

Mina stampede

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said he was at the site, said a group of Indonesians were moving slowly when "a wave of people, mostly tall, well-built Africans, trampled them to death."

However, an official for Hajj affairs at the Ministry of Religion in Jakarta, Indonesia, who identified himself as Ibrahim A S, said no Indonesians were killed.

And Abbas Hamza Abbasi, deputy director of the health ministry, described the scene differently.

"A wave of people, predominantly Asian, wanted to rush to the edge of the cavern because they think it's most sacred to actually hit the pillars with the pebbles," he said in a telephone interview.

"Most of them do not believe in a symbolic throw," he said.

Fervent Muslims believe that if they die in Makkah they are guaranteed a path to heaven and will be the first to rise from the dead on the day of resurrection.

Before the Monday deaths, Saudi officials had said the pilgrimage season was trouble-free despite tension between Saudi authorities and the Iranian contingent of some

S Asian convention ends in Kathmandu

By Staff Correspondent

A South Asian Convention on the theme "Towards People's SAARC" was held in Kathmandu on May 18 and 19, according to a delayed message.

Organised by the South Asian Forum for Human Rights, the Convention was participated by representatives from NGOs, political parties, cultural groups and various other organisations.

From Bangladesh a three member delegation comprising Justice K M Subhan of the Bangladesh Human Rights Commission, Mohiuddin Ahmed of the People's Commission on River Water and Environment and Mayeen Uddin Ahmed Badal of the BSD were among nearly 120 persons from across the region who attended the Convention.

The participants jointly drafted a 'Statement of Concern'. They marched in a procession after the concluding session on the afternoon of May 19 and went to the SAARC Secretariat to hand over a copy of the statement to the SAARC Secretary General Y K Silwal.

The participants decided to hold a series of meetings and organise events during the next SAARC summit.

Among the proposed activities are the finalisation of the People's Commission Report on the Ganges Basin and a People's Conference on Jammu and Kashmir.

Nazrul

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Dhaka, Trishal (Mymensingh) and Comilla.

Deputy Leader of the Jatiya Sangsad Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury will inaugurate a four-day programme on the poet at the Shilpakala Academy at 5:45 pm today. The academy will also organise a Nazrul expose and a hand-draft exhibition.

Photographs and portraits of Nazrul, gramophone records, audio cassettes and documentary films on the poet will be on display at the expose. The exhibitions will be open to the public from 3 pm to 10 pm everyday.

The Shilpakala Academy's other programmes include the rendering of Nazrul songs at the academy auditorium at 7 pm on Friday. On Saturday at 7 pm, "Madhumala", a well-known Nazrul play, will be staged.

The academy will also stage a lyrical dance sketch titled 'Nirob Keno Kabi' and solo musical solo.

In a message on the occasion, President Abdur Rahman Biswas termed Nazrul a patriot and said that the poet's works would always inspire the nation in its efforts to build a happy and a prosperous Bangladesh.

The President described the national poet as a shining star in the arena of Bengali language and literature.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in her message recalled Nazrul's inspirational contribution to the country's War of Independence. She also recalled Nazrul's pioneering role in the Muslim renaissance in the sub-continent and his uncompromising struggle against exploitation.

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, in her message, said Nazrul inspired an uncompromising struggle against religious dogmatism, superstition, social injustice, repression and exploitation.

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Moyeen discusses water issue with Koirala

By Staff Correspondent

State Minister for Planning Dr Moyeen Khan apprised Nepalese Prime Minister G P Koirala about the adverse environmental impact on different regions of Bangladesh because of the Farraka Barrage and withdrawal of water at the upper reaches of the Ganges.

Dr Khan informed Koirala that withdrawal of water at the upper reaches of the Ganges was affecting the sub-soil water level in the north-western region of the country while there was increasing salinity in the south-western parts.

The State Minister for Planning also discussed the possibility of further cooperation between the SAARC member countries after the implementation of SAPTA.

The issue of transit facility for Nepal through the Mongla Port also came up for discussion. The airlifting of selected items between the Kathmandu and Chittagong airports was also discussed in the context of the recent Indian offer to allow Nepal the use of the Bombay port for its imports.

The State Minister for Planning conveyed to the Nepalese Prime Minister the good wishes of the Bangladesh Prime Minister and the people of Bangladesh.

Dr Moyeen Khan returned to Dhaka on May 22.

Two murdered

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In a mosquito-net, police added. A murder case was filed with the Dhanmandi police but police are yet to find a clue to the murder.

In another incident, a group of armed men stabbed an ice cream factory worker, Tayeb Ali, 20, at Baghbari, Mirpur around 1 am yesterday. Tayeb Ali was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Police said that the worker was murdered following an altercation with the local bullies.

India suspends

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tion methods and procedures used are essential before proceeding with further work," he said. The Board monitors safety standards at nuclear power plants and laboratories.

The suspension of work will mean a delay of up to one year in four plants under construction, Krishnan said, reached by telephone in Bombay.

The 235 megawatt reactor in Kaiga was scheduled to start functioning next year. After a five-year battle with environmentalists and local residents, construction began in 1988 at the six-reactor plant in Kaiga, which is owned by a state company.

No nuclear fuel or heavy water had been transferred to Kaiga.

Only 2.4 percent of India's electricity is produced from four atomic power plants. The rest is generated from thermal and hydroelectric units. India plans to produce 10 percent of its electricity from nuclear reactors by the end of the century.

Khaleda-Hasina

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liament regarding the Jamaat chief Golam Azam which had led to the signing of a four-point accord between the treasury and opposition benches.

A senior leader of the ruling BNP said a summit could be held to end the present stalemate and make Parliament effective.

On her return from Makkah, the Prime Minister is expected to be approached by BNP mediators to make a formal invitation to the Opposition for a summit, he said.

But before any summit, the groundwork should be completed to pave the way for a fruitful dialogue between the two top leaders, the negotiators said.

They gave a broad hint that a move for pre-summit groundwork might start by the end of this month for staging the summit before June 6 when Parliament goes into the budget session.

Meanwhile, informal talks between the government and the Opposition leaders continued as both sides expressed their desire to sit and thrash out the thorny issues.

Sources said BNP Standing Committee member and Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia and Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain met Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina at 29 Minto Road on the Eid day.

Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim had telephonic contacts with BNP Secretary General and LGRD Minister Abdus Salam Talukdar and Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain.

Although these meetings and contacts were described as just exchange of pleasantries, observers believe the two sides are trying to come close in a bid to create an atmosphere for fruitful negotiation of important political issues.



The new Miss Universe Sushmita Sen of India is being crowned by outgoing Miss Universe Dayanora Torrés May 21 in Manila, the Philippines capital. Sen, an 18-year-old model from New Delhi, beat 76 other contestants to become the first Indian winner of the world's most prestigious beauty pageant. — AFP photo

Sushmita Sen

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Sen's family for going 'gaga over her electrifying feat', the Hindustan Times said.

Sen's winning the contest in Manila, it feared would set an example for Bengali women. "Won't all this encourage our very own Bengali women to try and steal the limelight, to become the talks of the town overnight? Doesn't the success of Miss Universe indicate such a possibility?"

"Thank God she is not returning to Calcutta now. There would have been a stampede at the airport then. And God knows how many people would have died..."

Sen, 18, sparked euphoria all over India after being crowned Miss Universe on Saturday to pocket 220,000 dollars in cash, prizes and privileges.

Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao congratulated the New Delhi-based model for the feat, which was shown live on state-run television and relayed for those who missed it.

Calcutta women's rights activist Maitreyi Chatterjee told the Indian Express that she was no supporter of 'sexist' beauty contests, but she had no kind word for the communists either.

The communist government of Bengal, she noted, had organised a film based cultural show where a naughty chart-buster, "What is behind the blouse," had been sung to the anger of feminists.

Mortar fire violates ceasefire in Kigali

NAIROBI, May 24: Rebel mortar shells shook the centre of Rwanda's capital Tuesday as a UN special envoy met nearby at the Defence Ministry in an effort to extend a two-day truce that both sides have violated, reports AP.

UN officials downplayed the intermittent mortar and small arms fire in Kigali and said the cease-fire they requested for the visit of UN special envoy Iqbal Riza seemed to be holding in the capital.

But the cease-fire, which was supposed to be nationwide, appeared to have broken down completely in other parts of the country. UN officials said there was heavy fighting in the northwest, where rebels are trying to advance on Ruhengeri.

As many as 200,000 people are believed to have been massacred in Rwanda in the chaos that has engulfed the country since President Juvenal Habyarimana, a member of the Hutu majority, died in a suspicious plane crash April 6. Most of the victims have been minority Tutsis

WTC bombing: One jailed for 240 yrs

NEW YORK, May 24:

Mohammad Salamah, one of four Muslim fundamentalists convicted of bombing the World Trade Centre, was sentenced today to 240 years in prison by a federal judge, reports Reuter.

Self-rule authority for Gaza, Jericho meets today

TUNIS, May 24: PLO leader Yasser Arafat will chair the Palestinian self-rule authority for the Gaza Strip and Jericho when it meets for the first time on Wednesday, PLO sources said yesterday, reports Reuter.

The PLO has named 17 of the 25 members of the Palestinian national authority and remaining members should be announced after the meeting, the sources said.

The authority will plan for operations over the next few months and assign duties to members, the sources added.

Dhaka elected WFP governing body Chairman

Bangladesh has been elected as the Chairman of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes, the governing body of the World Food Programme, for a one-year period (May '94-May '95), reports UNB.

According to a message received in Dhaka yesterday, Mirza Tasadduq Hussain Beg, the economic counsellor of the Bangladesh embassy in Rome and alternate permanent representative to the UN Food and Agriculture agencies, was elected to the post on Thursday at the 37th session of the committee.

Jackie Onassis laid to rest

ARLINGTON, Va. May 24: Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis was buried beside John F Kennedy Monday on a sunlit slope overlooking the capital they beguiled in Camelot days when, in secret service parlance, he was "lancer" and she was "lace," reports Reuter.

The eternal flame Mrs Onassis herself lit 31 years ago flickers over both of them now: The 35th President of the United States, assassinated at 46 in Dallas in November 1963; And his remarried widow, who cradled his bleeding head that day and showed the nation how to mourn its fallen leader.

She died Thursday in New York city, of cancer, at 64, to millions an emblem of dignity, elegance and grace.

"May the flame she lit so long ago burn ever brighter here and always brighter in our hearts. God bless you, friend, and farewell," said President Clinton, the graveside eulogist.

The simple, 14-minute ceremony in Arlington National Cemetery, across the Potomac river from Washington, had poignant echoes of that earlier mourning day in November 1963, in the farewells of their now-grown children.

Before leaving the gravesite, a shrine visited by millions annually, Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg knelt to kiss her mother's mahogany casket in the dazzling May sunshine.

She left a long-stemmed white flower on it. Then John Jr, who misted the world's eyes with that toddler's farewell salute to his father all those years ago, kissed the casket, walked a few steps to the President's headstone and dropped to one knee to touch it for a moment.

Mrs Onassis, who acquired great wealth and an aura of jet-set glamour some Americans resented through a second marriage to the late Greek tycoon Aristotle Onassis, was accorded funeral honours America reserves for the very select.

Medicine shop looted in Lauhajang

By Staff Correspondent

Local bullies beat up three people and looted cash and goods worth about Tk 1.5 lakh from a medicine shop at Kalmabazar under Lauhajang Police Station in Munshiganj district yesterday.

Local BNP vice president and owner of the medicine shop Dr A K M Jasmuddin was severely beaten up. He was treated at a local hospital.

Two other injured persons were Abu Taher — who came to the shop for buying medicine — and Mohammad Shahjahan — who was waiting in the shop before he was scheduled to leave for Dhaka around 11 in the morning.

Witnesses said that the armed group was led by Delwar Hossain Hiro, Khalilur Rahman and Mohammad Julhash. The armed men went on a rampage in the shop, looted medicine worth about Tk 50,000 and Tk 47,000 in cash and snatched another 60,000 taka from Shahjahan who was in the shop, witnesses said.

Officer-in-Charge of Lauhajang thana, Shamsul Kabir, told The Daily Star last night that they were informed of the incident but no arrest was made until filing of this report last night.

It is believed that the armed attack was in retaliation of Jasmuddin's complain against Hiro to the Home Minister and local SP.

Excess liquidity

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leaders and bankers feel there is scope for even further cuts in the rates. The NCBs are charging as low as 10.50 per cent on large and medium scale lending, the private banks as low as 11.50 per cent and the foreign banks a minimum of 13 per cent. The rates for working capital now range between ten and 15 per cent.

The steep rates are blamed on high overhead cost, but bankers pointed out that with better management systems it would be possible to reduce the lending rates further.

Some private banks like IFIC and Arab-Bangladesh, given their better management systems are in a position to take the lead in this regard. Agrani Bank also is well positioned because of its low cost institutional deposit base.

However, the excess liquidity situation could be taken advantage of by the government to off-set the bad debts of various public agencies, some bankers feel. If the government at this moment were to issue bonds at lower rates say at four per cent, the banks would find that a better deal than keeping their money idle.

This way the government would be able to muster funds at a cheaper rate to clear some of the defaulting loans of the sector corporations, thereby helping to expedite the privatisation programme.

Despite the competitive current lending rates business

The Midnight File

King Fahd to visit Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, May 24: King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia has accepted an invitation to visit Pakistan, state-run television said today. The broadcast did not say when the visit would take place. Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto extended the invitation when she met with the monarch on Saturday during a pilgrimage to Makkah in Saudi Arabia, reports AFP.

Israel closes its border to Palestinians

JERUSALEM, May 24: Israel announced today it was closing its border to Arab residents of the Palestinian self-rule area of Jericho for 24 hours after Palestinian police disarmed three Jewish settlers. "This is to enable Palestinian police commanders in the city to complete their organisation and to explain to all police stationed in the city their authority as established by the (Israel-PLO) declaration of principles," the army said, reports Reuter.

Nasiruddin passes away

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journalistic worlds who attended the janaza.

After the burial, the Prime Minister's Military Secretary placed wreaths on the grave on behalf of Begum Zia.

Nasiruddin was born on November 20, 1888 at village Paikardi of the present Chandpur district.

The *qil khwani* of Mohammad Nasiruddin will be held at 9:30 am on Friday at his Sarat Gupta Road residence. His friends and admirers have been requested to attend.

Born years before Nazrul and the beginning of the modern age in science, indeed much before the onset of modernism in literature and architecture and journalism, Nasiruddin was the harbinger of modern social, political and aesthetic values, specially for the disadvantaged Bengali Muslims. Founding the phenomenally successful *Saogat* literary journal in Calcutta in 1918, before he was even 30, and following it up shortly with equally successful *Shishu Saogat* and *Mahila Saogat*, Nasiruddin got a standard for fair and forthright journalism at a time this was particularly difficult. Kazi Nazrul Islam appreciated the work of this veritable elder brother and contributed to his journals.

After the inception of Pakistan, Nasiruddin moved to Dhaka and was home to the progressive and socially committed young writers of the then East Pakistan. Far above communal prejudice and a champion of democratic values such as tolerance and accommodation, secularism and social justice — his was an un-

compromising struggle also for women's emancipation. It is these values that Bangladesh was born of and the new state found him active as ever in spreading a healthy influence on the very unsure state of the artistic and intellectual temper of the old society in a new state.

Nasiruddin's life spanned the whole of the Bengali 14th century and more — and he had been through the thick and thin of the subcontinent's socio-political becoming featuring upheavals of the strength that could move mountains. And through this all he wasn't ever caught on the wrong foot. Happily for us all, he acted as a beacon of right action all through — till the last. The man who was modern before modernism dawned on the world, died as modern as he made himself to be in the first years of this Bengali century.

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Eid-ul-Azha

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ment and top officials attended. Eid congregations were also held at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque and all mosques of the country seeking divine blessings for continued peace, progress and prosperity of Bangladesh and solidarity and brotherhood of the Muslim *ummah*.

The government announced a three-day Eid holiday from Saturday.

National flags flew on top of all private and public buildings. The roadsides and traffic islands from Zia International Airport to Bangabhaban were decorated with miniature national flags and bunting inscribed with "Eid Mubarak", both in Bangla and Arabic.

Radio and television put up special programmes marking the significance of the occasion while newspapers published special supplements. Special diets were served among the patients in different hospitals, inmates of different jails, baby-care homes, vagrant centres, orphanages and destitute homes.

Various social, religious and cultural organisations, including Islamic Foundation and Islamic Cultural Centre, held discussions and seminars on the significance of the Eid-ul-Azha.

Meanwhile, President Biswas and Begum Biswas hosted a reception at Bangabhaban in Dhaka on the Eid afternoon.

Dhaka, Hanoi

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tions and also common regional and international issues. He is also expected to meet the Ministers of Industries and Commerce.

Vietnam supported the cause of the Bangladesh Liberation War. It was among the first countries to recognise Bangladesh and opened its diplomatic mission in Dhaka in 1973 but later closed it in 1979 due to financial constraints.

Vietnam's Ambassador to Dhaka is based in Yangon. Tran Viet Tan, who is the new envoy of Hanoi, presented his credentials to President Abdur Rahman Biswas on May 19.

Dhaka opened a diplomatic mission in Hanoi in November last year. Bangladesh's Ambassador to Vietnam is Mustafa Faruk Mohammad.

The Vietnamese Foreign Minister will leave Dhaka on May 27 for Cairo to attend the Non-Aligned Meeting of Foreign Ministers.

4 abducted in Jhenidah

JHENIDAH, May 24: Outlawed Biplobi Communist Party men abducted and tortured four people of a rival terrorist group in Harinakunda thana in last two days, police said today, reports UNB.

They kidnaped Nannu, 25 and Monwar, 20, from Andonia village on Monday and Ahmed, 30 and Khawja, 32, from Fulbaria village early today.

The BCP activists left Ahmed and Khawja at Harishpur village and Monwar at Bhanbanpur village in unconscious state. Local people sent them to Harinakunda Hospital in critical condition.

The whereabouts of Nannu was not known, police said.