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Sharif's letter handed over to Hasina

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's special envoy Senator M Akram Zaki called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday and handed over a letter of the Pakistan Prime Minister to her, reports UNB.

The Pak envoy informed the Prime Minister that the foreign secretary-level meeting between Pakistan and India would resume soon.

He said that Pakistan would not go for further nuclear test to keep the region tension-free.

Hasina told the Pakistani envoy that peace is essential for progress and development. "We want an immediate resumption of bilateral dialogue between New Delhi and Islamabad for the sake of peace and stability in this region."

The prime minister pointed out that there would be a scope for initiating dialogue on bilateral issues by the participating countries during the next SAARC Summit in Colombo.

Foreign Secretary Mustafizur Rahman and Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Karam Elahi were present on the occasion.

Dhaka, Bangkok sign extradition treaty

Bangladesh and Thailand signed an extradition treaty yesterday, reports BSS.

The signing of the treaty took place at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs following official talks between the two countries.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury and visiting Thai Deputy Foreign Minister Sukhumbhand Paribatra signed the treaty on behalf of their respective governments. The two leaders, who led their respective sides in the talks, also exchanged notes on the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect of taxes on income between Bangladesh and Thailand.

Foreign Minister Samad Azad and Home Minister Rafiqul Islam witnessed the signing ceremony. Foreign Secretary Mustafizur Rahman and Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Karam Elahi were present on the occasion.

retary Mustafizur Rahman, Home Secretary Shaifur Rahman and Thai Ambassador to Bangladesh Pithaya Pookaman were present.

The signing over, Foreign Minister Azad described the signing of the treaty as a 'historic event' and thanked Thailand for honouring "our request" to reach the accord.

He said this would help carrying out the trial of the killers of Bangabandhu. "We would look forward" to further cooperation with Thailand in other fields for mutual benefit, he said.

Paribatra said this is the beginning of cooperation between Thailand and Bangladesh in combating certain criminal activities like smuggling of narcotics and child prostitution.

Later talking to newsmen, Paribatra said the Thai court

had already ordered extradition of Bangul Huda (an alleged killer of Bangabandhu), but he had appealed against the verdict. He assured to do what was legally possible to expedite the process of Huda's extradition, but he was unable to give any specific date. He also said that they have similar agreements with a number of other countries, including the USA.

Home Minister Rafiqul Islam said the extradition treaty was not a must to bring back the accused persons wanted by court. But this (treaty) would certainly help, he said adding, "We would try to have similar treaty with others."

He said drafts of the treaty have been sent to a number of countries, including the USA, Canada, Zimbabwe and Libya, the home of the fugitives and

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Leaders and workers of BNP-led Seven Party Alliance held a rally near Rampura Bazar in the city yesterday as police stopped them from marching towards TV Bhaban. —Star photo

Chetia, 2 others indicted in two cases

Star Report

ULFA leader Anup Chetia and two of his associates were indicted in two cases in the court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka yesterday.

Charges were framed against Chetia and two of his associates under Section 14 of Foreigner's Act and Section 11 (1) (b) of the Passport Act. The court also fixed July 19 for the next hearing of the cases, according to our court correspondent.

Anup Chetia, the general secretary of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), along with his two associates, filed a petition in the court yesterday seeking political asylum in Bangladesh, court sources said.

However, the court did not take the asylum petition into cognizance, advising the ULFA leader to send the petition to the proper authorities.

Chetia is facing four specific

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JS session prorogued Khaleda doesn't believe in parliamentary system: Hasina

The budget session of the Jatiya Sangsad ended last night with Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury reading out the presidential order for prorogation.

The Sangsad went into session on June 10 and the national-budget for fiscal 1998-99 was placed in the House the next day. The budget was passed on June 30.

Giving a 50-minute winding up speech, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called upon Leader of the Opposition in the

House Begum Khaleda Zia to attend Sangsad proceedings regularly from the next session.

Observing that the Leader of the Opposition has a very important role to play in making the Sangsad effective, the PM said, "She has so far neither attended any meeting of the JS Business Advisory Committee nor she attended the proceedings of the House regularly — giving a clear impression that she does not believe in parliamentary system."

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Behave as true Leader of the House, BNP urges PM

Chief Whip of the Opposition Khondoker Delwar Hossain yesterday urged the Treasury Bench, specially the Leader of the House to behave in a manner that will make Parliament effective, reports UNB.

"Greater responsibility lies on the stronger shoulder, the greater leader... Leader of the House," he said.

The Opposition Chief Whip said: "Leader of the House is the leader of whole country and if it is so, she should behave as a true leader of the country, a true leader of the House."

"Her language should not be a language of attack or quarrel," Delwar said. "It is the duty of

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Hasina to take initiative for Indo-Pak talks in Colombo

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will take the initiative for a bilateral discussion between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan on the nuclear issue during the forthcoming SAARC summit in Colombo, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

Replying to questions in the House, the foreign minister said that during her recent visits to India and Pakistan, the Prime Minister reiterated Bangladesh's anti-nuclear stance and communicated the concerns of its people to the leaders of the two countries.

In this regard, Samad Azad

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BNP's gherao programme 'Stop using BTV against opposition leaders'

Thousands of opposition political activists staged sit-in demonstrations near Rampura Bazar and Merul Badda in the city yesterday as police stopped them from marching further to gherao the Bangladesh Television (BTV) Bhaban.

Leaders and workers belonging to the BNP-led seven-party alliance organised the gherao programme yesterday afternoon to protest, what they said, partisan role being played by the state-run electronic media.

A huge contingent of policemen, with water cannon and riot cars, took position since early afternoon, putting up barbed wire barricades at Merul

Badda and Rampura Bazar, on two sides of the BTV Bhaban. The opposition marchers coming from both directions stopped there and maintained restraint after initial commotion.

Two crackers were exploded and a rubber tyre was put on fire near Merul Badda where BNP workers, led by party leader Abdus Salam Talukdar and K M Obaidur Rahman, found that the road was barricaded.

At Rampura Bazar, BNP activists held a peaceful rally and set fire to a dummy TV set as a mark of protest.

Earlier, BNP activists began their march towards BTV Bhaban.

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Ex-army major gets life-term for killing wife

A court in Dhaka yesterday convicted a retired army major and sentenced him to life imprisonment for murdering his wife about four years ago, reports UNB.

The judge of the court, Miah Md Sharif Hossain, examined 13 witnesses during the trial and after hearing both sides gave the verdict against Major (Retd) Abdul Halim.

According to the prosecution case, Major (Retd) Halim on August 21, 1994, hit his wife Rehana Begum on the back of her head with a rod following a family feud. At that time, the victim was asleep.

As a result, she became seriously injured and fell unconscious. Later, she was taken to hospital where she died.

A case was registered with Cantonment thana in this connection. The accused Major made confessional statement under section 164 CrPC.

17 BNP leaders, activists held in Khagrachhari

From Our Correspondent KHAGRACHHARI, July 9: Police arrested 17 local leaders and activists of BNP, including a Union Parishad (UP) chairman from Ramgarh, Jaliyapara and Khagrachhari town in last two days.

Protesting the arrest, BNP-dominated Sarbadalia Oikya Parishad announced a 48-hour road barricade programme in the district from July 12.

Police said, three BNP leaders, including the UP Chairman of Ramgarh, Belayet Hossain Bhuiyan, 45, were arrested today from Jaliyapara and Khagrachhari town.

Angry supporters of BNP, in retaliation forced the movement of vehicles to a halt at Ramgarh. They also exploded at least five crackers.

According to party sources, See Page 12 Col 6

Home crowd will be France's biggest weapon on Sunday

LESIGNY (France), July 9: The French may be causing Brazilians to lose sleep, but not over the prospect of meeting their hosts in the World Cup final, reports AP.

A boisterous party erupted outside the team's hotel in this quiet Paris suburb, moments after France beat Croatia 2-1 Wednesday night to reach the final for the first time.

The usually sedate residents cheered and honked car horns at the hotel gate until Brazilian coach, Mario Zagallo came down and asked police to disperse them.

But for Zagallo, the pressure of home crowd fans is France's biggest weapon. Their team doesn't impress him, and he promises to turn the tables after the game.

"A full house is their greatest strength," he said. "But after

Sunday, they're the ones that won't sleep."

Zagallo thought the "Blues" looked nervous against a Croatian team that wasn't up to its previous game, when it knocked out three-time Cup winner Germany.

"They showed that they're not prepared to reach the final," Zagallo said. "They lacked the nerve," a Brazilian team meaning soccer tradition.

"Jersey" is what Brazilians have over any rival. The only

team to play in all 16 World Cups, they have reached the final five times and won four of them.

France also will be weakened by the absence of Laurent Blanc, who was expelled for pushing Croatia's Slaven Bilic in the face. The sturdy Olympique Marseille defender was one reason France has allowed just two goals in six games.

But even with Blanc, the French defence doesn't awe Zia.

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Rajya Sabha told Bangladesh PM didn't offer mediatory role for Indo-Pak talks

NEW DELHI, July 9: Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina did not offer a mediatory role for Indo-Pak talks during her visit to New Delhi on June 16, Minister of State for External Affairs Vasundhara Raje told the Rajya Sabha today, reports BSS.

Replying to a written question, she said during the meeting between Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Atal Bihari Vajpayee the two sides agreed on the need to intensify the existing excellent relations between the two neighbours.

The two countries further agreed to increase exchanges at various levels, including parliamentary delegations, students and cultural groups and to step up commercial and economic

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20000 carrying HIV in Bangladesh

At least 20 thousand people are carrying HIV and a total of 102 people have so far died of AIDS in Bangladesh.

Around one per cent of expecting mothers in rural areas are infected with HIV, implying the possibility of giving birth to millions of AIDS-infected children in the country.

These were stated by the speakers at the inaugural ceremony of a workshop on "Creating consciousness on HIV, AIDS and STDs" for the Imams and religious leaders held at the Islamic Medical Mission (IMM) yesterday.

Organised by the IMM the three-day workshop was inaugurated by minister for foreign affairs Abdus Samad Azad as chief guest while state minister for religious affairs Nurul Islam attended the ceremony as

special guest.

Secretary General of IMM and National Professor Nurul Islam delivered the address of welcome with Dr Abdul Jabbar in the chair.

Project Director of AIDS Protection and Control Programme of the IMM, Professor Nazrul Islam also spoke at the function.

Samad Azad said people living in different slums across the country cover around 11 per cent of total HIV-infected people.

Urging the young people to live restricted sexual life, he said at least 50 per cent of the total victims of sexual diseases are young.

Minister for religious affairs Nurul Islam urged the Imams and religious leaders to educate

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'SAARC members must devise means to resolve conflicts'

The visiting special envoy of Pakistan said yesterday that the importance of SAARC has increased as a plank for bilateral and regional cooperation since the next summit of the organisation in Colombo will take place in the shadow of a 'nuclearised sub-continent'.

"Following India's nuclear detonations, Pakistan was forced to respond. However, it is imperative that the SAARC

members devise means for acting as a forum for defusing the delicate situation in the interest of all," he said.

Senator Akram Zaki, Chairman of Pakistan's Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, is now on a visit to Bangladesh as the special envoy of Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

He was addressing a dialogue on "Security Situation in South Asia: The Prospect of SAARC" organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue at the CIDRAP auditorium. Moderated by Prof Rehman Sobhan, the dialogue was participated by leading in-

tellectuals, diplomats and academics.

"Pakistan has been compelled by India to explode nuclear devices as a means of deterrence. However, it is a fact that South Asia has now become a nuclearised area. A nuclear era may now force SAARC members to ensure a new regime of understanding and cooperation."

Responding to a question, he said, "It is in fact imperative that SAARC must do something to resolve some of the difficult conflicts."

Akram Zaki, who was previously a career diplomat and

served as his country's envoy to the United States and China, said that Pakistan was committed to make SAARC an effective forum for regional cooperation.

He said SAARC must graduate from its infant stage since it was founded a dozen years ago.

"SAARC must do something to resolve some of the long-standing and difficult conflicts plaguing the region."

Zaki said SAARC had a 'reluctant start' and after it commenced its journey, it had charted only insignificant areas of cooperation.

"SAARC, he said, must now try to achieve 'higher things' in

the interest of regional stability."

Zaki said that the decision of the last Male SAARC summit to have informal consultations between member nations on bilateral issues was a welcome move.

"But this system of consultations must be institutionalised to get effective results. Members of SAARC have a great stake in the security of the region and therefore, they can, and should discuss bilateral issues to resolve the problems of the region for greater peace and stability."

Zaki felicitated Bangladesh for taking initiatives in mak-

ing SAARC functional "Now it must try to make it more effective by making it a forum for solving issues that concern us all."

Explaining the reasons Pakistan detonated the nuclear devices, he said, "It became a compulsion for us to carry out the tests to redress the psychological imbalance that was created by India through its own

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Alternative Thoughts

The first issue of Alternative Thoughts of The Daily Star is coming out on 15 July 1998 and the theme for this issue is: **Safe Drinking Water for All.**

Scholars, researchers, activists and all other interested parties at home and abroad are requested to send their articles to Ekram Kabir at The Daily Star by 12 July '98 at the following address: e-mail: dstar@bangla.net, or fax: (8802) 863035, or by post.

TUs oppose container terminal at Patenga by foreign co

CHITTAGONG, July 9: Trade union bodies of Chittagong Port are preparing to go for a greater agitation to oppose the installation of a private container terminal at Patenga by a foreign consortium, Stevedoring Services of America (SSA), port sources said.

Dock workers and employees belonging to 20 trade union bodies formed an action committee named Chittagong Dock Bandar Sramik Karmachari Parishad to resist installation of the terminal by the American company which has already obtained approval in this regard, union leaders said.

President of Chittagong Port's CBA Mahfuzur Rahman

told this correspondent "We will start an agitation to resist such a move as installation of a container terminal by the American company will be a threat to the security of our naval base and airport here."

"Besides, it is an 'East-India Company' style to destroy our internal business," Mahfuz said, adding "If the container terminal is allowed to be set up, it may turn into a base for international smuggling."

He further said "On the other hand, flight operation at the time of high tide at the port channel might not be secured if the terminal is set up at Patenga. If any accident occurs, the port channel might be to-

tally blocked making the Chittagong Port inoperative."

The CBA leader went on, "The government artificially created a crisis at Chittagong Port to bring in foreign companies though we had urged in 1995 and '96 to set up container terminals as well as procure equipment from our own funds of the port."

Chittagong Port has a huge amount of idle money which can be used for building up container terminals and procuring modern equipment, he pointed out.

Mahfuz said the action committee would hold a rally on July 13 to protest the move.

Strike cripples cargo handling at Mongla Port

From Staff Correspondent KHULNA, July 9: The week-long strike by the employees of barges and cargo launches has paralysed cargo handling at Mongla Port.

The strike was called by the Khulna unit of Bangladesh Jahaaji Sramik Shingha from July 4, demanding release of seven employees of the cargo launch 'MV Palash' from jail.

They were arrested on June 16 by Khulna thana police on charge of toll-collection.

Till this evening, the deadlock at the port continued as loading of exportable goods in four foreign vessels could not be resumed.

Imported goods unloaded from 23 vessels could not be

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The Daily Star

World Cup Quiz '98

DRAW OF ROUND-9

TODAY

5 pm Jatiya Press Club

Guests include
Harun-ur Rashid, MP
General Secretary, Bangladesh Football Federation
Shefik Rahman
Editor, Weekly Jajjaidin
Matiur Rahman
Editor, Bhorer Kagoj
Ataul Hoque Mallick
Eminent sports journalist and
Afsana Mimi
Model, TV and stage performer

You are most cordially invited

WORLD CUP '98

KICK-OFF

NEXT MATCHES

Third-place decider
July 11: **Holland vs Croatia**, Stade de France, 1900 GMT (1:00 am BST)

Final
July 12: **Brazil vs France** and BTV will cover the match including closing ceremony live from Stade de France beginning at 1730 GMT (11:30 pm BST)