Dhaka to raise Farakka issue at Rome confce

Bangladesh is expected to raise the Farakka issue at World Fisheries Ministers Conference beginning in Rome today, reports UNB.

The FAO-sponsored two-day conference in the Italian capi tal will be attended by minis-

ters of 49 countries. Official sources here yes-

AB Bank to open branch in Bombay

Star Report

Arab-Bangladesh Bank Limited (ABBL) is expected to open its first overseas branch in the Indian commercial city of Bombay soon.

"We received permission from the Indian government late last year and we are planning to open a full-fledged branch in Bombay by the end of May or early June next," a top official of the bank said vesterday.

AB Bank would be the first local private sector bank to open a branch in India and the first Bangladeshi bank to start operations in Bombay, considered the commercial hub of the neighbouring country. Sonali Bank currently operates a branch in Calcutta.

"We are trying to tap into the huge financial transactions between India and Bangladesh which is routed through Bombay," the official said.

Official imports from India totalled about Tk 2,000 crore last year while unofficial estimates place the figure much higher.

AB Bank is aggressively expanding its overseas operations and has already opened a representative office in London and has also received permission to open a representative office in Myanmar.

It is also planning to set up offices in New York and Hong

terday indicated that the Bangladesh delegation, headed by Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman, is expected to seize the opportunity to draw world attention to the adverse impact of Farakka barrage on Bangladesh's socioeconomic life.

Unilateral withdrawal of water from the international river, Ganges, at the Farakka barrage by India played havoc with agriculture, irrigation, fisheries, forestry, power system and environment of the lower riparian Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has suffered an aggregate loss of resources worth about Tk 13.300 crore due to the withdrawal of waters from the Ganges and other rivers in dry season during last 20 years.

The 21st world fisheries ministers conference will devise ways of increasing global fish output through transfer of technology among the countries. It will also discuss problems prevailing in agriculture and food sector and exchange ideas on how to resolve those.

The meet will focus on environmental degradation caused by the disruption of natural of rivers in upper riparians and Green House ef-

Khomeini's son in coma

NICOSIA, Cyprus, Mar 13: The son of the late Iranian leader Avatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, a possible contender for high office, is brain dead after suffering a severe heart attack, state-run Tehran Radio said Monday, reports AP

Dr Hassan Arefi, head of the 30-man medical team treating Ahmad Khomeini at Tehran's Baqiyatollah Hospital, was quoted as saying that his heart was still beating but that his brain and nervous system stopped working after the attack Sunday.

10-point declaration

From Page One cision-making bodies that

dominate the world economy. Structural adjustment policies should have "a more human face" she said, referring to the austerity policies which the IMF and World Bank have forced upon a large number of

developing nations. The week of meetings in Copenhagen - five days in intense debate over the 86-page declaration - brought just two token gestures of debt relief. from Denmark and Austria. and a US plan to reallocate 100 million dollars of education funds to be solely for girls' education.

US Vice-President Al Gore also pledged Sunday the United States would continue to fight poverty at home and abroad and fulfill its responsibilities to Third World nations.

Gore said that Washington through the 'new partnerships initiative" would channel 40 per cent of its aid to Third World nations through nongovernment agencies to strengthen small businesses and democracy at the local level.

The figure is currently 32 per cent with the rest passing through large government programmes.

French President Francois Mitterrand, making what was likely his last major international appearance, urged in-

creased aid from wealthy countries in exchange for an end to the exploitation of children and other workers in developing world.

Mitterrand, who steps down in May after 14 years in office, also called for a 0.5 per cent tariff on all short-term financial transactions. This socalled "Tobin tax" - named after the winner of the 1981 Nobel prize for Economics James Tobin — could generate 1,500 billion dollars per year for financial development. economists believe.

But the Copenhagen declaration was criticized by many Third World delegates and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for failing to provide new financial resources or to make firm commitments to tackle the problem of developing countries debt, now estimated at nearly 2.000 billion dollars.

Oxfam policy advisor Patricia Feeney said that although the summit did not produce a breakthrough in thinking, it had succeeded in convincing some not to "define social development purely in terms of economic growth and leave poverty alleviation to the tender mercies of market forces.'

"Copenhagen may have lit a slow burning fuse which will put paid to the dogma and dominance of the Bretton Woods institutes," she said.

Groundwater level

Netrokona and the Kishoregani districts.

From Page One

While the greater Sylhet districts, Brahmanbaria, Narsingdhi, Chandpur, Shariatpur, Gopalgani, Bagerhat, Khulna, Satkhira and western Chittagong have witnessed a 3-5m fall in the groundwater level.

The districts which have recorded upto a three-metre lower level of groundwater include Nilphamari, Noakhali Bhola, Barisal, Pirojpur, Jhalkathi, Barguna. Cox's Bazar, Bandarban and northern Chittagong.

According to official figures, only a quarter of the 22.117 low-lift pumps in use in the 192 thanas of the 36 districts are currently operating while the underground water table has already gone beyond the suction limit of some 40 per cent of the 2,16,763 shallow tube-wells in the affected areas. Officials also apprehend that as much as 83 per cent of the medium tubewells will be inoperative by the middle of next month.

The drought during the July-October period of last year was caused by unusually poor rainfall. The amount of rainfall was lower by 20-35 per cent

compared to that of the previous season in the 36 districts.

Earlier last month, the government-instituted task force recommended a 26-point action-plan to tackle the effects of the drought and the subsequent shortage of irrigation water. It proposed undertaking a Tk 15 crore programme to reactivate the inoperative irrigation pumps through deepsetting and double-lifting methods.

The task force also suggested allocating Tk 61 crore for repairing 3,542 unsold deep tube-wells lying in the godowns of the Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation and another Tk 3.18 crore for repairing 240 DTW of

the Water Development Board. The task force projected the annual foodgrain production shortage of 5.72 lakh metric tons (MT), with the output in 1994-95 expected at 186 lakh MT compared to the actual production of 191.71 lakh MT during the previous

fiscal. Total foodgrain import requirement to make up for the shortfall was estimated at 9.32 lakh MT, including 3.6 lakh MT to make provisions for the annual increase in the popula-

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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No police report yet on 'Zia **Murder Case**'

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Mar 13: The police report sought by the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate. Chittagong regarding the 'Zia murder case' has not been submitted till date despite repeated reminders to Kotwali thana over the past 14 vears, court sources said.

Soon after the failure of Manzur's attempted coup an FIR was lodged with Kotwali thana in connection with President Zia's death.

Talking to The Daily Star over telephone, CMM Chittagong, Motiur Rahman said: "Few days ago also we sent a reminder to the police asking them to submit their investigation report but we haven't yet received it."

Sources say, Kotwali police is yet to find out the relevant case file on Zia's assassination that took place at the Chittagong Circuit House on the night of May 30, 1981.

When contacted, Kotwali police said: "We don't know anything about it."

However, a fresh investigation is likely to be made by the police for submitting a report to the court, sources say.

The Deputy Commissioner (North) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police told this correspondent this evening: "It depends on the government's decision whether we should reopen investigation or not l still don't know anything."

He declined to elaborate. Meanwhile, a CID team which arrived here from Dhaka yesterday, left Chittagong this afternoon after visiting the Fatikchhari tea estate area from where Gen Manzur was arrested and also the Hathazari

The CID team completed its probe here keeping its movements almost unknown even to the police of Hathazari and Fatikchhari thanas.

Informed sources said, the CID may also interrogate some relevant persons who were in charge of signals duty at the cantonment and passed messages to TV and other media following the coup.

Programme

From Page One

vesterday alternoon. The programmes will begin with the gherao of the thana headquarters throughout the country on March 16 and the district administration offices on March 19 to protest the price spiral of rice, fertiliser, paper and other essentials.

The Khaddya Bhaban in the capital will also be gheraoed and demonstrations held by the opposition parties on March 19.

A countrywide road-rail and waterways barricade programme will be enforced on March 23.

The opposition parties will conduct a mass contact campaign in the capital and throughout the country from March 24 to 27 to drum up support for the 'Dhaka Siege' programme on March 28.

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina announced the agitation programme at a press conference held at the Dhanmondi party office vesterday evening.

Jativa Party acting Chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury announced the programme from a rally at the south gate of Baitul Mokarram mosque in the afternoon.

Mizan Chowdhury said, "Constitutionally the government has no existence because of the opposition MPs' mass resignation.'

The country has been pushed to a crisis on two fronts - by the 'ineffective and corrupt government,

Mizan said. He said that besides the constitutional crisis there is also the possibility of a food crisis as fertiliser distribution was in the hands of BNP partymen.

The Ameer of the Jamaat-e-Islami Golam Azam, at a press conference at the party office, announced the programme. He blamed both the ruling party and the Speaker for flagrant violation of the Constitution.'

The Jamaat chief accused the ruling party of trying to cling to power illegally. He also accused the BNP of killings and repression of opposition party workers.

Dhaka Bar polls results: Filing of case condemned

By Court Correspondent Some 777 lawyers belonging to the Dhaka Bar Association, in a statement yesterday condemned the filing of a case challenging the results of the

polls of the association. The statement said the filing of the case had tarnished the image of the lawyers'

community. Lutfe Alam, a presidential candidate in the recently held Bar Association elections, filed the case alleging that Abu Sayed Sagar had been declared the winner illegally.



Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina announcing fresh agitation programmes at her party's Dhanmondi office yesterday. Also seen are AL general secretary Zillur Rahman (C) and presidium member Abdus Samad Azad - Star photo

Hasina: Corruption

From Page One

ers are not getting fertiliser although the production capacity of the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) is more than that of the national requirement, she said.

She referred to her recent visit to Rajshahi and said the Barendra project has collapsed and people were not getting irrigation facilities since the younger brother of a minister was made executive of the pro-

She also alleged that fertiliser is being smuggled to India by the dealers belonging to the ruling party, while the peasants were using low quality Indian fertiliser.

"The agriculture sector has been ruined," she said, adding that some 1.65 lakh irrigation pumps have gone out of order throughout the country.

"The ministers are saying there is no food or fertiliser crisis. If that is so, I want to ask why the people are not getting those at fair prices. Hasina said. Hasina alleged that the fer-

cause the son of a minister got the licence for importing fertiliser. She did not elaborate. The AL chief levelled corruption charges against several

tiliser crisis was created be-

ister and her family members "We brought the corruption charges in parliament. But the committee constituted in this connection, was not allowed to

ministers and the Prime Min-

work," she claimed. Hasina provided the press with a written test listing several alleged deals in which ministers resorted to corruption and misappropriated public funds.

She also alleged wrongdoing in deals signed by the government with Alcatel of France, Saipem, Occidental, Hyundai, Price Water House, Halcrow and some others. But she did not furnish documents to substantiate any of the alle-

She alleged that the Anti Corruption Bureau did not take up investigation into alleged corruption by ministers since the PM herself was involved in corruption.

About the industrial sector. she said some 5000 industries and factories were closed down during the rule of this government. Hundreds of thousands of workers were also retrenched, she added.

The academic atmosphere in the educational institutions has been destroyed due to "Terrorism unleashed by the ruling party's student wing." And educational equipment and materials including paper have become dearer, she said.

The AL chief alleged the Prime Minister had even held meetings with the killers of her own partymen, thus rehabilitating them in politics.

Referring to the PM's statement at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, Hasina said if she meant what she said, she must concede to the Opposition demand for general elections under a caretaker government.

"We welcome the main theme of the summit - giving back the people their power. We want to empower the people and for this a free and fair election is required," Hasina

"The people are the focal point of politics and economics," she said, but the PM does not believe in this and that is why she wants, to rig the elections", the AL chief al-

She also said that the country had become a market for Indian goods under this government.

"When I went to Rajshahi, thought it was an Indian city because Indian goods have flooded the Rajshahi region."

The AL president an nounced a fresh programme of agitation to protest the price hike of essentials and to press the demand for dissolution of parliament, resignation of the government and general elections under a caretaker government.

Senior Awami League leaders including Abdus Samad Azad, Mohiuddin Ahmed, Abdur Razzak, Sajeda Chowdhury and Zillur Rahman were also present at the press conference.

Indo-Nepal talks on water dev projects begin

KATHMANDU, Mar 13: Talks between top Indian and Nepalese officials on water resources development projects in southwestern Nepal began here today, a highly placed official of the Ministry for Water Resources said, reports AFP.

The main focus would be on the launching of Nepal's largest hydro-power project Karnali, to the far west, extension of Koshi and Gandak projects, construction of Budhi Gandaki project to the west and the 125-megawatt Tanakpur hydro-power project to the far west.

PM in London From Page One

Earlier, Begum Zia attended a dinner hosted by Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng in Copenhagen last night.

USAID praises Dhaka's economic progress

'WASHINGTON, Mar 13: The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has lauded the economic advancement that Bangladesh has made during the past few years, reports BSS.

Margaret Carpenter, Assistant Administrator for Asia and Near East division of USAID in a testimony before the subcommittee on Asia and the Pa cific on March 8 said that the percentage of Bangladeshis living in poverty has declined reasonably from 80 to 40 per cent during the period of USAID assistance.

The administrator said: Once written off as a development 'basket case, Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in grappling with rapid population growth rates, staggering poverty and over growing demands for food. She claimed that food production increased because of USAID's support for fertiliser marketing, pricing reforms and new agricultural technologies, and today Bangladesh is almost self sufficient in rice production, the staple food of the people."

The hearing of the sub-Chairman Doug Bereuter while man from California and other showed their interest to know about the investment opportunity in Bangladesh.

Margaret Carpenter said "With the support from the USAID the birth rates have dropped dramatically. The average Bangladeshi woman now have 27 great grandchildren

She said that some of this success has grown out of expanded grass-roots participation in the economy, particularly by women. More than 160,000 people have benefitted from USAID's women's enterprise development project which has created or expanded small businesses such as rickshaw repair, tailoring and craftmaking. Another 30.000 farmers — 80 per cent of whom are women - have also gained new skills and income from fish pond culture through USAID's agricultural research project, she added.

She further said that the demands for goods are gradually increasing in Bangladesh. Throughout Bangladesh, people are demanding more goods and more imports. Commercial imports of US wheat, for example, now average 50 million US dollar per year.

Referring to the frequent natural disasters in Bangladesh, Margaret Carpenter said: Bangladesh is more self-reliant in preparing for and managing the floods, cyclones and other natural disasters that plague the country."

Delhi meet on terrorism in SAARC states opens

today called for joint efforts and a commonality of approach to combat the menace of terrorism in the SAARC coun-

liaison officers' annual convention here, Arvind Varma, special secretary in the Home Ministry, said almost all SAARC countries had experienced this problem which should be fought with joint efforts, combined determination and a sense of purpose.

upon a confessional statement

made by Emdad, the inspector

told the court. He also sought a

10-day remand for proper in-

vestigation of the case by in-

On the other hand, Gen

Latif's lawyer Abdul Kalam said

that his client was picked up

by CID personnel from his Ut-

tara residence for discussion

He said Latif, who is 60, is suf

fering from old-age complica-

tions. Besides, his wife is un-

der treatment at the CMH.

the court that Gen Latif has no

son to help him. Also, he does

not even know the charges

against him and therefore, un

der this circumstances, the

CMM Shahiduddin Ahmed

Advocate Abdul Kalam told

terrogating the accused.

Ex-general, colonel held

From Page One the Chittagong Circuit House

on the night of May 30. CID sources said that they were completing formalities for arresting another colonel who is still in service. This person was then a major in the Chittagong garrison and, according to Emdad's statement. had accompanied the body to the Combined Military Hospital after the General was shot dead inside the Chittagong Cantonment.

In his statement Emdad also mentioned the name of another brigadier who, he claimed, had played a key role along with Latif in plotting Manzur's death. However, that former brigadier, who later became chairman of the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh died some years ago. Emdad also reportedly

stated before the magistrate last week that on June 1,1981 Latif and the other brigadier -Aziz - had a telephonic conversation with someone at the other end before assigning Emdad to take custody of Manzur who had been arrested. by Hathazari police earlier in the day.

This statement is quite different from the one Emdad had made before a special commission constituted immediately after the assassination of Ziaur Rahman. When investigators drew his

Manzur was carried out under direct supervision of the accused. The CID arrested them

attention to this inconsistency. Emdad explained that the 1981 statement was in fact drafted by Shamsur Rahman and he had just signed it. . A CID source said that Em-

sional statement on June 22. 1992 before a special government agency but as there was no case in this connection the agency could not follow up the matter. Our court correspondent says, Maj Gen (retd) Abdul Latif

dad had made a similar confes-

and Lt Col Shamsur Rahman were produced before the CMM at around 5 pm yester-A police van brought the accused amid tight security pro-

vided jointly by CID personnel

Manzur from police custody

and killed him to hide the

ident Zia.

petition for remand should be and the police. Investigating officer of the case ASP Abdul rejected Kahhar Akhand and a number Latif's son-in-law was present in the court. of other police officials were The lawyer hired to defend present in the court. Lt Col Shamsur Rahman failed Court Inspector Shahjahan told the CMM that the two acto submit the power of attorcused, along with Major (retd) ney in time and could not therefore plead on behalf of his Emdad, had snatched Gen

after hearing both the sides, truth behind the death of Presgranted the CID a five-day remand. He also submitted that dur-Emdad's bail rejected ing Zia's assassination on May 30, 1981 the accused were in Meanwhile, the CMM yes service in the Chittagong canterday also rejected a prayer tonment and the killing of for granting Maj Emdadul Huq

elient.

Emdad's wife Nazneen Huq had moved the petition.

committee was chaired by its Congressman Sherrod Brow from Ohio, Congressman Ber-

instead of 216.

NEW DELHI, Mar 13: India

tries, reports PTI. Inaugurating a two-day meeting of the SAARC regional

Joshi

tributed to the corruption endemic to most state governelections in 1996.

cumbent party to win a second term in office on the basis of its performance", said Ashis Nandy, one of India's most respected political analysts.

be much of a difference in the central thrust of governance or in politics. Idom might change, but not the substance,' he said in an interview today.

the Hindu nationalist Bharativa Janata party swept two-thirds of the Gujarat state assembly. and a coalition of the BJP and the Hindu radical group Shiv Sena finished first in Maharashtra state, where Bombay is located.

legislative seats decided today, the BJP/Shiv Sena coalition controlled 137, the Congress Party 78 seats and independents 45. Chief Minister Sharad Pawar of the Congress Party resigned, and the governor was expected to ask the BJP Shiv Sena alliance to form the next state government

The Midnight File

China, US sign MOU on satellite services

BEIJING. Mar 13: China and the United States today signed a memorandum of understanding on international commercial satellite launching services. The agreement valid for seven years constituted an important document for the two governments to coordinate and resolve trade issues in commercial satellite launching services and market accessibility reports PTI.

2 Hungarian ministers resign

BUDAPEST. Mar 13: Two Hungarian government ministers today handed in their resignations to protest against a weekend devaluation of the forint, the MTI news agency said. Welfare Minister Pal Kovacs and Secret Services Minister Bela Katona, both members of Prime Minister Gyula Horn's MSZP Socialist Party, also oppose a package of austerity measures adopted on Sunday, reports AFP.

Hartal passes off

From Page One

Medical College Correspondent reports that Muhibur Rahman, Joint Secretary of BCL Motifheel thana unit; Abdus Sattar, injured in Colapbagh: Mohammad Hasan injured in Demra and Mostafa who was injured in Manik Nagar were admitted to the DMCH.

There were incidents of chase and counter-chase beween police and pickets at Magh Bazar crossing and in Mohammadpur in the after-

Although mechanised vehicular traffic remained off the city roads, rickshaws plied almost throughout the day. Rickshaws in greater numbers were available after 1 pm as they were exempted from the purview of hartal from that

Our Chittagong Correspondent reported that activities at the Chittagong Port came to a halt, loading and unloading of cargo did not take place.

In Narayangani, at least 15

rickshaws were damaged by

pro-hartal pickets while a tempo was set on fire. The capital, however, for the second consecutive day wore a desolate look as almost all shops, commercial establishments, private offices and educational institutions remained closed. Most of the city banks, however, operated although transactions were poor. Kutcha bazars were open but supply of perishable items

Government offices continued to function although attendance was thin. Officers and employees at a number of government offices either staved back overnight at their offices or travelled by rickshaws or walked to their

were scarce and prices were

places of work yesterday. Railway sources said that train movement was affected in all the four railway zones of the country during the period. Train movement was disrupted in Chittagong, Dhaka and Pakshi as pickets put up barricades on Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka-Mymensingh routes The locomaster and assistant locomaster of a train were injured when their locomotive came under attack from pickets at Kasba, near Comilla, sources said.

Pickets stopped the Dhakabound 254 train near Anandamohan College in Mymensingh in the afternoon. This also resulted in the stoppage of the Padma Express bound for Northern region for several hours. The Isha Khan Express remained stranded at Shohagi station in Kishoregani for nearly two hours in the morning.

From Page One improved India's economy and increased foreign investment, but also raised inflation to double digits and angered many poor people. Voter dissatisfaction was at-

ments, but it may be too early to tell whether it will lead to a national anti-corruption movement as the country moves toward nationwide "It is very difficult for an in-

But I don't think there will

In the latest state elections,

With 98 per cent of the 288

Biman sources said that two international flights - of Saudia and Indian airlines were cancelled while Bangladesh Biman's flight for Kuwait was rescheduled due to hartal. In the domestic sector. the Raishahi and Syedpur flights were combined while the Jessore flight was can-

No long distance bus plied between Dhaka and other dis-

tricts. A large number of launches. however, operated from the Sadarghat terminal in the city.

A BSS report says five persons were injured in a clash between pro-hartal and antihartal activists at Jamtola on the Dhaka-Narayangani highway. The report, quoting police sources, said the clash took place when Awami League activists brought out a procession in support of the hartal and some people opposing the hartal clashed with them.

The injured were given first Opposition activists ex-

ploded home-made bombs to

create panic. Management sources said different mills in the area, including the Adamjee Jute Mills, Luxminarayan Cotton Mills and the Dhaka Vegetable Oil Mills Ltd functioned normally

correspondent says the attendance at the port was around 20 per cent, according to port sources. Three container ships awaiting unloading and loading of cargo, were unattended. Mills and factories in the industrial belts were either

closed on functioned with thin

In Chittagong activities at

the port came to a halt. Our

attendance. Shops and markets remained closed while offices and banks could not function normally. Sporadic blasts of cocktails amid picketing market the

hartal. Police also arrested over 20 pickets. Our Sylhet Correspondent adds: All the passenger and inter-city trains ran on schedule except for the Dhaka-bound intercity 'Parabat Express' which

was cancelled both today and yesterday. Rice under OMS

From Page One eight and nine tons respec-

and atta for 17 district towns of Dhaka division and greater district headquarters in other divisions have been raised to four tons from the earlier three tons, the announcement said.

Besides; the quantity of rice

The government has also allocated three and a half tons of rice and three and a half tons of atta for everyday sale in the open market in the district towns in rest of the country. The previous allotment was two and half tons for both rice

and atta. Indian team

From Page One hury, tribal leader Upendralal Chakma and 17 other officials and non-officials will visit Bangladesh government rehabilitation programmes at Khagrachhari on March 14 and 15 Fifteen members of the del-

egation except the two minis-

ters and some high officials

will leave the CHT for Tripura on March 15. The two ministers will visit Comilla on March 15 and 16. They will leave Comilla for Dhaka in the afternoon of March 16 and the three till

the afternoon of March 18. The ministers will leave Dhaka for Tripura the same alternoon.

Urea seized From Page One

seven trucks. Police seized the seven trucks but no one was arrested. in this connection.

Another 40 metric tons of

urea was seized by another vig-

ilance team from a godown at

Nagdah bazar in Atghoria

The fertilizer was allotted to a dealer. Moazzam Hossain, for distribution among the farmers at fair price. But the dealer allegedly sold it out in the black market.

Two separate cases were filed with respective police stations