

UN team finds nothing suspicious in Iraq

MANAMA, Bahrain, Aug 24: A UN team says it found nothing suspicious after investigating Iraq's oil and petrochemical industry to make sure that Saddam Hussein would not be able to secretly start producing chemical weapons again, reports AP.

"We didn't find any evidence of chemical weapons activities in their refinery-related activities, and whatever we asked, they provided," Cees Wolterbeek, Dutch leader of the 12-man team, said Wednesday.

The team returned to Bahrain on Tuesday after a two-week mission in Iraq.

Wolterbeek said Iraqis were saying "Take what you want, look everywhere if it's going to help remove the embargo," imposed by the UN Security Council after Saddam invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

"This inspection was to establish a baseline for long-term monitoring of all important chemical sites," he said. "We concentrated on the oil industry, including refineries and petrochemical plants."

He noted that Iraq, despite the damage caused during the 1991 Gulf War, still has one of the world's largest petroleum processing industries.

The UN team scanned about 20 sites, mainly around the Kirkuk oil region in northern Iraq and Basra in the south. These were damaged by allied warplanes and missiles during the war, but have largely been repaired.

Iraq's oil industry was producing about three million barrels of oil a day before the crippling sanctions were imposed. Now it produces around 700,000 barrels a day, primarily for domestic consumption, but is operating at less than 40 per cent of capacity because of a chronic shortage of spare parts.

"The Iraqis did a very good job at restoring the plants, but they're missing lots of spare parts and chemicals," Wolterbeek said.

Drug traffickers

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nearby Radio Colony area," he said and added "Alcohol, mainly the local brew, is bought from Savar, some four kms from the university. "Ganja was formerly sold on the campus itself but that practice was rooted out by the former VC," one JU official said.

Kumaratunga govt

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President Dingiri Banda Wijetunga, the UNP leader, holds the most powerful position. As defence minister, he is the only one who can lift the embargo.

In another development Wednesday, Ranil Wickremasinghe, the United National Party official who lost his position as prime minister after the election, was defeated in his bid to become the leader of the opposition in Parliament, party officials said.

President Wijetunga, who presided over the meeting of 94 UNP legislators, announced that former Cabinet minister Gamini Dissanayake had won by a majority of votes in a secret ballot.

Dissanayake, 52, left the UNP in 1991 after leading an abortive attempt to impeach President Ranasinghe Premadasa, who was later assassinated. Dissanayake returned to the party early this year.

Dissanayake's first task will be to consolidate the UNP rank-and-file, which appears deeply divided following its defeat in the election.

Mother & child

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with a view to ensuring better health for mother and child and to create mass awareness.

The President, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition have issued separate messages on the occasion, asking countrymen to lend helping hands for the welfare of the mothers and children.

Different professional groups have undertaken various programmes in their respective fields.

Health and Family Welfare Ministry will arrange rally, special programmes in media, seminars, mobile film show, painting contest for children, evening health care education programmes, rickshaw rally and also vaccination of mother and child.

The programmes also include distribution of vitamin capsules and anti-helminthic medicines among the children up to two-years and contraceptives among the couples.

A rally led by Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf will held at 7.30 am which will begin from the Shishu Park and terminate at the National Press Club.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressed a big public meeting in Kishoreganj yesterday. — PID photo

Kishoreganj

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"We have also started the production from alternative sources of fuel alongside oil and gas," she said, adding steps had already been taken to extract high quality coal found at Barapukuria in Dinajpur district and pit coal in Faridpur district.

The Prime Minister said the demand for electricity in the country's north-western region could be met by producing power with the coal of Barapukuria.

Besides, she said, the forest reserve could be protected by using coal in brick fields and household works to help maintain ecological balance. "Pit coal of Faridpur can play a vital role in the country's southern region in this regard."

The Prime Minister said her government is also continuing its endeavours to develop and exploit hydrocarbons of Madhyapara and limestone of Jaipurhat to ensure availability of construction materials, including cement.

The function was told that Jamalpur, Sherpur and Netrakona districts and Bhalka, Trishal and Gafargaon thanas will soon be brought under the gas supply system.

Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdus Salam Talukder, Deputy Minister for Shipping A B M Zahidul Haq, local MP Aatur Rahman Khan, Petrobangla Chairman C K M Abdullah, Resident Representative of ADB Van Der Linden and Managing Director of Titi Gas Major (ret'd) Mohammad Moktadir Ali also spoke.

Unending wait

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Fire Service and local administration is making all efforts to trace the vessel.
A naval ship, the BNS Shah Jalal, which arrived here Tuesday night, has also joined the search effort.

The BNS Shah Jalal, with some 70 officers and sailors and 10 divers on board, made a vigorous search in the river ignoring bad weather.

Six BIWTA vessels, Fire Service craft and naval police as well as the Chandpur district administration have been conducting separate rescue operations.

Relatives of the missing persons were also searching for the victims using country boats.

Meanwhile, Shipping Minister M K Anwar, briefing local newsmen while on a visit to the spot, said the government has been making all-out efforts to recover the bodies of the victims.

The minister also offered *fatoha* at the gravesite of some of the victims buried here.

Garments

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The 20-year-old global system of bilateral textile and apparel quotas called the multi-fibre arrangement (MFA) will no longer exist after July 1, 2005.

While the demise of MFA is being hailed by US textile importers, the EPB Vice Chairman and the BGMEA President expressed fears it would affect the Bangladeshi market, secured by quota in the US.

Asked about various restrictions imposed by the western countries on imports in the name of child labour, health or environment, Cline termed such restrictions "created-tension" and said these would improve the quality of manpower skill as well as the export industries of the Third World countries.

Cline said that Bangladesh had a natural advantage of having cheaper labour and had also gained experience in garments export. On the other hand, the garments imports by US, Japan and Europe was growing steadily which meant that removal of quotas would not affect Bangladesh's exports.

Bangladesh earned some 1.5 billion US dollars last year by exporting readymade garments.

Khaleda vows to honour people's confidence

KISHOREGANJ, Aug 24: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia emphatically said here today that she would continue to respect the confidence and responsibilities reposed in her party by the people by maintaining the continuity of the politics of production and development, reports BSS.

Addressing a mammoth public meeting at the local stadium here she said the BNP government had fulfilled most of its pre-election commitments and that her party always kept its pledges to the people.

Production has increased in the fields and factories, the people are getting *dal-bhat* (rice and lentil) regularly and there is a wave of development in every sphere of national life, the Prime Minister said.

Vowing to go ahead with the people-oriented socio-economic development programmes despite all odds, the Prime Minister urged the people to continue their support to the government's ongoing programmes of development and production.

The Prime Minister expressed her gratitude to the people of Kishoreganj for their positive and spontaneous response to her government through their massive participation in today's public meeting.

It was raining when Begum Zia was speaking but the thousands of people gathered at the stadium still listened to her, interrupting her speech with cheers and slogans.

The Prime Minister said the BNP government had carried out programmes suiting the needs and aspirations of the people who, she hoped, would again vote her party for the greater interest of the nation.

Giving a brief resume of the programmes undertaken by her government regarding education, women's development, self-employment generation, family planning, agriculture and communications, the Prime Minister said the

country's economy had been placed on a firm footing by these programmes.

The increase of per capita income, reduction of poverty in the rural areas, self-employment generation, and 36 per cent contribution of domestic resources to the annual development programme (ADP), were achievements testifying to the country's development, Begum Zia said.

The Prime Minister said, all the elections including polls to the local bodies, city corporations and the parliamentary by-elections held during the last three and a half years under the BNP government were free, fair and neutral and were acclaimed both at home and abroad.

She said all future elections would also be free, fair and neutral. Referring to a series of victory of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of the BNP, in different college students' union elections throughout the country, the Prime Minister said the future generation is rallying round the BNP and its correct political course by supporting the politics of Bangladeshi nationalism, democracy and the need to safeguard national independence.

About local demands, Begum Zia said steps would be taken to introduce honours courses at the Government Gurudayal College, allocate Taka 20 lakh for the construction of the Kishoreganj poura park, increase the number of beds in the Sadar hospital from 50 to 150, expand the telephone exchange, construct the Kishoreganj-Nilganj-Tarail road, develop the Shoalkia Eidgah Maidan and the Jamia Imdadia and Shaheedi Mosque.

Presided over by Habibur Rahman Bhuiyan, president of the district BNP, the meeting was addressed by BNP Secretary General and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdus Salam Talukder, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain and some local BNP leaders.

Akram, Maradona

From Page 1 Col 3

game, made a heroic comeback in the last World Cup following rigorous physical conditioning only to spoil his own and his team's chances by yet another undesirable drug-related connection.

The 34-year-old, undoubtedly the most adored soccer idol of his age, took a drug — ostensibly to combat a nasal problem — which contained a heady mixture of as many as five banned substances.

The Argentine Football Federation immediately withdrew the tempestuous, often melodramatic, magician from its Cup squad and FIFA had held disciplinary measures in abeyance because of the ongoing World Cup. Although delayed, the measure hung like a Damocles' sword which finally came down yesterday following a hearing of the case at its headquarters in Zurich.

FIFA also fined Maradona US 15,000 dollars.

The fine should be no problem for a millionaire like Maradona, but a ban of 15 months from all levels of football seems to have written the epitaph of the fairy-tale career of a genius who went from rags to riches, and also from the peak to an abyss. Sport, they say, is a great leveler.

Drought

From Page 1 Col 3

(SPARRSO) Dr A M Chowdhury told UNB yesterday.

But he cautioned that there are chances of widespread floods in Rajshahi, Faridpur, Pabna, Sylhet, Sunamganj and Habiganj if heavy rainfall occurs across the country, particularly in the upstream.

In the last couple of days, there had been considerable rainfall across much of the country, except in the upstream.

Referring to an earlier prediction that the country's *aman* production might be hampered, Dr Chowdhury said, "It does not seem that the *aman* will be affected due to less rain so far. The growers can still compensate if they even start planting right now as there are enough time to plant *aman* within this month."

But, he said, the *aman* is likely to be affected a little if there are heavy rainfall in the country. "But there is no reason to get worried," he added.

Flag meet with Myanmar soon

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 24: A high-level flag meeting between Bangladesh and Myanmar is likely to be held by the first week of September at Teknaf, according to an official source.

The meeting is aimed at resolving the outstanding border issues between the two countries.

A seven-member team of Myanmar border guard officials led by its sector commander U Than Aye is likely to attend the flag meeting. The Bangladesh side will be headed by Col Kazi Asraf Uddin.

Nobel winners to be announced from Oct 10

STOCKHOLM, Sweden, Aug 24: Winners of this year's Nobel Prizes in Science and Peace will be announced over four days in October, starting with Medicine on October 10, reports AP.

Each Nobel Prize is worth 7 million kronor, or about 920,000 US dollar at Wednesday's exchange rates.

The winner of the Economics prize will be announced October 11, the Physics and Chemistry prizes October 12 and the peace prize in Norway on October 14, said Birgitta Lemmel, a spokeswoman.

5 bodies recovered

From Our Correspondent

COXS BAZAR, Aug 24: Police have recovered another five bodies of the victims of a boat capsized in the Moheshkhali channel today.

Three of the bodies could be identified. They are Syed Alam, 45, Abdul Latif Master, 60, and Ayesha Begum, 28.

With this, the number of deaths in the incident stood at eight.

The passenger boat Seven Star capsized near the J M Ghat of Moheshkhali Thana Monday last while on voyage to Cox's Bazar from Kutubdia.

Indian tribals kill one near Kanaighat

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Aug 24: A Bangladeshi was shot dead by a group of Indian citizens in the Kanaighat border this morning.

The victim, a farmer named Aftab Ali alias Kutu Mona, 35, who was working in a field, was attacked by a group of Khasia tribals who intruded into Bangladesh territory at about 11 am.

Aftab hailed from village Mikirpara of Kanaighat thana.

On getting information, Kanaighat police recovered the body and sent it to the Sylhet M A G Osmani Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Meanwhile, the BDR has lodged a strong protest against the killing and intrusion with the Indian BSF.

The Midnight File

OIC meet from Sept 7

ISLAMABAD, Aug 24: Islamic foreign ministers will meet in Islamabad from September 7 to 9 to discuss issues facing the Muslim world. A Pakistan Foreign Ministry spokesman said today. He said the agenda of what he called an extraordinary foreign ministers meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) would include the Bosnian and Afghan conflicts and a separatist Muslim revolt in the Indian-ruled part of the disputed Kashmir region, reports Reuter.

Israel ready to pull out of Golan Heights

OSLO, Aug 24: Israel is prepared to withdraw from the occupied Golan Heights in exchange for peace with Syria, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin told a news conference today. "There is an Israeli readiness to pull out of Golan after years of saying we would not give back an inch," Beilin said, adding he believed a peace deal with Syria could be reached in a few months once the Syrians agreed to direct negotiations, reports Reuter.

Benazir postpones Gaza visit

KARACHI, Aug 24: Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto today postponed a visit to the autonomous Palestinian city of Gaza — soon after the Foreign Office announced the trip. Talking to reporters here, Benazir said her proposed visit to Gaza on September 4 clashed with a scheduled visit there by US Vice President Al Gore who is due to meet PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat on the same day, reports AFP.

NGOs urged to help disburse small credits

By Staff Correspondent

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday called upon the non-government organisations (NGOs) in the country to help disburse small credits.

He was speaking as chief guest at the certificate awarding ceremony of a training workshop on financial management at a city hotel, organised by Business Advisory Service Centre (BASC) an NGO, with assistance from United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The minister said the small industries and businesses have created more employments than the larger ones in recent years. But the government is finding it difficult to disburse credit to potential small entrepreneurs as commercial banks are hesitant to extend credit services to small businesses, he added.

The Finance Minister also emphasized the need for management development training for owners of small enterprises.

The function was also addressed by US Ambassador to Bangladesh, Mr David N Merrill, C M Murshed, and Mr Mahbul ul Haque Khan of BASC.

US Ambassador David N Merrill, who attended the function as special guest, said that his government would continue to support Bangladesh in expanding small enterprises.

Small ventures have potentials for poverty alleviation as well as employment generation, he said referring to the experience of the United States where only small scale ventures were now creating new jobs.

USAID officials and Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) president Mahbubur Rahman were among the guests.

One electrocuted in city

By DMCH Correspondent

A Health Ministry official, Mahbulul Haque, 35, was electrocuted at Kalabagan at the Mirpur Road in the city when power supply men were fixing electric wire yesterday morning.

Mahbulul Haque was going to his office at Mohakhali from his Kalabagan residence by a rickshaw at around 9 in the morning.

Mahbulul was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead.

A case was lodged with the Dhanmondi police and the Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Dhanmondi told The Daily Star that after a primary investigation they had found that negligence of the PDB people had caused the incident. But no arrest was made till writing this report.

JP hartal

From Page 1 Col 4

charged a group of JP leaders and supporters who tried to hold a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club. They went into action at some other points where the pickets tried to disrupt normalcy.

Meanwhile, acting chief of the JP Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury thanked the people of the capital for observing the hartal called to protest the ruling party actions. He resented the police action during hartal hours and said that JP always tried to observe its programmes peacefully.

He, however, said that if repression on them continued, they would have to think about alternative programmes.

Sharif Indian agent

From Page 1 Col 4

"I confirm that Pakistan possesses an atom bomb."

Benazir Bhutto and other Pakistani political and military leaders have said repeatedly that Pakistan has the ability to make nuclear weapons, but has chosen not to build them.

Sharif himself followed this line when he was prime minister from 1990-93. In his speech Tuesday, he gave no indication of when Pakistan assembled a nuclear bomb.

Sharif's remarks were part of his ongoing attempt to embarrass Ms Bhutto's government. He lost a close election to Ms Bhutto last year and says he wants to bring down her government before it serves a full five-year term.

According to US officials and others with a knowledge of Pakistan's programme, the country has all the necessary components for a bomb and could assemble one in a matter of days, or even hours.

Defence Minister Aftab Shaban Mirani told The Frontier Post that Sharif's claim was "a childish act" by an irresponsible person making false statements about Pakistan's nuclear policy.

The Pakistani Foreign Minister said Sharif's remarks would damage his country's interests and would be exploited by India.

"They will use this to implicate Pakistan in the recent plutonium scandal," he was quoted as saying, referring to suspicions voiced by German authorities that Pakistan was involved in an alleged plot to smuggle plutonium from Germany.

Sharif also said that during his rule, Pakistan gave large sums of money to a religious political party to aid the "Jihad (Holy War)" in Indian-controlled Kashmir.

Sharif, criticising Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's government for what he called an ineffective policy on Kashmir, said Pakistan should extend "all-out" support to the Kashmiri "freedom struggle".

Meanwhile, India today expressed concern over Sharif's claim that his country already has a nuclear bomb.

Sharif's comment has considerably strengthened India's case to declare Pakistan a terrorist state because of its support to separatists in Kashmir, said Junior Foreign Minister Salman Khursheed in a television interview in Delhi.

Khursheed described as "absolutely false" Sharif's claim that India too has the bomb. "India has simply said that we keep our options open in terms of security and that is the reason we do not sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. But we've never claimed we have the bomb," Khursheed said.

India hopes the international community will compel Pakistan to abandon this dangerous course which would endanger peace and stability in South Asia, foreign office spokesman Arif Khan said in a statement.

Although the Pakistan government has denied Sharif's claim, the issue irked lawmakers in India's Parliament today.

"The declaration by Nawaz Sharif... is a matter of grave concern for India's national security," said Atal Behari Vajpayee, leader of the opposition in Parliament.

Dialogue
From Page 1 Col 4
that we finally sat together and we are optimistic about a positive outcome.

The Opposition sources admitted that the meeting took place but declined to give details.

Both the ruling party and the Opposition sources were tight-lipped on when the next round of talks, is taking place.

Meanwhile, the opposition parties which have been boycotting Parliament since March would hold a joint meeting today to discuss the political impasse and to review the progress of the dialogue.

Opposition sources hinted that the boycotting parties may chalk out a guideline for talks with the ruling party.

The opposition parties are demanding a caretaker government for holding general elections.

The ruling party has so far rejected the demand.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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সুদ্র বিনিয়োগকারীদের জন্য বিভিন্ন সুযোগ

স্বল্প মূল্যের অধিকারী প্রতিশ্রুতিশীল এবং সম্ভাবনাময় উদ্যোক্তাদের সুদ শির্ষ এবং কৃষিভিত্তিক শিল্প স্থাপনের জন্যে বাংলাদেশ কৃষি ব্যাংক -এ নিম্নবর্ণিত ঋণ দান কর্মসূচী চালু আছে:

ক্রেডিট গ্যারান্টি স্কীম

- শুধুমাত্র নতুন উদ্যোক্তাগণ এ স্কীমের আওতায় ঋণ গ্রহণ করতে পারবেন
- সহায়ক জামানত ছাড়াই এ স্কীমের আওতায় ঋণ প্রদান করা হবে
- উদ্যোক্তা যে পরিমাণ অর্থ বিনিয়োগ করবেন বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক তার দ্বিগুণ পরিমাণ গ্যারান্টি প্রদান করবে। তবে গ্যারান্টির পরিমাণ হবে সর্বোচ্চ ২৫.০০ লক্ষ টাকা। উদ্যোক্তার বিনিয়োগকৃত অর্থের সমপরিমাণ অর্থ গ্যারান্টি ছাড়াই ব্যাংক অর্থায়ন করবে

স্বচ্ছায় অবসর গ্রহণকারীদের ঋণ সহায়তা

- সরকারী এমপ্লয়ীজ সেপারেশন প্রোগ্রামের আওতায় যে সকল কর্মকর্তা/কর্মচারী কমপক্ষে ১০ বছর সুনামের সাথে চাকুরী করার পর এবং ৫২ বছর বয়স পূর্তির পূর্বে স্বচ্ছায় অবসর গ্রহণ করবেন তারা এ কর্মসূচীর আওতায় ঋণ গ্রহণ করতে পারবেন
- আত্মকর্মসংস্থান মূলক সুদ প্রকল্প স্থাপনের জন্যে একজন উদ্যোক্তাকে সর্বোচ্চ ২০.০০ লক্ষ টাকা পর্যন্ত ঋণ সুবিধা প্রদান করা যাবে

অগ্রহী উদ্যোক্তাগণকে প্রধান কার্যালয়ের প্রকল্প পরিচালনা বিভাগ এবং ব্যাংকের বিভিন্ন মুখা আঞ্চলিক কার্যালয়/আঞ্চলিক কার্যালয়সমূহে যোগাযোগ করার জন্যে অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে। সাদা কাগজে সংশ্লিষ্ট শাখায় আবেদন করে আবেদনের একটি অনুলিপি সরাসরি ব্যাংকের প্রধান কার্যালয়ে ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালকের দপ্তরে প্রেরণের জন্যে অনুরোধ করা হলো।

বাংলাদেশ কৃষি ব্যাংক
গ্রাম বাংলার জনগণের সেবায় নিয়োজিত