

Defiant DPRK dumps NPT

REUTERS, Seoul

North Korea withdrew from the global nuclear arms control treaty Friday, escalating a crisis over its weapons ambitions just as two of its diplomats met Washington's former UN ambassador to try to end the impasse.

But Pyongyang said it had no intention of developing nuclear weapons and offered Washington a way out of the standoff.

The reclusive communist state, which Washington has bracketed with Iraq and Iran in an "axis of evil," announced that it was pulling out of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in a statement carried by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

Accusing Washington of seeking to topple its political system, it also

denounced the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as an American stooge and rejected the UN nuclear watchdog's call to readmit expelled inspectors.

"The government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in a statement today declared its withdrawal from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and its total freedom from the binding force of the safeguards accord with the International Atomic Energy Agency," KCNA said.

The unprecedented action sparked swift condemnation and alarm around the world. Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi demanded an immediate retraction and said he would raise the matter during an ongoing visit to Russia.

Moscow, one of North Korea's few remaining friends, voiced alarm.

Australia said it would send a senior delegation to Pyongyang next week to try to break the nuclear impasse and France said it was time for the UN Security Council to act.

The yen fell to a three-and-a-half-year low against the euro. South Korean and Japanese stocks fell on the news and the won slipped against the US dollar.

"Though we pull out of the NPT, we have no intention to produce nuclear weapons and our nuclear activities at this stage will be confined only to peaceful purposes such as the production of electricity," the North's statement said.

"If the US drops its hostile policy to stifle the DPRK and stops its nuclear threat to the DPRK, the DPRK may prove through a separate verification between the DPRK and the US that it does not make any

ASM NURUNNABI

Dhaka City's wholesale markets are important business centres catering to alimentary needs of the large population of a burgeoning metropolis and where thousands of people find employment. But as with the city's kitchen markets, these wholesale markets also present a dismal picture, often vitiating the environment of the neighbourhood they are located in.

During the last decade or so, there has been a large-scale expansion of the city as its population has grown by leaps and bounds. This population increase has naturally caused a corresponding increase in demand of consumer items, but this reality is not reflected in the number of wholesale markets which has remained almost the same over a long period of time. The handful of wholesale markets supplies various consumer items for the large number of retail

DOWN TO EARTH

City's wholesale markets need clean-up

markets which keep growing all the time.

The wholesale transactions at these markets amount to crores of taka. These markets supply various consumer items, such as rice, pulses, vegetables, fruits, medicines, etc. to the retail markets. Business activities centring round them have steadily increased over the years with the growth of various modes of road and water trans-

The city's Badamtoli Bazar is one of the well-known wholesale trading centres of the country. Businessmen trading in various commodities invest crores of taka here. The main characteristic of business at this centre is future trading, which means trading by making investments a year in advance on the basis of predetermined prices of commodities.

In this kind of trading, three parties are involved -- the growers, the local traders acting as middlemen and the wholesale businessmen based at Badamtoli. Such trading by advance investments mainly covers commodities like rice, pulses and fruits of various kinds. Advance payment is made to the middlemen at a certain percentage, usually 25

Bangabandhu's homecoming day observed

UNB, Gopalganj

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday placed wreath and offered foteha at the mazar of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Tungipara on his homecoming day.

Bangabandhu returned to independent Bangladesh on this day in 1972 from a jail in Pakistan, where he was incarcerated soon after the Pakistani occupation forces began a crackdown on March 25, 1971.

After juma prayers yesterday, a milad mahfil was held at the mazar complex, which was followed by a discussion on the significance of the day.

The speakers at the discussion meeting said that although the country was liberated on December 16, 1971 after a nine-month bloody war, the victory was complete with the return of Bangabandhu, the country's independence leader.

During his brief stopover in New

Hospital waste disposal still on drawing board

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has not yet developed a policy guideline for hospital waste management even after three years of a decision.

The health directorate decided in August 1999 to prepare a policy guideline on urgent basis for hospital waste management, focusing on setting up of a common or regional plant for their treatment.

The file is shelved at the health directorate and none reviewed it in the last couple of years, said a source there.

At present there is no law for proper disposal of hospital waste. The Environment Conservation Act

1995 and the Rules 1997 partially regulate management of all types of waste but there is no specific mention about management of hospital waste in those.

More than 60 hospitals and 500 private clinics in the country generate highly infectious and often toxic (chemical) waste everyday, which are disposed of in public waste bins or littered in areas around those.

These may be classified as infectious, chemical, pathological, pharmaceutical and radioactive wastes, all potentially hazardous.

Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical Hospital, National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases

(NICVD), Suhrawardi General Hospital, Pangu Hospital and Holy Family Red Crescent Hospital are some of the major hospitals in the city generating huge quantities of waste.

According to experts and the system followed in developed countries, hospital wastes are classified and separated at hospitals before disposal.

Infectious and toxic chemical wastes are collected in containers and treated scientifically to neutralise their affect before disposal.

Peruvian plane with 42 goes missing

REUTERS, Lima

Rescue teams searched a rugged area of Peru's Amazon jungle on Thursday night for a Tans Peru plane carrying 46 people that lost contact with air traffic controllers as it approached a small mountain airport.

The Fokker F-28 plane was declared in emergency at 8:43 a.m., minutes before it was to land in Chachapoyas, according to Jorge Belevan, spokesman for the state airline.

He told Reuters ground rescue teams would search through the night in an 18-mile radius of the airport.

"The weather is making the search and rescue more difficult," said Vice President Raul Diez Canseco, flanked by ministers at a news conference. "We regret this delicate situation and we hope to

have news in the next few hours because we have up to now been unable to locate the plane."

Earlier, Tans said heavy rain had forced Peru's army and air force to call off air searches. January is part of the rainy season in Peru's jungle.

Belevan said authorities hoped the plane, built in 1975, was able to make an emergency landing near Chachapoyas.

Tans Flight 222 took off from the coastal city of Chiclayo at 8:17 a.m. for the 30-minute flight to Chachapoyas, which is 7,600 feet above sea level.

The plane was carrying 42 passengers, including seven children and one infant, and four crew members, Belevan said. Two foreigners were on it, Belevan said.

Chachapoyas, 390 miles north of the Peruvian capital, Lima, is often visited by tourists traveling to

Korean ship with salt 'missing' from Mongla

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

M.V. Suntiil, a South Korean ship carrying over 9,000 metric tonnes of crude salt, has been 'missing' from Fairway buoy, near Hiron Point, since January 5.

The Mongla Port Authority and the Bangladesh Navy could not trace the ship till Thursday, despite a frantic search. The search was conducted following a High Court order on January 1, upon a writ petition filed by 27 salt traders of Khulna Zone who had imported the crude salt from India.

The Korean ship reportedly arrived at Chittagong Port in the last week of November 2002, carrying imported crude-salt-filled bags from Kandala seaport of India. After unloading 7,829 MT at Chittagong port, the ship was supposed to arrive at Mongla port with the remaining 9,214 metric

tonnes of crude salt imported from India.

Sources said Ocean Wave, the shipping agent, informed the Mongla Port Authority that the ship had anchored at Fairway buoy on December 25.

Accordingly, the port authority asked pilots Abdullah and Barhua to bring the ship to buoy 7. But the pilots did not see the ship at Fairway as claimed by the shipping agent. The port authority believes that the shipping agent of the chartered ship misinformed them about the location of the ship.

According to the port authority, M.V. Suntiil never entered the port channel. The shipping agent, on the other hand, believes that the ship fled the Bangladesh territorial water, soon after receiving the High Court order to detain her.

Respect court order, free Saber: AI

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Amnesty International (AI) has urged the government to immediately release detained Awami League Organising Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury, respecting court orders.

It also urged the government to ensure safety and wellbeing of Saber and to allow him to meet his family and lawyer.

Expressing grave concern at Saber's continued detention despite court order for his release, AI said prisoners remanded for interrogation are often subjected to torture. The government has failed to protect prisoners from torture and bring to justice those responsible for this.

Continued harassment of Saber as violation of his right to freedom of expression. The government's "defiance" of court orders for his release is denial of his fundamental right to be protected by law, the AI said in a press release.

All four sea trucks in Barisal now out of order

A CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

All the four newly procured Chinese sea trucks pressed into service in inland waterways in the southern region are now out of order before expiry of their one-year warranty period, IWTA sources said.

Khizir 5, 6, 7, and 8, handed over to the government last year, were put in Barisal-Lazmpur, Kalaia-Nazirpur and Daulat Khan-Char Alexander routes. Those are now in dockyards for repair, creating immense sufferings to people in the region.

Their operators said they often faced mechanical problems in operating the vessels. These are

not suitable for waterway conditions in Bangladesh, they claimed.

Moreover, these are "white elephants" as their fuel consumption and maintenance cost are too high compared to similar vessels built in the country.

On the other hand, four other similar sea trucks -- Khizir 1, 2, 3, and 4 -- built in the country earlier, are giving good service for years without any major problem, they said.

The four Chinese sea trucks, two Row-Row ferries and one ship were procured during the Awami League government under a Tk 90 crore programme, Tk 60 crore of which was provided by the Chinese government as loan, the sources said.

Crackers hurled on police van in Khulna: 4 injured

BSS, Khulna

Three police constables and a rickshawpuller were injured when some miscreants hurled crackers on a police van at Khan Jahan Ali Road here yesterday evening.

The injured constables are Mozammel Hoq, 26, Mohammad Jakaria, 25, and Yusuf, 26 and the rickshawpuller is Lokman Sardar, 28.

Police said a gang of unidentified miscreants threw crackers on the police van when it was passing through the PTI crossing at about 7.45 pm.

The injured were rushed to Khulna General Hospital. Later, the police constables were shifted to Khulna Medical College Hospital.

None was arrested till 9-30 pm yesterday.

7 army men hurt in Natore road accident

UNB, Natore

Seven army personnel were injured in a road accident at Bhatachhara in the town yesterday morning.

Police said a Bogra-bound truck carrying army men skidded off the road and fell into a ditch at around 10am, leaving seven of them injured.

Of the injured, Akram Hossain, Zakir Hossain, Sabir and Rezaul were first admitted to local hospital and later shifted to Bogra Combined Military Hospital.



Police officials check arms and ammunition at the Lalbagh Police Station, recovered in an anticrime operation in the city's Azimpur area yesterday.

Settle VC issue, Muslehuddin urges NSU authorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muslehuddin Ahmad in a press release on Thursday said he became the lawful vice-chancellor (VC) of North South University (NSU), as the university foundation board withdrew its appeal against a High Court verdict on re-designation.

In line with the Private University Act, the government re-designated Muslehuddin as the VC to the NSU from the president in the American university system, the press release added.

But the North South University Foundation (NSUF) Board filed a writ with the High Court, challenging the legality of re-designation.

On July 25, 1999, the court declared lawful the re-designation of Muslehuddin.

Following the court judgement, the NSUF filed an appeal with the Appellate Division against the High Court verdict. Later, the NSUF

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Jan 11		5-30 pm
Jan 12	6-44 am	

Prayer Timings		
Jan 11		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-55	4-10
Maghrib	5-35	5-41
Esha	7-30	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Burnt skin, tissues to be removed from Mimi's body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Doctors at the City Hospital will remove today more burnt skin and tissues from the body of Monika Afroz Mimi, now fighting for life after she was set afire allegedly by her cricketer boyfriend Shafiuddin Babu.

Babu and his friend Arif allegedly set her afire on January 4 in front of her hostel at West Razabazar in the city. She is a third year student of architecture at Ahsanullah University.

The burnt skin and tissues will be removed so that infection can not harm undamaged parts of the body, Mimi's family told The Daily Star last night.

On Wednesday, the doctors removed damaged skin and tissues from her hands. Undamaged tissues taken from her sole will be grafted in the hands on Monday or Tuesday, they said.

Doctors have also sought artificial membrane from the Atomic