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India keen to find solution : Pranab Dhaka, Delhi hold two rounds of water talks

NEW DELHI, May 5: India and Bangladesh opened talks on sharing the waters of the Ganges river here yesterday following complaints by Dhaka that New Delhi had been steadily decreasing the flow of water, officials said, reports AFP.

A senior Bangladeshi official held talks with his Indian counterpart after Prime Ministers P V Narasimha Rao of India and Begum Khaleda Zia of Bangladesh agreed to resume discussions at a one-to-one meeting here Thursday, they said.

A second round of talks was held this morning. Bangladesh diplomats here declined to comment on the talks saying they were "at a preliminary stage."

The Ganges water dispute has triggered complaints by Bangladeshi experts who say New Delhi had unilaterally reduced the flow of water to a level of 9,000 cubic feet per second from 34,000 cusecs agreed upon in 1977.

Meanwhile, Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Kumar Mukherjee told BSS today that the relationship between the two neighbours was "excellent" and said that efforts will be made to turn the ties more cordial.

Asked how the ties can be described as friendly and cordial when a crucial irritant like the sharing of the waters of the Ganges exists in the bilateral ties, Mukherjee said this should not be an obstacle to developing ties.

India is keen to find solution to the problem he said and referred to the foreign secretary level talks now in progress in Delhi.

Asked if the Irrigation Ministers of two countries will meet soon on the "Farakka issue" or talks will be held at any other level as a sequel to the talks of the foreign secretaries, the Indian External Affairs Minister said, "Let us see how it progresses."

Pranab Mukherjee said he looks forward to the meeting of the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Commission, which is scheduled to be held in India. No dates have been set for the meeting which generally takes place once in every two years.

Asked about the allegations of Indian posture as a "big brother" towards neighbours like Bangladesh, Mukherjee sought to brush aside such opinion. He said his country treats all sovereign nations equally.

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1000 join BNP Opposition misleading people: PM

More than 1,000 leaders and workers of different political parties of Fulbari and Pabna districts formally joined the BNP yesterday, reports UNB.

They met the Prime Minister at her Hare Road office and expressed their allegiance to her leadership.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said the Opposition believes in the politics of self-interest, not the welfare of the people. "When they were in power they made their fortune."

She said the programmes and politics of the BNP are devoted to the welfare of the people and national development.

The Prime Minister alleged that the Opposition politics were aimed at causing suffering of farmers, hampering production and development.

See Page 12 Col 7

Manzur murder: Charge-sheet after Eid Ershad may be made principal accused

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) is likely to submit charge-sheet in the Maj Gen Manzur murder case after the Eid-ul-Azha with jailed former president H M Ershad as the principal accused, sources close to the investigators said.

CID officials were now corroborating their findings, the sources said.

Ershad was chief of army staff when Manzur was killed while in custody, in Chittagong Cantonment, following the assassination of President Ziaur Rahman in May 1981.

The sources, who requested anonymity, said the investigators held a meeting Thursday with the senior officials to apprise them of the progress of the investigation.

Ershad might not be interrogated before the charge-sheet was submitted but he might be shown 'arrested' in the case, one source said.

"It is not mandatory to interrogate an accused before submitting charge-sheet. If the investigators gather ample evidence against a person, he can be made an accused in a case without questioning him," he said.

Investigating officer Abdul Kahar Akand, a senior ASP of the CID, however, declined to comment on the progress of the case.

"They (CID officials) are interested in producing more witnesses and evidence than accusing more people," the source added. Since March the investigators had interrogated more than two dozen people many of whom would be witnesses in the trial.

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Miscreants kill maid, stab master in city

By Staff Correspondent

A gang of four allegedly stabbed to death a teenage maid and also stabbed her master at a house at Green Road in the city yesterday afternoon.

The maid was identified as Morntaz Begum, 15.

Her master, Nazrul Islam, 55, a businessman, was seriously injured and hospitalised.

Sawkat, one of the four attackers, was known to Nazrul and had a dispute with him over loan-money, police sources said. Nazrul allegedly hired the three others.

Local people caught one of the four Khairul Bashar Gogon, 25, when they were escaping and handed him over to police.

Nazrul reportedly lent around Taka eight lakh to Sawkat, who lives in Keraniganj. A few days ago, Sawkat gave a cheque of Taka three lakh to Nazrul, which was dishonoured, a source said.

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Awami League president Sheikh Hasina addressing a public meeting at the Kishoreganj stadium yesterday. — AL photo

Opposition fighting for fair polls, food : Hasina

KISHOREGANJ, May 5: Sheikh Hasina, who is seeking immediate elections under a caretaker government, today said the BNP is making frantic efforts to hang on power for making more black money through corruption, reports UNB.

"This illegal government has no right to stay in power for corruption, rigging, killing and food and fertiliser scandal," she told a huge public meeting at a local stadium on the concluding day of her 3-day tour of greater Mymensingh district.

The Awami League President also addressed two public meetings at Kishoreganj and Bhairab and several wayside meetings.

"We are fighting for fair polls and the people's rights to food. We resigned from Parliament to establish these rights," she said and asked the Prime Minister to resign 90 days ahead of the elections and hand over power to a neutral caretaker government.

Hasina rebuked the government for blaming the Opposition for fertiliser-food crisis and said BNP men made huge black money by creating the crisis ignoring the interest of poor farmers.

She mentioned the names of several BNP ministers and MPs who were directly involved in the scandal. Dealerships of fertiliser were given to BNP people at the direction of the Prime Minister and they smuggled it to India, Hasina alleged.

She also blamed the government for killing 18 farmers, 17 workers, students, businessmen and Ansars.

"Now the people in power are planning to give the dealership of paper to their own men to create a new crisis and thereby open another way for making black money," the AL leader told the meeting.

Hasina said if the Awami League is voted to power, it will give subsidy to the agriculture sector, set up an agro-based industrial infrastructure and labour intensive industries.

The meeting was also addressed by Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman, Matia Chowdhury, Fazlur Rahman, Syed Asrafur Islam, Nazibul Bashar Majibbandari, Shamsul Huq and Advocate Asrafur Huq. Kishoreganj AL president Advocate Abdul Hamid presided.

ADB reviews projects, suggests speedy implementation

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has suggested expediting the implementation of different Bank-funded projects in energy, finance and industry, social infrastructure, and transport and communication sectors.

Reviewing the status of Bank-assisted projects in Bangladesh as of January 31 recently, the ADB also highlighted the major projects' specific implementation problems and put forward suggestions to overcome those.

There are 34 ADB-funded projects in Bangladesh. The total amount of loan for these projects was fixed at 2052.8 million US dollars, of which 821.8 million (39%) has been disbursed so far.

Of the total, 1499.8 million dollars is supposed to go to the aforesaid sectors. Some 584.2 million dollars was disbursed till January 31.

Mentioning the 189.3 million dollar eighth power project, the Bank asked the government to expedite the recruitment and fielding of consultants and remaining procurement activities.

As regards the 79.8 million dollar Brahmaputra Basin Gas Transmission and Distribution project, the ADB suggested settling the arbitration between contractors without further delay since the 'loan-closing date' expired in December last.

The progress of implementation of the 113.5 million dollar third natural gas development project is 'virtually nil', the Bank noted and asked the government to gear up the process.

The ADB also asked the Bangladesh Bank and participating financial institutions to expedite the implementation of small and cottage industry projects keeping in view the loan-closing date — October 9 — this year.

The loan utilisation of this 30 m-dollar project in finance and industry sector is 57 per cent while 86 per cent of the scheduled time has elapsed.

The Bank also suggested

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WB President Preston dead

WASHINGTON, May 5: Lewis Preston, President of the World Bank since 1991 and former Chief Executive of J P Morgan and Co., died at his home on Thursday evening, a World Bank spokesman said. He was 68, reports Reuters.

Preston had cancer and announced earlier this year that he would retire from the World Bank at the end of May.

"Lewis Preston provided a quiet, firm leadership that has transformed the bank. He cared deeply about this institution, and we cared deeply for him," acting World Bank President Richard Frank said in a statement released by the bank late Thursday.

Frank described Preston as the "premier banker of his time" and said he became a formidable leader for change at the World Bank, drawing upon his vast banking expertise, his knowledge of the international arena and a compassion for those the bank set out to help.

"Indeed, Lewis Preston leaves behind a much more open, responsive and effective institution than the one he joined in September 1991," Frank said.

Preston is survived by his wife of 36 years, Gladys 'Patsy' Pulitzer, their four daughters, seven grand children, and the wife of his son Lewis Preston Jr, who died of cancer three years ago.

Bonn outlaws Neo-Nazis

POTSDAM, Germany, May 5: A neo-Nazi organisation that slanders Jews and glorifies Adolf Hitler was outlawed today after officials deemed it could resort to terrorism, reports AP.

The group, called Direct Action-Middle Germany, has been holding secret meetings and giving fascist ideological training to youths, said officials in eastern Germany's Brandenburg state.

"This association glorifies the National Socialist regime and has racist, anti-Semitic and totalitarian thoughts," Brandenburg Interior Minister Alwin Ziel said in announcing the ban.

He said the group "orients itself against the constitution" and that some members have "expressed support for the use of terrorist means."

Ziel did not say whether the organisation had actually been plotting some terrorist action.

Direct Action-Middle Germany has been publishing a pamphlet called "Attack" whose motto is a quote from Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's propaganda minister: "Revenge should be enjoyed."

One edition of "Attack" said Jews are "parasitical exploiters of the (German) people."

Preparations to set up WTC in Ctg complete

CHITTAGONG, May 5: The Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCC&I) has completed all preparations to set up a World Trade Centre (WTC) in the port city under private initiatives, the first of its kind in the country, chamber sources said.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is expected to lay the foundation stone of the trade centre in Agrabad Commercial Area here, they said.

Talking to The Daily Star, President of the CCC&I Sarwar Jamal Nizam said "We are expecting that the foundation laying will take place by the third week of this month". A South Korean company — Young Ones — had offered consultancy service free of cost to build the trade centre, he said.

The Korean company has a big garments factory at Chittagong Export Processing Zone.

Nizam said that the chamber had already received allotment of two bighas of land for the centre aimed at promoting trade and investments.

A 16-storied building will be constructed at an estimated cost of Taka 20 crore to house the centre. The cost will be borne by members of the Chittagong Chamber.

When asked, Nizam said the building will be constructed without any financial assistance from the government.

The trade centre will have permanent display centres and facilities for international conference and international and local trade fairs, chamber sources said.

Besides, the office of the CCC&I will be shifted there.

The plan for setting up such a centre was taken up by the CCC&I about four years ago in view of the commercial importance of the city, one source said.

Biswas leaves for London

President Abdur Rahman Biswas left Dhaka last night for London to attend the celebrations to commemorate the Victory in Europe marking the end of the World War II, reports BSS.

Begum Hosne Ara Biswas and senior officials accompanied him.

More than 50 heads of state

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Rome summit to renew political commitment against hunger

By Staff Correspondent

focus food security for all. It will focus on the high risk of food crises and famine and the need for early corrective measures, he said, according to a message received in Dhaka last night.

Toros further said that, although the world can produce enough food for everyone, in the developing countries, 800 million people are chronically undernourished. Among them, 192 million children under the age of five suffer from acute or chronic protein and energy deficiencies. The vast majority of the chronically undernourished live in countries that do not grow enough food for their populations and cannot readily afford to fill the gap with imports.

At present, according to FAO, 88 nations fall into the category of low-income food-deficit countries. Of them, 44 are in Africa, 23 in Asia and the Pacific, 9 in Latin America and 12 in Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States. At the same time, bilateral and multilateral assistance to developing countries' agriculture is declining. Between 1980 and 1990 overall amounts dropped from US\$12 billion to \$10 billion and during this period, agriculture's share of total development assistance fell from 20 to 14 per cent.

According to current estimates by the year 2030 the world's population will rise from the present 5.5 billion to 9 billion. As the population grows, the per capita availability of arable land decreases, heightening the need to intensify agricultural production and making greater demands on finite natural resources.

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Asia's environment bill may rise to \$70b

MANILA, May 5: Developing Asia would need to spend some 13 billion dollars a year on improving its environment by the year 2000, but a stepped-up campaign could blot the cleanup bill to as much as 70 billion dollars, reports IPS.

These figures are found in a study published by the Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB), which sought to estimate the amounts needed if Asia were to continue current spending trends on environmental sectors and the extra cost if it were to aim to catch up with industrialised countries.

ADB consultant Paul Weatherly, who made the study, says Asian nations need to make major investments in national environmental conservation.

See Page 12 Col 3

Sec 144 in Fatulla

From Our Correspondent, NARAYANGANJ, May 5: Police today imposed Section 144 at Aliganj playground and its adjoining areas in Fatulla here to prevent two rival groups from holding rallies there.

Local unit of Islami Pathar and the Samaj Kalyan Parishad convened a religious congregation at 2:30 today at the playground where Jamaat leader Delwar Hossain Saidee was scheduled to speak.

A combine of local political parties and the Muktiyoddha Saigaid also called a rally at the same venue same time.

Meanwhile, the Jamaat activists tried several times to enter the ground but police prevented them. Several cocktails were exploded when the pro-Saidee youths tried to enter for the third time at around 4:00 pm.

Heavy contingent of police were deployed in the area.

Urgent Notice to Esteemed Power Consumers on Use of Electricity

Attention of all power consumers & the public is drawn to the following steps in view of ensuring smooth distribution of electricity received from the national grid as per demands of all classes of consumers & implementation of the Govt announced electricity load management policy.

- Irrigation pumps should be kept off during peak hours i.e. 6 pm to 10 pm.
- All kinds of shops & shopping centres except medicine, kutchra bazar, wholesale market of perishables & eating houses, should be kept shut after 8 pm.
- All kinds of illumination shall remain prohibited except on the Govt announced special festival days.
- Use of such high power consuming electrical appliances as iron, heater, cooker, water heater etc shall have to be kept as much possible limited during peak hours i.e. 6 pm to 10 pm.
- Industrial factories running on single shift shall have to operate in day time or remaining time of the night.
- Unnecessary burning of lights and operation of fans & other electrical implements shall have to be discouraged.

Cooperation of esteemed consumers/all concerned is solicited smooth use of electricity available under the present situation & proper implementation the electricity load management policy.

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Dhaka Electric Supply Authority