

Premadasa praises Khaleda's 'Dal-bhat' proposal

COLOMBO, Nov 9: Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa has commended Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's 'dal-bhat' proposal for guaranteeing a square meal per day for every individual in the South Asian region which has the same objectives as the Jansaviya programme of Sri Lanka, reports BSS.

Both the leaders were holding talks at Taj Samudra Hotel Friday morning when Begum Zia was on a state visit to Sri Lanka.

During the meeting Begum Zia has proposed that regional cooperation would be given a fillip by the introduction of a direct airlink between Dhaka and Colombo. Both the leaders agreed that the aviation authorities of the two countries should work out the specific arrangements keeping in view the economic viability of such venture.

Indians

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Tinbha Sangram Committee, Mojhar Hossain, Assistant Teacher of Dahagram Government Primary School and Idris Mia, who fled the enclaves under cover of darkness told this correspondent harrowing tales of the enclave people. They said many people died of hunger and diseases and those trying to cross over to the mainland were tortured. "The enclaves would be turned into graveyards if transferred to Bangladesh," the agitators threatened.

An official at Lalmonirhat told that some enclave people who fled to the mainland at night for relief were held by BSF while returning with relief goods and taken away. So very few people now come for collecting relief goods, he said.

According to an information, a good number of families of village Munshipara under Patgram upazila, close to the corridor, have shifted to safer places apprehending torture and intimidation.

BDR sector commander Rangpur, when asked admitted that the situation was grave and that the BDR was keeping constant watch. He, however, denied reports of the enclave people fleeing homes out of fear.

The BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party), after a partially successful November 4, 'bandh' (strike) in Mekliganj protesting Tinbha handover, have planned more demonstrations around the enclaves from November 15 to 30. From December 1, BJP activists would start entering the Tinbha corridor forcibly and continue to stay there to deter the handover, it was learnt.

DU reopens

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make commitment to root out terrorism from educational institutions in the country, he said in a written statement.

The BFUTA President held inter-party conflict and rivalry to establish supremacy through musclemen in student politics responsible for terrorist acts on the campuses and felt that a well-thought policy regarding student politics was essential to stop terrorism.

He observed that if the present spate of campus terrorism continued, the country as well as the present generation would be thrown into an obvious ruin. Teachers of the universities might not be mute witnesses to the ruinous process, he said.

He contradicted the opinion passed by certain quarters that the University Ordinance 1973 did not provide adequate measures to ensure discipline on university campuses.

November 10

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others were killed in police firing during 'Dhaka siege' programme against autocratic ruler on this very day in 1987.

Awami League would offer prayer and place floral wreath at the grave of Shaheed Noor Hossain at Jurain Cemetery in the morning. It would also organise a public rally at Bangabandhu Avenue at 3 pm which would be presided over by party chief Sheikh Hasina.

President of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) Saifuddin Ahmed Manik and General Secretary Nurul Islam Nahid in a statement urged the patriotic forces to be united again despite political differences for the sake of establishing democracy.

The acting Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami Abbas Ali Khan in a message urged the people to observe November 10 which initiated the fall of an autocratic ruler and established a democratically elected government.

Five-party Alliance would hold a rally at Zero Point at 4 pm to mark the day.

The city unit of Janata Dal would organise a rally at Gullistan Square in observance of the day.

Nov 10 a milestone in anti-autocracy movement

By Nazmul Ashraf

Today is November 10, the day that became the milestone in the nearly nine-year-long movement against the autocratic regime of deposed President Lt Gen (ret'd) H M Ershad.

The mainstream opposition political alliances and parties with the support of the major student organisations observed the 'Dhaka Siege' programme on this day in 1987 demanding resignation of the Ershad government.

The 'Dhaka Siege' programme ultimately brought the whole country to a standstill as the government snapped all communications with the capital Dhaka.

During observance of the 'Dhaka Siege' over four people including an Awami League-backed Juba League worker Noor Hossain were killed in police firing.

The killing of Noor Hossain who carried slogans 'Let democracy be free' and 'Down with autocracy' on his back and chest geared up the anti-autocracy movement by the opposition.

The opposition forces marked the day with action programmes in the following years of 1988 and 1989. In 1990, the day fell in the final phase of the anti-Ershad movement that began from October 10 with demonstrations around the secretariat.

The late 1990 vigorous mass movement culminated in the fall of the Ershad government on December 6 when Ershad resigned and handed over power to the non-partisan neutral government headed by Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed as per the Joint Declaration announced by the three major political alliances — the AL-led Eight Party, the BNP-led Seven Party and the Five-Party Alliance — on November 19.

The nine-year movement against the illegal rule by Ershad was carried forward by the Opposition in different phases. But in 1987, it got a fresh life with the November 10 'Dhaka Siege' programme.

The liaison committee of the three political alliances planned the November 10, 1987 programme. The Jamaat-e-Islami and some other smaller parties also joined with identical programmes.

The liaison committee

called on the people of all walks of life to stage sit-in demonstrations at different strategic points in the capital. It also called on the members of staff of the government, autonomous bodies and non-governmental organisations to boycott office and participate in the demonstrations to force the government to quit power.

The liaison committee also suggested that demonstrators from outside Dhaka resist obstructions on their way to Dhaka and also gherao the district and upazila headquarters all over the country.

Afraid of the opposition programme, the government snapped road, rail and water communications between the city and other parts of the country. It also banned rallies

and processions and shut down all educational institutions in the city on the previous day (November 9). Police and plainclothesmen arrested at least 150 opposition leaders and workers in midnight raids in the city. On the other hand, opposition activists exploded bombs, fired blank shots and damaged vehicles in various parts of the city including on the Dhaka University campus the same night.

On November 9 the BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia (now the Prime Minister) and the Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina (now the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament) met and jointly called upon the people to make the November 10 'Dhaka Siege' programme a success defying the imposition

of Section 144 by the government.

Telephones of Hasina and Khaleda were also disconnected the previous night. Khaleda remained absent from her cantonment residence.

As per the liaison committee-announced programme and call by the two leading politicians, people in thousands started thronging the city areas since the morning of Nov 10. Many from outside the city also joined the demonstrations reaching the city on foot.

The government deployed 16,000 members of the BDR, and police across the city to tame the demonstrators.

Police fired on the demonstrators at Lalbagh, Kaptan Bazar, Gullistan, both sides of the Secretariat, Zero Point and other places where Noor Hossain, Nurul Haq, Saidur Rahman and another unidentified protestor were killed.

Police also arrested 236 demonstrators during the 'Dhaka Siege'. Besides, bombs were hurled from atop the Allawala building, where the then ruling Jatiya Party office was housed. In the explosion of the bombs hurled on a BNP-led Seven-Party Alliance procession Khaleda escaped death. JP armed persons also fired on the protestors from the Allawala building.

The AL-led Eight Party gathering near the Secretariat also came under police attack. Police lathicharged and fired teargas shells on the processionists. Hasina managed to leave the spot unhurt.

On the day, the protestors also burnt dozens of public vehicles and attacked the GPO and House Building Finance Corporation offices.

The November 10 incidents gave a renewed life in the anti-autocracy movement, pushed forward in the following days with observance of hartals.

On November 11, the two top leaders — Khaleda and Hasina — were placed under house arrest.

Repeated hartals, anti-government demonstrations and clashes between protestors and the members of the law enforcing agencies became a regular phenomenon.

The government promulgated a state of emergency on November 27 and at one stage of the movement dissolved Parliament on December 9 that year (1987) Editorial Page 4



'Down with autocracy' and 'Set democracy free' painted on the bare body of Noor Hossain, who was killed on this day in 1987, became the rallying cry in the snowballing movement to restore democracy. — Star photo

The Midnight File

UN mission in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH, Nov 9: The United Nations mission to resuscitate Cambodia from the ravages of more than two decades of fighting arrived Saturday to begin the largest peacekeeping operation in UN history. "Our main task will be to establish liaison with the Supreme National Council and to see that the cease-fire, which is now official, is maintained," said mission chief Ataul Karim, reports AP.

Muslim rebels in Caucasus defy emergency

MOSCOW, Nov 9: Muslim rebels in the northern Caucasus defied a state of emergency imposed by Russian President Boris Yeltsin and declared martial law in their breakaway region, the Soviet news agency Tass said today, reports Reuters.

Bush warns against racism

THE HAGUE, Nov 9: US President George Bush warned today that racism disguised as nationalism threatened the spread of democracy in eastern Europe and urged Europe and the United States to avoid becoming warring trade blocks.

Bush, in remarks prepared for delivery before economic community leaders, also urged support for reform in the Soviet Union and cautioned that Europe and America must try to help because desperate times breed demagogues, reports Reuters.

SAARC summit

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the internal security situation and later the Prime Minister of Nepal also expressed his inability.

India took advantage of the situation ignoring the precedents that at earlier summits in Bangalore and Male, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were not represented by the heads of state or government but by their representatives.

This was for the second time that a SAARC summit scheduled to be held in Colombo was cancelled to give a disloyal Sri Lankan President Premadasa a lesson for forcing Delhi to withdraw its troops from the ethnic trouble-torn island.

But what is interesting is that as current Chairman of the SAARC the Maldives President was supposed to announce the postponement of the summit, but he did not make any such public announcement in this regard for reasons unknown to the delegates.

The announcement was made by the Foreign Ministry of Sri Lanka which also expressed

its inability to hold the summit by the end of the year though it later agreed to swallow the pill at the insistence of particularly the Prime Ministers of Bangladesh and Pakistan. Since it is Sri Lanka's turn to be the next chairman of the SAARC, the summit must be held in Colombo.

"The Colombo get-together" has no doubt incurred the wrath of Delhi indicating that the future of the SAARC is still vulnerable and an improvement in the relations among its member countries is still a remote possibility. But it was at the same an undoubtedly wise decision on the part of Bangladesh to go to Colombo despite the postponement of the summit because it has saved the SAARC from the death blow and also healed the wound of a friendly country.

The idea of forming the SAARC was conceived by Bangladesh. So, its emotional attachment with the birth of SAARC and also its special responsibility towards the forum cannot be denied.

PM

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active role in OIC during the last decade as it was in war with Iraq.

Mottaki said Iran has over the last two years increased its activities particularly within OIC and hope to play an effective role in future including the forthcoming OIC summit.

He touched on bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Iran which he thought could be further expanded.

Sharif

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He hoped that the SAARC summit would be held this year itself in Colombo.

Replying to a question about the future of SAARC, he said the organisation has its own significance and it should not be undermined "under any circumstances."

He said it was a good omen that four SAARC members — Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and the Maldives — held discussions in the Sri Lankan capital.

Sharif expressed confidence that the setback caused to SAARC due to the postponement would provide a fresh impetus to regional unity.

Hasina

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Harare.

She questioned the justification of taking along a large entourage of 69 members by the Prime Minister to Sri Lanka after postponement of the SAARC summit. Hasina also mentioned the 54-member entourage that accompanied the Prime Minister to Harare.

The Colombo trip alone cost the public exchequer Tk 3 crore, she said. "The money could have been spent for the well-being of poor masses in the country."

Hasina said people want to know for whose satisfaction the Prime Minister took the trip to Colombo at such huge expenditure even after the postponement of the summit.

Presided over by City Jubo League President Abul Hashem Bhuiyan, the meeting was addressed, by Awami League central leaders Amir Hossain Amu and Tofael Ahmed MP, City Awami League President Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, Jubo League Chairman Mostafa Mohsin Montu, General Secretary Phulu Sarker and Abdul Qudus Makhani.

28 bodies

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Zia Saturday expressed her deep shock and grief at the death of those killed in the bus accident at Shahbajpur of Brahmanbaria Friday.

Begum Zia directed the concerned authorities to ensure proper treatment of those injured in the accident. She wished early recovery of the injured.

The Prime Minister prayed to Almighty Allah to give strength to the members of the bereaved families to bear this loss.

Meanwhile the Communications Ministry has constituted a departmental enquiry committee to probe the cause of the accident.

According to press reports, the bus submerged in the river Titas after the driver lost control while boarding the ferry.

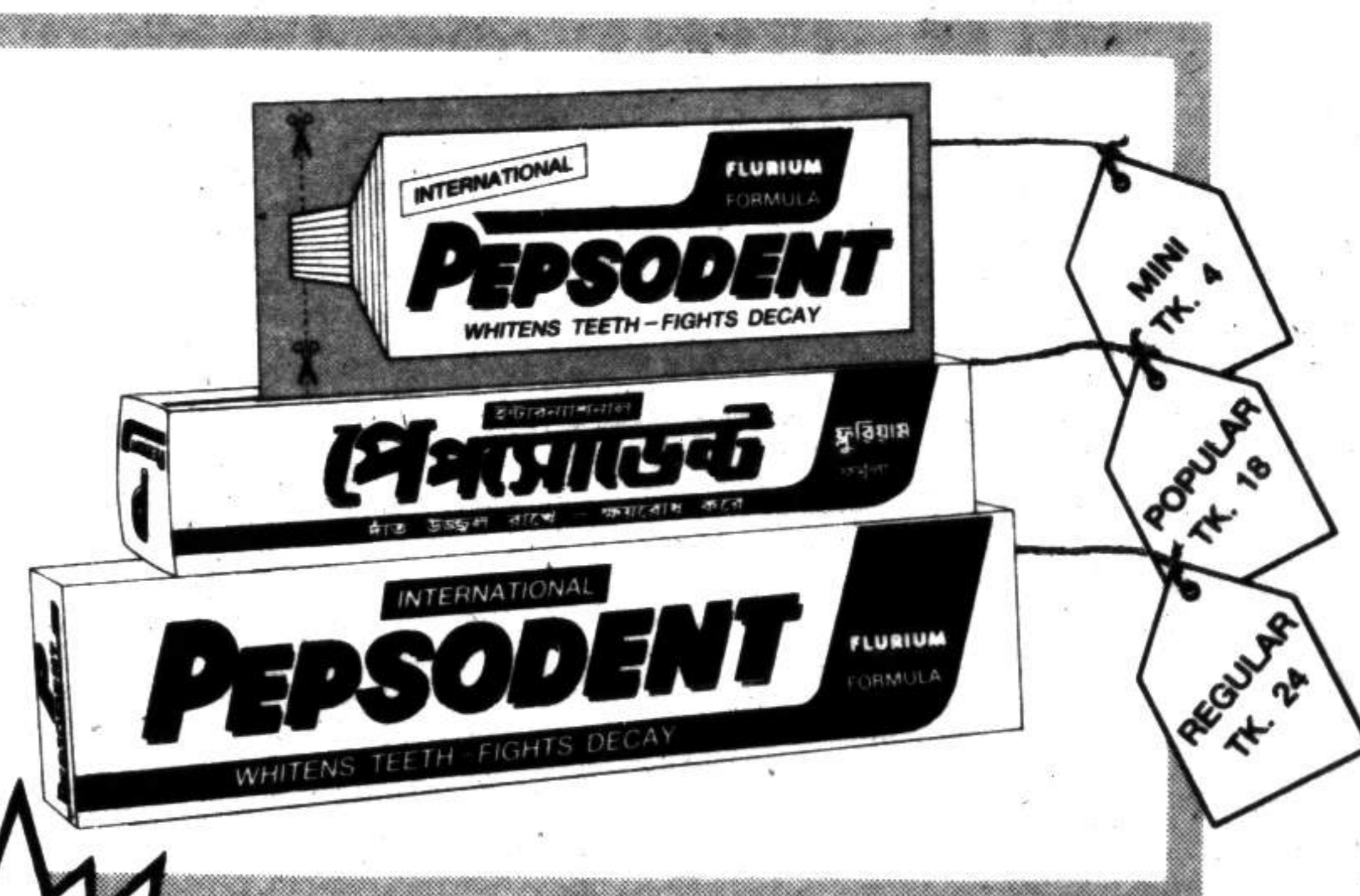


Twenty-eight bodies were recovered from the bus which plunged into the river Titas on Friday. The bus was salvaged on Saturday. — Star photo

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