

SAVE DHAKA



The Dhaka metropolis has become a city of traffic jam. Some overbridges, however, have been constructed to help pedestrians cross the roads avoiding the irritating congestion of vehicles. But these overbridges have been occupied by street vendors who are doing business at the cost of people's sufferings. This picture, taken yesterday, from Newmarket area, reflects this reality.

— Star photo by Enamul Huq

Water talks this month

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definite date for the launching of SAPTA was a big achievement. To make SAPTA operational, it has yet to be ratified by four out of the seven member countries of the SAARC including Bangladesh, he said. SAPTA is due to become operational from December 8 this year.

Farooq Sobhan said that under SAPTA, Bangladesh has offered 12 items with ten per cent duty reduction. Bhutan has offered concessions on 11 items while India has offered concessions on 106 items, ranging from 10 to 100 per cent. The average reduction of duty offered by India was around 50 per cent, he explained.

The next meeting of SAARC Council of ministers will be held on December 8 in New Delhi coinciding with the 10th anniversary of the launching of the organisation.

The second meeting of the SAARC finance ministers will also be held shortly.

A special meeting for strengthening the SAARC Secretariat will be held sometime in April, he said.

The Foreign Secretary also informed the newsmen that Bangladesh had offered to host a ministerial meeting in July before the Beijing Summit on Women.

Endorsement of energy as a new area of technical cooperation among one SAARC countries was also given at the summit. However, instead of extending the list of 12 technical areas of cooperation now existing, the energy question will be looked after by the existing Science and Technology Committee.

The recent summit has also decided to extend the two-year recognition period of affiliated bodies like the SAARC chamber to a five-year period.

The Foreign Secretary said, SAARC in its 10 years has been able to take the idea of regional cooperation significantly ahead.

"New SAARC has learnt to walk. It can hopefully run in the future," he said.

Benazir, Adhikary to visit Bangladesh

By Staff Correspondent

Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto is expected to pay an official visit to Bangladesh shortly.

Benazir would be coming at the invitation extended by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia during her recent trip to Islamabad. Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan said yesterday.

Prime Minister of Nepal Man Mohan Adhikary and Deputy Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal have also accepted invitations to visit Bangladesh in the near future. Madhav Kumar Nepal, who is also his country's Defence and Foreign Minister is likely to arrive in Dhaka on an official visit very shortly.

Meanwhile, it was confirmed yesterday that President of the Philippines Fidel Ramos will be coming to Bangladesh on a three-day visit sometime in September.

Dhaka may seek foodgrains under SAARC Scheme

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh may be the first country to put to test the SAARC Food Security Scheme by asking for a specified quantity of foodgrains.

The request for foodgrains is likely to be directed at both India and Pakistan in view of the production shortfall during the current harvesting season.

Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan told newsmen yesterday "It is quite possible that Bangladesh may seek some rice under the Food Security Scheme of SAARC."

He said India is supposed to have 1,20,000 tons of foodgrains under the scheme and that Dhaka would have twelve months to return the loaned quantity.

The Foreign Secretary said that Bangladesh was already trying to procure rice from Pakistan and India. "Both prime ministers have given assurance to give whatever rice we require on a private basis and also on a government to government basis."

Farooq Sobhan added, "We will put to test the SAARC Food Security Scheme and see how quickly we can get food."

Bihar

Bangladesh strongly favours an early repatriation of the remaining stranded Pakistanis.

Replying to questions at a news briefing at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the foreign secretary said that the Bangladesh Prime Minister during her recent meetings with her Pakistani counterpart in Islamabad and also with Pakistan President in New Delhi insisted on a timetable for the repatriation.

But the Pakistan side said that it was very difficult for them to set a timetable because of Pakistan's domestic compulsions, he added.

Replying to a question, he said that the Bangladesh side also called for a settlement to the assets and liabilities issue between the two countries.

Saudi forces

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Tehran accused Washington of seeking to impose its will on the world through "blackmail" and said it saw a confrontation as becoming inevitable.

Interior Minister Nayef bin Abdelaziz last Sunday warned that Riyadh would use "all means" to make Iranians and others respect the ban on political rallies, imposed here for the third consecutive year.

"We will be firm and will not allow any threat to the pilgrimage and the security of the holy sites," Prince Nayef said.

Tagore's birthday

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and the Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina in separate messages expressed their deep respects to the great poet and recalled his immense contributions in Bangla literature.

The government has arranged a three-day programme in the capital and two-day ones at Shahjapur in Sirajganj, Shelaidah in Kushtia and Patisar in Naogaon.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is expected to inaugurate the main programme at the Shilpakala Academy in the city at 7 in the evening.

Shipping Minister MK Anwar, State Minister for Establishment Minister Amrul Huq and the State Minister for Irrigation Mosharraf Hussain Shahjahan are scheduled to open the programmes at Patisar, Shahjapur and Shelaidah respectively.

Rest of the programmes in the capital will be held on May 17-18 while the programmes outside Dhaka will be organised today and tomorrow.

The programmes include cultural programmes, discussions, seminars and Rabindra Mela (fair).

Three killed in city incidents

By DMCH Correspondent

Three persons including a minor boy died and two others were injured in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

Twelve-year-old Babu who was missing since Saturday morning, was found dead on the bank of the river Buriganga yesterday morning.

Police recovered his body and sent it to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue.

Police suspected that he was drowned.

Babu, son of one Mohammad Abdul Fazal, was a residence of Raza Srinath Street, Lalbagh.

A garments worker reportedly committed suicide at Malibagh Chowdhury Para early yesterday.

The worker, who was identified as Taslima Begum, 20, allegedly killed herself by hanging.

One Mohammad Ekhas Uddin Sheikh aged about 35 also killed himself by hanging at Chahr Bar under Gulshan police station Saturday night.

Both the bodies were sent to the DMCH morgue.

Two SSC examinees were injured when two groups of muscle men clashed at Khilgaon yesterday afternoon.

The victims Mohammad

Mustafizur Rahman Babu, 16, and Zaidul Islam Emon, 15, were coming from their examination centre at Khilgaon High School.

Both of them received bullet injuries and were admitted to the DMCH.

IA to reduce Dhaka-Calcutta flights

The Indian Airlines Limited (IA) will withdraw one of its Calcutta-Dhaka-Calcutta flights on Tuesdays effective from May 15, a press release of the airlines said yesterday, reports BSS.

The withdrawal will remain valid till end of August this year.

The airlines which is now operating five flights per week between the two cities, henceforth from May 15, will have four weekly flights on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Indian Airlines sources said adding reduction of passenger load resulted in lessening the number of flights.



Miss Universe Sushmita Sen of India yesterday displaying diamonds worth 33000 US dollar which is part of the prize for the beauty pageant to be held in Windhoek, Namibia, on May 13.

— AFP photo

Observatories needed

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on an average 20 to 25 mild to moderate earthquakes were occurring either within the country or in neighbouring regions.

Besides, Bangladesh is virtually sitting in a earthquake-prone zone with at least three known 'fault lines'. These are Hinge fault, the Bogra fault and a fault in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, he said.

"Any time earthquake of a major intensity could hit Bangladesh," Sajedur Rahman said. In the recent past violent earthquakes in India and in the neighbouring region had shaken up several parts of Bangladesh, he pointed out. Rangpur, Sylhet, Mymensingh and part of the Hill Tracts are 'seismically active'.

The most intense earthquake occurred in the first part of this century in Balisera Valley in Srimangal which severely affected Maulvibazar.

One of the severest earthquakes occurred in 1876 in Shillong, only 80 kilometres from Bangladesh. It was registered at 8.7 on the Richter scale. Another earthquake oc-

curred in 1950 in Assam region, only 300 kilometres from the Bangladesh territory. It registered an intensity of 8.8 on the Richter scale.

According to experts, an earthquake of magnitude 5 on the Richter scale releases energy equivalent to an atom bomb of 20,000 TNT, almost the size of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. A magnitude of 6 on the Richter scale releases 30 times the energy measuring 5 on the Richter scale.

Three seismic observatories are required in the country immediately to determine and monitor the intensity of future quakes, experts say. The components of the observatories include a vertical measuring equipment and two horizontals — east-west and north-south seismic devices to determine the location of the epi-centres.

The country also requires some strong motion accelerographs to determine the ground expression due to an earthquake. The components are required without further delay for future record, planning and warning, they feel.

Liquid heroin

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liquid heroin from the Shaheen Hotel in the city's Kakrail area Saturday night.

However, the owner of the smuggled heroin, one Tofazzal Hossain, could not be arrested.

An NCD press release issued last night said that Tofazzal of Beparipara under Jhenaidah district smuggled in the four bottles of liquid heroin from Pakistan. He had been staying at the Shaheen Hotel but later remained absconding from there, it said. A case has been filed against him.

This is the first case of recovering liquid heroin in the country. Liquid heroin is injected into the body and it is more dangerous than the heroin in powder form. Injection of liquid heroin may cause AIDS and Hepatitis-B, experts say.

One stabbed to death in city

By DMCH Correspondent

One person was stabbed to death near the Mohammadpur Kazi Office in the city yesterday morning.

The victim identified as Ataur Rahman Jony aged about 25 received severe stab injuries and died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Police said, Ataur was waylaid by a group of armed men when he was going to his uncle's residence at Amirtek from Sir Sayed Road by a rickshaw at about 11 am.

Arms recovered

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 7: Razoon police in a predawn raid recovered some arms and ammunition including one light gun and a pipegun from a house at Noapara and arrested one Faruk Ahmed.

ALCWC meets today

The Awami League Central Working Committee ALCWC will meet at the party's Dhanmondi office at 7 pm today, reports UNB.

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina will preside over the meeting.

Meanwhile, the Bangabandhu Memorial Trust has decided to set up a hospital, Maternity Centre and Child Health Complex, in memory of Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib, wife of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The decision was taken at a meeting with Sheikh Hasina, President of the Trust, in the chair yesterday.

The meeting recalled with gratitude the contribution of Begum Fazilatunnesa to the entire life of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, democratic movement and the War of Liberation.

The trust also decided to set up youth training and orphanage centres after the names of Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Rasil.

Japanese boat case

PP initiates arguments

Public Prosecutor (PP) Abdur Razzak Khan yesterday told the special judge's court trying deposed president Hussain Muhammad Ershad in a corruption case involving purchase of Japanese rescue and relief boats that "It has to be seen whether the procurement of the boats was done in accordance with the decision of the government or on the desire of the accused now in the dock," reports BSS.

Initiating argument on behalf of the prosecution in the Special Case No 19 of 1993, the PP said it has also to be seen whether the business rule of the government was properly followed or not. No department or individual can flout any set of rules, he stressed.

Zinat Ara, additional sessions and district judge (first court), Dhaka who presided over the court, adjourned the trial till May 21 after both sides sought time.

One killed in Barisal clash

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, May 7: One person was killed and at least 12 others were injured in a clash between two groups of people over a disputed land at Gazipur village under Uzirpur thana of the district this afternoon.

The victim was identified as Abdur Rashid, 55.

Probe body

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away from him the fertiliser he was granted by the district administration for distribution among the farmers.

"I shall submit my statement to the commission. Earlier, I had also submitted such report to the district administration," he said and asked whether those responsible would be punished.

The enquiry commission staff said they would also visit certain places to verify the authenticity of allegations made by different quarters.

The response from the people about the enquiry was quite satisfactory. Persons concerned were coming and giving their statements, he added.

Biswas

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visiting heads of state and government.

The reception, held at the Guildhall, seat of the Corporation of London, was followed by a banquet which was hosted by Lord Mayor Christopher Walford at the great hall there.

At the Guildhall entrance, President Biswas and Begum Rahman were received by Prime Minister John Major, Mrs Major, Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress.

President Biswas during the banquet exchanged views with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, the Speaker of the Pakistan National Assembly, the Foreign Minister of Bosnia Herzegovina and the British Opposition Labour Leader.

Water issue

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farmers in the Bangladesh districts of Kushtia, Chuadanga, Jhenidah and Magura, Dhaka has said.

Experts say the resultant water shortage is also affecting the Sundarban mangrove forests threatened by increasing salinity.

Rao, after the summit of the South Asian Association ended, said domestic shortages had led to the damming up of the Ganges with a barrage at Farakka, and that the step was not aimed at harassing Bangladesh.

The Midnight File

Tamil rebels build runway

COLOMBO, May 7: Tamil rebels have built a runway on an abandoned British air strip in Mankulam, about 250 kilometers (160 miles) north of Colombo, a news report said today. The guerrillas may use a glider for attacking government targets. The Sunday Times newspaper said quoting military intelligence reports, reports AP.

Chirac wins French presidential polls

PARIS, May 7: Conservative Jacques Chirac is to be the next French president after defeating Socialist Lionel Jospin in the run-off ballot today, according to computer projections broadcast by national television, reports AFP.

The projections gave the Paris mayor about 52 per cent against 48 per cent for Socialist Lionel Jospin, according to projections by the BVA, CSA and Sofres polling institutes.

Although opinion polls released before a publication ban a week ago gave Chirac a 55-45 per cent margin, the Paris mayor has warned his supporters against complacency and urged a high turnout. Jospin equally insisted the race was still open.

The surveys showed 20 per cent of voters had not yet made their mind up. In the April 23 first round of the election, Jospin proved forecasts wrong to take first place.

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passer-by riding a cycle was killed when another truck ran over him.

The victim Abdul Malek, 30, died on the spot, cantonment police said.

Police seized all three trucks and arrested the driver, who hit the cycle.

The bodies were sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

UNB adds: Two persons were killed and 25 others injured when a passenger bus skidded off the road and fell into a road side ditch on the Pabna-Ishurdi highway near Gati in Chatmohar thana.

Of the victims, one was identified as Abdul Majid, 35 of Bahadurpur in Chatmohar thana while the identity of another man could not be known immediately.

The injured were rushed to Pabna Sadar Hospital where condition of Motahar, 25, Khokon, 20, Akbar Ali, 25, and Rustum Ali, 28, were stated to be critical.

The accident occurred when the Chatmohar bound bus tried to give way to a truck coming from opposite direction. The driver of the bus fled the scene.

Two children were killed in separate accidents on the Bogra-Nagarbari highway.

In one incident at Ullapara thana, Asma, 8 was run over by a speeding Baghabari bound lorry when she was crossing the road at 9 am.

In the other accident, Abdul, a nine year old boy, was knocked down by truck when he was trying to cross the road at Bhuiyagati in Raiganj thana at 10 am.

Nor'wester

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homeless, officials said.

Standing crops on a vast track of land were damaged and a large number of trees uprooted in 11 unions in Sadar and Nakla thanas.

Deputy Commissioner of the district visited the Sadar thana and sanctioned 17 metric tons of rice and Tk 14,000 for the affected families in the two thanas.

Lankan investor

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up a garment industry named M/s Pfeiffer Apparels (Pvt) Ltd in Bangladesh. Liu Chiu Leung Alvin has already been granted citizenship of Bangladesh.

For speedy industrialisation of the country the present government has liberalised the Citizenship Act with a view to providing incentives to foreign investors. The government provides residency status to those who make investment of 75 thousand US dollars. These measures have been in agreement with the industrial policy of the government and open market economy. This have already attracted a significant number of foreign investors.



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Bangladesh Telegraph & Telephone Board

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- The bank concerned will amend the bill and receive payment for current dues.
- In view of relieving the subscribers of unnecessary botheration, the banks have been given necessary instructions in this regard and list of receipts is being collected from the banks on daily basis through the revenue office staff.
- In the process, any addition of paid bill as arrear with current bill, will be instantaneously corrected.
- Government subscribers in Dhaka who might have not received the bill are requested to contact the following telephone numbers:

| | |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Phone: 812216 | Director (Revenue) |
| 834270 | |
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| 864828 | Senior Accounts Officer |
| 230402 | Telephone Revenue (South), Dhaka |

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