

Experts suggest permanent solution to Farakka issue

Water experts from home and abroad yesterday suggested an agreement on permanent sharing of the Ganges water between Bangladesh and India in the interest of security, development and ecological balance in the region, reports UNB.

At an international seminar on water sharing they underpinned their plea by citing the Indus basin treaty signed in 1960 through which India and Pakistan permanently shared the water of river Indus whose areas of command remain unaffected even during wars between the two rivals.

The speakers observed that if the four countries in Indochina — Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand — could resolve the Mekong river's water-sharing problem, there could be no difficulties in working out a formula for a permanent equitable sharing of the water of the Ganges between the two neighbours.

Participants of the seminar, split into four sessions, however, laid emphasis on the political wills of the two countries to find out a peaceful solution of the problem through negotiation and mutual understanding.

Prof M Shahjahan, Vice-Chancellor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), inaugurated the seminar on "Sharing of Water Resources in South Asia: A case of Bangladesh". Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) organised it in its auditorium.

The urgency of a solution of the long-standing Farakka issue was felt by the experts amidst reports on water crisis beginning in Bangladesh well ahead of the advent of dry season.

Drastic fall in the Ganges

water level and its tributaries is affecting agriculture, fisheries, forestry, navigation, industry and several other productive sectors in the country's north-western region.

There has been no accord on water sharing between the two countries since December 1988 when the last MOU expired.

Focusing on the adverse effects of the Farakka Barrage on socio-economic condition of Bangladesh, Prof Shahjahan said: "What is the issue here is that India unilaterally withdraws the Ganges water upstream and denies Bangladesh its legitimate share of the same."

Noted the VC: "Bangladesh, on its part, has been making relentless efforts to reach a settlement on the vexed issue, but to no avail thanks to India's apparent intransigence and lack of political will to resolve it once and for all."

Dr Robert W Bradnock, a Western expert on water resources, presented a paper titled Geopolitics of Water Sharing in South Asia: New Approaches to Old Problems.

Bradnock, a senior Lecturer of the Department of Geography, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London, in his paper portrayed a brief picture of shortage of water in different regions of Asia. He advocated augmentation of water and turning it into a resource to meet the acute situation.

He dubbed the Ganges water-sharing issue as a two-pronged problem — one is 'political' and another 'engineering'. Dr Bradnock called for developing the political relations between the two countries to pave the way for a negotiated settlement of the nagging problem.

Former Secretary for Irrigation of India Ramsamy R lyer in his paper headlined

"Indo-Bangladesh talks on The Ganga Water Issue" said the question of a joint approach to Nepal for examining the possibility of storage in that country for the augmentation of the flows of the Ganges had been under consideration "at political levels."

Ramsamy said: "There is not enough water in the Ganga to meet the needs of the two countries and therefore the lean season flows of the Ganga needed to be augmented (either through storages in Nepal or through diversion from Brahmaputra)."

Dr Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director of Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS) in Colombo, also read out a paper at the seminar on Security Implication of the Ganges Water Dispute for Bangladesh.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman said Indian proposition to divert the waters of Brahmaputra that flows through Assam into Bangladesh is viewed by the Assamese as a potential threat to their interest, both political and economic.

Participating in the seminar Professor Anun Nisat of the Department of Water Resources of BUET observed that the Ganges water issue should be solved permanently in a way the water-sharing problems of other international rivers have been solved.

Former Adviser to the President Azizul Haq, Prof Mozaffar Ahmed, Prof K B Sajjadur Rashid and Dr Imtiaz Ahmad of Dhaka University, Dr Moinuddin Farooq of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) and Dr Q K Ahmad of Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad also participated in the seminar.

Barrister A K H Morshed, Chairman of the Board of Governors of BISS, and its Director Major General Ghulam Quader spoke at the inaugural session.



City Awami League brought out a procession yesterday demanding holding of free and fair polls under a neutral caretaker government.

Israel starts evacuating army HQs from Nablus

NABLUS, West Bank, Nov 26: The Israeli army started today evacuating its military headquarters from Nablus, the largest West Bank city slated for handover to the PLO next month, witnesses said, reports Reuter.

But a dispute broke out over where the district co-ordination office should be sited, and led 10-15 Palestinian police to refuse to enter the Nablus area.

Brigadier General Ziad Al-Atrash, head of the PLO's military coordination committee, said: "According to the agreement, the DCO headquarters should be in Huwwara parallel to the main road but the buildings that have been set up by the Israelis were in a different location, parallel to the Israeli army camp and this is a violation of the agreement."

"I am not authorised to take over the DCO headquarters in this location, I suggest setting up tents at the agreed DCO location in Huwwara. The PLO leadership has been informed about the problem and it will take the right decision," he added.

The Palestinian police had set out from the self-rule enclave of Jericho earlier today.

Meanwhile, a spokesman for PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat said today that Arafat would meet Israel's new Foreign Minister Ehud Barak in Barcelona tomorrow during a conference of European Union and Mediterranean countries.

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Prabhakaran rejects offer

COLOMBO, Nov 26: Sri Lanka's top Tamil Tiger guerrilla leader today rejected an offer of peace talks with the Sri Lankan government and vowed to keep up the campaign for independence, reports AFP.

Velupillai Prabhakaran, the leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said in a pre-recorded speech over his clandestine radio that he was not willing to negotiate under military pressure.

Validity of grant

From Page 1

be sent to the Cabinet for final approval.

Regarding the commencement of the programme to contract out WASA's billing and collection to local contractors, the authorities made little progress due to strong resistance from labour unions.

Efforts to reduce WASA's accounts receivables arrears are also being affected by the labour union, the sources said.

Representatives of an IDA mission which visited Bangladesh in October apprehended that unless the labour union problems were also resolved, the government would not be able to fulfill some of the conditions.

Regarding the appointment of the Managing Director, the progress of the government was slow. In a letter to the French Trade Commission, the government said that this process was delayed because the advertisement to seek the most competent Managing Director was not only placed in the local newspapers, but it was also placed in foreign newspapers in a bid to attract Bangladeshi expatriates.

Some progress including land acquisition for the project, the country's most ambitious surface water project, has been made.

Bangladesh is financing 65.4 million dollars or 39 per cent of the total project cost.

The Fourth Dhaka Water Supply Project was conceived in the context of the shortfall of water supply against demand by nearly 50 per cent in the city, a drastic fall of the level of the sub-soil water reservoir, and a system loss of the Dhaka WASA of 49 to 53 per cent.

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Prokrichi continues strike

By Staff Correspondent

The Prokrichi-BCS Central Action Council observed the first day of its three-day work abstention programme yesterday. The three-day programme will end on November 28.

The members of the council, in a meeting at the Engineers' Institution yesterday, expressed their full support to the programme.

Presided over by Dr M A Majed, the meeting was also attended by Abu Hena, A N H Akhtar Hossain and Md Ebrahim Miah.

The council in a press release issued last night said if the government failed to take proper and effective steps by December 4 to implement the eight proposals of the council for implementation of the 17-point demand, the members of the council will start continuous work abstention from Dec 5.

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Investment seminar

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effort to pursue that reform agenda," said Fowler.

Quoting recent statistics on the requirement of the garment sector, the Commerce Minister said there is a vast scope for investment in the textiles sector to cater to the need of about 2400 ready-made garment factories.

"The leather sector, although contributes six per cent to the total export earnings, upholds high potential for future development, the minister added.

The British High Commissioner hoped that there will soon be an end to the political impasse which has already done so much damage.

"Despite a very long period of political tension, the people of Bangladesh have refused to become polarised and torn apart by partisan politics," said Fowler.

"This country needs fair elections, law and order, and vigorous reforming government ... If we get it, the sky will be the limit to the growth," Fowler added.

Listing the details of incentives offered by the government Rashed Maksud Khan, president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) said business partners from Europe can take advantage of those opportunities by helping the country to reach its goal in rapid development of the infrastructure and industrialisation.

"Privatisation in the true sense is the key to the solution of all the impediments and the wheel of the economy must not be subjected to any confrontation by other

Boats missing

From Page 1

at Mallpara of Jhilongha union in sadar thana.

Meanwhile, the district administration today announced a preliminary extent of damages incurred in Saturday's natural calamity. It said some 1.5 lakh people of 25,000 families in all the seven thanas of the district were affected directly by the cyclone and tidal surge.

Standing crops on 5,000 acres of land were totally damaged by sea water while on another 6,000 acres partially.

The number of totally and partially damaged kutcha houses is 12,000 and 9,000 respectively.

About 5,000 acres of shrimp 'gher' was totally inundated by surge water. Some 23-km embankment and 8-km kutcha roads were also damaged.

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At the seminar

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We are coming to the end of our tolerance. We are not going to tolerate this further. This is the strong message I want to send."

"What you politicians are doing?" Salman later said during coffee break drawing the attention of Zahiruddin.

Reacting to Salman's comments, Zahiruddin said: "Thirty years ago, I was the unopposed president of FBCCI. He (Rahman) should not try to teach me about how the FBCCI should function."

At this stage Zahiruddin attempted to leave the seminar venue. DCCI President Rashed Maksud Khan intervened and tried to appease them. After repeated requests from the organisers, he stepped back into the seminar hall.

When asked for comments on the situation later, Salman said: "No comments. It is nothing serious ... The time has come for reconciliation, not for confrontation."

"He (Rahman) should not have made such negative comments when the country is heading towards a positive direction, with the dissolution of Parliament paving the way for resolution of the political impasse through general elections."

Rashed Maksud Khan, President of DCCI, when asked, replied: "Everyone has his own view. One must be responsible enough as to when and where to speak about what."

"We are trying to attract investment. The people who gathered here, are not part of our politics. One should not speak about something irrelevant in a forum where we are trying to project our image," he added.

The DCCI President continued: "The FBCCI is not meant for politics but for promoting business interests of the country. It is not to directly involve politics. However, an individual has his right to do so in his personal capacity."

In reply to a question on the FBCCI-organised conference on the political situation on November 21, the DCCI President said: "This conference was not discussed with us (DCCI) and we were not involved. If it would have been discussed with us, then it could have brought better results."

"It was organised with different motives. That is why we did not attend."

Diana to be made roving ambassador?

LONDON, Nov 26: Prime Minister John Major is thinking of giving Princess Diana a role as a roving ambassador to boost British trade after her forthright television interview last week, a British newspaper reported today, says Reuter.

But another newspaper reported that foreign office ministers were worried about giving Diana such a role, fearing she would be a "loose cannon" who could compromise British policy abroad.

Major's office said today it had nothing to say about the reports, dismissing them as media speculation.

The government has declined to get drawn into the public debate sparked by Monday's startling interview.

But media speculation today, based on information from unnamed ministers, pointed to a heated debate in government on what to do about the estranged wife of heir-to-the-throne Prince Charles.

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The Midnight File

Bomb blows up bus in Pak Punjab: 3 killed

ISLAMABAD, Nov 26: A bomb blew up a mini-bus in the central Pakistani province of Punjab today, killing three people and injuring 14, the official APP news agency said. It said the bomb exploded inside the mini-bus at Neewan Kopra in Sialkot district as the vehicle was taking passengers from Gujrat to Sialkot town, further east near the Indian border, reports Reuter.

6 killed in road accidents

At least six persons were killed and six others injured in separate road accidents yesterday in Khulna and Jheridaha.

Our Khulna Correspondent reports: Four persons were killed and six others injured, two of them seriously, in a road accident at Elaipur, eight kilometres from Khulna city at 10 this morning.

The dead were identified as Nurul Islam, 35, Moksad Ali, 27, Faruque, 10, and Apu 5.

The accident occurred when a Pirojpur-bound bus fell into a roadside ditch ploughing through a grocery shop.

Four of the injured were admitted to Khulna Sadar Hospital.

Bus services on all routes from Rupsha east have been suspended in protest against the accident. Police seized the bus, but its driver escaped.

UNB adds: two people, including a minor girl, were killed in separate road accidents in Jheridaha today.

Police said an old man, Nital Bhattacharyya, died on the spot when a bus hit his bicycle near Mubarakganj Sugar Mills.

In another accident a four-year-old girl, Sima, was run over by a truck at Jamtala in Sadar thana in the morning.

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Loan repayment

From Page 1

received up to 1988, but the status of later loans is not yet clear, sources concerned said.

If the DRG facility expires, the aid recipients will be hard-hit as they will have to repay the loans from own resources.

The Yen appreciation has been so much that at the current rate of Yen, the government will have to pay 700 per cent more for a loan taken in 1975-76. Loans taken in 1980-81 will have to be repaid at 400 per cent in excess and loans taken in 1990-91 will have a 53.85 per cent cost addition due to Yen appreciation.

This huge appreciation has made the Japanese loans "less attractive" despite the DRG facility because it reflects a wrong accounting in terms of loans availability and DRG.

The sources feel that the government should also look for some financial instruments to stop over-payment.

The most effective instrument as seen by financial risk management experts is the 'currency options' which provides a hedge to the currency against any money market volatility as well as keeps the party open to "book opportunity."

When asked Mamun Rashid, a leading financial risk management analyst, said that the traditional way of covering foreign currency risk against future volatility is taking "forward cover."

However, in present day world there are various other ways like 'options and swaps' to address foreign currency risk.

"Forward foreign exchange" hedges currency risks at a fixed price while 'options' hedges risks as well as keeps client open to booking any profits available out of market movements, by paying a small premium like insurance.

Hasina

From Page 1

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"Let us take the opportunity of taking practical steps in discussing with an open mind regarding the formation of a non-partisan neutral caretaker government after you have taken the decision."

"Your one single decision will enable the countrymen to create a happy atmosphere to celebrate the silver jubilee of our independence."

"Let us come forward so that together we can celebrate the silver jubilee and show our respect to the martyrs of the liberation war."

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Salam Talukdar

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Asked about the prospect of a dialogue between the ruling party and the Opposition, the BNP leader said: "We're ready to settle all issues through discussions. But how could we do so unless they (the Opposition) agree to come to the negotiating table?"

Regarding Hasina's reply to the PM's third letter, Salam Talukdar said that he received Hasina's reply and handed it over to the PM yesterday evening. He declined to comment on Hasina's letter saying, "I'm yet to go through it."

Asked if the PM would reply to the AL leader's latest letter, the BNP Secretary General, who returned after medical treatment abroad and resumed his duties on Saturday, said: "It's a courtesy to reply to anybody's letter."

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\$88m coastal embankment project work from Jan

Work on the 87.8 million US dollar coastal embankment project is expected to begin in January in the country's disaster-prone coastal belt, reports BSS.

The main objective of the project is to check loss of lives and property during cyclones and prevent intrusion of salinity and storm surges to ensure increased agricultural yields.

International Development Association (IDA), the World Bank's concessional lending affiliate; will provide 65 per cent of the project cost, which includes a grant from the European Community. The government will finance the remaining cost of the project.

This was told at a press briefing of the World Bank at its office in the city yesterday.

Chief of the mission of World Bank in Dhaka Pierre Landell Mills, chief of agriculture and natural resources unit of the Bank Jan Wejueberg, senior programme officer Wahida Haq and consultant Rafiquzzaman spoke at the briefing.

PM rejects

From Page 1

ing for the polls."

In response, Zillur disclosed that the Prime Minister invited the AL chief to sit and discuss how to solve the crisis, but the PM remained 'rigid' on her 'uncompromising' stand on the caretaker issue.

Hasina, according to Zillur, further urged upon the PM to accept the Opposition's demand and save the country from a 'disastrous confrontation.'

"Your name will be written in the history in golden letters if you accept the demand of the people," Hasina was quoted as saying.

Hasina also reminded the PM about the violent incidents of 1990 when the people themselves stumped out the autocratic regime, Zillur said.

When Khaleda claimed that the caretaker issue was unconstitutional, Hasina reportedly responded by saying that the PM's clinging to the power itself, at this moment, was unconstitutional.

UNB adds: The Awami League leader reportedly told the Prime Minister that they could discuss with open mind on the structure of a caretaker government as had been constituted under Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed in 1990.

Hasina concluded her talks with a request to the Prime Minister to consider the matter with utmost importance and said she (Hasina) would be waiting for her (PM) reply.

Dr Kamal demands polls under model acceptable to all

Gano Forum chief Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday alleged that the BNP government was trying to hold the sixth parliamentary election by-passing the prevailing national political crisis.

He was speaking at a meeting of his party's Standing Committee in the city.

Dr Kamal said that any election without an 'acceptable-for-all model' would rather deepen the crisis and the anti-democracy forces might take the opportunity and could destroy the democratic process in the country.

He said that the government should establish an interim and neutral administration replacing the present cabinet before declaring the election schedules.

Dr Kamal also demanded of the government to declare the bank defaulters ineligible for participating in the election and stopping the communal propaganda.

Magura-type polls

From Page 1

Describing Election Commission as the nucleus for institutionalising democracy, Justice Sadeque said the process of formation of Parliament, which enacts and ensures fundamental rights of the citizens, begins from here.

He said one of the main causes of confrontation was the ignorance of the concerned persons regarding the relevant laws and jurisdictions of the organisations and institutions which are responsible for holding polls.

The political leadership should have some kind of training to know the relevant laws and procedures, the CEC said, adding that many confusions and misunderstandings could be dispelled through this process.

Justice Sadeque said the EC would welcome observers from home and abroad for monitoring the poll. The whole world had praised the elections held in 1991 he said adding that "we have to preserve that glory in future also."

The inaugural function was followed by two working sessions where five papers were presented and discussions were held.

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The inaugural function was followed by two working sessions where five papers were presented and discussions were held.

Validity of grant

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be sent to the Cabinet for final approval.

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Efforts to reduce WASA's accounts receivables arrears are also being affected by the labour union, the sources said.

Representatives of an IDA mission which visited Bangladesh in October apprehended that unless the labour union problems were also resolved, the government would not be able to fulfill some of the conditions.

Regarding the appointment of the Managing Director, the progress of the government was slow. In a letter to the French Trade Commission, the government said that this process was delayed because the advertisement to seek the most competent Managing Director was not only placed in the local newspapers, but it was also placed in foreign newspapers in a bid to attract Bangladeshi expatriates.

Some progress including land acquisition for the project, the country's most ambitious surface water project, has been made.

Bangladesh is financing 65.4 million dollars or 39 per cent of the total project cost.

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ইস্টার্ন হাউজিং লিঃ এর আবেদনস্বরূপ

অভিজাত আবাসিক এলাকা আফতাব নগর একত্রে প্রট বরাদ্দ শুরু হয়েছে। বিস্তারিত জানার জন্য নিম্ন ঠিকানায় যোগাযোগ করুন।

ইস্টার্ন হাউজিং লিমিটেড

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ফোন : হেড অফিস : ৮৬৬৭৩০, ৮৬৬৭৩১, ৮৬২২১-৩

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