



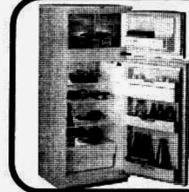
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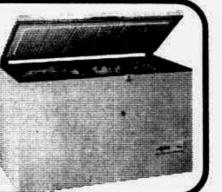


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Leaders from the D-8 Summit paying respects at the National Memorial at Savar yesterday. — Star photo by Sk Enamul Haq

New D-8 agenda

From Page 1

project on rural industrialisation in cooperation with Egypt. Suleyman Demirel stressed the need for increasing the volume of trade among D-8 countries by boosting private sector participation. The issue of free movement of businessmen within the member countries should be settled without delay. "Without more interaction, we cannot expect more cooperation," he observed.

Mahathir Mohammad said, "It is fitting that we should meet in Bangladesh, for this nation of poets and artists, and of great intellectuals, reflects the true potential of the Muslim world."

Since its independence, Bangladesh has never ceased to rebuild itself and that struggle has been greatly rewarded. Our Group, the D-8, is attempting to cope with a world which has become as threatening as when the Muslim empires were under siege.

"We have no time for personal and petty quarrels. We must look at the world from the point of view of the Ummah as a whole," Mahathir said. The Malaysian prime minister went on: There is only one reason for us to be together. We can talk to each other. All is not lost yet. We have assets and intrinsic strength. We need to recognise them and work together.

Nawaz Sharif suggested that high priority should be given to the development of infrastructure, industry and agriculture. The Pakistani prime minister described private sector as the flagship of economic growth and felt that it must be involved in the development efforts of the member countries.

The D-8, he said, should establish cooperation with other organisations, especially the OIC and the ECO to benefit from their experience in the economic, social and technological sectors.

The Egyptian foreign minister was critical of the developed countries and said that although the developing nations fulfilled their Uruguay Round commitments, the countries of the developed world have failed to live up to their pledges in several areas.

Hasina: Forge unity

From Page 1

who took over as next chairperson of the grouping of eight OIC-member states from Turkish President Suleyman Demirel, suggested integration of the private sector with D-8 process as soon as possible.

A Business Forum, involving entrepreneurs of the member states, should be convened soon, she said, adding that simultaneous meeting of proposed Business Forum with the D-8 Summit could promote partnership for development and progress between the private sectors and the governments.

Pointing to the recent financial flu sweeping across the globe, particularly some Asian countries, Hasina called for evolving mechanisms and structure to provide safeguards against relapse of such crises in future.

She appreciated the progress made in several areas of the cherished economic cooperation among the world's major Muslim countries during one year and a half of existence of the new bloc.

"We have already identified the priority areas of cooperation. Projects have been initiated in some selected areas," she said, adding Bangladesh as coordinator for rural development is to take up a project on rural industrialisation in cooperation with Egypt.

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Statement in JS likely tomorrow Hasina may invite opposition for talks

By Nazmul Ashraf and Reaz Ahmad

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is likely to make a statement in parliament tomorrow inviting the opposition leaders for negotiations when the House resumes its session, a source close to her said. An influential ruling party leader, Telecommunication Minister Mohammad Nasim, told The Daily Star yesterday that he would contact BNP leaders on the planned dialogue.

Khaleda calls on Sharif

By Staff Correspondent

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia yesterday called on Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at Hotel Sheraton and discussed various bilateral and regional issues.

The meeting that lasted about 45 minutes from 6 pm, Khaleda and Sharif also discussed prevailing social, political and economic situation in Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Briefing newsmen, BNP leader M M Rezaul Karim said the Pakistani Prime Minister apprised Khaleda Zia of latest developments on Indo-Pak relations.

Sena workers attack thana in Ctg: 15 held

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 1: At least 15 activists of Islami Chhatra Sena (ICS) were arrested during a clash with police in the compound of Kotwali thana here today.

At least 10 people including two policemen received minor injuries. The trouble began at 12 noon when the ICS activists attacked Kotwali thana after an altercation with some policemen in the thana, police said.

The ICS activists pelted stones at thana office damaging window panes and some vehicles in front of it, witnesses said.

Police resorted to lath-charge to disperse them. The activists of Chhatra Sena earlier went to Kotwali thana in a procession to file a case on dispute over their party office at Khatunganj.

Tributes paid to Liberation War martyrs

The leaders of the D-8 countries yesterday paid tributes to the martyrs of the country's Liberation War of 1971 by placing wreaths at the national memorial for martyrs, Sports BSS.

Turkish President Suleyman Demirel, Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Bin Mohammad, Iranian first-vice-president Dr Hassan Habibi, Pakistani Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amre Moussa, Indonesian people's welfare and poverty eradication minister Harryono Suyono and Nigerian Minister AA Isa stood in solemn silence when army bugles played the last post and the national flag of Bangladesh was lowered to the half-mast.

The delegates signed the visitors book and planted saplings of seven kamini (Murraya exotica) trees in the adjoining garden.

Sharif

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Sharif said market instability and volatile financial flows had shown the fragility of the global economy and dangers of unchecked and unmanaged globalisation.

The worst hit, he said, have been the developing countries. They face problems arising not only out of global economic slowdown but also a deepening socio-economic crisis due to evident inequities of the international economic system.

The Pakistan Prime Minister said there is a need to monitor, regulate and manage globalisation to attain the objective of growth coupled with equality.

He said all obstacles along the road to progress must be dismantled. International financial institutions must not tag unnecessary conditionalities to credits.

"Barriers that have been raised to exports from developing societies on flimsy social pretexts have to be pulled down. Neo-protectionism must be eliminated. Technology has to be shared."

Sharif, who touched on India-Pakistan conflicts over Kashmir on this occasion, said if peace is to be permanently established, the cause of conflicts and tensions must be eliminated. "The eye of South Asian storm has been the unresolved Kashmir dispute. It has to be squarely addressed."

Referring to his dialogue with Indian Premier Atal Behari Vajpayee in Lahore a few days ago, the Pakistan prime minister said he had useful discussions with his Indian counterpart.

City BCL leader beaten to death

By Staff Correspondent

A city BCL leader was beaten to death by a gang of miscreants at Sutrapur area on Sunday night.

The victim was identified as Mohammad Ayub Ali, 30, son of Monir Uddin of S K Das Road under Sutrapur thana. Police said Ayub was the office secretary of Sutrapur thana Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL).

According to FIR lodged with Sutrapur thana by one Shahin, a gang of eight men attacked him in front of the BCL office at about 9:30 pm on Sunday.

Police said the group was carrying tyres and tubes by a van when they appeared in front of BCL office at S K Das Road. Ayub intercepted them and claimed toll. After a heated altercation, the group attacked Ayub with stick and brick. He received serious head injuries.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he died at about 12:30 am yesterday. The body of the victim was sent to the hospital for autopsy.

A case was lodged with Sutrapur thana accusing Jamil Raju, Mukti, Naiju, Mithu, Manir.

The Awami League plans to make a fresh offer for a dialogue are targeted towards ensuring the agitating opposition parties' participation in the upazila and city corporation polls. The elections to upazilas are to be held by June this year and those to the four corporations, due by April 3, are likely to be deferred by six months.

But chances for a negotiated settlement of the current political standoff seems a far cry as both the government and the Opposition are rigid on their respective stances on the just-held municipal elections.

The opposition parties have made it clear that they would not negotiate unless the results of the municipal polls are scrapped. The AL has also said it is not ready for a conditional dialogue.

BNP chief and Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia told the media Sunday that she would not go for any dialogue with the government unless the municipal polls were declared void.

"There cannot be any conditional talks. The question does not arise at all of scrapping the municipal polls," Commerce

Malaysia keen

From Page 1

Hasina was scheduled to visit Malaysia but had to put it off due to devastating floods last year.

The Bangladesh Prime Minister said there is great scope for promoting bilateral relations through investment.

She hoped that the excellent relations between Kuala Lumpur and Dhaka would develop further in the days to come.

Sheikh Hasina yesterday called on Turkish President Suleyman Demirel.

During the meeting the Turkish President praised Bangladesh Premier for excellent arrangement of the summit after the devastating flood.

He hoped that the existing bilateral relations between the two countries would further expand in future.

Demirel donated US dollar 50,000 to the Prime Minister's Relief and Welfare Fund for infrastructure development of Bangladesh.

The heads of D-8 summit delegations from Indonesia, Egypt and Nigeria also called on Hasina at her suite yesterday.

All is not lost yet

From Page 1

None of these nations can claim to be a force of consequence in the international arena today, he said.

"Many of us have been unable to make our nations stable, capable of making progress to match that of the advanced countries of the world. Countries none of which are Muslim."

"Concepts such as globalisation have broken down the barrier which we had depended upon to protect our countries, culture and religion. Exposed to these assaults we find ourselves quite helpless and unable to adjust or to take advantage of the new ways and ideas," he said.

Describing the effect of free flow of capital across borders, he said the wealth some of "us have accumulated through the extraction of our natural resources have not been invested in our own countries."

"Instead we have taken advantage of the free flow of capital to invest in the developed countries. Effectively we have enriched them. But we do not know how to use this investment in order to influence them."

The Malaysian premier said

the developed countries "instead used our money to invest in our countries and then to suddenly pull out their investments in order to destabilise and impoverish us."

Elaborating the situation further, he said: "Then they take advantage of our poverty in order to gain control over us. Clearly we are not adept in the use of our wealth and the free flows of capital. A lot of our own money is held hostage abroad and actually used against us."

The Malaysian premier said even if in exploiting the poor to enrich themselves they cause more poverty and misery, as long as it is globalisation it is considered fair and proper by them.

"We may not reject globalisation or even modify it even though we are being destroyed by it," he lamented.

He warned that newer interpretations of globalisation are likely to "open up newer ways" for the exploitation of the poor by the rich.

Mahathir said currency trading has destroyed the economies of whole regions, impoverished millions and destabilised governments.

Biman's bid to lease two boeings for Hajj pilgrims

By Special Correspondent

Bangladesh Biman is negotiating with China Southern Airlines to lease two Boeing 777-200 aircraft from the Chinese company to carry Hajj pilgrims after a botched deal with a US charter company landed the national airlines in trouble regarding Hajj flights.

Representatives of the Chinese company arrived in Dhaka on Saturday. They held extensive negotiations with Biman officials yesterday and the day before.

"We are expecting a breakthrough in talks to finalise a deal," a Biman official told The Daily Star last night.

Earlier, Biman's Managing Director Air Commodore Rafiqul Islam told newsmen that the airlines would ferry all ballotee Hajj pilgrims despite the setbacks it suffered due to failure of Air Chartered World (ACW) to provide it two B-777 aircraft on schedule.

Declining to name ACW's

local agent, said to be the son of a high-up, the Biman MD said that there had been a breach of contract by the company. "We would draw a conclusion from our experience of chartering aircraft for Hajj flights whether we would go for direct negotiations with airlines instead of getting it through leasing companies through their local agents," he said.

ACW's failure at the last moment left Biman with no scope to float fresh tender but to go for negotiations with the Chinese company, he pointed out.

Since February 23, Biman carried 2,354 pilgrims to Jeddah by its own aircraft, diverting the planes from other routes and suspending its Dhaka-New York service, the MD said.

Biman will operate 26 flights carrying some 7,200 ballotee pilgrims.

and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed told The Daily Star when asked on Khaleda Zia's pre-condition.

Tofail called February 23-25 vote "the best ever local election participated by the highest number of candidates and voters."

"If the Opposition opts for further hartals instead of a negotiation, people will definitely resist those programmes," the minister said.

The position of the Election Commission is clear. Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena said earlier the municipal elections had been held "under certain laws" and that the EC had "no jurisdiction to scrap the legitimate results of the polls."

Despite a so-called boycott, Tofail said, the opposition leaders and workers contested the recent municipal polls and they would do so in the upcoming local polls too.

Minister Nasim said he would contact the BNP to make a formal offer for dialogue soon after the D-8 summit was over. "We're ready to resolve everything across the table provided they are also sincere."

Nasim said the ruling party was "sincere" about a dialogue with the opposition parties to ensure their participation in the coming upazila and the city corporation elections.

He echoed Tofail, saying that the municipal polls would not be canceled. "It's a childish demand from the Opposition. Those demanding scrapping of the polls with 60 per cent voter turnout do not believe in democracy."

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told The Daily Star his party would not volunteer for a dialogue. "But we'll respond to an offer for negotiations, if it comes from the government," he said but reiterated that the municipal polls must be annulled before such talks.

"We'll be left with no option but to boycott the upazila polls too, if our demand is not met," Bhuiyan warned.

Asked to comment on the CEC's point that law does not permit scrapping of the municipal polls, an angry BNP secretary general said, "Who is going to listen to him (CEC), whose resignation is now our main demand."

Malaysia regrets

The Malaysian High Commission in Dhaka regretted mistaking the "People's Republic of Bangladesh" for "Islamic Republic of Bangladesh" by Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad in his address to the inaugural session of D-8 Summit, reports UNB.

The high commission said there had been a typographical error in referring to the name of Bangladesh in the heading of the statement by Prime Minister of Malaysia at the second summit of the forum that began in the city yesterday.

"The error is very much regretted," it said in press clarification on the fax pass.

Interview

From Page 1

lever to influence their politics and internal policies.

Speaking about Malaysian economy, Mahathir said, "We have been able to make a turnaround from the slide. Our economy is now growing. This year, we hope to achieve at least one per cent growth."

Responding to questions on his former deputy Anwar Ibrahim, the Malaysian prime minister said: "Anwar in order to pursue his own interest attempted to destabilise the country. He tried to agitate the people to overthrow the government through undemocratic means. He should really try to go through the election process."

Mahathir said Anwar thought he could emulate the events in Indonesia which overthrew the government through street demonstrations.

The prime minister said Anwar's activities "affected the ability of the country to recover economically."

Asked about the performance of Bangladeshis working in Malaysia, Mahathir said, "They are doing very well. We are particularly benefited by their experience in several fields, particularly in the construction sector. We have the usual problem affecting the cultural sensitivity of the local population. But on the whole we do not have anything which we cannot resolve."

"But we are unable to take anymore from Bangladesh because of the downturn in our economy. Now we are also concentrating on building less labour-intensive industries to boost the income of our people."

"If there is no work, we will have to repatriate them." Asked what was his greatest success, Mahathir said, "It was to be able to maintain stability and racial harmony, which we value the most."



Stop the bombs !!! Participants at a rally, arranged by Bangladesh Campaign for Development and Cooperation, to demand the banning of land mines. (Story on page 11.) — Star photo by Amran Hossain

Rubel murder

Hearing on March 23

By Staff Correspondent

Metropolitan Sessions Judge Court yesterday has fixed March 23 as the hearing date for framing of charges against the accused in the Rubel Murder case.

Shamim Reza Rubel, 24, a BBA student at the Independent University of Bangladesh, was picked up by a team of Detective Branch of Police from near his residence on July 23 last year and was subsequently tortured to death in custody on the same day, according to a CID investigation.

Of the 14 accused, five policemen have been absconding since the incident. The other nine have been detained at the Dhaka Central Jail.

All nine, including AC Akram Hossain and Mukul Begum, were produced before the court at about 11am yesterday. AC Akram was not hand cuffed during his presence in the court of third additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge Molla Mustafa Kamal, court sources said.

Shell-Cairn

From Page 1

nies started showing lesser interest in the second round bid negotiations. Petrobranga had invited the companies twice in the recent months but none of these turned up.

However, Shell-Cairn officials took a move on Thursday and Petrobranga finally awarded block 10 to the joint venture.

Chief Executive of Cairn Bill Gammel said in a press release, "We are delighted with this award as block 10 has always been an integral part of our long-term strategy for our investment in Bangladesh. We look forward to continuing to work with Petrobranga and the government of Bangladesh in developing energy solutions for the southern and western regions of the country."

Tony Wildig, Vice President for New Business for Shell in the Middle East and South Asia, said, "This award, together with our existing contract areas in Bangladesh, should enable Shell to play a full, balanced role in the development of the gas and energy industries of Bangladesh. We will work closely with our partners and with the government of Bangladesh to provide early solutions to achieve a reliable and sufficient energy supply for the country."

President

From Page 1

"What is needed, of course, is the political will and necessary commitment to translate ideas into action. This is what cooperation is all about. This is what the D-8 is striving so earnestly to achieve," he said.

Welcoming the D-8 leaders, the Bangladesh President mentioned that they are here for a "very important task: How to strengthen cooperation among our countries in such a way that real benefits accrue to our people."

He said: "I wish for your meeting a successful outcome." Speaking as the outgoing chairman of D-8 as well as on behalf of the visiting distinguished leaders Turkish President Suleyman Demirel said, the D-8 offers us a forum where we can assess the developments in the world and in our regions at the highest level while at the same time work on concrete projects of benefit to our peoples."

On behalf of the leaders attending the summit he thanked President Shahabuddin for hosting the banquet.

Share scam

From Page 1

First Additional Sessions Judge of Dhaka district, continuing for four days. Hearing against Shinepur Holdings and Doha Securities was completed while that against Beximco Pharmaceuticals remained incomplete.

The accused in these cases are AKM Shamsuddoha of Doha Securities, ASF Rahman, Salman F Rahman and DH Khan of Beximco Pharmaceuticals and ASF Rahman, Salman F Rahman and AB Siddiqur Rahman of Shinepur.

Hearing on charge-framing against Chittagong Cement Clinker, SES Company, HMMS Financial Consulting & Securities Limited and First Capital Securities Ltd will begin on March 15. Charge-framing against Intiyah Hossain & Company and Securities Consultants Limited will begin on March 16 while the case against Rupun Oil and Feed Ltd on March 18.

Aref murder

From Page 1

sources said that Siddique admitted to leaving Kustia for Dhaka the day after the killings, as soon as law-enforcement agencies were alerted of the crime.

Siddique, a central leader of Purbha Bangla Sarbahara Party, was sentenced to 86 years of imprisonment in five cases. Four of these five were murder cases. One of the cases, Siddique was convicted in was the killing of a sentry of Rajbari GRP thana in 1993, police sources said.

Police is likely to produce Siddique before the CMM's court today.

When contacted last night the SP of Kustia told this correspondent over telephone that he was not informed about the arrest of Siddique. He said that seven people were arrested earlier as suspects in the murder case.

Demirel

From Page 1

ing the trade volume among the member countries, he suggested quick settling of the issue of free movement of member states' businessmen within the D-8 countries for more interaction and cooperation.

President Demirel referred to the recent global economic crisis and said the present challenges might force some countries to adopt protective measures and such measures might further aggravate the situation instead of bringing remedy.

"A higher degree of international cooperation coupled with a higher degree of transparency and prudence in the markets could have well prevented the outbreak and expansion of recent financial crisis."

Although the degree of damage varies from one country to another following the effect of the global financial and economic crisis, he hoped consultations and cooperation within the framework of D-8 would facilitate individual contributions towards shaping institutional and financial reforms in the global economy.

Development should be people-centred, he said adding that protecting the right to development requires a strong commitment to democracy and for democracy, development and peace are inseparable.

The Turkish president hoped the D-8 would take an important place among other international cooperation schemes by forming another channel of dialogue between developed and developing countries.

He further called for focusing energies together for building the common future by making best use of vast geography and potentials of the member countries, to diversify and facilitate trade and to upgrade social and economic conditions of the people. "The aim of D-8."