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Fresh move for PM's visit to Malaysia Hasina-Mahathir summit early next year likely

By Reaz Ahmad

A fresh initiative for a summit meeting between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Malaysian counterpart Mahathir Mohammed is under way with economic cooperation, topping the agenda, official sources said.

Hasina was forced to postpone an official visit to Malaysia scheduled for October 1 last as floods engulfed two-thirds of Bangladesh.

Malaysia has the largest concentration of expatriate Bangladeshis after the Middle East. Over three lakh Bangladeshis work in the Southeast Asian country that now confronts a slumping economy.

Bangladesh's High Commissioner to Malaysia Wajed Ali Khan Panni hopes Sheikh Hasina's visit may take place sometime in the first quarter of next year. "Both sides are keen (for the visit)," said Panni, now in Dhaka.

The high-profile agenda for a prospective summit would include fresh employment of

Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia, relocation of some Malaysian industries to Bangladesh and prospects for investment in Malaysia by Bangladeshi entrepreneurs, Panni said.

High Commissioner Panni said fresh recruitment from Bangladesh would be considered after a policy decision from the Malaysian authorities. "If the cost incurred by the workers can be reduced and close supervision and monitoring can be exercised by our government, Malaysia would prefer recruiting Bangladeshis than other nationals as our people are sincere to their duties and well behaved."

Over one lakh jobs are expected to be created in manufacturing and plantation sectors soon, said Panni.

Unless recruitment costs are scaled down to Tk 40,000 from an exorbitant Tk one lakh in some cases, the tendency of job-hopping would remain, which Malaysian government does not appreciate, Panni said.

Though hit by an economic recession, Malaysia plans to go ahead with its plans for high-tech industries for faster growth and relocate labour-intensive manufacturing units to neighbouring countries, according to Panni. In Malaysia, television, audio-visual equipment, refrigerator, air cooler and other electronic goods manufacturing units and textile mills are considered labour intensive.

The high commissioner said that recent opening up of a "Product Display Centre" near the chancery in Kuala Lumpur had received a tremendous response. "Malaysian entrepreneurs and chambers are showing interest in Bangladeshi products on display."

So, said Panni, there are good prospects for the new-generation Bangladeshi entrepreneurs to go for joint ventures and invest in Malaysia in jute, leather, ceramic, melamine and many other sectors.



Date yet to be set for Asma's operation

By Staff Correspondent

Condition of Asma Begum, whose only functioning kidney was "mistakenly" removed by the doctors during an operation at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) is continuing to deteriorate.

She was given two bags of blood yesterday, and received her regular five-hour haemodialysis at Bangabandhu Medical Hospital.

Too weak to walk, Asma said yesterday she cannot even go to toilet without help now. She had vomited thrice yesterday and hadn't been able to eat anything since the morning. This has become a normal phenomenon with her for the past couple of weeks but doctors are yet to look into her problem properly, she said, speaking to The Daily Star.

Professor Harun-ur-Rashid, head of nephrology at the hospital, defended the doctors. "It is very unlikely that Asma's health condition will improve," he told The Daily Star yesterday evening.

"I admit she is weak but she is still fit to undergo the transplantation."

Rashid said he would like the operation to take place between December 8 and 15. "I have talked to the urologists and asked them to set a date for the surgery."

Asma's mother will donate one of her kidneys to the ailing daughter.

Meanwhile, Asma has recovered from the chest infection, one of the factors delaying her surgery.

Hearing of Obaid Manzoor & Moazzem's bail prayers continues

There is no evidence of the involvement of KM Obaidur Rahman, MP, Shah Moazzem Hossain and Nurul Islam Monzor in the November 3, 1975 killing of four national leaders in Dhaka Central Jail, submitted their counsel in the High Court yesterday, reports UNB.

Pleading for their release on bail, Advocate Khandokar Mahbubuddin Ahmed said their names were not found in the charge sheet nor there was any evidence that they were involved in the conspiracy behind the killing.

BNP Standing Committee member KM Obaidur Rahman and district leader Nurul Islam Manzoor and Jatiya Party (Z-M) co-chairman Shah Moazzem Hossain were taken into custody in October in connection with the jail killing case.

One of the counsel comprising Justice Abdul Karim and Justice ABM Khairul Haq, the counsel raised doubts about the genuineness of the investigation into the case which has started after 21 years of the incident.

They submitted that the ingredients, as per criminal law, facts and circumstances of the case do not indicate any act of conspiracy by their clients.

One of the counsel submitted some statements of evidence in the case to show that none of the accused had involvement in the conspiracy for the killing.

Strongly opposing bail, Deputy Attorney General M Farooq submitted that *prima facie* of the case showed their involvement in the conspiracy.

12 villagers slaughtered in Algeria

ALGIERS, Dec 2: Armed attackers slaughtered 12 villagers during their sleep in a massacre early Wednesday in Algeria, an official communiqué and hospital sources said, reports AP.

Algerian security forces immediately launched a search for the attackers in the Sidi Rachid region about 100 kilometers (60 miles) west of Algiers, where the massacre took place, an official communiqué said.

No one claimed responsibility for the killings, which are usually blamed on Islamic militants.

Sec 144 to avert BNP-AL clash in Rajshahi

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAH, Dec 2: The district administration today imposed Section 144 from tomorrow morning till midnight in and around the playground of Banerwar College to avert a possible clash between the activists of BNP and Awami League.

BDR and police have also been posted in the area.

Sources said, the activists of local unit of BNP have arranged a reception meeting at Banerwar College playground tomorrow afternoon for local MP Nadim Mostafa who was recently granted interim bail in Taser Murder Case at Naopara village under Puthia thana on October 1.

Taser was killed in a clash between the activists of BNP and the Awami League.

The local Awami League leaders also announced a public meeting tomorrow afternoon at the same venue.

Land dispute

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thana unit of Jatiyatabadi Sechchasevak Dal. The house of Luthur was also set afire last night.

During the clash, Luthur's father Abdul Bari, 60, brother Zia, 25, and mother Jamirunnessa, 45, also received injuries.

The injured in the rival group include Ahmed Ali, 45, Budhu Mia, 30, Lechu Mia, 30, Liaquat Mia, 25, Mubashwir Ali, 40, and Azirunnessa, 45. They were admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital with critical wounds.

Police personnel have been deployed in the village.

Oil, gas exploration Govt urged to frame policy on the basis of nat'l consensus

The key author of the Constitution Dr Kamal Hossain has urged the government to frame short and long term policy on the basis of national consensus for exploration and use of the national resources including oil and gas, reports BSS.

"A national initiative is needed to ensure active participation of the representatives from all sections of people in this sector," he said while addressing a discussion on oil and gas resources at Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday.

Presided over by president of Gano Azadi League Abdus Samad, the discussion was attended by Dhaka University leader Dr Ayub Khan, Mohammad Shahidullah, Abdur Rashid, Bar Council member Golam Ali Tipu, Mostafa Amin, Dr Omar Haider Chowdhury and Mahfuza Chowdhury. Eleven left-leaning political parties including Left Democratic Front (LDF), Gano Forum, Ganotantri Party, Gano Azadi League and Communist Kendra organised the discussion to frame a national committee for ensuring proper use of oil and gas. After the discussion a national committee was formed with Mohammad Shahidullah as convenor and MM Akash as member secretary.

Dr Kamal said the government should maintain transparency in signing and utilisation of natural resources like oil and gas.

The constitutional expert urged the government not to lease out all gas fields to multinational companies at a time.

"We should formulate a co-ordinated policy, guidelines and planning for ensuring a happy, prosperous Bangladesh by maximum utilisation of our natural resources," he said.

Dr Kamal said it is the responsibility of a democratic government to sign treaties for the interest of the people and the nation. But it should be signed with transparency and with the opinion of the experts in the sectors.

"We should extend our hand to help this democratic government in any constructive and pro-people steps," he said.

He stressed the need for strengthening the national institutions like Petrobangla and Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration Corporation (BAPEXC) and cancellation of the terms and conditions of the anti-state treaties.

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Robbers loot valuables worth Tk 6 lakh

By Staff Correspondent

Robbers looted valuables including gold ornaments worth about Tk 6.28 lakh from a residence at BRTC staff quarter under Tejgaon thana in the city Tuesday evening.

Police quoting the FIR said a gang of 10 to 12 robbers entered the house of a DGM of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC). Abul Hossain Khan at around 7 pm saying that they had an important business with him.

They tied up the members of the family and looted gold ornaments, clothes and Tk 12,000 from the house.

Poura chairman

From Page 1
five criminal cases, there are also allegations against him that foodgrains under the VGF programme could not be distributed in Sirajganj Poursava due to his non-cooperation.

The government has allocated 6,500 special VGF cards for Sirajganj Poursava to distribute foodgrains among the flood-hit people.

The order said the cases filed against him are serious in nature and he is now incapable of discharging his duties as he is in jail.

PM: Army

From Page 1
the best cadet and awarded the coveted Sword of Honour. He also got the Osmani Gold Medal for best academic feat.

Sergeant Bandara was adjudged the best among the 34 Sri Lankan cadets and awarded the BMA cane. Battalion Quarter Master Sergeant Md Syed Iqbal received the Chief of Army Staff Gold Medal for his best performance in the military subjects.

Ruhul Amin Company won the BMA colour for the winter term. They were adjudged the champion company on the basis of different inter-company competition.

Addressing the newly commissioned officers, the Prime Minister said, perseverance, sense of discipline and leadership are the prime requirements for building a strong and efficient armed forces.

Referring to the modernisation of the armed forces, Hasina said the NDC course is going to be started from next January in National Defense College at Mirpur, where the 'Army War Course' will be started in 2001.

She said the academic activities of the Military Institute of Science and Technology and Armed Forces Medical College will also be started soon. Process is going on to procure latest frigate and other necessary equipment, she added.

Steps have also been taken to collect latest MIG-29 fighters, C-130 carrier aircraft, helicopter and equipment for the Air Force, she added.

Recalling the signing of the CHT agreement on this day (December 2) last year, the Prime Minister said, "we have restored peace in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region and are implementing the accord gradually for the development of the tribal people."

She said the government has brought the CHT region in the mainstream of national development activities and taken a number of development initiatives for its rapid improvement.

Hasina lauded the role of army during different natural calamities and also their courage and patience, which reflected a positive impact in solving the longstanding CHT problem.

Earlier, the Prime Minister's motorcade was escorted to the saluting dais by horse riders, with lancers, where she was received by Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen. Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman, local Area Commander Maj Gen Abu Kaiser Fazlul Kabir and BMA Commandant Brig SM Ikramul Haque.

Another batch of 25 Rohingyas return home

From Our Correspondent
COXS BAZAR, Dec 2: A second batch of 25 Rohingya refugees belonging to 5 families returned home today from Kutupalong camp.

Rakib Uddin Ahmed, Additional Commissioner for Refugee, Relief and Rehabilitation and representative from UNHCR saw them off on the bank of river Naf at Teknaf.

Immigration officials of Myanmar received the group at Kanig Chong camp.

With today's batch, a total of 2,29,537 refugees so far returned voluntarily to Myanmar, according to the official sources.

Fifty more refugees are likely to leave for Myanmar on Wednesday next.



Women with empty utensils pass through a central Calcutta street during a 'hunger rally' in protest of the steep price rise on vegetables and other items in India yesterday. Trinamul Congress organised the rally which was joined by hundreds of thousands of people paralysing the central part of the city.

— AP/UNB photo

Two leaders of outlawed party shot dead

JESSORE, Dec 2: Two leaders of outlawed Biplobi Communist Party were shot dead by their rivals in separate incidents in the town on Tuesday night, reports UNB.

The victims were identified as Abul Ahsan, 45, son of Hanif Mollah of Ramkhil village, and Moinur Islam of Hasimpur village in Kotwali thana.

Police said the gunmen, believed to be the members of Sramajibi Mukti Andolon, picked up Abul Hasan from his residence at gun point at about 10:30 pm and shot him dead in a nearby field. They also exploded some bombs during the incident.

Earlier in the evening, activists of outlawed Sarbarama Party shot dead Moinur Islam in his house.

US eases sanctions on India, Pakistan

WASHINGTON, Dec 2: On the eve of a White House visit by the Pakistani prime minister, President Bill Clinton took action to ease most of the sanctions that were imposed against Pakistan and India after they tested nuclear bombs last spring, reports AP.

White House officials also held out the possibility that Clinton would reschedule for next year the trip he cancelled this fall to the two nations. "It's still our hope to go to India and Pakistan at some point," said National Security Council spokesman David Leavy.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was scheduled to meet with Clinton in the Oval Office this afternoon. Sharif was also meeting with Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, Energy Secretary Richardson, and officials from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

In advance of the leaders' meeting, Clinton signed papers waiving until Oct. 21, 1999, the sanctions he was statutorily obliged to impose after India and Pakistan conducted nuclear tests last May.

The long-anticipated waiver opened the way for US loans and investments, some military-to-military training and education, and crucial US backing for the IMF's \$5.5 billion economic bailout for Pakistan.

Fund.

I think they'll look for ways that the US can help the economic situation of Pakistan. White House press secretary Joe Lockhart said. Clinton will also press Sharif to adhere to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, restrain any nuclear deployment and tighten controls on the export of nuclear missile equipment and technology, Lockhart said.

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Non-stop hartal

From Page 1
platform and launch a vigorous street agitation to topple this "autocratic, subversive, killer and repressive" government.

"There might be differences of opinion, but we all have to work together to save the country and its people."

Reiterating his demand for a mid-term election, Khaleda said it has become a necessity in the greater interest of the country, the people and democracy. The government is destroying the parliament, democracy and democratic institutions in a planned way to "reintroduce one-party system."

Alleging that the government was abusing Special Powers Act, she said false cases have been filed against more than 17,000 leaders and activists of BNP and several thousand others were jailed.

Referring to PCJSS leader Shantu Larma's claim of an "unwritten agreement", Khaleda urged the government to immediately inform the people what it was. She suspected that the unwritten agreement might provide for a permanent handover of the 5000 square mile CHT region to 'others'.

Khaleda alleged that the government has started a foul game over the leasing of oil and gas exploration blocs and was trying to lease out those to multinational companies sacrificing national interests.

Top leaders of BNP and its different front organisations also addressed the meeting. BNP's policy makers, advisors and senior leaders participated in the fasting. The programme, aimed at pressing home various demands including mid-term election, began at 9:13 am with recitation from the Quran and ended at 5:15 pm. BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan gave an introductory speech urging the government to test its popularity by going for mid-term polls.

Top leaders of alliance components Jatiya Party (Z-M), Jagpa, Democratic League, Progressive Nationalist Party and Nationalist Democratic Alliance also took part in the

hunger strike. Jamaat secretary general along with a group of senior leaders reached the venue at 12:40 pm and expressed solidarity with the hunger strikers and their demands.

Different professional bodies, socio-cultural organisations, teachers' associations and a number of intellectuals visited the venue and expressed solidarity.

Attack on PCJSS members in Khagrachhari

Activists of Pahari Chhatra Parishad reportedly attacked some PCJSS members at Madhumangal Karbaripara in Panchhari thana of Khagrachhari district on Tuesday night, reports UNB.

PCJSS leaders here said the anti peace accord elements opened fire at the pro-accord members at Pujung and Logung while they were returning home after carrying out campaign to observe the first anniversary of the CHT peace accord.

A tense situation is prevailing in the area following the attack.

Sikalbaha

From Page 1
tion a second chance: an extra six months' time to complete the work by paying a daily demurrage of 10,000 dollars.

"May be PDB will encash the 1.5 million US dollars if Smith Cogeneration fails to meet this deadline. But it wouldn't help anyone. We need additional power before the next lean season and this scheme is simply letting us down," said an official.

The PDB signed four contracts for setting up of barge-mounted plants and three of those suffered delay. Only the Khulna Power Company Limited (KPCL) led by multinational power company Wartsila, successfully commissioned its plant on October 2 last.

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