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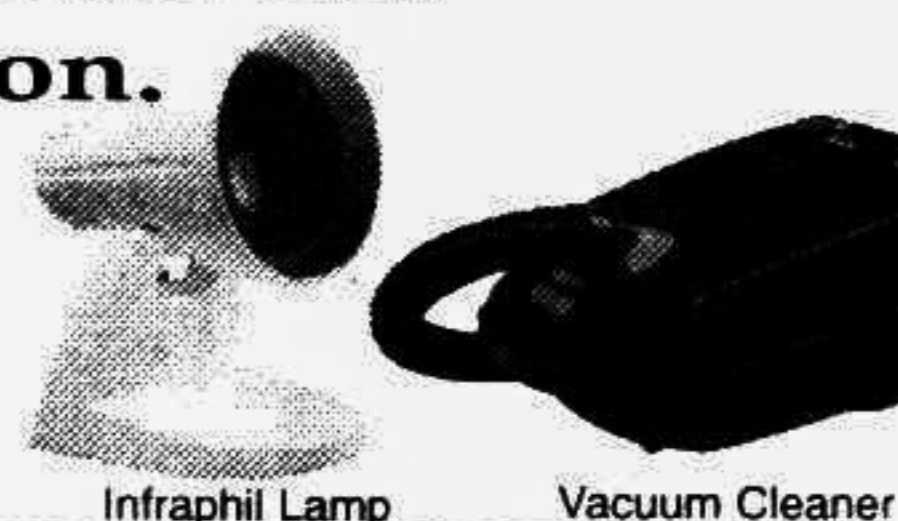
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Mahathir

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storm, devaluation, and the role of IMF and World Bank, which he said, are necessary although he does not like them. The ringgit (Malaysian currency) is weaker but has recovered and is doing well, he said adding that the currency dealers who raked the 'tiger' economies forcing devaluation would return once those (the economies) recover.

But China did well, keeping its currency under control. "Currency racketeers created the recent Asian turmoil", he observed.

He also replied to questions on how he sees the D-8, democracy and rule of law, differences between Western and Eastern concepts about these, the 'clash of civilisations' and his country's relations with the United States.

He said relations with the US is "good" despite "instigation" by US Vice-President Al Gore to bring about a fall of his government through street demonstrations.

With the Malaysian ambassador and other officials helping him on the dais, Dr Mahathir said that the outcome of the second D-8 Summit was "satisfactory". Summit leaders discussed ways to promote trade and economic relations between the member states, insurance and re-insurance.

Dr Mahathir described his talks with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as good saying that they talked on expanding economic co-operation, business ties and Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia.

"The Malaysian business has about a billion dollar investment in Bangladesh. There are nearly 300,000 Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia. They are very good. But we can not take more because of our economic situation", he told a questioner.

"Despite Western efforts (to destabilise) Malaysia remained stable. The government and the government officials are stable. Anybody trying to do something wrong faces the consequence", he added in a reference to Anwar Ibrahim.

Dr Mahathir accused his sacked deputy also of instigating street riots after seeing street demonstrations bringing about fall of governments elsewhere.

"The West have their own ideas. It's clash of civilisations. As usual, they are looking for enemies. They have taken steps to undermine our economy and finance. We have no choice but to try as much as possible to keep them off. They believe in a world where might is right. History shows peace is an anthem to them", Dr Mahathir said.

On Western concept of democracy, he said it is based on individual rights. "But we believe in community above individual. Democracy is for majority and community forms majority", Dr Mahathir said.

On Anwar's trial he said, "None is above law, including himself". Law will take its own course, he said while answering a question on a former police officer admitting beating Anwar in custody.

Asked when he would retire, the 72-year-old leader ruling Malaysia for 18 years said with a smile, "A respectable person can not run away. I will retire when time comes."

D-8: Museum

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On August 15, 1975, Pakistani Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, after going round the museum with keen interest, also signed the visitor's book. He wrote: "The Bangabandhu and his family along with so many other tragically lost their lives. May Allah rest their souls in eternal peace. I pray for the prosperity and well-being of the people of Bangladesh."

Leaders of other delegations, attending the D-8 Summit, also visited the museum one after another in the morning. Going through the museum, they also talked to the curator.

Turkish President Suleyman Demirel was the first among the D-8 leaders who visited the museum yesterday. Demirel and his entourage while going round wanted to know about the life of the great leader, how he was killed, who killed him and so on.

President Demirel signed the visitor's book and wrote something in Turkish language. Dr Hassan Habibi, First Vice-President of Iran, expressed his sentiment in Persian while signing the visitor's book.

On arrival at the museum, the heads of D-8 delegations were received by state minister for youth and sports Obaidul Quader, state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, president of the Museum Prof Salahuddin Ahmed, museum curator Syed Siddiq Rahman, trustee member Baby Moudud and Nurul Fazal Bulbul.

The dignitaries also placed wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu outside the Museum.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Leaders of the Developing Eight (D-8) pose for photograph on board VS Masud during a river cruise in the river Buriganga yesterday. — Star photo

A productive alliance

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Highlighting some of the areas which have made definitive progress, she said Egypt is taking the lead in matters of trade and expected to host the first meeting of experts in April this year.

Turkey has taken the initiative to build an agricultural aircraft and formulate the cooperation agenda for environment and health.

Bangladesh and Egypt will jointly implement a project on rural industrialisation. Iran is organising the industrial and technological data bank, expected to become operational by July this year.

Malaysia is taking the lead in 'Takaful' insurance while Pakistan is in charge of projects in fisheries and in agriculture. Indonesia will be dealing with poverty alleviation and energy sector, Sheikh Hasina pointed out.

She pointed out that the new group represented 800 million people or about 13.5 per cent of the global population but their share of world trade was roughly four per cent.

"These countries are rich in resources. Their combined oil reserve is about 12 per cent of the total world reserve, while their gas reserve is about 21 per cent of the world's proven reserve."

Tribute to Ahmed Sharif today

By Staff Correspondent

A condolence meeting to pay tribute to late Dr Ahmed Sharif will be held at the Central Shaheed Minar at 3 p.m. today.

Dr Ahmed Sharif Shroddha Nibedan Jatiya Committee (national committee for paying tribute to Dr Ahmed Sharif) has organised the condolence meeting, says a press release.

Some 60 speakers including litterateur, academician, intellectual, politician and development worker will shed lights on different phases of life and works of the late intellectual at the meeting.

A proposal to preserve the memories of the late pioneer of free-thinking will also be approved at the meeting, the release added.

Demirel defines D-8

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finance and regarding scientific collaboration and development.

Speaking about Bangladesh-Turkish relations, he said the current level of economic and commercial relations between the two countries did not reflect the "real potentials of our two countries".

"I think we love each other. Our two peoples are like brothers. You admire Kemal Atatürk and we know about Kazi Nazrul (the rebel poet). I read a piece of his poem in the parliament. But in the economic field, we know very little of each other's possibilities."

"I have requested both President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to visit Turkey with a group of businessmen, academicians and journalists. I expect your President to visit Turkey at the end of May or June."

"The continuance of mutual visits between Turkey and Bangladesh will contribute to the expansion of the economic and commercial dimension of our relations."

He also expressed the hope that there would be more frequent contacts between "our businessmen to explore the

possibilities of cooperation."

Demirel said a proposal has been forwarded to hold the second meeting of the Bangladesh-Turkey Joint Economic Commission in Ankara in September this year.

The Turkish President hoped that during the forthcoming meeting of the Joint Economic Commission efforts would be made to enhance the level of trading and economic cooperation. He said the trade volume between the two countries was only US\$ 23 million in 1997 and "reached a modest figure of US\$ 26 million in the period of January-September in 1998" and hoped that these figures can be increased significantly.

Demirel pointed out that the legal framework for furthering economic and commercial relations between Turkey and Bangladesh is yet to be completed.

"We are looking forward to finalising and putting into effect the Agreement on Prevention of Double taxation."

This agreement, he said, will encourage businessmen of the two countries "to engage in more economic activities."

Asked about air links between the two countries, he said, that Turkey would be interested in opening direct links between Istanbul and Dhaka shortly.

The visiting President expressed the hope that Bangladesh, Turkey and the countries of the D-8 would take advantage of the bonds provided by a common faith and cultural ties.

River cruise

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They further took note of the fact that the D-8 countries enjoy a special relation with the Organisation of Islamic Countries, as all of them are members of OIC as well.

New chairperson of D-8 Sheikh Hasina reciprocating the sentiments hoped that she would receive sincere cooperation from the leaders of the member countries.

The Bangladesh Prime Minister also expressed her sincere thanks and gratitude to the D-8 leaders.

Kibria

From Page 1

past and future losses due to mechanical and technical problems would emerge as a great concern for a poor country like Bangladesh.

He also maintained that excepting for Bangladesh, all others involved with Kafco had already made profit from Kafco.

The OECF, along with two Japanese companies, Chiyoda and Marubeni, holds 31.29 per cent share of Kafco while the BCIC owns 43.51 per cent.

Meanwhile, the current managing director and former managing director of Kafco are blaming each other on poor performance of the fertiliser factory.

Kafco MD John H Wilson in a well-circulated letter alleged that Kafco's former MD Dr M Towhidi was responsible for the poor performance of Kafco. On the other hand, Dr Towhidi said that the fertiliser plant was performing poorly as the general contractors (Chiyoda and Marubeni corporation) provided low-quality machinery and services.

Dr Towhidi also alleged the present MD of being "subservient to the will of Marubeni, Chiyoda and Haldor Topsoe and criticised him for joining hands with them to make the government agree to the so-called commercial settlement."

The former MD, who served in Kafco for five years till mid '98, maintained that the proposed commercial settlement with Chiyoda and Marubeni would make irreparable damage to Bangladesh.

Declaration

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forms in the international financial system in cooperation with other developing countries, whenever appropriate.

They emphasized the need of channeling adequate resources into the developing countries for investment and institutional capacity building to enable them to better deal with the challenges of a globalised economy and open trading system.

While recognising that trade among the D-8 is a most promising area of cooperation, the Dhaka meet felt that its potential is yet to be fully tapped. In this context, they directed the D-8 Commission to further explore the possibilities of promoting trade among the member countries, among others, through the convening a meeting of Ministers of Commerce/Trade and Economy at an early date and explore those possibilities.

They viewed that simultaneous or parallel meetings of a Business Forum, involving entrepreneurs of the member states, with D-8 Summits could help develop the much-needed partnership for development.

"We appreciated the initiative of Egypt to convene simultaneously with our next Summit in Cairo the first D-8 Business Forum," said the summit declaration.

In preparation for the Forum, the participants should be encouraged to come with specific proposals for expanding trade and setting up joint ventures.

PM hosts dinner for D-8 leaders

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the current chairperson of the D-8 bloc, hosted a dinner in honour of the leaders attending the summit in the capital, reports UNB.

The dinner was arranged at the Park restaurant of Dhaka Sheraton hotel, the official venue of the two-day summit that concluded in the city yesterday with adoption of the Dhaka Declaration.

Discovery camera crew

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dus of a wildlife sanctuary unless the bearer has applied for a permit at the nearest forest station.

During the incident, Herd alleged that the Forest Department officials responsible for security were nowhere nearby.

The forest officer at Katka reportedly contacted the Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF) of Shoronkhola Range only later that night and was advised by the latter to provide all possible cooperation to the film crew.

But according to Herd, the ACF's "all possible cooperation" amounted to a couple of forest guards armed with rifles and faulty ammunition.

This incident was brought to the attention of Chief Conservator of Forests Ghulam Habib. Habib was not available for comment.

When contacted at his office in Khulna, owner of Royal Tours - Faruk denied even having boarded the Chhuti, alleging that it had been Herd and Mansur who misbehaved with him and his guests - among them "some top military officials." Faruk explained that there had been three other public launches present at Katka on the day and that no one could prove that the beer cans in question were his.

Ahsan Nazir, one of the tourists from the Royal Gondola, however gave a different version, admitting that he had accompanied Faruk when they boarded the Chhuti, and even admitting that there had been some violence. He, however, denied that their group had an automatic pistol.

A government representative who accompanied the film crew throughout their stay in Bangladesh told this correspondent that he approached Faruk on the evening of February 24, demanding an explanation for his actions.

The representative, reluctant to be named, has in his possession a recorded conversation on tape in which Faruk admits to having assaulted the film-crew, and challenges the authorities to try and take action against him.

Having left Katka the very same night, the M.V.Chhuti reached Mongla the following day and at about 5:00pm, Herd tried to file a case with the Mongla Thana. The Superintendent of Police at Bagherhat was present at the police station but refused to take the complaint or provide an explanation for his refusal.

Reliable sources in Khulna have confirmed that Faruk and his men are backed by a powerful godfather in Khulna. On one occasion a few months ago, Faruk was allegedly caught red-handed while trying to shoot a deer but no action was reported to have been taken.

Herd, a renowned wildlife cameraman, headed back home in Scotland on February 27, a day after he returned to Dhaka from the Sunderbans.

While speaking to this correspondent at the office of the Daily Star on Friday, Herd admitted to having been in fear for his life as Faruk had allegedly threatened to kill him and sink the M.V.Chhuti.

It was only after Mansur had received severe injuries and had apologised for having "offended" Faruk that the men left on their speedboat, threatening to come back if Herd and Mansur did not pack up and leave, the very same night.

Only days after the Prime Minister's declaration of the Sunderbans as a World Heritage Site, this incident has raised security concerns among environmentalists and tour operators alike.

Tourism in the Sunderbans has in recent times been in high gear.

In a statement, the tourists

on board M.V.Chhuti have appealed to the authorities to make the Sunderbans safer and prevent such terrorist activities in the future.

Herd, visibly shaken by the ordeal, has circulated copies of his statement to all the concerned ministries. "The seriousness of this offence should not be underestimated," says Herd, adding that "the security of the Sunderbans area has now been compromised by this incident."

Aref killing Siddique Molla sent to jail

By Staff Correspondent

Siddique Molla, a suspect in the killing of Kazi Aref and five others, was sent to Dhaka Central Jail yesterday.

Kazi Aref along with five other JSD leaders were shot dead by a gang of assailants on the podium of a public meeting at Daulatpur in Kushtia on February 16.

Special Branch of Police arrested Siddique Molla, 34, a fugitive, awarded 86 years of imprisonment in five cases, from city's Gulshan area on Monday afternoon.

Mustafiz buried

Foreign Secretary Mustafiz Rahman was laid to rest at Mirpur Intellectuals graveyard yesterday afternoon, reports UNB.

Earlier, two janazas were held — one at Gulshan mosque and another on the premises of Foreign Ministry.

At Gulshan mosque, ambassadors of the Muslim countries, including the dean of the diplomatic corps Mohammad Shatha Zarab, attended the janaza.

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