

Ganges water-sharing Expert-level talks held in Delhi

From Kunal Ganguly

NEW DELHI, Sept 28: A 3-member Bangladesh delegation held talks with the Indian side here today on sharing of Ganges water.

For Bangladesh, a deltaic country where 90 per cent of the people are engaged in agriculture and fishing, getting enough water is of great importance and this is what the delegation led by Additional Foreign Secretary Ahmed Tariq Karim is trying to convince the Indians.

We are quite hopeful to come to a solution that will be acceptable to both the countries, said an official of the Indian External Affairs ministry, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The attitude of the present centre-left government headed by Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda, who is a farmer's son, appears to be positive. The new government also wants to settle most of the bilateral issues with its neighbours, specially Bangladesh, Nepal and China.

The dispute over sharing of water started in April, 1975 when India built a barrage at Farakka in West Bengal state, just 11 miles from Bangladesh's northern frontier to divert water of the Ganges to Hooghly river to keep Calcutta port operative during the dry season — January to May.

Availability of surface water in the Ganges is about 446 million acres of feet (MAF) on an annual basis and about 21 MAF during the dry season. India said during the dry season it needed to divert 40,000 cusec water into the Hooghly-Baghairathi for flushing silts to improve the navigability of Calcutta port.

Bangladesh says it needs dry season water for irrigation and to keep its rivers navigable. India had agreed to ensure a flow of 44,000 cusec of water a day during the test run of the barrage.

But the formal agreement

was signed only in 1977 when Bangladesh 38,000 cusec of water a day during the dry season. The agreement was extended until 1988.

After 1988 there is now no agreement on sharing the Ganges water that prompted Bangladesh to accuse India of unilateral withdrawal of water at Farakka point.

In principle, the two countries have agreed to find out a solution on the basis of the available water and Mr Karim's delegation may have the answer before it leaves for home next week.

Oman Air opens route to Dhaka

Oman Air, a regional airlines of the Gulf state, started its operation in Bangladesh by opening a new route to Dhaka yesterday, reports UNB.

The inaugural flight, a Airbus-320, arrived at the Zia International Airport in the evening carrying 101 passengers, a delegation of Oman Air and some journalists.

32 ruling party activists held in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, Sept 28: Police in pre-dawn raids today arrested 32 activists of the ruling party and its front organisations following series of clashes in the town, reports UNB.

The clash between the Kalu and Korban groups of local Awami League erupted on Wednesday over control of a riverside ghat of the Jamuna at Raniganj. The two groups also locked in sporadic clashes Thursday-Friday.

176 vehicles seized in city

By Staff Correspondent
Police seized 176 vehicles from different parts of the city during a special drive yesterday.

The vehicles were seized for not having valid documents, police said. During the drive from 11 am to 2:30 pm, some 49 checkpoints were set up at various points of the city.

The seized vehicles include 124 auto-rickshaws, 44 motor cycles, four private cars, one micro bus, two tempos and one mitsubishi, police said.

Separate cases have been lodged.

13 fishing boats sink in Bay: 12 missing

COX'S BAZAR, Sept 28: Twelve fishermen were missing after 13 fishing boats sank in the Bay during a storm today, reports UNB.

Fishermen of Teknaf coast said 70 fishermen swam ashore, but the fate of 12 others could not be known.

Of the sunken boats, 12 belonged to the people of St Martin's while another one to Shahpori island of Teknaf. Meanwhile, vast tracts of land in Kutubdia and Mohekhali islands, Chokoria coast and Cox's Bazar were inundated by high tide in the Bay under the impact of low on Friday.

World Children's Day today

The World Children's Day will be observed in the country as elsewhere in the world today, reports BSS.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday issued separate messages on the occasion.

Gold smuggling

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DB police was interrogating Patwari, owner of Hotel Mirgoya at Tophkhana Road in the city, till last night. He was placed on a four-day remand Friday, police sources said.

Shibir

From Page 1
The Jamaat-e-Islami-backed ICS men fought a fierce gunfight on the IU campus in Kushtia, bordering Jhenidah, on Thursday which forced the closure of the university for an indefinite period.

According to the latest report 40 BCL activists, including Harun-ar-Rashid, General Secretary BCL IU branch and 135 Shibir activists, have been injured. Some 5 BCL activists, are now in Kushtia General Hospital.

Abul Kalam Majumdar, Harun and Mamunur Rashid of Shibir have been sent to Dhaka in critical condition. Nineteen others Shibir activists who sustained bullet wounds are now in Jhenidah Hospital.

Hasina

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Unwilling to see press coverage of the function, the Prime Minister asked the party leaders and activists who attended the function not to make the event public, an MP who was present on the occasion told this correspondent on condition of anonymity.

Govt body probing Churakhali massacre

From Our Correspondent

RANGAMATI, Sept 28: A five-member body headed by Additional Commissioner of Chittagong Division Sultan Mahmud Chowdhury today started enquiry into the September 9 Churakhali massacre of woodcutters in Baghaichhari thana of the district, official sources said.

The other members of the probe body are Mustaque Ahmed, Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Home; Matiur Rahman Miridha, Director of the Special Affairs Division; Major Mahbubur Rahman, Brigade Major of 305 Infantry Brigade and Abdur Razaque, ADM of Rangamati district.

The team was carrying out the enquiry till the filing of this report at 7:45 pm by taking interviews of local people and dependents of the victims at Langadu, Thana Nirbahi Officer of Langadu Shahadat Hussain told the Daily Star over telephone.

Meanwhile, a 3-member probe body headed by retired justice Abdul Jalil will start enquiry on October 1 into the abduction of Kalpana Chakma, ADC (General) of Rangamati Shahidullah Majumdar told this correspondent.

Extortionists attack city lab owner

By Staff Correspondent

Extortionists allegedly attacked the owner of a pathological laboratory in Dhanmondi residential area in the city on Friday as he refused to give them money.

Abu Mohammad Shamim, owner of Lab Aid Ltd alleged that one Atiq, along with another person, came to his lab and demanded Tk 3 lakh. When he refused to give the money, Atiq became very angry and hit Shamim with a pistol. Shamim was injured in the attack alleged that Atiq attempted to shoot him by his pistol but failed as it did not work.

Murtaza's death

Key police officer commits suicide
Advocate Sigma Huda said, Bangladesh is a secular country and religion has nothing to do with enforcing laws in protecting women's rights.

Dr Najma Chowdhury dwelt elaborately on four topics — women in the Jatiya Sangsad, political parties and women the CEDAW and status of women at the upper tier of the administration.

Presenting a comparative statistics, Dr Najma Chowdhury observed that the rate of women's participation in parliamentary elections marked a slight rise over the last one decade in the June 12 elections women candidates deposits were forfeited in 62.5 per cent of the seats they contested for while the rate was as high as 68.5 per cent in case of male candidates.

Dhaka ready

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Bangladesh hopes that the respect for civilian lives will be upheld.
The spokesman said Bangladesh has been closely following events in Afghanistan "with which we have historical links and for whose people we wish peace and prosperity."

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Kitchen market at everyone's doorsteps

By Abu Sayed

There are many things that are not readily available in Bangladesh. But a 'kutchra bazar' or kitchen market surely is.

One finds them everywhere all the time. One does not need to toil much to reach a kutchra bazar. They are at everyone's doorsteps or just outside work-places.

The growth is unrestricted too. Thus it is adding to the city's myriad of problems, including becoming a big factor in creating traffic jams.

The markets first sit on pavements and then spread on to the main roads. Pavements and roads in front of Bangladesh Bank in the busy

patronised by a section of law enforcement people and maas-tans, who collect 'tolls' from the pavement steps.

"Behind each and every illegal kitchen market has the hands of influential musclemen who maintain channel with the authorities and police," said a vegetable vendor at Motijheel Shapla square. "I had to buy possession for this five foot by four foot space on the footpath. Then there are daily tola (rent)," he said.

Permanent vendors in the area said each of them had to pay Tk 500-1000 to these musclemen as possession fee and Tk 50 to Tk 100 as daily rent.

However, the business is not



A kitchen market on the footpath in city's Motijheel area.

commercial district of Motijheel has turned out to a permanent kitchen market. A similar one is there on Indira Road close to Farmgate crossing. And there are many more across the city. In fact, they are countless.

Economic hardships are forcing many rural poor to migrate to the cities. A section of these migrant people are responsible for this unauthorized pavement markets. They are

always peaceful. Sometimes, the authorities evict the vendors. But eventually they return to the pavements.

Even though these pavement markets create many problems, there are residents who do not mind them. Ironically, they even like them as the difficulties in shopping in the authorized markets are great. The city does not have enough authorized markets for vegetables, grocery, fish and meat.

Call to remove barriers

From Page 1
emancipation, their position in politics to involvement in decision making process.

They also discussed about representation of women in the Jatiya Sangsad and the government's stand on the Convention for Elimination of Discriminations Against Women (CEDAW), an international law on women's rights.

The panelists included Agriculture, Food, Relief and Disaster Management Minister Begum Motia Chowdhury, Water Resources Minister Abdur Razak, State Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Abdul Matin Khasru, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, BNP leader and former minister Shamsul Islam, Workers Party General Secretary Rashed Khan Menon, economists Prof Rehman Sobhan, Abul Maal Abdul Muhit and Prof Anisuzzaman, writer Selina Hussain, Raja Devashish Roy, MP, Farida Rouf Asha, MP, former MPs Jahanara Begum and Farida Rahman, Advocate Sigma Huda, Ayesha Khanam, former education secretary Kazi Fazlur Rahman, Shirin Haq, Salma Ali and Sara Zaker.

Rasheda K Chowdhury, Shahin Anam, Abed Khan, Ferdous Haq, Ali Reza, Mahmuda Islam, Maleka Begum and Roushan Jahan were also present, among others, at the round-table conference.

Prof Rehman Sobhan sought views of the attending leaders of three political parties on a proposition for increasing the number of women's seats in the Jatiya Sangsad to 100, to be elected through direct elections.

None of the leaders gave a direct answer but expressed their full support for more representation of women in the Jatiya Sangsad.

also referred to a recent bill in the Indian Lok Sabha proposing 33 per cent seats for women.

Abdul Matin Khasru said a national consensus is required for evolving a methodology to ensure more representation of women in the JS. "Why should there be only a few mercy-seats for women", wondered the state minister.

Some discussants drew the ministers' attention on the government's "reservation" on some articles of the CEDAW, of which Bangladesh is a signatory. The CEDAW adopted by the United Nations in December, 1979, was introduced in September 3, 1981 and so far 155 countries ratified it.

Begum Motia Chowdhury told the conference that the government's "reservation" on some articles of CEDAW was due to religious sentiment of people thought that those contradicted Islamic Sharia. She said CEDAW would be "considered" taking into confidence all segments of people including the religious groups.

Motia Chowdhury assured the women's rights activists that their problems, suggestions and sentiments would be communicated to the Prime Minister.

About poor representation of women in the top tier of the administration, Motia Chowdhury said, "I believe women have to build up their careers competing with the male and not become subject to mercy."

Abdur Razak said misinterpretation of religion was a major hurdle to women's development. He stressed on continuation of democratic practices and building up public opinion for empowerment of women.

Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan observed there should be more debate on the issue of women's empowerment. It is more important how we like to execute policies friendly to women, he said.

Rashed Khan Menon said religion was never a bar in achieving goals. He cited examples of the Language Movement and the Liberation War.

According to the Dhaka City Corporation, there are 34 authorised kitchen markets for the city's 90 wards. The number looks inadequate for a city of eight million. A government official in Motijheel area said: "I usually shop from this foot-path markets when we return home after office to avoid the hazards of going to bazar which would have otherwise taken time and money."

Most of the unauthorised bazars have sprung up under open sky. But some of them, like the one on the road beside the AGB colony in Kamalapur area, have taken a permanent shape with pucca sheds. Abul Kashem, who has a shop at the bazar, said that he had come to Dhaka from Khulna in search of a job some five years back. Failing, he managed possession of a space at the bazar with help of one of his friends. Now he earns Tk 150-200 everyday.

Another vendor of the bazar Meer Ahmed said that he migrated to the capital for a job and one day sat in the bazar with makeshift vegetable shop. He continues and earns Tk 100-150 daily.

A vendor at the kutchra bazar in Indira road said he was working at a garments factory as a helper. But he left the arduous job and started this business. Another vendor at the market Abdul Qader said that he migrated from a village of Mymensingh district in search of a job. He pulled rickshaw for sometimes. He later left rickshaw pulling and opted to be a vegetable vendor.

Business on the footpaths increased some 7-8 years ago when a large number of flood-hit people migrated to Dhaka.

When contacted, police officials of the concerned thanas refused to comment. But a police official on condition of anonymity said: "It's not possible for the police force alone to tackle the situation. A clear cut directive from political masters are needed to remove all the street vendors and the kitchen markets."

A city corporation official, who deals with the authorised kitchen markets, said that all sorts of business on footpaths are illegal. But he had no answer when asked whether the corporation has any plan to remove the illegal markets.

Is there any plan to build more kutchra bazars in the city? The official answered that new kutchra bazars cannot be constructed due to lack of suitable land. "We cannot find suitable space for kitchen markets," he said.

An increase in the number of authorized markets is not the only answer to the problem.

"The city must get rid of the burden of over population. But unfortunately the pressure especially from the floating people is growing," the DCC official said.

The alarming rate of rural to urban migration needs to be curbed. Or else, there may come a day when the entire city will be lost in the jungle of unauthorized markets. — NEWS NETWORK



The National Reception Committee accorded a farewell reception to President Abdur Rahman Biswas at the Osmani Memorial Hall in the city yesterday.

City BCL leader beaten up

By DMC Correspondent

A Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leader of the city north unit was severely beaten up by an unidentified gang at Mirpur-1 in the city yesterday afternoon.

Imam Hossain alias Tonal, 22, son of Araf Sharif, came under attack when he was coming to Dhaka University from Mirpur at about 4pm. He was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), hospital sources said.

Imam, who passed the HSC examination from Titumir College last year, was residing with one Iqbal at the FH Hall of Dhaka University.

One robbed of Tk 2 lakh in Sitakunda

CHITTAGONG, Sept 28: A businessman was robbed of some Tk 2 lakh at Colonel Hat of Sitakunda thana in the district today, police said, reports UNB.

The businessman, Badshah Mia, came under attack by a group of armed youths at about 2 pm while coming from Bhatuari to Chittagong in an auto-rickshaw.

A case was filed with Sitakunda police in this connection.

Police said snatching in the port city and the adjoining areas have increased alarmingly in recent days. In last one week, about Tk 8 lakh was snatched in the city, they added.

BNP

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in protest against such activities of the CEC, the BNP had already demanded his resignation, "but he didn't care."

The party reiterated the demand for resignation of the CEC in the greater interest of free and fair election in the future.

The meeting demanded that identity cards be provided to all voters of the country.

Referring to the deteriorating law and order situation and terrorism in educational institutions, it said although the government came to power with the commitment to stop terrorism, it itself aggravated the situation through its partymen.

Terrorism has assumed an alarming shape and the whole society has become a hostage to it, the meeting said adding that public life has become unbearable due to ruling party's terrorism as well as state terrorism.

The BNP alleged that police forces were being used for establishing party hegemony in educational institutions.

UAE extends

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But large numbers break the law by overstaying their welcome or absconding from their sponsors for what they say is better treatment or pay with other employers.

The practices have always been illegal, but the new law imposes stricter punishment for offenders.

For over a week, all flights to cities such as New Delhi, Bombay and Manila before the previous deadline have been booked solid. Tickets for a 2,000-person ship to India, which was due to leave on September 30, were sold out in hours.

Taliban

From Page 1
ditional white skull cap or turban and women to be covered in Islamic dress from head to toe.

The decaying corpses of Najibullah and his brother, Shahpur Ahmedzai, remained hanging by wire nooses around their necks outside the presidential palace Saturday morning, more than 24 hours after they were killed.

The bodies of Jafzar and Tokhi were not on public display. Radio Kabul gave no details of their executions, but said they had been living with Najibullah for the past four years in a United Nations compound a few blocks from the palace.

Nat'l unity needed for forward march: Biswas

President Abdur Rahman Biswas has said national unity is needed for the forward march of the country and making it self-reliant tapping all its potential resources, reports UNB.

"Today our prime need is unity irrespective of party and opinion. All parties should realise that it is not possible to eliminate another. All political parties should sit together to identify national problems and find out their solution," he said.

President Biswas was addressing a farewell reception accorded to him by the National Reception Committee at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city in the evening. Former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, who is now Leader of the Opposition, attended the function.

Biswas told all not to blame one another and think oneself more intelligent than others. "In our country, it is difficult for a party or an individual alone to resolve national problems."

The outgoing President advised all to devote themselves to nation-building activities through national unity. "Otherwise, we will be lagging far behind."

Biswas said Bangladesh is not at all a poor country because it has numerous resources besides its human resource. "We are poor due to lack of skilled management."

"Our poverty is man-made and motivated. In fact, the nation is not poor and there cannot be poverty if the country runs under national unity on every issue," he added and called upon the politicians to inform the people about the real condition of the country.

He said the socio-economic condition of neighbouring and many other Asian countries is not better than that of Bangladesh. But they now became economic power as they believe in national unity and upholding nation's interest above all else.

He called upon politicians, MPs, non-mps, businessmen and all other sections of society to rise above the fallacy that Bangladesh is poor and start a fresh march forward.

About his Presidential responsibility, Biswas said: "I have tried my best from the highest position of the state to discharge my constitutional duties for protecting the national interest. My whole tenure was devoted for the interest of the people."

"I was amongst the people during the last five years. This is a rare honour and experience for me. This is why I tried heart and soul to protect the Constitution. I tried my best to maintain my oath. The nation will say how much I did."

He sought 'dua' from the countrymen so that he could pass the rest of his life for the welfare of the nation.

Presided over by Convener of the national reception committee Barrister Mainul Hossain, the function was also addressed by former Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali MP, former Dhaka University VC Prof Emazuddin Ahmed, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Jagga President Shaiful Alam Prodhon, Morshed Khan MP, Khulna City Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman and Major (Retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed MP.

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Printed & Published by A. S. Mahmud, Managing Director, on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd, 52, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, from City Publishing House Ltd, 90, Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmandi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4, Commercial: 500091 (Direct), Fax No: 88-02-863035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA. Email: dstar@bangla.net