

Pakistan, India renew nuclear pact

List of installations, facilities exchanged

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan and India, in a rare confidence-building measure, renewed an agreement yesterday not to attack each other's nuclear installations and facilities, the Pakistan foreign ministry said in a statement.

The move coincides with easing tensions between the bitter nuclear rivals as hundreds of thousands of troops, deployed along their common border after a deadly attack on India's parliament in December 2001, are withdrawn.

"Both countries are required to exchange on the first working day of every year information on their nuclear installations and facilities," the statement said.

"Accordingly, information on nuclear installations and facilities of both sides was exchanged yesterday through diplomatic channels."

The exchange of information, under an agreement dating back to 1991, effectively means the two nations are committed not to attack each other's nuclear installations and facilities

A year ago the lists were exchanged during the biggest military build-up along the frontier in 15 years after the attack on India's parliament which New Delhi blamed on Pakistan-based groups fighting Indian rule in disputed Kashmir. Pakistan denied the charge.

India accuses Pakistan of arming radical Islamic groups and allowing them to cross from Pakistan-controlled Kashmir to the Indian side of the disputed region to fight a separatist insurgency there.

Pakistan denies the charge. It says it offers diplomatic and moral support to what it calls a legitimate freedom struggle.

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee asked Pakistan on Tuesday to end its focus on the Kashmir dispute, the trigger of two wars between the neighbours, and boost cultural and economic ties to help ease hostility.

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf said on Monday the threat of a "non-conventional war" helped prevent a conflict in 2002. His spokesman stressed that he had not meant a nuclear conflict but a popular uprising against Indian troops by Kashmiris.



Asif Ali made new CAG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Controller General of Accounts Asif Ali has been appointed the controller and auditor general (CAG) of Bangladesh.

The appointment of a person in service as CAG is first ever in Bangladesh. In the past, all CAGs had been appointed after retirement.

Ali, the ninth CAG of the country, will be sworn into office today, succeeding Ahsan Ali Sarker.

He obtained Master's in political science from Dhaka University and joined the erstwhile Pakistan Military Accounts Service in 1970.

He served as a member of the United Nations audit team and audited the UNDP headquarters and Unicef headquarters in New York.

Ali authored a number of books on accounts and auditing. Many of his articles were published in leading local and international journals.

He is also a life member of Asiatic Society, Bangla Academy and Islamic Foundation.

Demarcation of Gulshan Lake as per original map demanded

UNB, Dhaka

Residents of the city's posh Gulshan area have threatened to wage a civil movement if Rajuk fails to take initiative by January 17 for demarcation of Gulshan Lake as per its original map.

Gulshan Society, an organisation of the residents, took the decision in a meeting held here recently, said a press release.

The society also demanded removal of earth from the lakeside, which has been periodically filled by Rajuk to create plots, violating the existing law.

The High Court in an order directed Rajuk to excavate the landfill in this area in order to bring back the lake's original shape.

It called for implementation of the prime minister's directive for developing the environment of the Gulshan Lake and its surrounding areas.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Jan 2		5-23 pm
Jan 3	6-42 am	

Prayer Timings

Jan 2		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-29	5-35
Esha	7-30	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Govt now looking to the East: PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has said her government has added a 'new dimension' to its foreign policy and is 'now looking to the East for the benefit of the people and the country.'

"In addition to the existing relationship with the West, now we are looking to the East. The East, West, North and South are now totally open to us. We have realised that we will be benefited if we proceed to the East and thus our foreign policy and diplomacy are concentrating on benefit of the country and its people," she observed.

The BNP chief was addressing a big students gathering at the Ramna

present alliance government's independent foreign policy, she said.

Khaleda accused the previous Awami League (AL) government of destroying the national economy, pursuing a subservient foreign policy, spreading corruption and crime. The alliance government has greatly succeeded in salvaging the country from the ruins and is now steering it to a bright future.

"Now we have almost freed the country from crime and we are now fighting corruption. We shall step up the drive against corrupt people and eliminate corruption from the

country's importance in the world. This shows the success of the

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PHOTO: STAR

A woman blows a bugle during a Narayanganj Pourashabha election campaign in the Narayanganj town yesterday. The election is scheduled for January 16.

New Year revellers stay indoors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

New Year celebrations in the city were rather different this year. Unlike previous years, a small number of people came out on the streets to welcome the New Year.

In the past, fireworks and crackers would break the silence of the night, and a huge number of people used to enjoy the first hours of the New Year, dancing and singing on the streets.

But this time around, most people remained indoors and the streets were almost empty after 11:00pm.

It was the police, BDR and

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Embezzlement of Tk 2.5cr 11 Agrani Bank staff in Khulna sued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The District Anti-Corruption Bureau, Khulna, filed separate cases with Khulna thana on Tuesday night accusing 14 persons including 11 former and present officials of the corporate branch of Agrani Bank, Khulna, for embezzling nearly Tk 2.5 crore from the bank through fraud.

The accused include principal officer of the bank Atul Chandra Dey, senior principal officer Abu Taher Mian, cash officers Depal Chandra Roy and Biswas Karimul Islam, officer-in-charge of clearing department Lutfor Rahman, his younger brother Manik Khan, brother-in-law Nurul Islam and cousin Ashraf

Hossain, former senior principal officers Hafizur Rahman, Nurul Islam and Sunil Dutta, and former principal officer Shib Das Sarder.

Inspector Abu Mohammad Arif Siddiqui and assistant inspector Abul Hashem Kazi of the District Anti-Corruption Bureau are complainants of the five separate cases filed in connection with the embezzlement.

According to the FIRs, the accused in connivance with each other embezzled a total of Tk 2.44 crore from August 6, 1994, till February 27, 2001, by fraudulent means. The principal accused of all the five cases is Lutfor Rahman, officer-in-charge of the clearing

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RAPT IN COLOUR AND FRAGRANCE



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

A girl looks at flowers on display. The Bureau of Export Promotion organised a flower fair at Agargaon in the city yesterday.

New JCD body formed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A new central committee of the ruling BNP's student front Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) was formed yesterday with Shahabuddin Laitu as its president and Azizul Bari Helal general secretary.

According to a BNP press release, the other office bearers of the committee are Senior Vice-president Sultan Salauddin Tuku, Joint-secretary Selimuzzaman Selim and Organising Secretary Shafiq Bari Babu.

Laitu was the general secretary of the central committee of the JCD that was suspended in 2001.

The BNP press release signed by its Students' Affairs Secretary

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'Deployment of army not a permanent solution'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deployment of the army is not a permanent solution to the law and order slide, said Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday.

The president of the Gono Forum termed crime the main barrier to development and said the major political parties in the country patronise criminals for their own gains.

In his address to a public meeting as chief guest at the Town Hall at

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Transport leaders demand 10pc bus fare hike

UNB, Dhaka

Transport leaders at a meeting with Communications Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda yesterday demanded implementation of the decision to raise bus fare by 10 per cent.

Bus fare should be increased in conformity with the rise of various kinds of toll, import tax, hike of maintenance cost and taxes on tyre and tube in the transport sector, Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samity said during a meeting with Barrister Huda.

Samity president principal Md Abdur Rashid Khan, general secretary MA Baten, additional secretary general Md Saiful Alam and other leaders attended the meeting.

During the meeting the association leaders urged government to arrange a pre-budget dialogue with the representatives of transport sector aiming at solving the existing problems in this sector.

AL calls for an end to HR violation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) has vowed to free the country from repression in 2003 and urged the government to end human-rights violation experienced last year.

The newly elected 73-strong AL Central Working Committee (ALCWC) took up a set of resolutions and decisions at its first meeting at the party headquarters on the Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday, with AL President Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The three-hour meeting over, Hasina told the waiting newsmen that the country went through a horrible period of repression and

torture in 2002. "I hope 2003 would be a year of freedom and people would be relieved of repression, crime and corruption."

Hasina expressed concern over the indifference of the government towards the victims of cold wave countrywide. "Two hundred people died from cold and the government is doing nothing at all," she said.

The ALCWC meeting decided that four AL teams would soon fan out across different northern districts to help the cold-hit people out.

The plan for the humanitarian visit will be laid out at a meeting of the party secretariat tomorrow in the city.

Following yesterday's meeting, the new committee placed a wreath

at the Central Shaheed Minar and later garlanded the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum.

Besides, decisions were taken to place wreaths at the National Memorial on January 5 and make a ziarat to the grave of Bangabandhu at Tungipara, Gopalganj, on January 10.

In her introductory speech at the ALCWC meeting, Hasina urged her party colleagues to make use of the new fusion of old and new leaders in the party.

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Police yet to find a clue to engr Shafiq murder

SHAMIM ASHRAF

Police have failed to find a clue to the murder of engineer Shafiq-ul-Mowla Tipu even four days after recovering his body.

The body of Shafiq with marks of injury was recovered by Ramna police from the Shaheed Minar premises on the campus of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) at about 9:00 on Saturday night.

Sources said the engineer was missing since he left his

Shugunbagicha residence in the city at about 8:00 pm on Saturday. Earlier, he attended a meeting at a business firm, Ananda Group, at Naya Paltan till 7:30 pm.

As Shafiq did not return to his residence that night, his elder brother SM Shawkat Osman, senior assistant secretary at the education ministry, tried to contact him over his mobile phone at about 11:30 am on Sunday.

In a case filed with the Ramna Police Station, Shawkat said an unidentified person responded to

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Book fair opens PM declares 2003 as 'library year'

UNB, Dhaka

Declaring 2003 as "Library Year", Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday urged all concerned in the domain of books to be active in bringing about a library movement in the country during this period.

She assured that her government would provide all necessary assistance in development of books and libraries in the country. "Set up library in every locality and village; buy, read and present books," the PM said making a public call as she opened a book fair in the capital.

She was speaking at the inaugural function of the fortnight-long 9th

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Cold waves on the way

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two to three cold waves may sweep across northwestern, northeastern and southwestern regions of the country this month, said a weathercast yesterday.

During the moderate to severe cold sweeps, the mercury level may range between five and eight degrees Celsius.

According to the meteorological department, another two to three cold waves at seven to ten degrees Celsius are likely to blow elsewhere.

Meanwhile, a centenarian named Monir Uddin Ahmed of

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