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## N-threat Vajpayee warns Pakistan

NEW DELHI, Feb 6. Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee today threatened a retaliatory strike against Pakistan if Islamabad unleashed nuclear weapons on New Delhi, reports AFP.

"We have always said we are for no-first use of nuclear weapons," the Press Trust of India quoted him as saying in the northern city of Jalandhar. "But if somebody uses it against us, we will not refrain from doing so," he said. "We cannot just keep quiet while such weapons are used against us."

The United News of India quoted Vajpayee as saying, "if Pakistan thought that it could destroy India by a nuclear bomb, it was grossly mistaken."

Vajpayee said India "could retaliate and retaliate massively."

India and Pakistan tested nuclear weapons in May 1998.

Another report says Vajpayee today ruled out the possibility of holding a referendum in the disputed Himalayan state of Kashmir to decide its future.

Pakistan claims the right to control the whole of divided Kashmir on the strength of its Muslim-majority population.

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- Source: Islamic Foundation

## EC's cash aid up, food down

But total aid flow to remain unchanged

By Rafiq Hasan

The European Commission will reduce food aid and increase cash assistance, keeping the total aid flow unchanged, sources at EC's Dhaka office said.

The EC will provide food assistance worth around 22 million euro and cash assistance of 58 million euro in the next three years.

The food assistance this year will be 50,000 tonnes worth about 10 million euro. In the next two years, it will be worth six million euro each.

The cash assistance will be 17 million euro this year, 22.5 million next year and 18.5 million in the following year.

As per a changed aid policy, the EC prefer disbursement of

cash instead of food assistance to third world countries to ensure food security and employment. When this was informed to Bangladesh, the government stressed continuation of aid more in terms of food than in cash to implement on-going projects under the Food for Work Programme.

The EC agreed to provide food aid for Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) and some other projects under Food for Work Programme.

A senior official at the EC office here when contacted said, "We have received a letter from the government about its acceptance of our proposal, but any individual agreement in this regard is yet to be signed."

The official said EC's earlier aid commitments have been fulfilled. "We are preparing for fresh exchange of letters". During 1998 and 1999, the EC provided 2,40,000 tonnes of food as assistance to Bangladesh.

Asked whether future EC assistance to Bangladesh was discussed during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent visit to Brussels, another official at the EC office replied in the negative.

A high official of the finance ministry said, "We have accepted the proposal in principle and will observe the result at least for one year. If we face any problem in getting cash instead of food, we will discuss the matter with the EC."

The government is now

preparing projects to be implemented with EC assistance, he said.

The issue of food assistance was also discussed at the last working group meeting between the government and EC officials, held in Dhaka in November last year.

The EC delegation led by Erich W Muller explained the new food aid policy of the commission. They told the meeting that in 1996, the EC Council adopted a new food aid policy to ensure food security in the recipient countries.

The new policy emphasises people's access to food and also supports long-term national nutrition programmes.

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Visitors flip through books on the opening day of the Ekushey Grantha Mela (Book Fair) at Bangla Academy yesterday. — Star photo

## Book fair opens Hasina alerts against 'evil move' to change power

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has sought cooperation from the people in continuing the democratic and constitutional process, reports UNB.

Calling for the people to remain alert about any evil move to change power through extra-constitutional means, she said, "through a long struggle we've stopped the trend of change in power through unconstitutional, undemocratic way."

"Now you will have to remain alert and extend help for the continuity of democracy and constitutional process," she said inaugurating Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela (book fair) at Bangla Academy yesterday afternoon.

The prime minister formally inaugurated the book fair amidst tight security as the

## Dhaka's plea to extend Clinton's stay

By M Anwarul Haq

Dhaka has requested Washington to extend President Bill Clinton's stay in Bangladesh by another day so that he could attend the Independence Day celebrations on March 26, sources concerned said.

"A flurry of communications has been initiated between the two capitals over the US President's scheduled visit to Bangladesh and making it a two-day stay," one source said.

The initial itinerary of Clinton as announced in March 2000 mentioned a day-long visit on March 25.

Officials at the Prime Minister's Office are now convinced that Dhaka has erred in agreeing to the one-day visit of the US President on March 25. Incidentally, it is the blackest day in the country's history because the occupation Pakistani Army unleashed barbaric massacre of innocent people that night in 1971. When the date was fixed in consulta-

## It rally now Feb 13, token hunger strike tomorrow

The BNP-led opposition alliance has shifted today's joint mass rally and procession programme in the city to February 13 and announced a token hunger strike and sit-in by its MPs tomorrow to protest enactment of the Public Safety Act.

BNP and Jatiya Party MPs led by Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleeduzzaman Zia will stage a token hunger strike from "Morning to afternoon" at Paltan Maidan.

Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikkyo Jote (IOJ) MPs will stage a sit-in there because the parties differ on hunger strike on religious ground.

The decisions were taken at a meeting of the Liaison Committee of the alliance, held at the official residence of the opposition leader yesterday. BNP Vice-chairman M Shamsul Haque

## 6000-strong DCC men not enough!

40pc of a day's waste simply left behind to rot on city streets

By Morshed Ali Khan

More than 6,000 men, 192 trucks with fuel and maintenance cost of about Tk 40 lakh per month, its average annual expense for wages is about Tk 28 crore and it has an unspecified number of brooms, shovels, rakes and wheel-borrows bought with public money.

Conservancy officials however say the resources they have are too little to keep the city clean. On an average, about 40 of their trucks keep off the



Stacks of stinking garbage lie in the open at Karwanbazar in the city as Dhaka City Corporation hasn't collected them for a week. — Star photo

## Hijacked Afghan plane heads for Russia

MOSCOW, Feb 6. A hijacked Afghan airliner took off today from Kazakhstan with 168 people on board and was heading for Russia, a Reuters news agency reported.

The Ariana Boeing 727 jet landed at Aktyubinsk airport in northwestern Kazakhstan after obtaining fuel in a Tashkent stopover against a threat to blow up the plane.

ITAR-TASS news agency said that 24 tonnes of fuel had been provided to the plane in Tashkent.

Interfax quoted an Uzbek foreign ministry official as saying the hijackers had threatened to blow up the plane unless it was refuelled. Several armed men were on board, the ministry said.

The unidentified hijackers also demanded food and per-

## Queen Sophia arrives today

Queen Sophia of Spain will arrive in Dhaka today on a two-day visit to Bangladesh, reports BSS.

She is coming at the invitation of Grameen Bank and is scheduled to visit some projects in the micro-credit sector, sources in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

Queen Sophia also visited Bangladesh earlier.

Several journalists belonging to both electronic and print media will accompany the Queen, who is coming from Philippines.

### The Daily Star Anniversary Supplement

The Daily Star will bring out a 40-page Special Supplement on February 9, 2000 to mark its entry into the Tenth Year of publication. The Supplement which is designed to focus on the first quarter of the new millennium will carry scholarly writings about the directions we need to take as well as reports of our own correspondents highlighting some positive trends in specific areas of national life.

The price of the 56-page Daily Star anniversary issue, inclusive of the normal 16-page spread-out, remains unchanged at Tk 6.00.

### We have Moved

Offices of The Daily Star have moved to its new premises at Karwan Bazar. Please send in your mails and contact us at the following address and telephone numbers:

The Daily Star  
19, Karwan Bazar  
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## Biman allowed to use Heathrow

By Shehab Ahmed

Bangladesh Biman has received permission from the British authorities to use Heathrow airport in London for operating its Dhaka-New York flight, Biman sources said.

It would help the national carrier to operate two flights to New York via Dubai twice a week, the sources said.

A Biman official confirming the news said it would help cut operation costs for the trans-Atlantic flights.

Biman was operating the New York flights through New Delhi since last two years while KLM Royal Dutch airlines over use of Schiphol airport for the New

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