

Beijing Declaration Friday

Disputes over human, sexual rights

BEIJING, Sept 13: With less than two days to resolve their disputes, negotiators at the UN women's conference ran into sharp division over human and sexual rights today, reports AP.

Late in the day, fresh problems arose over a 'Beijing Declaration' to crown the Fourth World Conference on Women, with some Western delegates fearing it would water down the gains made for women at the conference.

But China was believed to be anxious for the prestige of a document carrying the name of its capital, alongside the Platform of Action, which will spell out a new deal for women in the 21st century.

Argentina led resistance to a sentence in the platform that urges governments to 'take action to ensure that women's sexual and reproductive rights are fully recognised and respected,' participants said.

'They're still far apart, so there's no resolution,' said Geoffrey Knox of the New York-based International Women's Health Coalition.

Separately, defining human rights continued to bedevil the conference.

Some texts have passed the negotiating committees, but a new difficulty arose today over a sentence calling for 'full respect for the various religious and ethical values, cultural background and philosophical convictions of all its people and in conformity with all human rights and fundamental freedoms.'

This phrase is opposed by liberals as attaching relative values to rights they consider universal.

As a compromise, Namibia proposed adding a reaffirmation of past UN declarations, said Donna Sullivan, a Washington, DC-based human rights lobbyist.

Sullivan, who attended the closed-door meeting, said Namibia's compromise was supported by Brazil, Ghana, Cuba, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, Colombia, Mexico and Bolivia.

Impasse

From Page 1

ning for more harts but the dates were yet to be finalised. 'This will depend on the government's role as regards our planned 72-hour country-wide agitation from September 16', he said.

Sheraton contract

From Page 1

When his attention was drawn to the reports carried out by some newspapers stating that the operating company planned to withdraw following the 'illegal' interference by him, Mannan straightway dismissed it saying 'interference is inevitable when it concerns saving the national exchequer.'

Despite requests made by this correspondent to the acting general manager of the hotel, K S Alam, to know the view of the SOMC, he expressed his 'inability' saying, 'I can not say anything. If you want to know anything you better contact the senior vice president of the SOMC, who is based in Hong Kong.'

During last 10 years, the SOMC incurred a loss of Tk 1.1 crore on a sale of Tk 196 crore. BCL recently invested Tk 42 crore for the expansion work of the hotel by the BSL and increase in sales, said the state minister.

Before SOMC took over the BSL earned a net profit of Tk 13.2 crore in a turnover Tk 56.3 crore over a period of 10 years. Under the OBcurrent management rose to Taka 1960 million during last 10 years, according to the interim report of the probe committee, formed to investigate anomalies in the hotel management by the ministry.

Asked if the performance of the Hotel Intercontinental was 'so efficient,' why did the government signed a contract with the new company, the state minister said: 'It was during the Ershad regime when the management was handed over to the present company with an uneven agreement forgetting the national interest.'

The Hotel Intercontinental authority asked for a revision of management fee from 17.5 per cent of the total revenue to 20 per cent which the then government refused to increase while the current company is taking on an average 60 to 80 per cent of the total revenue as management fee. So, that is one of the reasons as to why the agreement is biased towards the SOMC, he added.

Tea output

From Page 1

duce 54 million kgs. tea this year. In the previous year it recorded a production of 53 million kgs. Tea Board sources said.

Nasruddin informed that the tea gardens had suffered an estimated loss of over Tk two crore due to such natural calamities in Chittagong only. An overwhelming majority of the tea gardens are located in the greater Sylhet district.

General Manager of a British-owned company, James Finlay, Qamrul Islam Chowdhury told this correspondent that production of tea in his company's gardens has recorded a 31 per cent fall this season compared with the previous years.

During the period from January to August 5 this year James Finlay, a leading producer, produced 3.45 million kgs of tea as against 4.97 million kgs during the corresponding period of 1994. 'Our target of production this year is 12 million kgs. But it is our ill-luck that we faced a drought, which forced down our production,' he said.

He informed that Tk 32 crore were pumped into the 20 gardens of Finlay to raise the yield.



Krupa Sindhu Bhoi thanks Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao after being sworn in as Minister of State at the presidential palace in New Delhi yesterday. — AFP/UNB photo

40 IU JCD activists resign

ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY, KUSHTIA, Sept 13: Some 40

leaders and workers of Islamic University JCD unit today resigned from the organisation after an intra-party conflict on the campus, reports UNB.

It was disclosed at a press conference at Islamic University (IU) Press-Corner this afternoon, organised by the faction led by former IU-unit JCD President Mirza Walid Hossain. The announcement came following the postponement of JCD conference at Ziaur Rahman Hall of the university on Tuesday.

Rival JCD-faction led by Mohammad Ali, has reportedly postponed the conference amidst strong support of Mirza Walid Hossain in the Hall.

Ex-AL MP Shankar Chy dead

Awami League leader, freedom fighter and former MP Sree Shankar Gobinda Chowdhury died at the Combined Military Hospital Tuesday night. He was 67, reports UNB.

Late Shankar Chowdhury was elected Member of Parliament in 1970, 73 and '91. He was also a Governor-designate of Natore district in 1975.

He was the president of Natore district Awami League and a member of the party's National Committee.

Shankar Chowdhury was thrice elected chairman of Natore pourashava.

He left behind his wife, four daughters and a host of relatives.

47 bags of urea seized: One held

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Sept 13: Police seized 47 bags of urea fertilizer and arrested dealer Mozammel Haq of Hizla Bandar today. Police said the dealer tried to sell the fertilizer in blackmarket.

IAF jet

From Page 1

pervisory operations.

A senior Home Ministry official said the Indians have been given the necessary permission to investigate the wreckage and take away whatever portions they want to take.

The permission has been given as part of normal practice and as per international convention,' he said.

The Indian side has proposed to bring in a wrecker and two lorries to transport only 'vital parts' of the crashed Mig-21, the official added. The vital parts include the black box.

The Mig-21 took off from Bagdogra air force base-situated about ten kilometres from Bangladesh territory, opposite Panchagar district. According to informed sources, the airbase occupies a strategic position being located near the 'northern neck' of Bangladesh and the Chinese border.

Indian officials said that the engine of the aircraft caught fire during flight and the lone pilot managed to bail out safely within their territory while the plane crashed within one kilometre of Bangladesh border. The wreckage of the plane was found by villagers after it reportedly exploded and fell at village Omorkhan of Dhakkamara union of Panchagar district. Three Bangladeshis were injured in the incident.

Following the crash, meeting were held between the BDR and the BSF.

Rao expands cabinet with 13 new faces

NEW DELHI, Sept 13: With an eye on elections next year, Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao expanded his Cabinet Wednesday with 13 new members, giving his government more regional balance and voter appeal, reports AP.

The Cabinet shuffle was designed to give a revitalized image to Rao's government, which suffered losses in key states in local elections in the last year.

The ministers were sworn in by President Shankar Dayal Sharma at the presidential palace.

Regional bosses of Rao's Congress Party were given seats in the Union Council of Ministers, which now includes more than 70 full cabinet members and junior ministers of state.

No changes were immediately announced in the major positions of foreign, finance or commerce ministers.

Manzur murder

From Page 1

Upon a government prayer for early hearing of the rule yesterday the division bench of the HC, comprising Justice Mohammad Mozammel Haque and Justice Mohammad Nurul Islam, fixed the matter for hearing today.

Earlier on September 12 Justice Mohammad Abdur Rouf the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in his chamber allowed the government prayer for withdrawal of the petition praying for stay of the HC order.

The same division bench on August 30 ordered stay of the said proceedings and issued a rule upon the government to show cause as to why the said proceedings should not be set aside.

Deputy Attorney General AFM Hasan Arif placed the government prayer before the court.

Eyes of 12 patients removed

From Page 1

tients whose eyes have been removed.

Some of the patients told this correspondent that doctors told them in private that the fungal infection was caused due to 'some faults at the operation theatre.'

Justifying the high incidence of fungal infection, Dr Mustafizur Rahman said, 'in the harvesting seasons the fungus infections are usually high.' 'Humid weather also contributes to high rate of such infections.'

According to him, 'one per cent fungal infection cases are considered normal even in the Western world.'

When questioned whether removal of eyes of one per cent of such patients are considered normal, he said, 'I do not know...'

When asked about compensation to those ill-fated people Dr Mustafiz said, 'they did not demand any... it is not our fault.'

Some leading eye specialists of the city when contacted by this correspondent contradicted Dr Rahman's contention. 'If the weather and the harvesting season are to be blamed for the increasing number of fungal patients, then all the hospitals would have had high incidences of similar cases,' they argued. 'Instead of making lame excuses, the authorities there should have taken extra precautions, checking and rechecking the equipments at the operation theatre.'

'This is one of the worst records in the history of ophthalmology,' said one leading eye specialist requesting anonymity. 'Even one per cent of such cases is too much and undesirable,' the other expert added.

Some nurses requesting

anonymity confided to the correspondent. 'Infectious eyes are being removed every day in the hospital.'

Banesa Begum of Kamrangir Char, under Lal Bagh Thana of Dhaka district is lying on Bed no. 4 of

Blinded by 'mistake'

By Staff Correspondent

Abdul Hamid Patwari lost his left eye as doctors at the Islamia Eye Hospital took him to be Hamid Ullah and removed it. Patwari was promised a corneal grafting free of cost but was discharged later without it.

Both Patwari and Hamid Ullah had undergone cataract operations. Left eye of Hamid Ullah was to be removed on August 20 for fungal infection. But the authorities mistakenly removed the eye of Patwari.

Later he was promised a corneal grafting and free treatment in the hospital, said his son Liton.

Patwari complained of loose motion and wanted medicine free of cost. But it was not given when he insisted, he was given a 'Discharge slip.' Liton told this correspondent.

When contacted, the hospital authorities refused to make any comment in this regard. Liton told this correspondent he will go for legal action against the hospital authorities.

Shishu Ward in the Islamia Eye Hospital after removal of her fungus-infected right eye. Her daughter Nurunnahar, while talking to this correspondent said, 'the doctors removed her eye on Sunday last.'

5 hurt by toll collectors on DMCH campus

By DMCH Correspondent

At least five employees of a construction firm were injured as they tried to resist a group of extortionists at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) campus yesterday.

Hospital sources said that the extortionists had been demanding from the firm two per cent of the Taka 19 crore, contract for construction of an extension building of the hospital. Being refused, the group, numbering about 15 attacked the employees at the construction site.

Coaching centres

From Page 1

Green Road area where angry students attacked another coaching centre.

According to informed sources, trouble was brewing between the students and the coaching centres since the authorities decided that admission to the country's universities and colleges would be on the basis of SSC and HSC marks.

The government on September 7 announced the decision to change the admission system, apparently in view of the mushroom growth of coaching centres that were taking large amounts as fees from the students intending to get them admitted into the colleges and universities for higher studies.

Many students who appeared in the HSC examination this year (results of which are still awaited) already paid up to Taka 3500 per head per unit to different coaching centres for admission into the universities, medical and engineering colleges.

Petrol pump, vehicles gutted

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Sept 13: A petrol pump, several vehicles and a tea stall were gutted in a devastating fire at Chashara tonight.

The fire, reportedly originating from a bomb explosion at 8-30 pm, engulfed a tank lorry from which oil was being unloaded at the petrol pump. The blaze spread to nearby areas quickly.

Two microbuses, two private cars, two mini-buses and 15 rickshaws, parked in and around the Prantik Filling Station were also burnt.

Fire Brigade personnel brought the blaze under control at 9.15 pm.

B'baria killing

From Page 1

The first autopsy was done at the Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital.

An investigation officer visited the spot today and interrogated some witnesses. He also interrogated the four accused policemen: SI Sanwar Hossain and constables Abul Hossain, Abdul Mannan and Mostasin Ali yesterday.

Awami League held a meeting at the District Bar Council premises to protest the killing. The meeting was addressed by Pouroushabha Chairman Al Mamun Sarkar and other local AL leaders. District AL president Syed Sirajul Islam presided.

The Midnight File

Grenade strikes US embassy in Moscow

MOSCOW, Sept 13: Russia placed its security forces in Moscow on high alert today after a rocket-propelled grenade struck the US embassy in the city centre, a spokesman for the security services said. A high alert allows the troops to halt any vehicle and enter any building. The spokesman, quoted by Interfax news agency, said such incidents are no joke--this is an act of international terrorism, reports AFP.

New fertiliser factory

From Page 1

others. Energy Secretary Faizur Razzak and Chairman of Petrobangla, Power Development Board and Dhaka Electric Supply Authority.

A 26-member committee headed by the Energy Secretary prepared the policy as per a government decision in 1993 to ensure proper exploration, production, distribution and rational use of energy to meet the growing demand for energy in the country.

Explaining the objectives of the policy the energy minister said, 'the power utilities would be gradually transferred to corporate management for operation on commercial basis.'

The policy also fixed allocation of gas, which is the major source of Bangladesh's energy sector, for different sectors in the following proportions: 45 to 50 per cent of the total gas production will be supplied for power generation, 25-27 per cent for fertiliser production, 13-18 per cent for industry and 8 to 10 per cent for commercial and domestic use. In 1993, 49.7 per cent gas was allocated for power generation, 8.3 per cent for industry and 8.1 per cent for commercial and domestic use, the minister said.

The pricing of different kinds of fuel will be determined on commercial basis. If user has to be subsidised, the government will properly compensate the utility agencies.

The policy stressed the need for setting up a database on energy and making a resource assessment on the basis of extensive surveys.

To improve management of gas system, the policy suggests setting up a national gas grid, privatising some gas fields and prioritising the western regions of the country in case of fresh discovery of gas reserves. Presently, the eastern part of the country consumes most of the gas outputs.

According to the policy recommendations for management of petroleum fuel private investors will build up their own infrastructure having pipeline storage and dis-

tribution system and the authorities would gradually privatise petroleum import, refining and marketing.

A coal marketing company might be set up in the future. The policy also stressed energy conservation and environmental considerations.

To improve the energy supply in the western region the policy suggests several steps including providing additional advantages for oil and gas exploration and development in the area and supplying LPG thereby setting up new pipeline.

At least 20 per cent of the producing gas wells will be kept as emergency reserve.

Dinajpur rally

From Page 1

warned of a vigorous agitation if any action was taken against anybody centering the incidents that took place from August 24 to 30.

Meanwhile, the speakers at a gathering of women at the Dinajpur Institute premises demanded resignation of the Home Minister and dismissal from service of the Deputy Commissioner and the Police Superintendent of Dinajpur.

Speaking on the occasion, Sharifa Khatun, mother of Yasmin, with tears in her eyes said, 'I want trial of the killers of my child.'

Presided over by Begum Meherunnesa Chhabti, the rally was also addressed by Dr Laila Khan of Ain-O-Salish Kendra, Khushi Kabir of Nijera Kari, Advocate Habibunnesa and Advocate Khaleda Khatun.

They demanded publication of the report of the inquiry committee.

Opposition

From Page 1

yesterday at the Bangabandhu Avenue in the city and Jamaat held a rally at the north gate of the Baitul Mukarram mosque. They also brought out separate processions.

The three parties will bring out torch processions at ward levels in the city today and centrally from separate venues in the city tomorrow.

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