

Rao told to revamp party before polls

NEW DELHI, Apr 6: India's ruling Congress Party asked Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao to revamp the country's oldest political machine ahead of general elections next year, but leaders warned today there was little time left to act, reports Reuter.

The elite Congress Working Committee (CWC), at a marathon session on Wednesday, gave Rao a free hand to revamp the party structure.

The meeting asked Rao to reorganise various state-level Congress committees and enforce discipline to rejuvenate the party.

Party leaders met after a

series of severe electoral setbacks in state elections. General elections must be held within the next 14 months.

"Time is running out," said a party lawmaker today. Rao's critics have accused him of not doing enough to win back Muslims and lower caste Hindus, after opposition groups trounced the Congress in state elections, largely with their support.

Party officials said there was a call at the meeting to woo Sonia Gandhi, the Italian-born widow of late premier Rajiv Gandhi, into Congress politics.

Demands were also made by party officials to appoint a 'working president' to fortify Rao and stem any further damage.

Farmers demanding fertiliser block

Dhaka-Burimari road

LALMONIRHAT, Apr 6: Several hundred farmers put up barricades on the Dhaka-Burimari highway in Aditmali thana today demanding urea fertiliser, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the agitated farmers also assaulted the Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) when he tried to pacify them.

The farmers squatted on the highway at Burirbazar, blocking the movement of vehicular traffic for four hours from 11 am and chanted slogans in favour of their demand.

They blamed the Agriculture Extension Department for preparing a false report on the basis of which insufficient fertiliser was allocated for the thana.

DB still probing break-in at Finance ministry

By Staff Correspondent

Detective police are waiting to hear from the Finance Ministry if any important documents had been stolen during the daring break-in Sunday night at the Bangladesh Secretariat.

A senior DB official last night said the ministry would be able to inform the investigators by Saturday whether the burglars had stolen any valuable papers.

Meanwhile, police continued interrogating officials and employees of the ministry and the Secretariat security staff yesterday.

The break-in took place in 12 rooms of the Finance Ministry, including the rooms of the minister and the banking secretary, on the third floor of the Secretariat's Building No 7 in the city.

Notice to withdraw 8th NSC lottery

By Staff Correspondent

The National Sports Council (NSC) has been served with a demand for justice notice to withdraw its 8th lottery programme within seven days, failing which a writ petition would be moved before the Supreme Court.

Advocate Subrata Chowdhury, on behalf of Professor Abdullah A Haroon, president of the Bangladesh Society for Conservation of Environment (BSCE) served the notice on April 4 upon the chairman, the secretary, and the director (administration) of the NSC and the secretaries of Finance and Sports ministries.

The notice said, sellers of the lottery tickets for the 'Krisa Unnayan Thabbi' or sports development fund have been creating public nuisance through their use of hundreds of loudspeakers to promote sales, thereby creating a serious noise pollution in the city environment.

DU admission test today

By DU Correspondent

Tests for admission in the first year Honours courses for the 1994-95 academic session of the Dhaka University begins today.

This year, as many as 17 students will compete for every seat.

The examination of the 'Ka' unit for departments under the Science faculty will be held from 10 am to 12 noon this morning at 23 centres across the city, including the Dhaka University itself.

About 63,313 candidates who passed the HSC examinations under the various education boards of the country have applied for the 3,787 first year Honours seats this year.

The test will be held under four units — 'Ka', 'Kha' (Faculty of Arts), 'Ga' (Faculty of Commerce) and 'Gha' (Faculty of Science) Students willing to change their groups have to apply through the 'Gha' unit.

This year the highest number of candidates — about 21,319 — have applied for the 1150 seats in the Science faculty.

Citynet Bangladesh to be formed

A regional organisation of the local government will be established under the title 'Citynet Bangladesh' to strengthen modern urbanisation, city development and solving various problems of the cities, reports UNB.

The decision was taken yesterday at a meeting of the Citynet held at Nagar Bhaban with Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation Mohammad Hanif in the chair.

The meeting also decided to establish the Secretariat of Citynet in Dhaka, said a press release.

CCC Mayor A B M Mohiuddin, RCC Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu, KCC Mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman, RAJUK Chairman Humayun Khadem, Secretary General of Distress Assistance Association Dibalok Singh, ESCAP representative Jens Overgaard and Adnan Aliyani, Citynet representative Marco Sato, DCC Chief Executive Officer A M Abdul Jabbar, Chief Engineer Quamruzzaman Mahmud and Secretary Jalal Uddin Ahmed also attended the meeting.

Dollar hits a new low

TOKYO, Apr 6: The Dollar hit a new global low of 85.11 Yen in Tokyo today, despite massive central bank intervention over the last week, the Bank of Japan announced, reports AFP.

The US unit fell to 85.11 Yen, but slightly recovered to around 85.29-35 Yen by 4 pm (0700 GMT), the Bank said.

The previous low was 85.55 Yen reached in Sydney on Tuesday.

WASA system loss

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one or two more units in the same plot, more connections have been drawn from the original supply source, leaving no records with the WASA.

The daily demand for water stands at nearly 130 crore litres while the WASA is capable of supplying only 74 crore.

"Estimating that the per head demand for water is 180 litres a day, and that the city population is no less than 7 million, the WASA is practically supplying water for only 35 to 40 lakh of the city people. The rest of the population are just sharing this water," the official added.

The WASA depends on 187 deep tubewells as its main source of water. The only sub-soil water treatment plant, in Chandnight, provides only four million gallons daily.

"Many people still think water is abundant and therefore they could waste it or could do without paying for it. Yet, the actual situation of the sub-soil water reservoir is alarming and WASA requires more and more funds to ensure water supplies from alternate sources," an engineer of the public utility said.

"We need cooperation from our consumers and expect awareness of the people about the consequences of water pilferage. They should not fall prey to any offer from unscrupulous WASA employees who promise to provide them with illegal connections," the engineer suggested, requesting anonymity.

The annual revenue target for WASA in fiscal 1993-94 was Tk 60 crore, which had been achieved. This year the target is Tk 70 crore.



Justice T H Khan (left) taking over charge as President, Supreme Court Bar Association from M Hafizullah during the association's annual general meeting yesterday. Outgoing Secretary, Ozair Farooq, is on extreme right. — Star photo

SC Bar Assoc AGM held

The annual general meeting (AGM) of the Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association was held yesterday with the outgoing president M Hafizullah in the chair, reports BSS.

The meeting, at the Bar Library premises, was addressed by president of the association Justice T H Khan and general secretary S M Munir who formally took over charge on the occasion.

Earlier, Mashuk Hossain, convener of the election sub-committee, officially announced the names of the new office-bearers and executive members of the association, elected in the two-day annual polls held March 29-30.

New president T.H.Khan, a former minister, is the convener of the Nationalist Lawyers' Forum. He was earlier president of the SC Bar in 1978-79.

The other elected office-bearers and members of the association for the 1995-96 term are: Vice presidents — S M Zillul Huq Khan and Syed M Dastgir Hossain; treasurer — M Salimullah; joint secretaries — Md Omar Faruq and Ms Amatul Nur Begum Panna; members — A K Moinul Huq, S H M Nurul Huda Jaigirdar, Ms Khaleda Panna, Rabindra Ghosh, S M Ramzan Khan, Tariq ul Hakim and Ms Ambia Bulbul Reza.

The function was also addressed by outgoing general secretary Ozair Farooq.

Prof Fashiul Alam reelected CUTA president

CHITTAGONG, Apr 6: The pro-BNP White and Awami League-supported Pink panels shared the leadership of Chittagong University Teachers' Association in its election held today, reports UNB.

The Pink panel bagged 7 seats while the White got 4 posts.

The incumbent president of CUTA, Prof Fashiul Alam of Management Department, was reelected for 1995-96 bagging 200 votes. He is a stalwart of the Pink panel.

Prof Fashiul's nearest rival Dr Mohammad Mahububullah of White panel got 155 votes.

Dr Siddiq Ahmed Chowdhury of White panel was elected General Secretary. He polled 195 votes.

The other elected office-bearers are: Vice president — Prof Nasruddin (Pink), Treasurer — Prof Salehuddin (Pink), Joint Secretary — A K M Mahfuzul Huq (Mahfuz-Parvez) (White); members: Prof Yusuf Sharif Ahmed Khan (White), Dr M Alauddin (Pink), Mohammad Abdul Gafur (White), Prof Anwarul Azim Arif (Pink), Dr Tawhid Hossain Chowdhury (Pink) and Prof Hasanuzzaman Chowdhury (Pink).

A total of 358 teachers out of 443 cast their votes at the university's Science Faculty from 9 am to 1:30 pm.

Opposition hailed for exempting Tongi from hartal

By Staff Correspondent

The Study and Research Group (SRG), a non-govt organisation, has congratulated the opposition political parties for exempting the Tongi municipal area from the country-wide hartal on April 10.

In a statement, convener of the organisation Feroz M Hassan said, this would enable the Election Commission to introduce a new election model using the voters' identification cards in an industrial area.

Rafiquzzaman

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April 3 by the Anti-Corruption Bureau in connection with a case involving a Bangladesh Shilpa Bank loan of Tk 10.85 crore.

Rafiquzzaman was represented by Advocate Azizul Huq while Hamidul Hassan appeared on behalf of the Anti-Corruption Bureau.

Manzur murder

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investigators may seek court order to shift the case to Dhaka from Chittagong.

"It will be difficult for the investigators to produce witnesses in the court in Chittagong since most of them live in Dhaka," the source told The Daily Star.

He also said CID officials were planning to interrogate jailed former president H M Ershad whose name had come up during the investigation. Court orders and permission from the Home Ministry were needed for this, he added.

Another source said, no fresh arrest was made yesterday in connection with the case but investigators led by ASP Abdul Kalam Akand were busy collecting relevant documents.

Our Staff Correspondent adds from Chittagong: Another date is likely to be fixed instead of April 11 for hearing of the Manzur murder case at the chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court here, sources said.

It may not be possible to produce the accused due to the blockade programme of the SKOP on that day, the sources pointed out.

According to legal experts, the date may be shifted with the submission of a prayer by the DIG (prison) to the CMM's court through the AC (prosecution).

However, the CMM has already issued warrants for bringing the three accused.

Of them, Major (Rtd) Emdad now in Comilla jail, was produced before the CMM's court on March 28. The other two — Major Gen. (Rtd) M A Latif and Lt. Col. (Rtd) Shamsur Rahman — are scheduled to be produced on April 11. Emdad is also due to appear again on the same date.

Four killed in city

By DMCH Correspondent

Four persons, including a minor boy, were killed and another was injured in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

An unknown male aged about 25 was killed when two groups of musclemen clashed at Postagola near the Nandina Fire Station last night.

The victim, who received bullet injuries in his back, died on the spot.

Zakir Hossain, 8, was killed when a Mao-bound truck knocked him down near Postagola bridge in the afternoon. He died on the spot.

Farida, 40, wife of Muhammad Tofayel Majumder, died when a speeding truck ran over her at Bashbari under Mohammadpur thana at 9 am.

Another unknown male, 35, was killed under the wheels of a speeding truck near Kanhpur bridge at about 2.30 pm.

Meanwhile, a young man was seriously injured when a group of muggers stabbed him in Lalbagh area early yesterday.

Zahiruddin

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been proved that an industrialist is not a good industries minister.

The Prime Minister may announce her decision on return from her two-day visit to Nepal which begins today, the source said.

Another ruling party leader said the PM has set a 'trend of maintaining stability in her cabinet. It helps develop expertise of a minister in his field, enabling him to run the ministry efficiently.'

After the resignation of Zahiruddin Khan, the name of another industrialist, who is now a special envoy, came up for the post. Some BNP insiders also hinted another minor reshuffle in the cabinet for the post of information minister.

No specific name was available but BNP circle speculated that Chowdhury Tanbir Ahmed Siddiqui, L K Siddiqui and Prof Abdul Hafiz may be inducted in the cabinet. The name of a former cabinet secretary was also heard from a ruling party source.

Shamsul Islam Khan was the first Industries Minister in Begum Zia's cabinet formed in March 1991, who was asked by the PM to resign on September 12, 1993.

Zahiruddin Khan, who was a technocrat minister in charge of the Ministry of Planning, succeeded him.

Lutfar Rahman Khan, who was earlier State Minister for Relief, is now holding the post of State Minister for Industries.

Zahiruddin Khan is the fourth minister who has resigned. The others are Shamsul Islam Khan, State Minister for Establishment Nurul Huda who resigned on June 12, 1993 and Information Minister Nazmul Huda who quit on November 5, 1994.

Rising sales pressure downs DSE index

The bourse here continues to behave bearish with a rising sales pressure, and brokers stressed increased liquidity supply to the market to arrest the trend, reports UNB.

A staggering sale pressure, mostly from foreign fund managers, saw the DSE (Dhaka Stock Exchange) index falling to 763 yesterday from 783 at the week's start.

Brokers said with the sale pressure mounting market was severely experiencing the dearth of liquidity which could have, otherwise, pulled the index stable.

"Financial institutions are virtually absent on the floor," said Mostaque Ahmed Sadeque, a leading broker.

Mostaque and some of his fellow DSE members alleged that the ICB (Investment Corporation of Bangladesh) was low-key and selling more than buying.

According to an unconfirmed figure, the ICB, the single biggest player in DSE transactions, sold securities worth about Tk 6.62 crore against its purchase of Tk 3.1 crore during the last one month.

According to DSE sources, a steady fall saw the all share price index losing 75 points in last one month.

Market closed yesterday with the index down to 763 from 766 Wednesday and from 774 the previous day.

BCL calls student strike Apr 18

Pro-Awami League Chhatra League yesterday called a country-wide student strike for April 18 to press for release of its workers and withdrawal of cases filed against central leaders, reports UNB.

BCL leaders at a press conference also announced a series of other agitation plans, including gherao of the Home Ministry and DC offices across the country on April 22.

Addressing the press conference at the Jatya Press Club yesterday afternoon, BCL president Enamul Huq Shameem demanded immediate withdrawal of the cases filed against the BCL activists, and leaders including himself.

He also demanded release of BCL workers arrested during the current agitation.

The government, alleged Shameem, filed 'false' cases against him and other central BCL leaders to suppress the current agitation of the students against 'corruption, inefficiency, nepotism and politicisation of the administration.'

The Chhatra League leader also demanded for lowering of prices of essentials, including fertiliser, paper, rice, pulses and salt.

Nurses strike

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was held in Dhaka yesterday at the conference room of the Health Ministry with health and family welfare minister in the chair.

The meeting was attended, among others, by Minister of State for Civil Aviation and Tourism Major (Retd) Abdul Mannan, president of Ramna thana unit of BNP and ward commissioner Mohammad Chowdhury Alam.

The leaders of nurses decided to postpone their on-going strike with effect from 8 pm last night following fruitful discussions, a press release of the Diploma Nurses' Association and Diploma Students Nurses' Union said.

The press release further said the government accepted four demands of the nurses and a committee has been formed to consider the rest of the demands.

FBCCI chief

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Mr Rahman was addressing as chief guest at the publication ceremony of 'The Share Bazar', country's first journal on investment and stock market. Held at a local hotel the function was presided over by journal's editor A R Atique while chairman of the Dhaka Stock Exchange Khurshid Alam, editor of the Financial Express Moazzem Hossain and journal's publisher Kamrun Nahar spoke on the occasion.

The FBCCI president said that the country's business community were united today and at the moment a national unity was essential to carry the nation towards the cherished goal of achieving economic progress and prosperity.

Khurshid Alam underscored the need for effective communications between the investors and the investment sectors and he hoped that the newly published journal would make meaningful contributions towards that end.

The editor of the journal assured that the new publication would make positive contributions in giving the real picture in the field of investment and stock market as well as other fields of economic activities.

The Midnight File

Big powers vow not to attack non-nuclear countries

GENEVA, Apr 6: Russia, Britain and France today joined a US pledge to refrain from using nuclear weapons against certified non-nuclear countries. The move was aimed at securing renewal of the treaty to stop the spread of atomic arms. China told the 38-nation conference on Disarmament of its policy never to use nuclear weapons against any country, whether or not it has signed the 25-year-old Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. India and Pakistan, which have not joined the NPT, said they wanted stronger guarantees, reports AP.

Desmond Tutu meets jailed Abiola

ABUJA, Apr 6: South Africa's Anglican archbishop Desmond Tutu today met jailed Nigerian opposition leader Mashood Abiola, who faces trial for treason, the cleric told the press. Tutu said Abiola had told him that he was now ready to come out of prison in the federal capital Abuja even if certain restrictions were placed on him by the military government, reports AFP.

C'wealth Secy Gen's offer

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was in Bangladesh during October-November last year and stayed for 37 days to try and facilitate the process of a dialogue between the government and the Opposition to resolve the crisis which has been plaguing the country since March last year.

Sir Ninian succeeded in making both sides sit across the table and several rounds of formal talks were also held. But his efforts eventually did not yield any positive result and the stalemate continues.

When contacted, well-placed sources close to the BNP and the AL hierarchy, who spoke on condition of anonymity, confirmed Chief Emeka's latest overture and said that his offer and proposals were being examined. It is gathered that both the leaders are considering the offer and discussing with their key political advisers before taking any decision.

Sir Ninian Stephen, the first emissary of the Commonwealth Secretary General, Saifur

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ently amidst growing public perception that the reforms in the sector is still far from expectation.

"The services (of the banks) should be provided in an unbiased and unprejudiced manner. Banking decisions should be based strictly on valid business criteria."

Also the NCBs (Nationalised Commercial Banks) will be operated strictly on commercial basis and without interference by the government in management decisions, the policy paper says.

According to the policy, the government discourages undue concentration of ownership which might lead to 'abuses' and that it will not allow "a single group or family of shareholders" to control more than one bank.

The Finance Minister stressed the need for protecting depositors' fund and said that the government is fully supportive of Bangladesh Bank's stronger banking supervision and regulation.

The depositors' money must be considered as being held in trust to be returned to them according to the terms on which it was accepted, he said.

Government will support any enforcement action that the Bangladesh Bank may consider necessary with respect to any bank, says the policy statement.

It lays emphasis on drastic improvement in the banking sector: "Banking industry must improve efficiency, quality and productivity of its investment portfolios, establish management accountability."

The policy also says that there will be no discrimination between the public and private banks. "As a matter of government policy both the government and private sector banks are subjected to one and the same legal and regulatory framework."

Awami League leaders Zillur Rahman, Mozaffar Hossain Palta, Abdul Mannan, Abdul Hasnat Abdullah and Nurul Islam Nahid were with the party chief during the meet.

The next SAARC summit is scheduled to be held in New Delhi from May 2 to 4.

The Prime Minister's entourage includes Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman and Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan.

The two prime ministers Begum Khaleda Zia and Manmohan Adhikari — during official talks — are expected to discuss bilateral matters and regional and international issues of common concern.

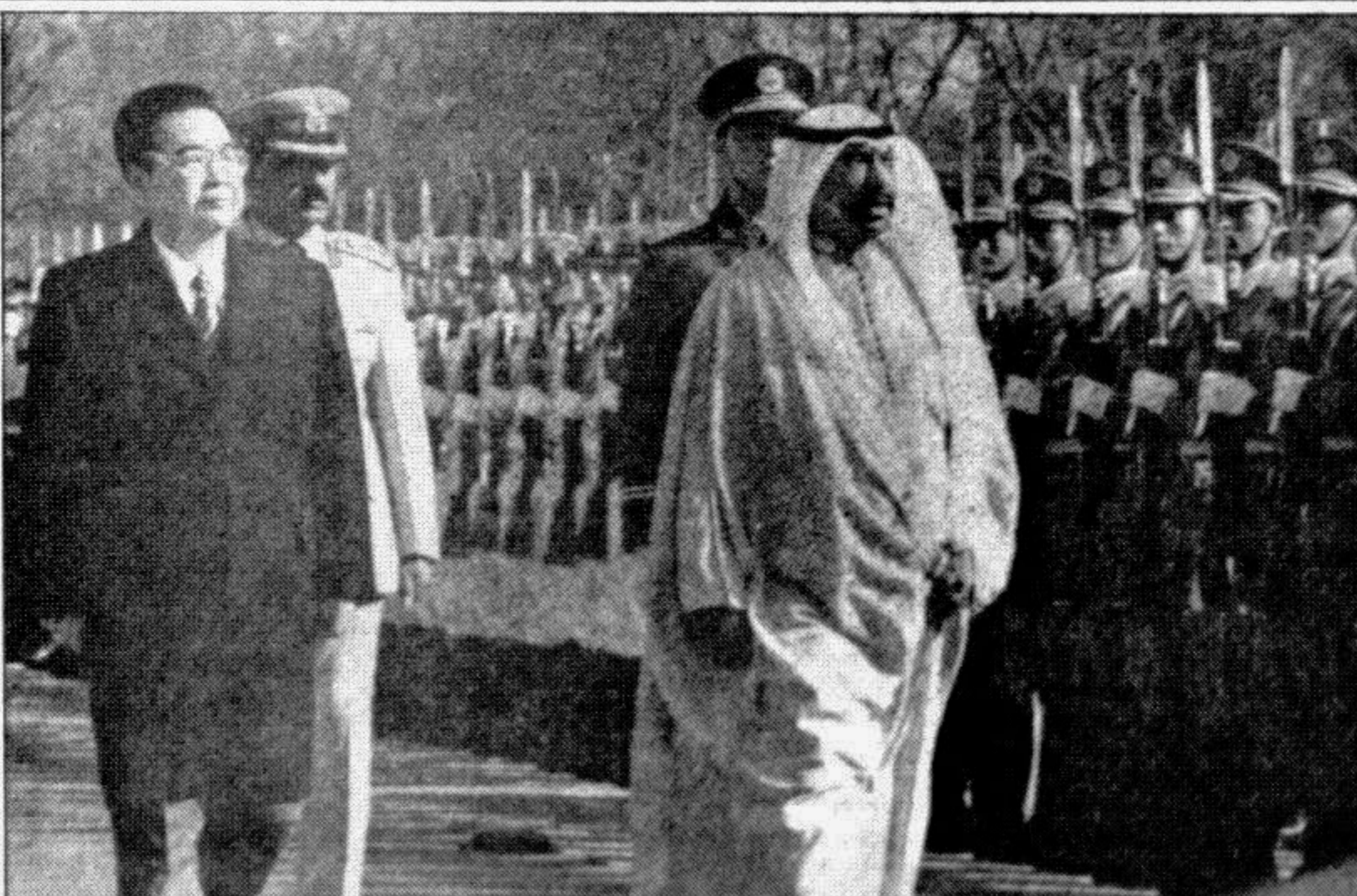
Foreign Ministry sources said, the two prime ministers will review the progress made in the implementation of various SAARC programmes including the South Asian Preferential Trade Arrangement (SAPTA).

The existing close ties between Nepal and Bangladesh are expected to be strengthened as a result of the visit, the sources added.

Begum Zia will call on King Birendra Bir Bikram Shahdev. She will also visit the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu before returning home on Saturday.

Indian dams

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lars Sardar Sarovar Project, but stopped short of saying it should be abandoned.



Kuwaiti Prime Minister Saad al-Abdallah al-Sabah and his Chinese counterpart Li Peng (L) reviewing a guard of honour in Beijing's Tiananmen Square yesterday. China is the first leg of a four-nation Asian tour by the Kuwaiti Prime Minister. He is due in Dhaka on April 12. — AFP/UNB photo

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