

Tk 45cr allocated for post-flood agri rehabilitation

The total allocation for the short-term post-flood agricultural rehabilitation stands at Tk 45 crore, including government's contribution of Tk 34.64 crore, reports UNB.

This was stated at a review meeting on Post Flood Rehabilitation Activities of the Agriculture Ministry, held at the Secretariat with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The devastating flood this year badly affected more than 90 lakh families who depend mainly on agriculture. The government has taken up short, medium and long term programmes to recoup the losses.

Addressing the meeting, the Prime Minister urged upon all concerned to go for massive

cultivation of crops and vegetables to recover the huge losses caused by the deluge.

Hasina suggested the officials to motivate people to eat more vegetables and fruits available in the country.

Vegetables will give the people more calories and help reduce dependence on rice, she said suggesting that people should be motivated to change their food habit.

Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury termed the government decision of reviving the Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADCO) and supplementary irrigation projects a great challenge.

"We must face this challenge

for our agricultural development," she said.

Agriculture Secretary Dr Shaukat Ali Khan said effective steps have been taken for proper rehabilitation of the small and marginal farmers.

The meeting was told that standing crops (ropa aman) of one lakh hectares of land, out of 25.25 lakh hectares, were affected by pest after the flood. Of those, crops of 85,000 hectares have been made pest-free and the process is going on.

The meeting was also informed that the Food for Work programme will be started from December and 7.31 lakh metric tons of food grains have been allocated for implementing the programme.

New Bhutanese envoy presents credentials to President

The newly appointed Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bhutan to Bangladesh, Dasho Lhatu Wangchuk, presented his credentials to President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban on Wednesday, reports APB.

Welcoming the Ambassador, the President said that the existing friendly relation between the two countries is excellent.

Justice Shahabuddin recalled the support of Bhutan to the cause of the independence of Bangladesh and said that Bhutan was the second country to accord recognition just after its liberation.

He hoped that the bilateral relations could be further developed in future for the mutual benefit of both the peoples.

"As fellow members of the SAARC, both the countries have been working closely for development of South Asia," President Shahabuddin said, adding that the two countries have many interests in common which have helped in bringing them closer.

Secretary to the President Muhammad Enamul Haq, Foreign Secretary Mustafizur Rahman and MSP Major General A M Siraj were present on the occasion.

Pak relief materials reach Ctg port

CHITTAGONG, Oct 28: The relief materials, donated by Pakistan government for the flood affected people of Bangladesh, reached Chittagong Port today, reports BSS.

Acting High Commissioner of Pakistan to Bangladesh, Erfan-ur-Rahman Raja, formally handed over some 1000 tons of rice and different life saving medicines to Joint Secretary of Disaster Management and Relief Mohammad Shamsul Islam at a simple ceremony at the port.

Handing over the relief goods, the Acting High Commissioner said the government of Bangladesh had faced the recent devastating flood with undaunted spirits and courage.

He further said Pakistan was always ready to stand by the distressed people of Bangladesh.

Receiving the goods, Joint Secretary Shamsul Islam conveyed thanks to the Pakistan government for kind gesture and expressed the hope that the existing friendly relationship between two nations would be strengthened further.

Acting Chairman of the Chittagong Port Zahiruddin Mahmud, Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Hasan and other officials were present during the ceremony.

Two JCD activists arrested, released later

Police picked up two JCD men from a residence of city's Eskaton area in the early hours yesterday, reports UNB.

They were identified as Mazharul Islam Babu, general secretary of JCD Bangabandhu Hall of Dhaka University and JCD activist Sumon.

When contacted, Ramna police said the arrested JCD men were released in the morning. They were picked up only for interrogation, they added.

However, JCD brought out a procession and held a rally on the DU campus protesting the arrest and demanded their immediate release.

The rally was addressed by JCD general secretary Habib-un-Nabi Sohel, A B M Mosarrif Hossain, Monowar Hossain Rana and Selimuzzaman.

Participation of youths to eradicate hunger, poverty stressed

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Habibul Matin Khasru Tuesday emphasised the need for active participation of youths for eradicating hunger and poverty from the country, reports BSS.

"We must devise a mechanism to eradicate hunger and poverty from society," he said while inaugurating the third national youth conference '98 in the Academy for Planning and Development.

Presided over by chairperson of 'Youth Ending Hunger Bangladesh' a sister organisation of Hunger project Nigar Najma Shapla, the function was also addressed, among others, by global chairperson of the Hunger project Shakila Suda, Country Director of the organisation Prof Dr Badiul Alam Majumdar, Kaniko Neju and Satoshi Arikawa, chairperson and managing director respectively of Hunger project of Japan and Rafiqul Islam Sarkar.

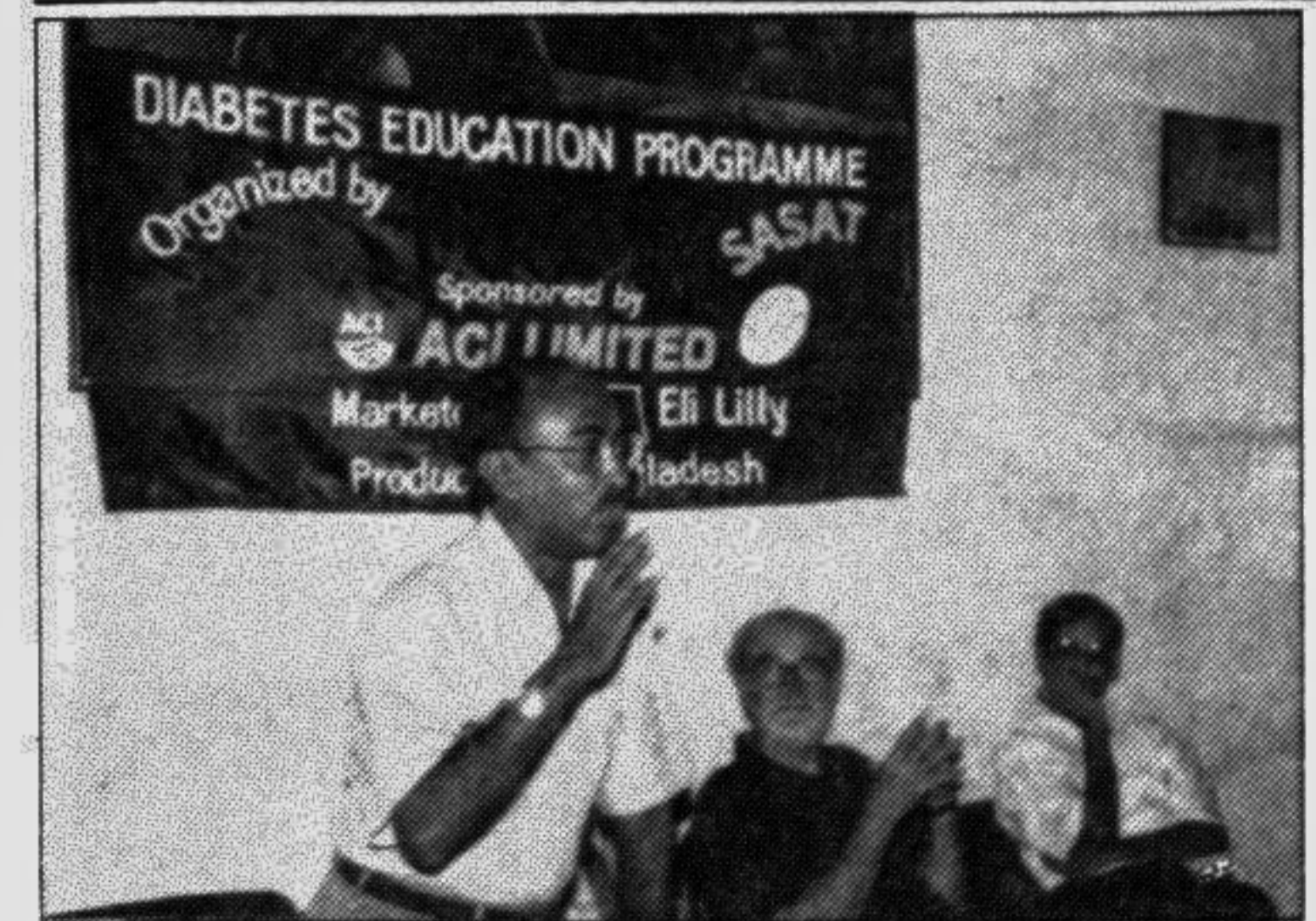
Khasru said as the world is now highly competitive "we have to join the struggle for survival right at this moment."

The law minister urged the politicians of the country to avoid the politics of "self-destruction" to remove poverty and hunger.

He said as a "nation we are not poor, we have every potentiality, but we need such a movement which can inspired us constantly to develop the nation."

The minister urged the youth community to take part in the hunger and poverty eradication movement with the same spirit of the country's independence struggle.

A total of 200 representatives of the organisation across the country are taking part in the two-day conference.



Reputed diabetologist and endocrinologist Dr Zafar A Latif addressing a discussion on diabetes at the Bangladesh-Japan Friendship Hospital at Gulshan in the city on Tuesday. Internationally reputed diabetologist and a Professor of the University of Minnesota, USA Dr Michael Steffes and Dr Faruque Pathan of the BIRDEM Hospital are also seen.



Commissioner of the Ward No 49 (Dhanmondi) Abul Khair Bablu inaugurated a cleansing drive in front of the Rayerbazar High School on Tuesday underscoring the need for social consciousness to keep the environment clean.

JS body discusses revenue collection measures

The parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of Finance, at a meeting held in the Sangsad Bhaban yesterday emphasised the need for speedy removal of legal obstacles to the reform, reports APB.

Chaired by the committee Chairman Prof Mohammad Ali Ashraf, the meeting also discussed the steps taken by the National Board of Revenue (NBR) to achieve the target of revenue collection.

Committee members Chitra Bhattacharya, Syed Masud Reza, Mohammad Karim Uddin Bharosha, Mohammad Saifur Rahman and M K Anwar attended the meeting.

Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria attended the meeting on special invitation.

Secretary of the Internal Resource Division of the Ministry of Finance and NBR Chairman Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury and concerned high officials were present, said a PID handout.

Japanese NGO donates foodstuff to PM's Relief Fund

OISCA, a Japanese NGO, has donated 3,623 kgs of foodstuff to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund for country's flood affected people, reports UNB.

OISCA representative Yoshiko Y Nakano handed over the foodstuff, including milk powder, flour, seeds and protein biscuits to Bangladesh Ambassador to Japan in Tokyo yesterday, according to a message received in the city.

During the meeting with Ambassador Rashed Ahmed, the OISCA president informed that OISCA would intensify its programme of plantation of mangoes around the Sundarbans to reduce salinity and gear up human resource development programmes, particularly training of women in various fields.

Steps taken for fair distribution of VGF cards, agri loans

The government has taken all-out steps for fair distribution of VGF cards agri-loans among the genuine flood-affected people of the country, official sources said yesterday, reports BSS.

The sources said that no scope was left for foul practices with VGF cards and this was for the first time in the country that such a large number of cards had been distributed among the affected and needy people.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had given repeated and stern warnings against any corrupt practices with the poor people's food and no report on misuse of VGF cards or their improper distribution was received from anywhere of the country, they said.

When attention was drawn to the allegation of a Workers' Party leader that massive corruption and nepotism were taking place in regard to distribution of VGF cards and disbursement of agri-loans, they rejected the allegation, saying: "It is totally untrue and false." They also denied the allegation of the Workers' Party leader that VGF cards and agri-loans were being distributed on party considerations.

VGF rice, wheat seized from shop in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent SYLHET, Oct 28: Biswanath thana police has seized 29 bags of rice and 40 bags of wheat from a shop near village Rampur under Alankari union in the midnight last night.

The police went on action after three UP members, one ex-member and a local AL leader yesterday in a written complaint to the DIG of Police, Sylhet, alleged that, the chairman of Khajanchigaon UP had misappropriated and sold out about 4000-kg of rice and 4000-kg of wheat allotted for the VGF programme.

An investigation into the matter is going on.

Errata

The news item headlined "14 firms pre-qualify for \$40m NGL project" published in The Daily Star Wednesday had a factual mistake. Fourteen foreign firms Tuesday submitted proposals for the NGL project at the RFGCL. The pre-qualifying stage begins with this process. The mistake is regretted.

Blue panel for DU Syndicate elections

By DU Correspondent

'Blue Panel', a platform of pro-Awami League teachers at the Dhaka University nominated its candidates yesterday for the Syndicate and Academic Council elections scheduled for November.

The candidates nominated for Syndicate elections are: Prof Kazi Shahidullah, dean of Arts Faculty, Prof Md Abdul Aziz, provost of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall, Prof ATM Zahurul Haq of Economics, associate professor Dr Shahid Akhter Hossain of Soil Science, assistant professor Afroz Jahar Ara of IER and lecturer Azahar Ali Chowdhury of Finance and Banking.

The candidates nominated for the Academic Council are — associate professors Dr Humayun Akhter, Dr AKM Saiful Mazid and Dr Amal Krishna Halder and assistant professors Dr Emran Kabir Chowdhury, Dr Zeenat Intiaz Ali and Shakila Fahmida Rahman.

ASK condemns bid to evict slum dwellers

By Staff Correspondent

Ain-O-Salish Kendra (ASK) has expressed grave concern and condemned the bid to evict slum dwellers from Segunbagicha area.

In a statement yesterday, it said, "An organisation is trying to throw out the inhabitants of a slum at Segunbagicha in the city and has been threatening its dwellers without any arrangement for their rehabilitation."

Quoting the Minister for Housing and Works as saying that no slum would be evicted without making alternative arrangement for them, the statement said, "according to Section 9 of the Special Redressal Act, none can be evicted from his dwelling place by force without the legal procedure."

Urging the government to stop the eviction of the slum dwellers from the khas land at Segunbagicha, ASK demanded that the land be leased to the slum dwellers instead of leasing it to any other organisation.

Sudanese team calls on Health Minister

The visiting nine-member Sudanese delegation called on Health and Family Welfare Minister Salauddin Yusuf at his office in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

The delegation, led by Professor Bashir Ibrahim Mukhter, Secretary Federal Ministry of health of Sudan, comprises representative from press, radio, Family Planning Association and Department of International Cooperation and Investment.

The purpose of the visit is to study and observe reproductive health and family planning programme, poverty alleviation programme, micro-credit system of BRAC and Grameen Bank.

This visit is a part of the technical exchange cooperation programmes sponsored by UNFPA, Sudan and organised by South-South Centre which is an institution of partners in Population and Development in Bangladesh.

The team also met with Health and Family Welfare Secretary M M Reza.

UNFPA aid for healthcare services to garment workers

UNFPA will provide 5.23 lakh US dollars to implement a project aiming to ensure reproductive health, education and welfare of the country's garment workers, report agencies.

An agreement to this effect was signed between the UNFPA and BGMEA at a city hotel yesterday.

The project will be implemented by the BGMEA under the supervision and cooperation of the government.

BGMEA President Mostafa Golam Quddus and UNFPA Country Representative Alain P Mouchiroud signed the agreement on behalf of their respective sides. Labour and Employment Minister M A Mannan was also present.

Addressing the function as chief guest, M A Mannan thanked both the parties for taking the initiative and hoped the BGMEA would be able to bring welfare to its workers, mostly women, through this pilot project.

For ensuring 'easy-to-reach healthcare services', the project is intended to provide a package of reproductive health-care education and services for some

100,000 workers in 175 garment industries.

Besides, workers will be provided with family-planning services and advice to change their behaviour towards fertility and pattern of living.

"Such actions will help create image in the international arena," said BOI Executive Chairman Farooq Sobhan at the function, citing the BGMEA's success story on elimination of child labour from their factories.

Quddus said garment manufacturers were aware of health problems of their workforce and 'earnestly tried to help the workers in the issues relating to health and social factors.'

"Despite positive changes, they are still caught in the vicious cycle of illiteracy, poor nutrition status and health mainly because of lack of awareness and access to health services," Quddus said.

Among others, BGMEA Director Iqbal Ahmed addressed the ceremony, attended by other directors of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association.



BGMEA president Mostafa Golam Quddus and UNFPA Resident Representative Alain P Mouchiroud signed an agreement yesterday to provide 5.23 lakh dollar for healthcare services to the garment workers.

Clinton's scandal on canvas

NEW DELHI, Oct 28: An Indian artist incensed by the scandal involving US President Bill Clinton and a former White House intern has put his feelings on canvas, opening an exhibit titled "Clinton and Monica" on Tuesday, reports AP.

Artist Mohsin Shaikh, who took three months to complete the paintings, said he felt compelled to paint the oils because Clinton's inappropriate actions within the White House meant that no woman was safe.

"I want to tell the truth to the world," Shaikh said as the exhibit opened in a trendy New Delhi gallery.

"Super power in super abandon," read the title of a painting, showing former intern Monica Lewinsky kneeling in front of Clinton, who is standing on the presidential seal.

Several paintings showed Clinton in intimate embrace with Lewinsky. Some paintings used the White House as a backdrop.

Khushiwanit Singh, a popular New Delhi journalist who spoke at the opening said the paintings should be viewed as simple erotica.

Shaikh did not seem interested in profiting from Clinton's embarrassment.

Lockerbie bombing Britain won't give in to Libyan demand

LONDON, Oct 28: Foreign Secretary Robin Cook insisted on Tuesday that Britain would not give in to a Libyan demand that the two suspects in the Lockerbie bombing should serve their sentences outside Scotland if they were found guilty, reports Reuters.

Britain and the United States agreed last August that the trial of the two men could be held in the Netherlands. United Nations sanctions, including a ban on air links, remain in force against Libya until it hands them over.

Pan Am flight 103 blew up in mid-air over the Scottish town of Lockerbie in December 1988, killing 270 people, most of them Americans.

Cook, answering questions in the House of Commons about progress in talks with Libya through UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, said: "We have been able to respond positively to all the issues raised by the Libyan legal team, with the exception of their demand that if convicted the two accused should not serve their sentence in a Scottish prison."

Avenue in Turkey named after Bangabandhu

An avenue named after Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was inaugurated in the Turkish capital, Ankara yesterday, reports BSS.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, who is in Ankara to represent Bangladesh at the ceremony marking the 75th anniversary of the proclamation of Republic of Turkey, attended the function naming the avenue after Bangabandhu, a message received in the city said.

Azad reached Ankara yesterday and his official programme in Turkish capital began with the inauguration of the avenue.

The ceremony was attended, among others, by the Deputy Mayor of Greater Ankara Municipality and a number of high officials of the Turkish government.

In his brief remark, Samad Azad conveyed thanks on behalf of the Bangladesh government and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to the government of Turkey and municipal authorities of Ankara for their decision to name an important boulevard after the Father of the Nation.

Azad expressed the hope that friendship and cooperation between Bangladesh and Turkey would further strengthen in the coming years to the mutual benefit of two peoples.

JS body for creating job opportunity in foreign ships

A meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Shipping Ministry yesterday stressed the need for creating job opportunity for the Bangladeshi crews in foreign shipping lines, reports UNB.

The meeting discussed the measures taken for providing training, equipping Marine Academy and training centres with modern facilities and adoption of latest curricula.

It was informed in the meeting that seven foreign trainers were appointed at the Chittagong Marine Academy. The authorities concern were asked to expedite setting up of the proposed marine training centre in Khulna.

Presided over by the committee chairman Col (ret'd) Shaukat Ali, the meeting was attended by its members A B M Abul Kasem, Mahmuda Shaukat, Md Rafiqul Islam Bakul and Jafrul Islam Chowdhury.

Cultural programme of Sammilito Sangskritik Forum

By Staff Correspondent

Sammilito Sangskritik Forum will arrange a discussion and cultural programme at the Engineers' Institute auditorium in the city at 5 pm on Friday to mark the birth centenary of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, says a press release.

Former Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University Prof Maniruzzaman Mia will inaugurate the programme. National Professor Dewan Mohammad Azfar will attend the programme as chief guest while Secretary for Information M Akmal Hossain will be the special guest. And the forum's national executive committee chairman Zahurul Islam Tipu will preside.

McEwan wins Booker Prize

LONDON, Oct 28: Ian McEwan won the prestigious Booker Prize for fiction on Tuesday for his novel, "Amsterdam," reports AP.

McEwan, 50, won the 21,000 pound (dhs 35,000) prize at the 1998 awards ceremony in London's Guildhall.

"Amsterdam" tells the story of two men embroiled in scandal when the lover of both is photographed in compromising positions with the foreign secretary.

"I feel as if I'm in a dream as I'm sure all winners before me have felt too," the author said as he received his award from former Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd.

McEwan previously was nominated for "The Comfort of Strangers," in 1981, and "Black Dogs," in 1992. Other highly praised novels were "The Child in Time," "The Innocent" and last year's "Enduring Love," a story of obsessive stalking following a ballooning accident.

A Booker Prize can more than double hardback sales and has greatly boosted library readership of winning books.

The prize, established in 1968, is bestowed each year on the best novel written in English in Britain or Commonwealth nations.

The bookmakers' favourite to win had been Beryl Bainbridge's "Master George," set in the Crimean War. Bainbridge has been nominated five times for the Booker.

Bangladeshi American running for NY State Senate

NEW YORK, Oct 28: Next week on November 3, Americans will go to polls to elect hundreds of federal, state and local representatives, reports UNB.

Among those seeking an elected office will be Morshed Alam, a first generation immigrant from Bangladesh.

Morshed is challenging Frank Padavan, a 24-year career incumbent from the Republican Party for a seat in the New York State Senate. If elected, he will be the first South Asian ever to win a state-wide office in New York.

On paper, Morshed should now be sitting pretty. In a heavily Democratic district in New York, he is the only candidate for the State Senate from the Democratic Party.

He has been endorsed by some of the political heavyweights of the state's political institutions, including Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. He has also been endorsed by Congressman Chuck Schumer (Democrat-New York) and by several major newspapers.

Yet, Morshed is running as an underdog. Though he is on the ballot as a Democrat, he has not been formally endorsed by the Queens County Democratic Organisation.

Morshed said he has an election budget of some 33,000 dollar, raised through individual contributions and fundraising activities. In addition, he has received a 25,000 dollar matching contribution from the Democratic Party.

"To run against a veteran incumbent, you need at least 200,000 dollar," Morshed told UNB.

Morshed is active among South Asian communities in New York and works as a chemist for the City's Department of Environmental Protection.

Aamer Sohail
Captain, Pakistan Cricket Team

Wasim Akram
Pakistan Cricket team

Shahid Afridi
Pakistan Cricket team

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