

Nepal to discuss transit issues with India

Prachanda tells Fakhruddin

UNB, New York

Nepalese Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda on Friday said Nepal has no problem with Bangladesh and the countries have friendship for a long time.

He said his government will hold fresh talks with India on various issues, including economic and transit issues.

The Nepalese PM made the remarks during a bilateral meeting with Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at the UN headquarters on the sidelines of the 63rd session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The chief adviser said Nepal can take infrastructure advantage of Bangladesh including that of Mongla port and Bangla Bandh land port for direct communication between the two countries to enhance trade relation.

He also emphasised on increasing people-to-people contact between the two countries, which can be accelerated in many ways like introducing bus services.

Fakhruddin congratulated the new Nepalese PM and appreciated that the election in Nepal was good.

Prachanda also congratulated the CA for creating 'good election

environment in Bangladesh" under his dynamic leadership and mentioned about the announcement of election date.

Fakhruddin said good election atmosphere was being created not only for holding the next general election fairly but all the future elections also.

He invited the Nepalese PM to visit Bangladesh to which Prachanda said he would definitely like to visit Bangladesh.

CA's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim, who was present at the meeting, later briefed the newsmen.



Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed and Nepalese Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda hold a meeting on the sidelines of the 63rd session of the United Nations General Assembly at the UN headquarters on Friday.

Education summit in Nov to formulate nat'l policy

Says Hossain Zillur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman yesterday said an education summit will be held in November in the city to formulate a national education policy.

"We are going to organise an education summit in November. I hope academicians, concerned government officials and experts will participate in the summit where we will formulate short-term, mid-term and long-term education policies," he added.

The adviser was speaking at a press briefing at the National Academy for Education Management (Naem) in the city after a daylong view exchange meeting.

On the eve of the summit, education ministry yesterday organised the meeting where academicians and experts stressed on different issues, including how to ensure quality education to eliminate existing discriminations.

Zillur also said a high-powered committee will be formed very soon for identifying how to strengthen the

activities of National University (NU). "Over 80 per cent tertiary-level students are now studying at NU-affiliated colleges. Degree colleges have a capacity of around 7 lakh students but their qualities are tremendously low. Besides, NU has many problems and for this reason, we will form a high-powered committee very soon," he said.

He further said a working group comprising education ministry, directorate of secondary and higher education and NU has been formed for preparing a policy to set up new educational institutions, academic recognition and opening additional class sessions.

"DSHE will be reformed very soon.

We have already received a proposal from DSHE on how to reform it," the adviser added.

He also said the education ministry is now working to expand and become popular of information technology (IT) education from child level.

"Gradually, we will have to expand IT education. For this purpose, we primarily introduce a pilot programme involving some schools. Under the programme, some children will get the opportunity of using child laptops," he added.

Education secretary, NU vice chancellor, chairmen of different education boards and educationists also took part in the press briefing.

Low over Bay moves northwards

UNB, Dhaka

The well-marked low formed over the north-west Bay off Bangladesh-West Bengal coast moved northwards inland and lay over the southwestern parts of Bangladesh encompassing Barisal, Patuakhali, Madaripur and Khulna.

"It is likely to move in a north-westerly direction," said a special Met Office bulletin on yesterday night, as reports said the areas experienced rain and squalls.

Under its influence, steep pressure gradient and convective cloud

persists over the North Bay.

Squally weather is likely to continue over the North Bay and adjoining coastal areas of the country and 'may affect the maritime ports'.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been advised to hoist local cautionary signal number three (R) three.

All fishing-boats and trawlers over North Bay have been advised to remain close to the coast and proceed with caution until further notice.



Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at most places over Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at many places over Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy rainfalls are also likely at places elsewhere over the country during the period, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 35.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 24.3 degrees Celsius at Chittagong.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:49pm today and rises at 5:49am tomorrow.

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	31.8	24.8	72	80
Chittagong	28.5	24.3	87	95
Rajshahi	31.5	24.8	100	91
Khulna	29.0	24.8	98	100
Barisal	28.0	25.5	90	95
Sylhet	35.0	25.5	71	80
Cox's Bazar	29.4	25.2	98	96

Shahnewaz laid to rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Dr Shahnewaz Alam Khan, country director of Concern Worldwide in Sierra Leone, who was killed in a road accident in Freetown on September 17, was laid to rest at Azimpur graveyard in Dhaka on Friday.

Earlier, his body was brought to Dhaka from Freetown on Friday morning.



Hasina's 61st anniversary of birth today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 61st birth anniversary of former prime minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina.

Her party will celebrate the day in a low-key manner as she is now on parole and undergoing treatment in the United States.

The AL will hold a session of special prayers for her early recovery from illness at the party's Dharmadond office.

Hasina, the eldest daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was born at Tungipara in Gopalganj on this day in 1947.

She was elected president of the AL at a council session of the party in February 1981 while she was in exile. She returned home on May 17, 1981.

Hasina led the AL to power and became the prime minister of Bangladesh in June 1996, two decades after Bangabandhu along with other family members and relatives was assassinated in August 1975.

The AL chief escaped an assassination attempt on August 21 in 2004 when a rally of her party came under grenade attacks in the capital that left 24 leaders and activists dead.

Different front organisations of the AL will organise milad mahfils on the occasion.

Hasina will celebrate her birthday at the residence of her son Sajeeb Wazed Joy in Washington. The US unit of AL will also observe her birthday with various programmes, according to a report of ANA, a news agency based in New York.

AL acting president Zillur Rahman and acting general secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam called on the party leaders and activists and all well-wishers to observe the birth anniversary of Hasina.

Running car catches fire in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A running private car caught fire at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday.

Shahinur Islam, a fire fighter of Mohammadpur Fire Station, was injured in the fire. He received first aid from Pangu Hospital, fire service officials said.

They said panic gripped commuters and locals on Dhanmondi Road No-3 when the car caught fire at around 4:15pm due to technical glitches, creating traffic congestion in the adjacent areas.

The driver was the only man in the car during the incident.

Fire fighters extinguished the blaze at around 4:35pm.

Cop informant shot in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An informant of police was injured by shot of criminals at Motijheel in the city yesterday.

The victim was identified as Anwar Hossain, 30.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with injuries on chest.

Witnesses said a gang criminals shot Anwar when he was talking with a contractor at Arambagh in the city.

When everybody wants to go home, they opt otherwise

SHAMIM ASHRAF

Perching on the edge of a raised platform outside the Kamalapur Railway Station in the capital yesterday, they wore the same expression - a kind of vacant look on their faces.

When the rail station is bustling with home-bound people who want to celebrate Eid with their near and dear ones, these four kids see no difference between going home and staying in Dhaka during this great festival.

"For me, life back home has nothing to offer," 14-year-old Mosharrar sighed. Although he has a father and a stepmother in Noakhali, it doesn't make any difference to him.

Mamun, Shukkur and Nizam, who are of approximately same age, have similar stories to tell. And they belong to the group of homeless people in Dhaka to whom festivals like Eid brings no special meaning.

"It is rather a bad time for us because we almost lose our means of livelihood during such periods," Mosharrar added.

Many homeless people sleep on the spaces adjacent to the railway station at night. Most of them will not go home during this Eid, the boys said.

Tejgaon and Airport railway stations, Karwan Bazar kitchen market, Stadium Market, Shahbagh, Ramna, Chankharpool and Mirpur are some of the areas where several hundred homeless people sleep at night under the open sky.

Most of them are porters, day-labourers, hawkers, sweepers and scavengers while others are engaged in begging, mugging, stealing and prostitution. Each of them has a unique story of their life to tell.

Mosharrar came to Dhaka about four years ago to work as a domestic help at a house in Hazaribagh after his mother Zohra Begum died in a lightning strike at their home in Maichchhara village. A few days later, he came out of the house to buy some groceries but lost his way. He then went back to his village home with the help of some people.

"But my stepmother beat me up and my father, a farmer, drove me out of the home assuming that I have fled from my employer's house. Then I came to Dhaka again by train."

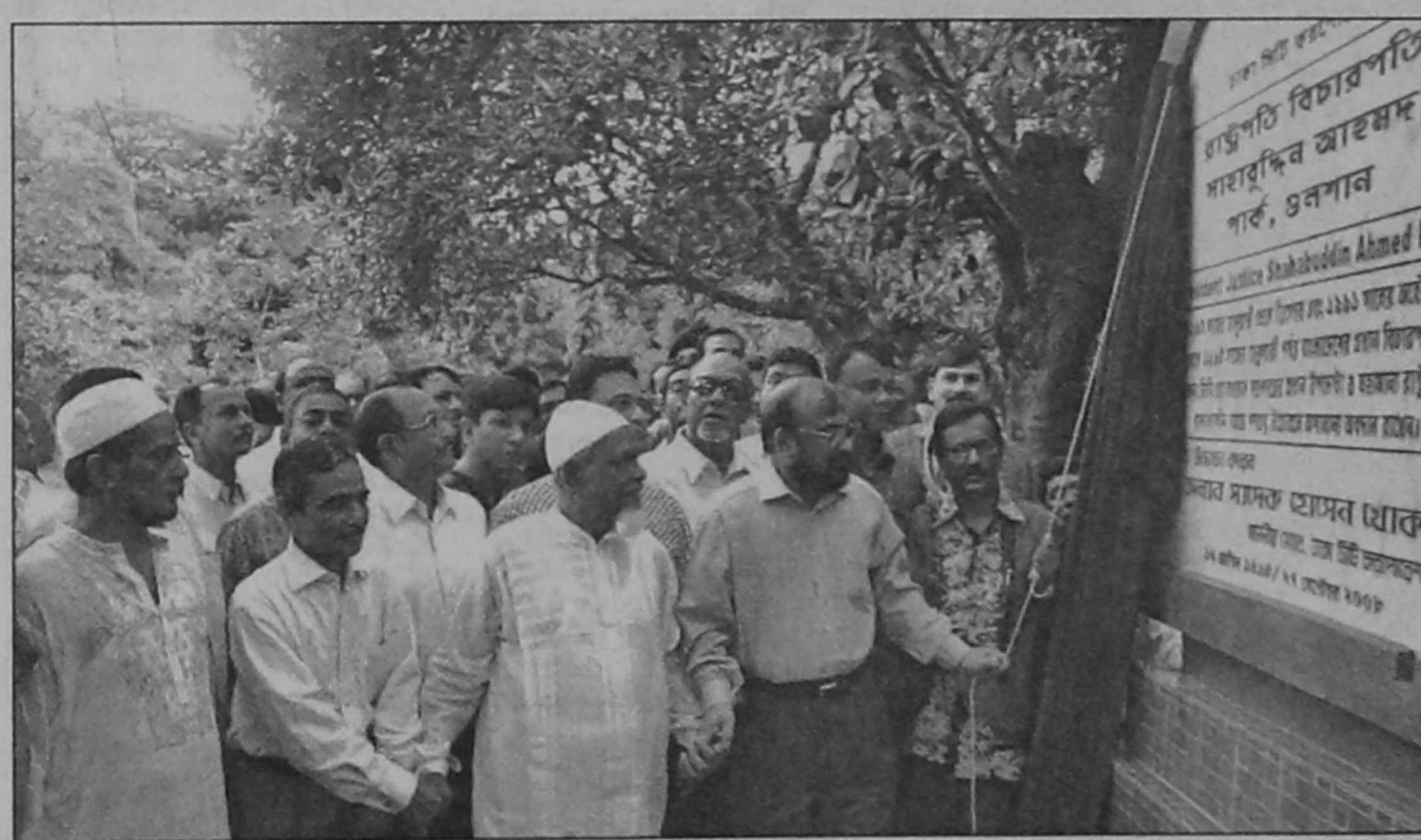
Puja mandap shifted from Gulshan ground to Banani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Puja Uddipan Committee yesterday agreed to shift the venue of puja mandap from Gulshan ground to Banani ground at Kemal Ataturk Avenue in the city after a meeting with the authorities concerned.

Sources said Puja Uddipan Committee decided to shift the venue as it is near the Gulshan Azad Mosque.

Earlier, the authorities concerned gave permission to the Puja Uddipan Committee to erect the puja mandap at Gulshan Ground behind Wonderland.



Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka unveils the plaque of President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at Park at Gulshan in the city yesterday.

Pay Tk 30, buy a pound of acid

FROM PAGE 1
Acids are frequently sold this way ignoring laws as the monitoring is poor.

According to the Acid Control Act, 2002, whoever produces, imports, transports, stores, sells and uses acids without licence could be sentenced to three to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment with fines. People who possess equipment used for producing acids without having the licence for them could be sentenced to three to 15 years' rigorous imprisonment with fines.

While talking to The Daily Star, Deputy Commissioner, Dhaka Mohammad Zillur Rahman said he has no special team to monitor and control the acid market.

"We should have a distinct monitoring team to control acid



Four homeless boys - Mosharrar, Mamun, Shukkur and Nizam - sit outside Kamalapur Railway Station. "For me, life back home has nothing to offer," says Mosharrar.

He earns a living by selling abandoned water bottles and other items. He also sometimes carry luggage of railway passengers in exchange for money.

Mamun hails from Nangolpur in Comilla. His father is a drug peddler who married another woman after his first wife showed symptoms of mental disorder three years ago.

"My father is also a drug addict and my stepmother often used to torture me. So, I thought it is better to work as a porter than to endure such pains at home," he said.

But being a porter is not easy for a newcomer at Kamalapur Railway Station. "The old porters beat and drive us away as we charge less than they do. So, I ended up being a scavenger."

But Mamun did not give up. After saving some money, he invested that in buying newspapers from the agents and started selling them.

When this correspondent was talking to Mamun, Shirin, a 28-year-old woman in worn-out salwar and kamiz, appeared there and asked,

"Would you give me some money? I have been starving since last night."

Shirin, who hails from Sadullapur, doesn't want to go back to his village home.

"My husband doesn't look after me as he has another wife, and my day-labourer father does not afford to feed me. Who will I go back to?" she said, adding that she came to Dhaka to find out her younger sister who works as a domestic help somewhere in the city.

"As I do not know where she lives, I've started begging here," she said.

Akash, a 15-year-old boy from Katkhali in Goalanda, approached this time. "Can you find me a job?" the boy in blue jeans and printed shirt asked this correspondent.

He came to Gulistan by a bus from his village home just a couple of hours ago in search of a job and the people there suggested that he go to Kamalapur.

After his mother died of cancer three years ago, his father, a rickshawpuller, stopped his education and forced him to work as a day-

labourer.

"As I couldn't earn money in recent days because of floods, my stepmother started torturing me. She tied me to a pole and beat me up last night," the boy broke down in tears.

Mosharrar, the paperboy, could not hold back his tears, when asked what special menu they will have on Eid day.

"We will have to buy the regular menu: rice, vegetables and pulse. We can have chicken if there is a little more money. Who will cook polao or semai for us?"

Abdul Jabbar, 32, who came to Dhaka a week ago in search of a job, is yet to find one.

"My son is waiting... my wife is waiting for me... but I have no way to see them during this Eid," the man from Lanbari in Laxmipur said, staring at the passengers boarding a Chittagong-bound train.

Jabbar had to sell his clothes and shoe to buy food for him. "What would I take back home for my family?"

'Fair elections under emergency impossible'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The leaders of Left Democratic Alliance at a press conference yesterday said the military-backed government is trying to legalise their wrongdoings by holding the national elections under the state of emergency.

Convener of the alliance Advocate Abdus Salam, Saiful Huq, general secretary of Biplabi Workers' Party, Jonayed Saki, convener of Gono Sanghati, and Moshrefa Mishu, convener of Biplabi Oikya Forum, were present at the press conference at the office of Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal in the city.

They said free, fair and credible election under the emergency is totally impossible.

They placed a five-point demand to hold a free and fair election, including lifting of emergency, cancellation of Representation of the People Ordinance (RPO), declaring corrupts, black money holders, war criminals and convicts unfit for contesting any election, to stop the government's practice of influencing constitutional institutions like election commission, Anti-Corruption Commission and judiciary and to create an environment so that all political parties can take part in the election with confidence.

CPB protests price hike of electricity

DU CORRESPONDENT

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) yesterday protested the decision of increasing price of electricity.

In statement, CPB President Manjurul Ahsan Khan and General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim protested the decision taken by the energy regulatory commission and alleged that the commission took the decision ignoring opinions of economists and businessmen.

The CPB leaders also said the lives of general people have meanwhile become unbearable due to price hike of essentials. The decision of increasing price of electricity would rather increase misery in the people's lives.

The statement also read due to unequal agreement with foreign companies the government has to purchase electricity and gas in higher rate.

The leaders of the party also expect that steps would be taken to curb corruption in the sector rather increasing price of electricity.

Qulkhwani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Qulkhwani of Dr Fasihuddin Mahtab, former minister and general secretary of Bangladesh Diabetic Association, will be held at Banani central mosque after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend the programme and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 10th death anniversary of Alhaj M A Sattar, a social worker and founder of Phulmati Islamiya Senior Madrasa, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at Phulmati Islamiya Senior Madrasa premises in Demra after Asr prayers.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend the programme and pray for peace of the departed soul.