

# Japan's new PM rejects WWII 'war criminal' label

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's new premier Shinzo Abe risked new controversy yesterday ahead of a fence-mending visit to Asian neighbors, insisting World War II leaders tried by US-led forces were not "war criminals."

The conservative leader, who has come under repeated grilling over his views on history, rejected the "war criminals" label one day after making more conciliatory remarks about Japan's past.

"The people who are said to be so-called Class-A criminals were tried and convicted as war criminals at the Tokyo tribunal, but they were not war criminals under domestic laws," Abe said during a parliamentary session.

"That also was the case for my relative," he added.

Abe, 52, is a grandson of Nobusuke Kishi, who served in the wartime cabinet and helped supervise the industrialization of Manchukuo — the puppet state Japan set up in northeastern China.

After the war, Kishi was jailed by US forces as a top war criminal although he was not tried. Kishi later served as prime minister from 1957 to 1960.

Abe, Japan's first prime minister born after World War II, is seen as holding more headline views on history than his predecessor, Junichiro Koizumi.

# Benazir presses to return for elections

REUTERS, Boston

Former Pakistan premier Benazir Bhutto said on Thursday she wants to return to run in 2007 elections and accused the country's military ruler of failing to tackle religious schools that promote global terrorism.

"I've been out for a very long time — since 1999. The people need to hear from me," the exiled opposition leader told Reuters. "If the people of Pakistan honour me with that position, I would like to come back as prime minister."

Benazir and exiled former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, once a bitter rival, formed the multi-party Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy after President Pervez Musharraf seized power in 1999 in a bloodless coup.

Both want to return to Pakistan but Musharraf has vowed to block that and has dismissed a growing alliance between her Pakistan Peoples Party and Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League as irrelevant.

He has accused both of corruption — allegations they deny — and most people believe that, with Sharif and Benazir outside the country, elections by the end of 2007 will return national and provincial assemblies that will vote Musharraf in again.

"If the leaders of the religious parties should be allowed to campaign in Pakistan, the leaders of the moderate parties should be allowed to return to Pakistan and campaign," Benazir said after attending a conference in Boston.

Benazir said a blast near Musharraf's army residence in the northern city of Rawalpindi on Wednesday showed that terrorism was reaching deeper into Pakistani cities, partly because militants still thrive in Islamic seminaries, or madrasas.

"This is a worrying decline in the

# Dialogue to continue

FROM PAGE 1  
made with Bhuiyan, Jilil told Hasina that he is optimistic about the dialogue.

Sources said Hasina told Jilil that the development will be elaborately discussed at the ALCWC meeting today. The meeting will also discuss the next course of agitation programmes against the government to press home the demand for electoral reforms.

"If the government does not concede the demand for electoral reforms, the people will march to Dhaka with whatever they have to realise the demand on the day KM Hasan will take charge," Obaidul Quader, a senior AL leader, said adding that they will continue their movement on the street while the talks to break the political deadlock is on.

On the other hand, Bhuiyan yesterday talked to his senior colleagues in the cabinet and informed them about the development of the dialogue. He will also sit with three other secretaries general of the components of the ruling alliance today. Before sitting for the third round of dialogue tomorrow, Bhuiyan will fix his final strategy in consultation with Khaleda Zia following the meeting.

As the two parties sat for the first time in 11 years, a number of leaders and lawmakers of both BNP and AL, journalists and common people thronged the parliament much before the second round of talks started yesterday. A mood of festivity was visceral in and around the parliament building.

Accompanied by party lawmakers and leaders, AL second-in-command Abdul Jalil entered the standing committee room at 10:57am. Shortly afterwards, he was joined by his counterpart Bhuiyan. Deputy Speaker Akhtar Hameed Siddiqui and opposition Chief Whip Abudus Shaheed received them amid incessant clicks of camera shutters.

But when the senior leaders were leaving the parliament house

# No step yet

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in April 2005), the Bangladesh government has not taken any measure to restore human rights and grant the citizens of Bangladesh fundamental rights.

"Rather terrorism continues and hundreds of people have been killed by armed forces without any trial. The hostility of police has been increased in recent days," the letter noted.

It said members of the EU parliament see no reason why the Bangladesh government has failed to arrest any real culprit in connection with the grenade attack on August 21 on the public meeting of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, when more than 24 people were killed and over 500 injured.

"We believe that failure to punish the real culprits, who are responsible for the grenade attack on Sheikh Hasina, Shah AMS Kibria and on other political leaders, will encourage them to carry out similar terrorist activities in Bangladesh.

"The EU parliament members believe that in order to strengthen the democracy of Bangladesh, it's foremost important to hold free, fair and transparent legislative elections."

They said the present Election Commission has failed to establish a congenial situation for free and fair elections.

"These people were not tried under Japanese laws," he said, referring to war criminals. "It's a fact that I, as prime minister, must not decide whether they are war criminals or not."

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# India close to missile deal with Israel

PTI, AFP, New Delhi

India is close to wrapping up a Rs. 1,800-crore deal with Israel for buying Spyder quick reaction air defence missile systems.

The Indian Air Force is purchasing 18 Spyder missile systems, Air Chief Marshal S.P. Tyagi told reporters here on Thursday. The system's Python-5 and Derby missiles will give the IAF the capability to engage enemy aircraft, helicopters, unmanned air vehicles, drones and precision-guided munitions.

"Price negotiations are over and the deal has been sent to the Cabinet Committee on Security for clearance," Air Chief Marshal Tyagi said.

The system can provide air defence for fixed assets such as airbases, nuclear installations, VVIP buildings and point and area defence for mobile forces.

Israel and the European consortium MBDT were in the contention. Meanwhile, India is in talks with France to purchase several second-hand Mirage 2000 fighters to bolster its air force, a diplomat said Friday.

"The Indian air force is seeking to acquire some aircraft quickly," the diplomat told AFP, without giving numbers, although the Indian press has said 40 may be bought.

"The figure of 40 does not match the reality," the diplomat said.

French defence ministry officials were due to meet India's air force chief later Friday.

Indian air force spokesman squadron leader Mahesh Upasani said the proposal to acquire the jets had "come to us from France".

France and India have also been

# RMG workers

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demanded fixing the minimum wage at Tk 3,000.

Their five-point demand includes immediate implementation of the tripartite agreement among the workers, owners and the government, stopping discharge of the workers from the garment factories across the country and paying arrears and Eid bonus before the Eid-ul-Fitr.

Termining the recently passed Bangladesh Labour Law 2006 "undemocratic", they said it would not serve the workers' interest. They demanded cancellation of the law.

At a rally at Mukhtangon yesterday morning, NGWF demanded implementation of the trilateral, bilateral and factory-level contracts.

UFGW also held a rally at the same place in the afternoon and said the declaration of minimum wages is a 'betrayal' with the workers' movement for realisation of longstanding demands.

They urged the workers to observe a 'hartal-like' strike by

# Violent protests

FROM PAGE 1  
Chudanga district and put blockades on roads and railways for three hours from 8:00am protesting the ongoing load shedding and power outage.

The protesters chanted slogans and demonstrated all over the town for uninterrupted power. They warned of tougher programmes if the outage continues during the Ramadan.

Locals vandalised a power substation and staged demonstration by burning tyres on the highway on Thursday night, reports our RU correspondent.

On the same night, students of different residential halls of RU brought out a procession on the campus for power supply.

As the procession passed through Kazla and Binodpur, locals spontaneously took position on the highway and put barricade on the road for hours.

The combined rally later reached Talaimari power station and the demonstrators threw stones and bricksbats at the station.

They also tried to set fire to it but police resisted.

The Power Supply Division officials, who fled the station to escape the public wrath, sought additional police forces to guard the sub-station.

Against the demand of 45 MW power for the areas, only 12-15 MW was transmitted on Thursday and Friday, Power Development Board sources said.

Expressing dissatisfaction over the power crisis, Rajshahi traders said their business in the month of Ramadan is being badly hampered due to the crisis.

UNB adds from Habiganj: Power generation at Shahji Bazar power

# Mayor Minu

FROM PAGE 1  
city will reach 50 lakh," he said. A fresh water supply project with a cost of Tk 46 crore is also under implementation, he added.

Under the fresh-water project approved by Ecenc on October 4, around 300km-long water supply line will be installed to supply treated water from the Padma river, he said.

The mayor, however, said he had asked the power authorities to supply power to all households and mosques at least during the sehri and iftar.

# India close to missile deal with Israel

discussing for several months a new maintenance contract for New Delhi's 52 Mirage fighters built by Dassault, the diplomat said.

Indian sources added that India's navy is also talking to Dassault about purchasing the Mirage-2000MKI, a maritime version of the French jet.

India has plans to purchase 126 fighter jets at a cost of up to nine billion dollars to replace its ageing MiG-21s.

Dassault's Rafale warplane is among the contenders along with US firm Lockheed Martin's F-18 and Russia's MiG-35.

New Delhi is expected to issue a request for proposals in January, the sources said.

India has 34 air squadrons, each with 12 operational jets, against a sanctioned strength of 40 squadrons.

The MiG-21s have been dubbed "flying coffins" by the media due to their frequent crashes. In March, India's defence ministry released figures showing that 54 MiG-21 fighter jets had crashed in the past seven years.

# Depression

FROM PAGE 16  
within 44-km of the depression centre is about 40kph, rising to 50kph in gusts or squalls. Sea will remain moderate.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been advised to keep hoisted local cautionary signal number one.

All fishing boats and trawlers over the north Bay and deep sea have been advised to come close to the coast and proceed with caution until further notice.

# Mufti Hannan

FROM PAGE 16  
was earlier placed on a 120-day remand in connection with the August 17 bomb blast cases filed with different police stations in the city. So, he appealed for rejecting his remand prayer. No lawyer stood for Hannan.

After the hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Shamsul Alam granted a five-day remand.

Meantime, two Huji members—Hafez Naim Ahmed alias Arif and Badrul Alam—arrested in connection with the bomb attack on British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury were also shown arrested in the Ramna Batamul bomb blast case. The court fixed October 16 for hearing on the petition, seeking a 10-day remand for the two.

Ten people died and several others were injured on April 14, 2001 when bombs went off at Ramna Batamul.

On June 14, 2001, one of the arrestees, Maulana Akbar Hussain, gave a confessional statement to a metropolitan magistrate and disclosed names of Mufti Hannan and others involved in the blasts.

# Ship survey

FROM PAGE 16  
Council to impose sanctions that do not involve the use of armed forces, such as economic penalties, breaking diplomatic relations or banning air travel.

The council gave Iran until Aug. 31 to spend enrichment in return for a package of incentives or face punishments under Article 41, but the council has held off any action because of talks between European foreign policy chief Javier Solana and Iran's top negotiator Ali Larjani.

Solana conceded Wednesday that "endless hours" of talks with Larjani had made little progress and suggested the dispute could wind up at the UN soon. But he stressed Thursday that dialogue with Iran must continue even if nuclear talks fail.

"We shall not spare any effort to try to move forward when it is possible," he said in Rome. "It is not possible at the moment, but that doesn't mean it will not be possible later."

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Moscow remains opposed to sanctions against Iran for now.

"Some members of the six nations already want to impose sanctions against Iran. We, however, think first we must continue multilateral actions," he said.

"I think that until all diplomatic possibilities have been exhausted, sanctions would be extreme," Lavrov told reporters in Warsaw after meeting with his Polish counterpart. "I think we need to do all we can to push Iran toward starting negotiations."

On Tuesday, diplomats said Western council members the United States, Britain and France favour an embargo on sales of nuclear or missile technology to Tehran as a first sanctions step. That would be followed by other sanctions, including travel bans on Iranian officials and the freezing of their assets.

Referring to the siege programme to the Ahmadiyya structures in Pataukhali, Chittagong, Khulna, Bogra and Saitkhira, IKNMB Emrur Maolana Mahmudul Hasan Mamtazi said, "The government was forced to ban all kinds of books of the Ahmadiyyas following our movement."

At least 10,000 people, mostly civilians, have died in Assam since the insurgency began more than two decades ago.

There are also several smaller militant groups fighting for the rights of ethnic minorities operate in the area.

The militants say India's central government exploits the northeast's rich natural resources while doing little to improve its poor infrastructure or to alleviate widespread unemployment.

The outdoor patient centre will be extended later to home care service and indoor facilities, he said, adding, "Philanthropic groups need to come forward to promote the service as we often cannot do our best for budgetary constraints."

According to the World Health Organisation, there are 10 lakh cancer patients in Bangladesh while two lakh more are diagnosed every year. According to the National Cancer Institute, about 80 per cent of these patients come to hospitals when the disease is at a far advanced stage.

Inadequate screening services, limited access to diagnostic facilities, few cancer specialists and the existing socioeconomic condition ultimately suggest that more and more patients would be requiring palliative care.

The number of patients diagnosed with other incurable progressive illnesses like AIDS, motor neuron disease, end-stage kidney, respiratory and cardiac condition that requires palliative care is also significant, experts said on the eve of World Hospice and Palliative Care Day today.

The theme of the day this year is "Access to care for all". Over 33 million of 58 million people dying each year globally need palliative care, the experts said. Two-thirds of those in need of palliative care live in the developing countries that have less than 10 per cent of the world resources for health care personnel, drugs and equipment, they added.

In many developed countries, people receive service from outpatient consultations, home services and inpatient home care services. Bangladesh has just started its journey through the outpatient consultation centre at the BSMMU and soon it will be able to extend the service, said Nezamuddin Ahmed, associate professor of anaesthesiology at BSMMU.

"It is obviously a timely and significant initiative. It is important to dignify our death, even more for those who have been suffering from incurable diseases," said Director of National Cancer Institute Prof Sharif ul Alam.

Under the upgrading project for National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital, a palliative care unit with 20 beds and trained staffs will start soon, he said.

The move is part of an anti-graft drive by the junta that ousted Thaksin in a bloodless coup on September 19.

In one of the junta's first actions, the generals reinstated the National Counter Corruption Commission, which had been dormant for more than a year, and set up its own high-powered anti-graft panel with the power to seize assets from Thaksin and other former officials.

After its first meeting Friday, the NCCC said it would release the financial records, making public detailed information about the assets of billionaire Thaksin and everyone who was in his cabinet.

"The NCCC will publicly disclose the asset declarations of former prime minister Thaksin and his cabinet ministers on October 20," spokesman Klanarong Chanthick said.

The release will include 208 financial records running from the start of Thaksin's government in 2001, he said.

"Even though Thaksin is living in exile overseas, he must submit a final asset account" like any other premier who leaves office, Klanarong said.

# 17 killed in Pak sectarian battle for a shrine

AFP, Peshawar

Seventeen people have been killed during fighting between Sunni and Shia tribesmen over ownership of a shrine in northwest Pakistan, security officials said yesterday.

The tribes exchanged gun, rocket and mortar fire after the dispute erupted several days ago over the holy site in the festive Orakzai tribal district, a senior security official told AFP.

"We have a large presence of security personnel over there and we are trying to restore order," the official said on condition of anonymity.

Officials said the trouble broke out when clerics from the rival sects both tried to occupy the shrine, with each side claiming it belonged to them.

Clashes also have erupted in the neighbouring districts of Khurram and Hangu, an official at the Federally Administered Tribal Areas secretariat said, without giving details.

Pakistan's 80 percent majority Sunnis and minority Shias generally live together peacefully but outbreaks of sectarian violence and bombings have claimed thousands of lives in the past two decades.

More than 30 people were killed in a suicide bombing and subsequent fighting in February in Hangu.

Pakistan's tribal areas are awash with weapons left over from the anti-Soviet "jihad" in Afghanistan during the 1980s.

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