

Colombo Declaration adopted

Call for global N-disarmament

COLOMBO, July 31: The seven-nation SAARC summit ended here today with a call for global nuclear disarmament, saying the recent nuclear tests by India and Pakistan should not be seen in isolation, report agencies.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation said in the 13-page "Colombo Declaration" adopted after a three-day meeting here that some countries maintained huge nuclear arsenals despite a stated commitment to disarmament.

"Stability, peace and security in South Asia could not be considered in isolation of the global security environment," the declaration said.

"Although great-power rivalry no longer posed a serious threat and danger of a global nuclear conflagration had abated, yet some states had sought to maintain huge arsenals of nuclear weapons."

The declaration said the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) had not led to any progress towards nuclear disarmament nor pre-

vented proliferation. "The declaration called upon all nuclear-weapon states, whether party or non-party to NPT, to engage constructively through a transparent and credible process of negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament."

"The SAARC urged the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on a comprehensive, universal and non-discriminatory international instrument prohibiting the use or threat of nuclear weapons as well as eliminating such weapons in existing arsenals," it said.

The SAARC groups Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The summit provided the first opportunity for a meeting of the prime ministers of India and Pakistan since their tit-for-tat nuclear tests in May, which provoked worldwide condemnation and fears of war in South Asia.

Neither India nor Pakistan, which have fought three wars, are signatories to the NPT and CTBT.

The Colombo Declaration also dealt with a variety of subjects, including political and economic cooperation between member states, and people-to-people contacts within the region of more than one billion.

The concluding ceremony of the summit chaired by current SAARC Chairperson and Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga was also attended by the SAARC leaders.

The concluding session was held at the President's Secretariat. Later the SAARC chairperson addressed a press conference.

The declaration said, the SAARC leaders reiterated their commitment to the promotion of mutual trust and understanding and recognised that the aims of promoting peace, stability and amity and accelerated socio-economic cooperation may be achieved by fostering good neighbourly relations, relieving tensions and building confidence.

The declaration agreed that a process of informal political consultation would prove useful to settle dispute and reduce tension in the region. The summit-

teers recognised that this process would contribute to the appreciation of each others problems and perceptions as well as for decisive action in agreed areas of regional cooperation.

"The 10th summit concluded successfully... today, we can say that SAARC is a mature forum and we can go forward to achieve our end," new SAARC Chairman and President of Sri Lanka Chandrika Kumaratunga told a crowded press conference at the President's Secretariat this afternoon.

In reply to a question about the India-Pakistan post-nuclear dialogue, Chandrika said the prime ministers of India and Pakistan have been able to meet on the sidelines of their summit and hoped that they would be able to carry forward the dialogue process to find out a solution of their problems.

Asked why the declaration failed to express concern about the nuclear tension in South Asia and request India and Pakistan to sign CTBT since some SAARC members have already been signatories to it, the SAARC Chairperson said the

See Page 12 Col 1



Traffic movement on Dhaka-Chittagong highway slowed down yesterday as flood water submerged the road near Jangla in Narayanganj thana. — Star photo

Commonality outweighs differences: Kumaratunga

COLOMBO, July 31: South Asian leaders congratulated themselves today for defying sceptics who predicted the end of their bloc and said they had overcome one of the most difficult periods in its history, reports Reuters.

"I would not be wrong if I said that many of us had a few apprehensions and a lot of others outside our region were making all kinds of prophecies of doom for the SAARC process," Sri Lankan President

Colombo summit a success: Hasina

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday described the 10th SAARC summit as a complete success dispelling all tension following the nuclear tests by India and Pakistan, reports UNB.

Talking to newsmen who accompanied her to cover the SAARC summit, she said many feared about the fate of the summit but finally it concluded smoothly in a fair environment.

The Prime Minister referred to her visit to New Delhi and Islamabad last month and said the visit had cooled down the post-tests tension, paving the way for smooth holding of the

Next SAARC summit in Nepal

COLOMBO, July 31: The next 11th SAARC Summit will be held in Nepal in the second half of 1999, reports UNB.

The SAARC leaders accepted with deep appreciation the offer made by Nepal to host the SAARC Summit.

A Soul-Searching Meeting of ASEAN FMs in Manila

by Barrister Harun ur Rashid
Page 4

Business

Proposed Industrial Policy targets high growth of manufacturing

SAARC nations agree to stick to SAFTA deadline of 2001
Pages 8, 9

Supplements

Today's 20-page issue of The Daily Star contains a 3-page supplement on 'Swiss Confederation Day' on Pages 17, 18 & 19 and one page supplement on World Breast-Feeding Week '98' on Page 20

India-Pakistan talks fail

COLOMBO, July 31: Hardening their positions, India and Pakistan ended three days of talks today in a stalemate on how to resolve their menacing territorial dispute over Kashmir, reports AP.

The announcement the talks had failed crushed hopes that had been raised two days earlier when Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee of India and Pakistan's Nawaz Sharif said they had agreed to resume negotia-

tions by their most senior diplomats which were suspended last year.

"The outcome so far is zero," Sharif told a Sri Lankan newspaper.

As if to demonstrate a determination to stand tough, Indian and Pakistani soldiers exchanged heavy mortar and artillery fire across the frontier on Thursday. Military officials reported at least 52 people dead and more than 100 wounded on

both sides. In one incident, Indian said Pakistani mortars fell on a military hospital, killing 10 people.

Sharif and Vajpayee may make another attempt to defuse tensions when they both attend a summit of the Nonaligned Movement in Durban, South Africa, starting September.

During the talks in Colombo on the sidelines of a regional summit, India and Pakistan slipped back to positions they held in 1994 when efforts to

discuss Kashmir got bogged down in procedural quarrels and were suspended for three years.

An obsessive focus on a single issue or a one-point agenda is as neurotic for individuals as for a nation," said India's top diplomat, Foreign Secretary K Raghunath.

A Pakistani Foreign Ministry statement accused India of maintaining a "rigid and inflexible position" for refusing to address the Kashmir issue.

"No basis exists for resumption of dialogue," Tariq Altaf, the Pakistani spokesman said.

Among the issues on India's agenda is a withdrawal of troops from the world's highest battle field on Siachen glacier, the demarcation of a maritime boundary, tackling drug trafficking and settling a river water dispute.

The Indian foreign secretary See Page 12 Col 5



Pakistani Foreign Minister Goher Ayub Khan, left, shakes hands with Indian special envoy, and top aide to Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Jaswant Singh yesterday before the start of closing ceremony of the SAARC summit in Colombo. — AP/UNB photo

No official guideline for waste disposal by hospitals

By Naimul Haq

Under the existing laws, there is no specified method for waste disposal by hospitals and clinics.

"There is no official guideline for disposal of such waste," a health directorate official said.

Absence of a guideline for safe disposal of clinic waste leads to environmental pollution, causing deadly infections. The authorities concerned to give least priority to checking and monitoring disposal of clinic wastes containing hazardous materials, it is alleged.

"We have no set rule to look into how hospital waste is disposed of. During inspection, we check if the hospitals and clinics have facilities as defined in the relevant ordinance," said Dr Aklima Khatun, Assistant Director (hospital) in health directorate.

Till now, there is no consensus among clinic owners on safe waste disposal. "Unfortunately, the leaders of Bangladesh Private Clinic Owners' Association (BPCOA) could not yet reach a consensus on safe waste disposal," said BPCOA leader Md Jahangir Alam.

The existing practice of waste disposal, according to a recent study by Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS), show that liquid as well as solid waste from hundreds of city clinics — containing toxic materials, human organs, syringes, needles, tissue, chemical waste, blood stained cotton and other deadly waste — are simply dumped in the city corporation garbage bins or in open drains.

"All these waste contain sufficient quantity of potential toxic pathogens that can cause deadly diseases," said Dr Reaz

Mobarak, who has recently conducted a study on hospital environment in the city.

He said, "Medical waste is a small portion of the total waste collected every day by Dhaka City Corporation (about 3000 tons of solid waste every day). But when mixed with other waste these contaminate the 'entire' as micro-organisms in our sub-tropical condition are able to multiply at an alarming rate."

Besides, the ministry of health and the ministry of environment, responsible for enforcing whatever laws are there, to safe disposal of hospital waste, lack power and resources to enforce those, sources said.

During a survey by BCAS, it was found that majority of the city clinics did not have proper facilities for waste disposal and

See Page 12 Col 6

Couple held for torturing teenage maid in city

By Staff Correspondent

A couple was arrested on charge of torturing a teenage maid at their flat in the city's Siddeswari area yesterday.

With serious injuries police rescued the maid Hawa Bibi, 12, daughter of Nasiruddin of Gohar under Karimganj thana in Kishoreganj, from the flat and admitted her to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The couple, identified as A I H Taher alias Parvez and his wife Farzana Laila Hashi, was arrested soon after the rescue operation at about 11:30 am, police said.

Hawa, who had been working as a maid at Parvez's flat since February last, was often tortured by Hashi for the last one month, police said.

Hawa told police that the housewife would often beat her by hot kitchen utensil and other tools used in cooking, causing burns and injuries in

See Page 12 Col 7

2 sisters-in-law of Rubel record statements

By Staff Correspondent

The judicial commission probing the death of Shamim Reza Rubel in police custody yesterday recorded the statements of two sisters-in-law of the victim.

Their statements were recorded between 5 pm to 7:30 pm.

The one-man commission, comprising Justice Habibur Rahman Khan, was formed on Monday last.

The commission recorded the statements of four persons including the father and two brothers of Rubel earlier on Wednesday.

The commission will record statements of some more persons including the eldest brother of Rubel today. Recording of statements is scheduled to begin at 11:00 am.

The office of the commission has been set up at the Circuit House in the city, sources added. Rubel, a BBA student of In-

dependent University was murdered in the custody of DB Police in city on Thursday last.

Meanwhile, CID yesterday continued interrogating the six DB men arrested for their alleged involvement in the killing.

They were interrogated at the CID control room the whole day, sources said.

The six DB men were placed on remand yesterday. Inspector Aminul Islam was placed on a four-day remand and five others — SI Hayatul Islam Thakur, ASI Abdul Karim, Havildar Nuruzzaman, constable Parvez and Faruk — on a three-day remand.

A number of journalists went to talk with the CID officials concerned at the CID Control Room yesterday afternoon. They waited at the visitors room for about two hours but none turned up there.

See Page 12 Col 5

Bangla-Bhutan transit thru' Nakugaon route soon

SHERPUR, July 31: The transit between Bhutan and Bangladesh through Nakugaon land port in Nalitabari thana here is expected to be opened soon, reports UNB.

The indication came after a recent visit by a joint official delegation of Bhutan and Bangladesh to different land ports of the two countries, official sources said.

The delegation inspected the routes from Bakshiganj-Dhanua-Kamalpur in Jamalpur district, Korotola and Gobrakura land port in Myemensingh district and Nakugaon-Dhalu land port in Sherpur district. They found the routes easiest and shortest.

They said the 400-km transit from Nakugaon frontier to Thimpu of Bhutan via Dhalu frontier of Meghalaya state of India can be opened after the

See Page 12 Col 7

SSC results tomorrow

The SSC results under five education boards will be announced tomorrow at 4 pm, reports BSS.

An official handout yesterday said the SSC results of 1998 would be announced from the respective centres simultaneously. Heads of the schools would be able to collect the results from the centre secretaries, and the students have been advised to collect results from respective schools.

No results will be available at the education boards or newspaper offices, the handout said.

AC Akram placed in cell with special security

By Staff Correspondent

Akram Hossain, Assistant Commissioner of Detective Branch of police, who is accused in the Rubel murder case has been put under special security in the Dhaka Central Jail, Home Ministry officials said.

"Akram has been put in a cell with special security," an official said. Asked about the cause of special security for Akram, he said, "Lot of convicts lodged in the jail were proved to be criminals by AC Akram."

'Begum Zia's utterances can imperil democracy'

By Staff Correspondent

State Minister for Information Abu Sayeed has bitterly criticised Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia for her "provocative and irresponsible utterances" which, he said, could imperil fundamental human rights and democracy in the country.

"In the last few days, she (Begum Zia) has at least on four occasions, stated publicly that Awami League would face the same fate as in August 1975," Abu Sayeed said while talking to newsmen at a briefing at his residence yesterday.

"What is the significance of these comments? Is she hatching up a conspiracy as part of an international blueprint for a repetition of 1975 to fulfil her wishes of going back to power?" the state minister asked.

"Such statements are not only intended to undo the democratic edifice but also to

See Page 12 Col 2

'Corruption, mismanagement in DCC keep city unclean'

Star Report

Why Dhaka city is so unclean? Is it because of lack of resources, funds, equipment or manpower?

A study on the Dhaka City Corporation's garbage cleaning system says, none of these factors are responsible for this. Rather, it is corruption, lack of accountability and supervision which keep the city unclean.

The study titled "When both market and state fail: The crisis of solid waste management in Urban Bangladesh" was made by the Centre for Policy Dialogue as part of its third Independent Review of Bangladesh's Development (IRBD), 1997.

The report prepared by M Asaduzzaman of BIDS and Sayed A Hye of Jahangirnagar University reveals that every year, crores of taka are being embezzled in the name of giving

'wages' to ghost sweepers, and through misappropriation of the cleaning materials used by them.

Even with 50 per cent of DCC's conservancy manpower remaining absent, each sweeper has to clean only about 100 metres of roads and each truck has to make a trip of two kilometers a day, the study showed. And yet, the city seems not to have any garbage cleaning system at all because of "administrative failures."

The total waste generated in the city is about 3500 tonnes per day, or 0.5 kg per person a day. The per capita waste carried to the disposal sites is about 0.2 kg per day. DCC, however, is responsible for collecting and cleaning only 80 per cent of this waste. The rest should be disposed of by the Railway and the

Public Works Department (PWD).

The total area under the DCC is about 344 square kilometres with a population of about seven million. But its service area is only 288 square km.

The DCC has to arrange sweeping of about 2395 km of roads, streets and footpaths and cleaning of about 2463 km of drains every day.

The city is divided into 10 zones for the purpose of collecting solid waste. The cleaners of DCC are supposed to sweep the roads and clean the drains daily in three shifts — morning, day and night.

According to a calculation, the support services, manpower and equipment which the DCC now possesses should be sufficient for ensuring solid waste collection and disposal if those

are used optimally, the study says.

Although the DCC has increased its workforce and equipment for solid waste management and almost doubled its budgetary allocation for the purpose in the last 4 to 5 years, there has been little improvement in the quality of services, the study said.

The study says, the argument of resource constraint may be true only partially.

"DCC has 90 wards and 288 square kms to clean in three shifts a day. This means an average ward should have nearly 58 cleaners. Even if half of them are not available on any given day, each cleaner has to cover a little over one-tenth of a kilometer of road," the study said.

If half of DCC's 269 trucks

are available for service at any given moment, there then the command area of under each truck will be little more than two square kilometres. If the cleaners clean their respective areas only once a day and each truck makes four trips a day, the city should be cleared of garbage every day, it said.

The DCC's complaint of lack of funds also appears to be untenable, the study says. In the last fiscal year (1996-97), DCC's 'conservancy budget' was raised to Tk 95 crore from Tk 18 crore in the previous year. And still, the situation has not improved at all.

The study mentioned that the cleaners hardly follow their schedule and as a result, garbage remain piled up. Such gross neglect of duty has never been dealt with effectively by

the DCC authorities, because of alleged pressure from workers unions and groups.

The system for reporting for duty is full of loopholes, resulting in non-accountability.

If some sweepers remain absent from their duties and the matter comes to the notice of the inspector concerned, other sweepers take the responsibility of doing this work. No action is thus allowed to be taken against the absentees, the study mentioned.

It is not also clear if any systematic record of conservancy work is maintained at the centre, the study said. Thus, it is difficult to get hold of a cleaner for failure in duties.

The DCC has one Conservancy Inspector in each ward who is responsible for supervising

See Page 12 Col 8