

CITIZENSHIP ISSUE

Stranded Pakistanis begin fast

unto death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A section of stranded Pakistanis began fast unto death on Friday demanding a meeting with Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz now attending the Saarc summit in the capital to resolve their citizenship issue.

Members of the Stranded Pakistanis General Repatriation Committee (SPGRC) began the programme at 10:00am at their office at Geneva Camp in Mohammadpur to press the demand.

"Around 100 of them continued the fast yesterday and some of them have fallen sick," Shawkat Ali, general secretary of SPGRC, told The Daily Star in the evening.

Besides, many more at sections 10, 11 and 12 of Mirpur in the city also observed fasting, he said, adding, "Our Chittagong, Rangpur and Bogra offices also observed token hunger strike to meet the demand."

"We contacted Pakistan High Commission here to arrange at least a 10-minute meeting between a 10-member delegation of our group and the Pak PM, but they [high commission] 'bluffed' us," he added.

Bangladesh Human Rights Commission in a press release has asked the Saarc leaders to settle the issue of stranded Pakistanis.

BOMB ATTACK

Injured gold trader dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Gold trader Goutam Kumar Das succumbed to bomb injury at 8:30am yesterday at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

He was severely injured in a bomb attack by outlaws on Monday night at Noapara under Abhoynagar upazila of Jessore.

The injured gold trader was sent to DMCH from Khulna Medical College Hospital on Tuesday as his condition deteriorated.

His wife Maya Rani Das lodged FIR with Abhoynagar Police Station on Tuesday naming an extremist. But police could not arrest the accused.

According to FIR, the extremist demanded huge amount of toll from the slain gold trader. But the trader refused to pay it and therefore the outlaws killed him.

Police said a live bomb was recovered from the place of occurrence during investigation.

DHL provides logistical support to Pak quake victims

Since the South Asian earthquake hit almost a month ago, DHL has been providing aid and other support to Pakistan as the country copes with the aftermath of the devastating earthquake, says a press release.

DHL employees in Pakistan and around the world have leveraged their expertise in the management of complex logistics and transportation processes to help deliver aid and relief supplies to the earthquake survivors.

To date, DHL Pakistan employees, along with volunteers from DHL Bahrain and the Corporate Head Office, are actively involved with the Dubai-based Airport Emergency Team (AET), an initiative of the World Economic Forum's Disaster Response Network.

The AET, which also includes Emirates, Aramex, Dnata and other companies as members, provides logistical services on a voluntary basis for relief goods that arrive by air. The AET had previously assisted in the same capacity during the tsunami relief operations in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The AET that has been deployed to the Chaklala Air Base in Islamabad is working closely with the Pakistan Army and the Pakistan Air Force to receive all inbound relief cargo flights. Aside from securing the necessary government clearances and equipment, the AET is also responsible for the overall warehouse logistics management for incoming relief supplies, including the sorting and loading of the relief goods on to trucks for their distribution to people affected by the earthquake.

To date, the team has handled aid supplies from over 110 international relief flight, managing over 4,500 tonnes of relief aid in the process.

DHL Pakistan is providing the local government with rented trucks to assist in the transportation and distribution of relief supplies to affected areas.

DHL has also developed an innovative solution to getting aid to victims in remote and inaccessible towns and villages in Pakistan, by reusing old bags to pack 500 relief packages a day for dropping out of helicopters.

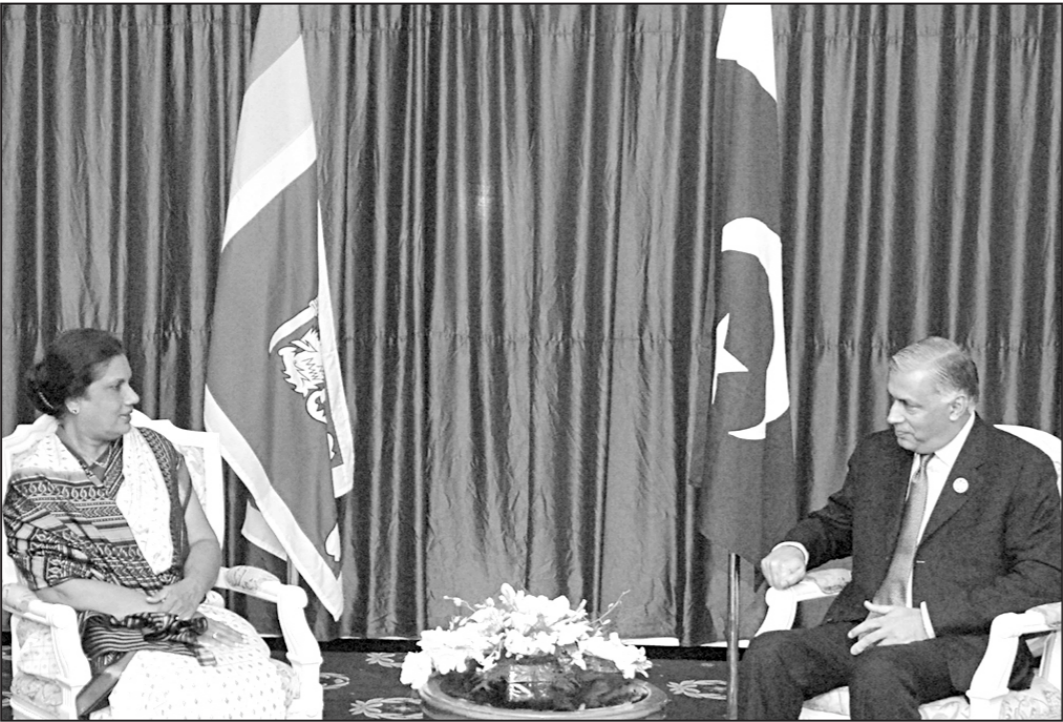


PHOTO: AFP

Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz talks with Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga Bandaranaike at a meeting in the city yesterday.

AL criticises govt for holding Saarc summit during monga

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the main opposition Awami League (AL) yesterday criticised the BNP-led coalition government for holding the Saarc summit at a time when the country is experiencing a devastating monga (a famine-like situation) in its northern region.

Speaking at a discussion, they said when the people of the country are fighting for life, the government held the Saarc summit spending a huge amount of money only for illumination.

The AL leaders said it is shameful for an independent nation to confer Saarc award posthumously on Ziaur Rahman who, as they claimed, instigated the killings of Bangabandhu, four national leaders and hundreds of army personnel and general people.

The discussion was organised in memory of four national leaders marking the Jail Killing Day in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi in the city.

Speaking on the occasion, AL

Presidium Member Zillur Rahman said the anti-liberation forces killed Bangabandhu and four national leaders to create a vacuum in the leadership of the country.

He said the killing of Bangabandhu, four national leaders, Shah AMS Kibria, Ahsanullah Master and other AL leaders and the abortive attempt to kill Sheikh Hasina on August 21 last year were interwoven with the same string.

Zillur said attacks have been made on progressive forces to destroy the spirit of the liberation war.

He urged the countrymen to resist the conspiracy.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said the government did not take any single measurers to tackle the monga while they are spending a lot of money in the name of Saarc summit.

He pledged that the AL would bring an end to monga if voted to power again.

Jalil urged the countrymen to make November 22 grand rally of 14-party a complete success to relieve them of all

sorts of repression and corruption.

Presidium Member Abdur Razzak said the anti-liberation forces are conspiring against the country as well as the AL to destroy the hard-earned independence and democracy.

"We have no way to go back but to move forward to oust the alliance government," he added.

AL leader Tofail Ahmed said the assassinations of four national leaders were so designed that no one could dare to lead the nation in future.

He urged the countrymen to oust the alliance government through a mass surge as they defeated the Pakistani occupation forces in 1971 and ousted the autocratic government in 1990.

AL Presidium Members Motia Chowdhury, Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Suranjit Sengupta, Mohammad Nasim, Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Advocate Sahara Khatun, Asaduzzaman Noor MP and AK Azad Chowdhury also spoke at the discussion.

Lawyers demand visa-free movement in Saarc region

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Democratic Lawyers' Association of Bangladesh (DLAB) yesterday in a statement urged the leaders of the Saarc countries to allow visa free movement of the lawyers in the Saarc region.

DLAB President Barrister Shafik Ahmed and General Secretary Mohammad Zahidul Bari demanded visa free movement of lawyers in the Saarc countries so that they can play an effective role to reform and develop the judicial system in the region, protect human rights and the environment and exchange views among the lawyers of the countries for enactment of new laws.

It also expressed profound shock at the death of Eanyetullah Khan, editor of the daily New Age and editor in chief of weekly Holiday.

It also expressed condolence at the death of Mohammad Foyz Ullah, general secretary of Bangladesh National Awami Party (NAP) central committee.

Photo contest for young photographers

UNB, Dhaka

The British Council, British High Commission and DFID in cooperation with Map Photo Agency have organised a photo competition titled 'My World, My Future' for young photographers.

The contest will be held during the 'NorthSouthEastWest' photo exhibition on climate change scheduled for December 17-31. The exhibition will be held at the National Museum Gallery in the city.

The interested photographers have been asked to submit a maximum of five black and white or colour photos for the print photo competition. The photos could be submitted directly or by post to the Culture and Science Unit of British Council or at Tejaagon office of Map Photo Agency by November 27.

Each print should be 12" by 16" in size.

Entry forms are free of cost and available in all the renowned photo labs, photographic institutions, Map Photo Agency and the British Council.

An exhibition of 50 selected images will be arranged on the British Council premises in the first week of January.

The first prize of the competition is a Canon SLR 350D- 8 mega pixel digital camera, the second prize is a Canon IXY 600- 7.1 mega pixel digital camera and the third prize is Canon A520- 4 mega pixel digital camera, says a press release.

Russia pursues Iran nuclear compromise

AFP, Tehran

The head of Russia's Security Council was in Tehran yesterday to sound out Iranian officials on a deal aimed at averting an escalation in Iran's nuclear standoff with the West.

Igor Ivanov started the day meeting with Iran's nuclear chief Ali Larjani, who had hinted Friday at the possibility of a solution.

He was also due to speak with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki and other senior figures, amid speculation Russia might conduct sensitive nuclear fuel work on Iran's behalf.

Iran said Friday it still wanted to conduct the work on its own territory but was willing to discuss its uranium being enriched abroad.

"What is important for Iran is to enrich (uranium) on its soil," local media quoted Larjani as saying.

He said he had not received any formal proposal for enrichment abroad, but that if one were offered, "we will discuss it."

On his arrival Friday, Ivanov said "the Russian government will have a certain number of discussions with Iranian officials in order to reach a better solution."

"I hope we will reach a common point of view," he added, without confirming whether he was bringing any proposal with him.

Under one reportedly being floated, Iran would be allowed to carry out an initial step in making nuclear fuel -- converting uranium ore into the uranium hexafluoride gas that is the feedstock for making enriched uranium.

But enrichment itself would be done in Russia under an offer said to be under consideration by the European Union and the United States.

Ivanov's visit comes ahead of a November 24 meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) board, which will consider referring Iran to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions.



PHOTO: PID

Rukhsana Aziz, wife of Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, speaks at a reception organised by Holy Cross Girls' School in Dhaka yesterday. She is a former student of the school.

India's \$100m go to Saarc Dev Fund

UNB, Dhaka

India's \$100 million contribution for the Saarc Poverty Alleviation programme will be used under the umbrella of Saarc Development Fund (SDF) for various development and welfare schemes in member countries.

The Saarc Standing Committee accepted the recommendations that different funds being operated under the association be brought under the SDF, Indian news agency UNI reported.

The fund will have different windows including one for poverty alleviation.

Indian Minister of State for External Affairs E Ahamed said, "We accord priority to the implementation of collaborative projects for poverty alleviation." This was also emphasised at the committee meetings.

On disaster preparedness and management proposal, the minister

said there was a general recognition of India's abundant experience and capabilities in this regard.

35 shops gutted in Narayanganj

UNB, Narayanganj

A devastating fire gutted 35 shops at Shiddhirganj in the district disrupting traffic on Dhaka-Chittagong highway for about an hour.

Fire Brigade sources said the fire originated from an electric short-circuit at about 5:00am and soon raged through the shops built on a government land at Shimrail.

On information, firefighters from four fire stations rushed to the spot and put out the blaze at about 8:00am.

The shop owners claimed that the extent of loss caused by the fire could go up to Tk 50 lakh.

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather may remain mainly dry over the country in the next 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period, Met Office said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 32.0 degree Celsius was recorded at Chittagong and the lowest of 15.2 degrees at Syedpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:13pm today and rises at 6:13am tomorrow.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	29.0	21.0	58	51
Chittagong	32.0	22.1	66	75
Rajshahi	29.0	15.3	72	72
Khulna	29.5	19.4	62	62
Barisal	30.0	18.6	71	85
Sylhet	30.6	20.5	76	67
Cox's Bazar	31.4	23.0	79	70

Shaukat calls for moving

FROM PAGE 1

make Saarc a more vibrant and effective body of cooperation for development and progress in the region.

The Pakistani premier offered a set of recommendations that include expansion and intensification of economic and commercial cooperation, promotion of cooperation in the field of energy, cooperation in joint projects to alleviate poverty, and to promote health, education and agriculture, improvement of infrastructure, especially region-wide transportation and communications links, and greater cooperation and coordination in monetary and fiscal policies of the Saarc member states.

He referred to the Social Charter adopted in the 12th Islamabad Saarc Summit and emphasised that opportunities must be seized to ensure that South Asia is put on a fast track to development. He said considerable work has been accomplished since the "landmark Islamabad summit" and urged to sustain that momentum.

He also said Pakistan as the chair of Saarc has made concerted efforts toward regional cooperation and development and assured to continue the efforts in future to bring the peoples of the region closer to each other.

Shaukat Aziz expressed satisfaction over the improvement in political atmosphere in South Asia and said it had a positive impact on Saarc. He stressed the need for making Saarc a symbol of its people's determination to promote peace, progress and stability in the region.

He said Saarc has started gaining a new confidence and its international profile has been enhanced considerably.

He acknowledged that the association has received an application from Afghanistan for membership and a request from China to be associated with it either as a dialogue partner or as an observer.

He said the requests have been deliberated in the standing committee and the council of ministers have referred them to the summit for a final decision. "Pakistan looks forward to welcome its neighbour and brotherly country Afghanistan to our Saarc family. Pakistan also welcomes the interest shown by our friend and neighbouring China to be associated with Saarc."

The Pakistani premier also said he is confident that the Dhaka Summit will prove to be a great success and will become an important landmark in cooperation among the Saarc members and for the association's expansion.

Referring to the recent Tsunami in the region and the recent earthquake in Pakistan and in Indian Kashmir, he expressed his condolences to the peoples and governments of the Saarc countries for the loss of lives and properties. He reaffirmed solidarity with the countries that have suffered from the disasters and urged the Saarc members to pledge for joint effort in rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Pak PM's wife visits her old school

UNB, Dhaka

Many memories visibly crowded her mind as Rukhsana, the Pakistan prime minister's spouse, got back four classmates when she visited Holy Cross High School and College in the capital yesterday.

Rukhsana Aziz, wife of Shaukat Aziz, studied at Holy Cross School from 1962 to 1965 and passed class V, VI and VIII from the institution. She became immensely happy and nostalgic, getting back her school friends.

"She embraced and kissed her classmates. She took tea with her friends and schoolteachers, reminiscing their old days," says a firsthand account of the emotional reunion.

Among the classmates were Khadiza Afzal, Sajia Tanveer, Mahfuza Ahmed and Shanaj Reza Ali.

Two senior-most teachers of her times Saleha Anwar and Anjumara Ahmed were also present at the function. Rukhsana recalled their motherly affection for her.

Sources in the Holy Cross School said ahead of the Dhaka trip, the wife of Pakistan's prime minister remembered her classmates and communicated with them through the Pak Embassy here. She also invited them to be present at her school-visit programme.

Rukhsana came to the school at 5:10pm, accompanied by the members of her entourage -- Nasreen Kasuri, wife of Pakistan's Foreign Minister Khursid Mahmood Kasuri, Ghazala Babur, wife of Pakistan's high commissioner in Dhaka, Shazia Irfan Azam, wife of military secretary to the Pakistan's prime minister. She spent more than an hour with her school friends and teachers.

Director General of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Dilara Hafiz and Mrs Osman Faruque, wife of Education Minister Osman Farruk, also accompanied the wife of Pakistan prime minister.

The school authorities organised a simple function in honour of the wife of Pakistan prime minister.

A few students and teachers were present at the function. Headmistress of the Holy Cross School Sister Philomena Quiah received Rukhsana Aziz.

PROTEST AGAINST KING BFUJ condemns deportation of Nepalese journalist

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) yesterday protested the deportation of a Nepalese journalist from Bangladesh one day before the Saarc summit.

Sources said police deported the Nepalese journalist as he planned to organise a protest against the Nepalese King.

Terming it as a repression on a foreign journalist, the BFUJ leaders said the Nepalese journalist has every right to protest against the repression and censorship imposed on the media by King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah's illegal government.

They expressed solidarity with the struggle of the Nepalese journalists against the illegal regime in Nepal.

The BFUJ leaders regretted that the meeting of South Asian Free Media Association (Safma) ended in Dhaka on Friday failed to condemn the deportation of the Nepalese journalist and cancellation of BFUJ's National Convention against Repression on Journalists by Bangladesh government.

CPA mobile court fines 85 vessels

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

The mobile court of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) in a ten-day drive till Thursday fined 85 vessels Tk 17 lakh for violating the port and maritime acts.

During the drive at the port mooring and different jetty areas stretching from the Karnaphuli estuary to the Shah Amanat Bridge, the mobile court also detained six lighter vessels that were operating with expired survey certificates.

The detained vessels are MV Anghi Express, MV Master Arif, MV Al Tayef, MV Sharp-1, MV Prince of Dohar and MV Israt.

CPA magistrate Mohammad Munir Chowdhury led the drive aimed at maintaining safe and free movement of ocean bound vessels and preventing violation of shipping law, tax evasion and the environmental pollution.

The court awarded the penalty for over-loading, illegal movement of vessels in and around the port area, operating vessels without radio and required manpower.

Several members of the Airport Emergency Team prepare to unload a DHL aircraft full of relief aid.

