Ahmed, Rashed Khan Menon, Suranjit Sengupta and Maulana Abdus Sobhan. They accused the Information Minister of defying the Speaker.

Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda, while replying to the allegation, told the House that TV had been covering the activities of all the parliamentary standing committees.

"So far, I have not received any request from the Speaker to cover the proceedings of the probe committee," the minister said, adding that he must make arrangements for coverage of the committee's activities if the Speaker asked him to.

Abdus Samad Azad, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, repeating the allegation against the Information Minister, said that the government had violated the November 19, 1990 joint declaration of the then three major political alliances which promised autonomy to the state-run Radio and TV.

Deputy Leader of the House, Professor Badruddoza Chowdhury, told the Sangsad that nobody should have any doubt over the government's sincerity regarding the probe into the Opposition allegations of corruption. In this regard he reminded the House that it was the treasury bench which had proposed the formation of the committee.

Other than the discussion over the probe committee, Parliament yesterday took up the Electricity (Amendment) Act, 1993 for discussion.

Twelve opposition MPs, who felt for eliciting public opinion on the bill, spoke on the issue.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali adjourned the House at 9:17 pm to resume again at 4 this afternoon.

To save women from male cops

ISLAMABAD, Nov 22: Pakistan is to set up police stations staffed exclusively by women to prevent harassment of females by male police, a senior official said Monday, reports AFP.

Mistreatment of female suspects at police stations has been a focal point of women's rights organizations and an issue frequently highlighted by the national press.

Pakistan's police force already has a small number of female officers, but more would have to be trained to meet the new staffing plans.

The stations would initially be established in four large cities in Punjab, the country's most populous province, said Faisal Saleh Hayat, a political adviser in Punjab.

Hayat said Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's government would also set up special courts for women.



A two-day international conference on the Eastern Himalayan Waters, jointly organised by the Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) and the Global Infrastructure Fund Research Foundation of Japan, was inaugurated at a city hotel yesterday. — Star photo

Experts propose dams, reservoirs

From Page 1 Col 7
The Nepalese delegates also discussed the possibilities of building some hydro-electric power plants.

The GIF representatives from Japan proposed drilling deep water wells in the three regions. The gigantic volume of water stored at depths of ten to twelve thousand feet under the sea should provide the people of the region a permanent source of drinking water, they said.

The conference also discussed creating an institutional framework of a regional or international character to resolve the water-related problems and highlighted relevant international laws pertaining to the rivers, the sources added.

Today's concluding session of the conference is likely to reach a consensus on the proposals discussed yesterday, the sources added.

Earlier, State Minister for Irrigation Mosharrif Hossain Shahjahan, while inaugurating the conference as chief guest yesterday morning, said the socio-economic context of this part of the subcontinent underscored the urgency for cooperative development of our water resource potentials.

PM: Water resources

From Page 1 Col 5
The Prime Minister said, "We need to readjust to contemporary times and for this we require resolve, vision and far-sight."

Begum Zia said she had already received from Nepal and Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala in discharging her responsibilities as SAARC chairperson.

She said "I have every reason to believe we can achieve self-reliance and growth and SAARC could provide the people of the region the requisite superstructure."

Begum Zia termed the conclusion of SAPTA during the Dhaka Summit earlier this year as a momentous event and said "we have made progress in poverty alleviation, as well as in other core economic areas."

She hoped that the forthcoming session of the council of ministers in December would play an important role in strengthening SAARC. "Let it be our mutual resolve to consolidate cooperation in South Asia," she said.

The banquet was attended by Speaker of the House of Representatives of Nepal Damnath Dhungana, Home Minister Sher Bahadur Dupa, Leader of the Opposition Manmohan Adhikari, Mayor of Kathmandu PL Singh and daughter of the Nepalese Prime Minister Sujata Koirala and the members of the Bangladesh delegation.

Prime Minister Koirala was at the Tribhuvan International

The minister noted, that despite a wealth of fertile land and water, the eastern Himalayan region had remained poor and expressed his hopes that the participants at the conference would come up with strategies for an optimal and equitable utilisation of the water resources of the region.

The inaugural session, presided over by chairman of the BUP Dr QK Ahmad, was also addressed, among others, by Prof KB Sajjadur Rasheed, special advisor to GIF E. Noda, Managing Director of GIF Dr N Yamamoto, former Indian Secretary Ramaswamy R Iyer, GR Bhatta from Nepal and others.

The State Minister identified the Himalayan rivers as a great source of development of the region and called for understanding the needs of the three nations on the basis of trust, transparency and mutual respect.

He observed that age-old malice between nations in the world was coming to an end and said, "We can also take initiatives in solving our own conflicts. Nothing is impossible if all the parties have the will to resolve."

Mosharrif expressed his hopes that the experts would focus on an understanding of each country's concerns and rights — irrespective of its size and relative location — and said, "This will indeed be in the true SAARC spirit."

QK Ahmad urged upon the political leaderships of the regional countries to resolve the water-related issues immediately.

"Once such a political framework is established," the BUP chairman said, "Technical and modality-related problems should not pose much difficulty."

Indian expert Rameswami R Iyer said, the outcome of the conference would aid the decision making process of the governments of the region. "We, the experts are just facilitators who will identify the problems and help the governments."

GR Bhatta of Nepal said, "Water has become the flesh and blood for Nepal," and added that the conference should create a common goal for the regional countries.

Tanker fire probe stalled

From Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, Nov 22: The committee formed to investigate the cause of a fire on the MV Bay Bridge here November 13 is yet to start its work because the engine room of the vessel has not been cleared of noxious gases.

In the incident, six people were killed while another is still missing.

The convenor of the inquiry committee and controller of the Jamuna Oil Depots A S M Ali Ahmed told The Daily Star that about 17,500 litres of oil were found short on completion of the unloading this morning.

Meanwhile, nine days after the incident the Fire Service formed an inquiry committee headed by an Assistant Director Mizaunur Rahman and four other officers today.

Farakka posing grave threat to Bangladesh: Salam tells UN executive

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder yesterday told a UN executive that the Farakka barrage over the Ganges had posed a grave threat to the environment of Bangladesh, reports UNB.

The Minister was talking to the visiting Under Secretary General for United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UN Centre for Human Settlements, Elizabeth Dowdeswell, when she called on him at the secretariat.

"Bangladesh is not getting its equitable share of Ganges water in dry season but getting excessive water in rainy season as a result of which flood occurs almost every year in Bangladesh," Salam Talukder said.

Farakka problem, considered one of the major irritants in the bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh, was raised at the United Nations by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia during the UNGA session.

An official handout said Elizabeth assured all possible cooperation in preservation of environment in Bangladesh.

MCHTI project

From Page 1 Col 7
increase in the cost they said that the donors want all construction materials, technology consultants and experts be brought from Japan. But Bangladesh authorities deem that the implementation of the project under the aforesaid conditions would cause inflation in the country. Besides, hiring experts and procurement of goods from a foreign country would also deprive the local manpower and businessmen.

A Planning Ministry source said the government is currently discouraging foreign-aided projects with cross-conditionalities and conditions contrary to the national interests.

In the case of MCHTI project, he added, at best 2 to 3 per cent increase in the cost could be accepted but the rise has been estimated five times more.

Govt-Shantibahini talks tomorrow

CHITTAGONG, Nov 22: The sixth round of talks between the government committee for the Chittagong Hill Tracts issues and the Parbatya Chattagram Janasanghati Samity (PCJSS), the political core of the tribal insurgents, will be held at the Khagrachhari Circuit House tomorrow.

Deputy Commissioner of Khagrachhari Yar Mohammad told BSS over telephone here last night that the PCJSS had consented to sit with the government for the next round of talks.

The fifth round of talks was held in September last in which the PCJSS agreed to extend the ceasefire till November 30.

Communications Minister Oli Ahmed will lead the nine-member government committee, while the five-member committee of the PCJSS will be headed by Jyotirindra Bodhi Priya Larma alias Shantu.

BDR-BSF talks today

By Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, Nov 22: A 11-member BSF delegation arrived today to attend the border coordination conference between Bangladesh and India. The official talks will begin tomorrow.

The Indian delegation led by IG of South Bengal Frontier Force and his counterpart BDR's Deputy Director General Brigadier Iftakharul Bashar, PSC went on a river cruise by MNS Shahjalal in the Passur river this afternoon, BDR sources said. The delegates met in an informal meeting on board the vessel.

Sources said that discussion on 'push in' will also figure under the conference.

Shahjahan, Altaf barred from running DUJ

The First Sub-Judge's Court of Dhaka has ordered that 32 persons including M Shahjahan Meah and Altaf Mahmud cannot function in the name of the Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ), reports BSS.

A petition filed by Zahirul Huq, President and Ruhul Amin Gazi, General Secretary of the Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ), registered with the government and bearing No. B 829, challenged the legality of 32 persons including M Shahjahan Meah and Altaf Mahmud acting in the name of office-bearers of DUJ, according to a press release.

The court order said it has examined the submissions and papers of both the sides involved in the matter and after hearing has restrained all activities of the defendants, including holding of the annual general meeting and election by them on November 21.

The case was conducted by Advocate Montazuddin, A S M Sohrab Ali and others on behalf of the petitioners.

The Midnight File

Probe report of Indian stock scam next month

NEW DELHI, Nov 22: An all-party parliamentary panel probing India's largest securities fraud will unveil its final report in Parliament next month, a prominent member of the team said today. Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) member Gurudas Dasgupta said the panel will finalise its report on the 1.3 billion dollar stock market scam on November 30 and unveil it in Parliament during its next session in December, reports AFP.

13 killed in Guatemalan plane crash

GUATEMALA CITY, Nov 22: Thirteen people were killed when a plane belonging to a Guatemalan company crashed in the village of Palencia, north of the capital late Sunday, a local radio station reported today. The plane belonging to Aerovias was returning from the ST Elena Airport in the northern department of Peten, radio Sonor said. Foreign tourists returning from the Mayan Ruins of Tikal are believed to be among those killed, reports Reuter.

Uproar in Sangsad

From Page 1 Col 8
Supplementaries and counter-supplementaries were raised from both sides when Awami League MP KM Jahangir asked Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury to let the House know about the political identity of Jinnah and his murderers.

The Home Minister merely said that Jinnah was the drama secretary of the Zia Hall but did not give his political affiliation, nor those of his assassins.

The minister said one Saidur Rahman Sayeed alias Sayeed Sohrab, a final year Philosophy student of the Dhaka University and a resident of the Mohsin Hall, was arrested in connection with Jinnah's murder.

To a supplementary from KM Jahangir as to why Sayeed Sohrab was arrested as an accused in the murder case and not under the Anti-Terrorism Act, the Home Minister said the maximum punishment is death penalty if an accused is found guilty of murder.

There were shouting across the House when a Treasury Bench member wanted to know from the Home Minister the identity of the murderers of businessman Humayun Zahir.

Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni termed the supplementary 'irrelevant.' But the Home Minister replied that that was a historic case and

those who stood for the bail of an accused in the murder of Zahir were passing time in an embarrassing and unwarranted situation.

Taking the floor amidst hue and cry, Awami League stalwart Tofael Ahmed said that the Home Minister had given a reply although the chair had teamed the supplementary irrelevant.

Tofael asked the Home Minister to verify the press reports that JCD leader Jinnah was killed following a conflict between LGRD Minister Abdus Salam Talukdar and Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury.

The AL leader also alleged that the killer of Jinnah was reportedly seen at Sugandha after the murder.

Tofael's remarks raised a lot of shouts in the House as the LGRD Minister sprang on his feet to say that he did not see such press reports, nor had he read them.

The LGRD Minister said many imaginary stories are published in the newspapers and he does not care if anybody enjoys reading such stories.

Kuwait-Iraq

From Page 1 Col 4
The Iraqi government's actions and Kuwait will maintain its policy of self-restraint and leave the handling of the matter to the peace-keeping troops who were coming to preserve the border, the newspaper reported him as saying.

The official Kuwait news agency said Kuwait was expected to deliver a strong letter of protest at Saturday's incursion to the UN Security Council. It reported Kuwait's UN Ambassador Mohammad Abul Hassan as saying stronger Security Council measures were required to make Iraq comply with ceasefire resolutions.

The UN Security Council if February decided to send 775 soldiers and support staff to reinforce UNIKOM's observer mission with a mandate to take physical action to prevent incursions.

USAID to close 21 missions in Third World

By Staff Correspondent
The US Agency for International Development (USAID) will close 21 of its missions in the Third World because of change in US aid policy, says a USIS press release.

However, Bangladesh will not be among those countries from where the USAID will withdraw itself.

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Koirala: Common problems

From Page 1 Col 5

He said as a member of the SAARC, Nepal had placed abiding faith in the ideals enshrined in the SAARC charter.

He said people of this region had entrusted historic responsibilities upon them and hoped with that goodwill, cooperation, harmony and understanding of the countries of the region they could fulfil the hopes and aspirations of our peoples.

The Nepalese Prime Minister expressed happiness that Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is the Chairperson of SAARC and said the SAARC had moved forward on some core issues which could lay the solid foundation of regional cooperation.

He said the establishment of SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) had added new dimension towards greater economic cooperation among SAARC countries.

Koirala expressed his confidence that the experience, leadership and knowledge of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia would help achieve substantial progress of SAARC.

He assured all help and full

cooperation and whole-hearted support to the current SAARC chairperson.

The Nepalese Prime Minister said both Nepal and Bangladesh had taken a concerted approach — toward the problem faced by the least developed countries.

"It is important that Nepal and Bangladesh continue maintaining a close working relationship in international fora",

Body parts 'business' booming

LONDON, Nov 22: A British television programme reported on Sunday there was a global trade in human organs for transplantation and said it had 'harrowing evidence' from the Third World and Russia, reports Reuter.

The 'body parts business' shown on British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) television on Sunday called for international action to prevent the spread of organ transplant abuses. They said new legal mechanisms were needed to stop the trade.