

I had to agree with Ishaq when he ousted Benazir: Beg

ISLAMABAD, Sept 27: Pakistan's former army chief Aslam Beg has again criticised the destruction of Iraq by the US-led allied forces for the liberation of Kuwait, it was reported today, reports AFP.

General Beg, whose controversial statements at the peak of the Gulf war embarrassed the government and reportedly annoyed Washington, defended the stance he took against massive bombing of Iraqi installations in February. "I stand by my thesis," he was quoted as telling a group of Pakistani journalists while launching his Foundation for Research in National Defence and Security (FRIENDS) here Thursday.

The General, who retired in mid-August after completing his three year tenure, said, "nobody has the right to liberate a country in order to liberate another country," the Muslim daily said.

He took over after General Mohammed Zia ul Haq died in a plane crash in August 1988, and served under three successive prime ministers. His statements on major issues frequently caused ripples and also triggered rumours that he may have political ambitions.

At his first press conference after his retirement, he revealed that both President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had offered him a senior position in the government but he had declined.

"I do not work with the people who do not trust me," he said admitting that until his

last day in the office there were doubts about him.

Asked if he was a key player in the ouster of former premier Benazir Bhutto he said he had to agree with the president who dismissed her on August 6, 1990, for alleged abuse of power during her 20-month rule.

"I was chief of the Army Staff and the President being the Supreme Commander was my immediate boss," he said. "If I had not agreed with him, I had two options: either to resign or assume power," Beg said adding that he adopted the easiest course.

The General urged both the government and the opposition to end their confrontation and resolve issues politically. He ruled out the possibility of contesting the next presidential polls due in 1993.

"Politics is not my cup of tea," he said, stressing that FRIENDS would be a non-political, non-governmental organisation.

It would try to play a constructive role in opinion building and promoting a consensus and understanding among the general public on vital issues, he said.

Observers said Beg's foundation would provide a forum to like-minded officers and intellectuals to express their views on important social and political problems.

Membership will be open to research scholars, specialists, experts, writers, speakers, journalists and retired civil and military officers, he said.

Female lawmakers

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Asia had the highest proportion of female politicians, with 12.6 percent, closely followed by the European region at 12.5 percent and the Americas at 12 percent. Arab states were at the bottom with only 3.7 percent.

But within Europe there were huge variations, the survey showed.

The percentage of women in the Finnish parliament rose from 31.5 percent in June 1989 to 38.5 percent this year, while in Austria it nearly doubled from 10.9 percent to 21.8 percent.

By contrast, in Romania the number of women in parliament has plummeted from 34.4 percent to 3.6 percent since 1989. Multi-party elections in Albania caused female representation to drop from 28.8 percent to 3.6 percent; in Czechoslovakia from 29.5 percent to 8.7 percent; in Hungary from 20.9 percent to 7.0 percent, and in Bulgaria from 21.0 percent to 8.5 percent, it said.

Mongolia recorded a decline from 24.9 percent to 2.1 percent after democratic elections in 1990.

The Geneva-based IPU groups parliaments from 111 countries.



Homeless people of the city staged a rally in front of the National Press Club on Friday demanding an end to their plight. —Star photo

Mammoth Delhi rally blasts economic policies

Eight Indian parties threaten to launch movement against Rao govt

NEW DELHI, Sept 27: India's centrist and leftist opposition parties today blasted the new government over spiralling prices and its economic policies at a mammoth rally in the heart of the national capital, reports AFP.

Leaders of eight parties threatened to launch a nationwide campaign if Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's three-month-old minority government did not rapidly change its fiscal policies.

They promised to bring down prices in 100 days. But what is the reality. Prices of everything are shooting to the sky," former Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh told the rally in a 25-minute stinging speech in Hindi.

He said the government's policies aimed at opening up India's economy to attract foreign capital and overcome its worst fiscal crisis were the wrong ones.

An estimated half a million opposition party activists, mainly communists, thronged the rally site near the federal Parliament to hear speeches from leaders of centrist and

leftist groupings.

The site was a sea of hammer-and-sickle red flags of the communists and green flags of the centrist Janata Dal (People's Party) of VP Singh, who headed India's first minority government from December 1989 to November 1990.

Thousands of armed police and paramilitary forces were on duty, but there were no disturbances.

The crowd had earlier marched in a procession nearly 10 kilometers (six miles) across New Delhi, waving party flags and banners.

Many listeners climbed on trees all around the meeting ground. Today's gathering was the first show of opposition strength since the Congress(I) Party headed by Rao took power June 21 after emerging as the front runner in elections marred by Rajiv Gandhi's assassination.

VP Singh and communist politicians also criticised Rao's administration for selling gold in the world market and seeking heavy borrowings from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to check falling

foreign exchange reserves.

New Delhi has undertaken sweeping economic reforms, beginning with a steep devaluation of the rupee and followed it by steps to liberalise trade and free industry from government controls.

"The economic policies that the government is following will mortgage our country at the hands of the West," said Harkishan Singh Surjeet, Deputy Leader of the powerful Communist Party of India (Marxist).

The opposition leaders also accused the government of not doing enough to end separatist campaigns in Punjab, Kashmir and Assam states, and urged the Prime Minister not to rely exclusively on security forces to bring peace.

The Janata Dal and communists fought the May-June general elections as allies, and oppose both the Congress Party and the opposition Hindu-revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Opposition trade unions have called for an India-wide strike on November 27 to protest the government's fiscal policies.

Gorbachev unsure about ME confce in October

MOSCOW, Sept 27: Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev questioned today whether a Mideast peace conference could be held as planned in October but said such a meeting was "necessary" to bringing peace to the region, reports AFP.

Gorbachev said it was still "possible" the conference could go ahead next month but added: "I think there are already some doubts appearing on whether the meeting would take place that soon."

"It is a necessary process," the Soviet leader said, referring to efforts to convene a peace conference, "and we have real hopes that a conference can be convened."

His remarks, made to reporters during a news conference at the Kremlin with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, came a day after US Secretary of State James Baker said in New York that talks on holding the meeting had yielded few results and that it was still too early to set a date.

Mubarak described the diplomatic efforts behind the scenes as "difficult."

He said "Arab solidarity" was an important factor in laying the ground work but stressed that for us, resolving the Palestinian problem comes before all else.

"We need to take the first step," he said, referring to holding the conference. The important thing is talks aimed at bringing about peace in the region. We need to discuss all

the issues important to all the parties."

The remarks by the two leaders came amid continuing tension between Washington and Tel Aviv over Israeli plans to expand Jewish settlements in occupied land.

Mubarak said his government was keeping in contact with the main parties involved in the Mideast peace process, including Israel and the Palestinians.

Gorbachev also praised moves by Arab countries, notably the oil-rich countries of the Arabian peninsula, to provide economic aid to the Soviet Union and said he and Mubarak had agreed to "increase the volume of trade" between their countries.

"We highly appreciate the principled position" of Mubarak's government "toward the Soviet Union," Gorbachev said.

UN inspectors

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compiled.

But David Kay, the American head of the UN team, said in a satellite telephone interview from the carpark early today with CNN television that Iraqi officials dealing with him there "express a complete lack of knowledge of what has been done in New York."

President George Bush has said he still has doubts about Iraq's willingness to allow UN inspections of its weapons of mass destruction and indicated Washington will press on with military preparations to force Baghdad to comply if necessary.

Bush told reporters at a state dinner for King Hassan II of Morocco on Thursday he was "a little skeptical" Iraqi President Saddam Hussein would comply with the UN Security Council resolutions implementing the ceasefire conditions imposed after Iraq's defeat in the Gulf war.

The arms inspections are part of the conditions. Asked about a New York Times newspaper report due to appear today, that the administration had abruptly halted a group of attack helicopters and additional war-

planes en route to Saudi Arabia on Thursday, Bush replied, "We haven't changed any plans."

He said: "We're prepared to do whatever it takes to enforce

Job quotas: Indian students take to streets for second day

NEW DELHI, Sept 27: Hundreds of students protesting caste-based job quotas today took to the streets in parts of northern India, stoning buses and clashing with police, reports AFP.

Scores of university students hijacked state-owned buses and damaged at least 10 on the second straight day of violence in the national capital, police and witnesses said.

The students also set up roadblocks in half a dozen districts, disrupting traffic and compounding problems for the police already hard-pressed on account of a mammoth opposition rally here.

A police official said there was no major violence, and that policemen were told to exercise "utmost restraint"

the resolutions."

The Times quoted officials in the Bush Administration as saying that a flight of Air Force transports carrying assault helicopters and accompanied by tanker aircraft was turned around in mid-air after it had left for Saudi Arabia.

The administration order followed a message from Saudi Arabia's Defense Minister, Sultan bin Abdul Aziz, in which he said he saw no further need for sending additional firepower, The Times said.

CU

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for violating the agreements, according to varsity sources.

The authority issued reminders to those defaulting teachers several times asking them to pay back the dues but none responded.

The source said even the authority tried to realise the dues from the organisations where they are working now abroad but proper cooperation was not received. Finding of other means, the authority has now started to issue letters to the guarantors of those teachers asking for clearing the outstanding dues.

The source said the highest were of defaulting teachers were from the department of economics. Fifty five teachers of the university are now on study leave abroad, mostly in the US and Canada.

33.6m poor in US

WASHINGTON, Sept 27: America's poor numbered 33.6 million last year, the US Census bureau said Thursday, reporting on the first increase in the population of impoverished Americans since 1983, reports AFP.

Under the bureau's 1990, benchmark for poverty a family of four earning 13,359 dollars a year or less is considered poor.

The bureau said two-thirds of the poor were white, 40 per cent were children and 11 per cent were elderly.

The census figures showed that 32 per cent of blacks were living below the poverty line, the highest level of any racial or ethnic minority group.

Hispanics were next at 28 per cent followed by Asians and Pacific islanders at 12 per cent.

The 1990 count was up 2.3 million from the previous year when the poverty line was 12.674 dollars for a family of four.

Diarrhoea

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The major rivers are flowing below their respective danger levels excepting the Surma at Kanaighat, the Kushiya at Amalshid and Sheola, the Manu at Manu railway bridge and the Meghna at Bhatrab Bazar.

UNB adds: Diarrhoea so far claimed 26 lives in the district, according to local sources. But the official figure is 8 dead from diarrhoeal diseases.

One Monwara Khatun (38) of Ekdala in the municipal area died on Friday.

Flood situation remained static in Sylhet district Friday after a rainless day and following slight reduction of onrush of flood waters from across the border.

However, situation in the haor areas of Kanaighat upazila worsened further as flood waters were entering through ten breaches caused by earlier floods in the embankment on river Surma.

Flood protection embankment in Zakiganj upazila is still threatened by the late monsoon flood which also left a large number of people marooned in Kanaighat, Companyganj, Jaintapur and Goainghat upazilas.

Social Welfare and Women Affairs Minister, and Relief Coordinator of greater Rangpur district Tariqul Islam on Friday visited flood affected Shaptibari, Bhadaf of Aditmar upazila and Baura of Patgram upazila of Lalmonirhat. He also supervised relief activities at different camps in the district.

Relief Coordinator of Rajshahi, Natore, Naogaon and Chapainawabganj districts and State Minister for Land, Kabir Hossain Thursday visited the flood affected villages of Gurudaspur and Singra upazila of Natore.

About 860 families have lost their homes today as more than 3,000 people were affected in three upazilas of Manikganj and one upazila in neighboring Tangail district following incessant rainfall over a 24-hour period.

Communication of Hartrampur upazila with the district headquarters was cut off on Friday morning as the road has gone under water at Bathimuri because of the heavy downpour.

Water level of the river Jamuna rose 8 cm in 24 hours but was flowing 48 cm below danger mark at Arichaghat on Friday afternoon.

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The Midnight File

\$8 million US aid for Nepal

KATMANDU, Sept 27: The United States Friday agreed to give aid worth \$8 million to Nepal to help speed up the economic liberalization planned by the Himalayan Kingdom's new government. Another agreement Friday promised \$2.87 million worth of non-fat milk powder and butter oil to Nepal. The US ambassador to Nepal, Julia Chang Bloch, said the products will be distributed by the state-run Dairy Development Corporation to private dairies, reports AP.

Typhoon Mireille lashes southern Japan

TOKYO, Sept 27: Typhoon Mireille lashed southern Japan today, killing at least 10 people and injuring more than 200, the national police agency said here. Some 60,000 air travellers were affected as nearly 480 domestic flights were cancelled airline officials said. Train services were disrupted over a wide area, railway company officials said while electricity companies said the typhoon caused power failures affecting 1.24 million homes, reports AFP.

Industries minister back home

Industries Minister Shamsul Islam Khan has said the US business community lauded Bangladesh's industrial policy and evinced keen interest for investment in the country. Talking to UNB at the Zia International Airport last night on his return from a 14-day trip to the United States, Khan termed the visit "very successful."

Rajshahi Board

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securing marks 847, with six letters, Rajshahi Cadet College, Abdullah-Al-Mahmud, Raj (Cadet) 5, 847, six letters of the same college and Mohammad Anisuzzaman Raj 1, 847, six letters, Rajshahi Collegiate School jointly.

5. Mohammad Shahjahan Kaiser Alam Sarkar, Gal 1, 845, six letters, Gaibandha Government High School.

6. Raifa Razzak, Bog M 511, 843 marks six letters, Bogra Government High School.

7. Sarker Hossain Shaheed Mohammad Reza, Rang (Cadet) 3, 840, six letters, Rangpur Cadet College.

8. Mohammad Rafuzzaman, Raj (Cadet) 1, 839 marks, six letters Rajshahi Cadet College, Khandakar Ali Kowar, Pab (Cadet) 2, 839, six letters, Pabna Cadet College and Fahmda Bari, Raj M 1074, 839 marks, six letters, Rajshahi Government Girls High School, Helenabad jointly.

9. Mohammad Mahubur Rahman, Raj (Cadet) 2, 838, six letters Rajshahi Cadet College.

10. Mohammad Manzurul Hasan, Rang (Cadet) 2, 836, six letters of Rangpur Cadet College.

Following is the combined (male-female) merit list in social science group of the first ten among twenty students.

Mohammad Shahjahan, roll Tetulia-120, stood first, securing 748 marks, with three letters, Haradighi High School.

Mohammad Shamim Iftikhar, Rang 1261, stood second securing 747, marks, with three letters, Rangpur High School.

Lawrence Besra, Din 1149, 738 with three letters, Saini Phillips High School.

Mohammad Nazmul Huda, Sunder-671, 737 marks, with three letters, Sundarganj Abdul Majid Government Boys' High School.

Mosammat Maslima Akter, Dhunat-M 901, 735 marks, with three letters, Dhunat Pilot Girls' High School.

Mohammad Matur Rahman, Bog-1161, 734 marks, with one letter, Bogra Zila School.

Mohammad Sahruul Islam, Shitb- (Nowab) 346, 732 marks, with two letters, Shitganj Government Model High School and Devajani Chakrabarti, Nat-M 1234, 732 marks, with four letters, Natore Government Girls' High School

He secured 869 marks with six distinctions from the Science Group. In an interview he said he used to study six to seven hours a day regularly. He had only one private teacher but his father and mother used to help him in his study.

Mahmud said he would do his higher studies in computer science.

About student politics, he said he does not like it.

He is a fan of cricket and also plays cricket.

Mushfiqur Rahman of the same school stood second in the SSC examination of the board. He got 851 marks with six distinctions from the Science Group.

His father Mohammad Ali is a medicine merchant. Mushfiq said he would also pursue his higher education in computer science.

Mushfiq used to study five to six hours a day regularly. He had also only one private teacher to help him in his study.

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The special drive launched with a view to realise the arrears gas bills and disconnect gas connection of the defaulting domestic customers of Dhaka Metropolitan Area will continue as per following schedule:

28-9-91 to 03-10-91	Zone - 1	Jatrabari, Jurain, Postogola, Demra and adjacent areas.
05-10-91 to 10-10-91	Zone - 2	Motijheel, Old Dhaka and adjacent areas.
12-10-91 to 16-10-91	Zone - 3	Dhanmondi, Azampur, Mohammadpur, Lalmatia and adjacent areas.
19-10-91 to 24-10-91	Zone - 4	Dhaka Cantonment, Gulshan, Banani, Uttara, Baridhara and adjacent areas.
26-10-91 to 31-10-91	Zone - 5	Mirpur and adjacent areas.

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Left front

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prepared a draft programme and distributed it among the probable components of the proposed front. In the draft, the front has been termed as 'Patriotic Democratic Front'.

According to the draft, the front is aimed to unite the patriotic, democratic and progressive forces of the country. CPB and NAP(M) are against branding the front as a 'left' one, rather they prefer to keep the front's door open to all democratic and patriotic forces. They are maintaining a lenient view towards Awami League and believe that there should not be any hard and fast rule to go for a united movement with AL or others on particular issues.

But the components of the 5-Party alliance are in favour of launching a front purely with left identity and oppose any sort of alliance with AL, BNP, Jatiya Party or Jamaat-e-Islami.

Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, General Secretary of the CPB, told The Daily Star Friday that the proposed front was aimed at forging unity of and understanding among the patriotic and democratic forces.

"We want to bring all patriotic and democratic forces in the front," said Manik. He made it clear that the front should not be confined to the left forces only. He however categorically said that they would not compromise on the question of secularism and Bangladeshi nationalism.

NAP(M) General Secretary Pankaj Bhattacharya said that they were determined to launch the front by the middle of October for which process had already been initiated.

He said that he was in favour of critical but positive attitude towards AL and also towards BNP. "But we are against joining hands with the parties like Jatiya Party or Jamaat," he said.

Bimal Biswas, General Secretary of the United Communist League (UCL), who is also convenor of the 5-party alli-

ance said that a positive decision about the front at the forthcoming congress of the CPB would accelerate the process of forming a "broad-based front of the left democratic progressive forces."

He said that the front should be formed with only progressive parties like, the components of the 5-party, CPB, NAP (M), Samyabadi Dal, Gano Azadi League, Ganatantri Party and other like-minded parties and forces.

Haider Akbar Khan Rono, a central leader of the Workers Party, said that his party was in favour of a left front which would work with the aim at establishing socialism.

He categorically opposed any cooperation with AL, BNP, JP or Jamaat terming these parties as the representatives of the bourgeoisie class.

Dilip Barua, General Secretary of Samyabadi Dal, said that a front with progressive forces could create a new current in the political arena of the country.

According to concerned sources, among the components of the 5-party, UCL and JSD (Inu) are maintaining positive attitude towards the formation of a broad-based front with CPB and others. But the other components of the 5-party maintain that it should be a front of the left forces only.

Ganatantri Party, a component of now defunct Eight-party Alliance, is learnt to be reluctant to join the front. However, the party is expected to take a decision on the issue at its council scheduled in November this year.

Meanwhile, an alliance of eight left-leaning student organisations was formed on Thursday. The student organisations are associated the parties like NAP, CPB and components of the 5-party. Political observers consider the student alliance as significant and believe that it might contribute towards forging a greater unity of the left forces.

Nuruddin Choudhury dead

Nuruddin Ahmed Choudhury died on Friday of a heart attack at the Suhrawardy hospital at 11pm. He was 72.

Son of late Khan Bahadur Gausuddin Ahmed Choudhury of Sylhet, he was a former Director General of Food. He left behind his wife, a son and five daughters.

He is the brother of Shamsuddin A Choudhury E A Choudhury, former I G of Police, Imamuddin A Choudhury, Former Secretary and a former adviser to the President, Nasir A Choudhury, Managing Director Green Delta Insurance and Safi A Choudhury Managing Director of Albert David.

His body will be taken to Sylhet today (Saturday) for burial at the Graveyard of the Dargah of Hazrat Shahjalal.