

4 more republics to join commonwealth

MOSCOW, Dec 12: The Russian legislature on Thursday overwhelmingly approved President Boris Yeltsin's proposed commonwealth, and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev said he would resign if it replaces the Soviet state, reports AP.

The main work of my life is done, Gorbachev told reporters, indicating that he might be considering resignation.

The idea of a commonwealth, which already includes Byelorussia and Ukraine, appeared to be sweeping past the men who brought political and economic reform to the Soviet Union.

enough to eat. The US government has warned that the Soviet Union could face civil disorder and has expressed concern about who controls the Soviet Union's 27,000 nuclear warheads.

After a speech in which Yeltsin said support for the commonwealth was growing, Russian legislators voted 188-6, with seven abstentions, to approve the pact.

The vote was followed by thunderous applause, after which Yeltsin, president of the Russian Republic, strode to the lectern and said: "I congratulate you on this historic decision and thank you."

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Sirajganj BNP's memo to DC

SIRAJGANJ, Dec 12: District BNP brought out a procession in the town today in protest of the killing of Juba Dal leader Shariful Islam Bablu, Shariful (26) was killed allegedly by some Awami League activists on December 9.

The processionists also submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner demanding trial of the killers, reports UNB.

Tribal insurgent surrenders

RANGAMATI, Dec 12: A member of outlawed tribal insurgents surrendered to a member of enforcing agency at Dighinala in Khagrachhari hill district Wednesday afternoon.

Shibu Ranjan Chakma alias Samar (32), self-styled second lieutenant of the so-called Shantibahini laid down his gun to the security force, official sources said, reports UNB.

Jute workers

From Page 1 Col. 4 agreed points in the bilateral meetings.

Five labour leaders will represent the Sangram Parishad in the proposed draft committee while five officials will represent the government side. This committee would meet on Saturday, sources said. It is reliably learnt that the government has agreed to announce the wage commission very soon and the wage commission would submit its report within three months of its formation.

A representative from the jute mills workers would be included in the proposed wage commission which will fix the wages for the industrial workers.

The wage commission award, irrespective of its amount recommended by the commission, would, however, be implemented with effect from July 1, 1991, official sources said.

For the interim period the government has agreed to pay an amount of Taka 1500 to each of the 88,000 workers under the BJMC. This money will, however, be given in instalments from January 1992, the sources confirmed.

On the question of reinstatement of workers who lost their jobs for political reasons during the last decade, the government has agreed to give back their jobs. The number of terminated workers is about seven hundred, a Pankaj Sramik Karmachari Sangram Parishad leader told this correspondent. The Jute Minister Hannan Shah, while talking to this correspondent over telephone, said that the number of the workers to be reinstated would be determined after a scrutiny by a particular committee.

On the question of further denationalising the public sector jute industries, both the sides agreed that no jute industry would be denationalised unless the workers and the government reach a consensus. Incidentally, Finance Minister Saifur Rahman on Wednesday told the newsmen that the government had no immediate plan for disinvestment.

It is also learnt that the Jute Ministry has on principle agreed to provide the jute sector with fifty per cent subsidy under the bonus voucher scheme which was in practice during the Pakistan period, to make the jute industries of both the public and private sectors profitable.

The Jute Ministry yesterday agreed to send a recommendation to the Finance Ministry in this regard, said the sources.

The Jute Minister was expecting the Sangram Parishad leaders to sign the agreement before December 22 saying that they should not back out this time for the sake of ensuring peace and stability in the

productive sectors and in the greater interest of the national economy.

The jute mills workers leaders may wait for results to be accruing from the separate meetings of the government with the SKOP and the Cotton and Textile Sramik Karmachari Federation, scheduled to be held on December 14.

It may be mentioned that the scheduled meeting between the Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and the SKOP leaders was abandoned yesterday as most of the SKOP leaders were outside Dhaka.

The new date of the meeting has been fixed on December 14.

On Thursday's meeting between the Jute Ministry and the leaders of the jute mills workers, the government side was represented by the Jute Minister Brig Hannan Shah (ret'd) and Rashid Talukder, Chairman of BJMC. The workers' side was represented by Abul Basher and Shah Alam of Workers' Party-backed Jatiya Sramik Federation, Rehanuddin Rehan, leader of the labour front of Awami League, Siddiq Sarder of Jatiya Party's labour front and Kayum of BNP's labour front.

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isting national problems. Presided over by Dilip Barua of Samyabadi Dal (SD), the discussion was also addressed by Pankaj Bhattacharya, Dr Abdul Malek of NAP, Nurul Islam Nahid of CPB, Alhaj Abdus Samad of Gano Azadi League and Abdur Rouf of the Samyabadi Dal.

Pankaj Bhattacharya expressed his grave concern over the mounting frustration, persisting in national life and called for launching a united movement in alliance with the democratic forces against the major social and economic problems plaguing the nation.

He said there is no alternative to national consensus for resolving the vital national issues and no single party alone could face the problems created over the years by the autocratic regime.

The PDF convener was critical of the activities of the ruling BNP and the Awami League and said they failed to deliver what people expect of them.

On campus violence, he said: "Now we have to think twice before attending any anti-terrorism rally organised by those who patronise hoodlums in the educational institutions."

Nurul Islam Nahid said it was the time for the true patriots to launch a vigorous mass movement to realise the demands of the people.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia meeting Shaikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, the Emir of Kuwait, at the OIC conference venue in Dakar Monday. — PID photo

PM: Hasina's letter

From Page 1 Col. 4 countries, and reduction of debt burden of poor Islamic countries.

She said in response to her call, the Saudi government announced the writing off of all debts of poor Islamic countries.

Turning to internal situation, Begum Zia said the reported writing of letters by the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina to the Foreign Missions in Dhaka on internal problems was not proper.

While giving her reaction Begum Zia said in our independent and democratic country 'all of us have to put in our efforts to solve our problems involving our own people. Sending letters to foreign missions was not at all desirable.'

The Prime Minister said that terrorists were being dealt with irrespective of party affiliations and according to the law of the land. Actions were taken even against people belonging to her party, she said.

Asked why she did not reciprocate a step taken by Sheikh Hasina to help stop campus violence by suspending activities of her party's student wing, Begum Zia said her party believed in healthy student politics, not terrorism.

She said the student wing of the BNP was winning student union elections in colleges due to its sound politics. Those who create violence proposed to suspend student activities.

As to the question why the Jatiya Party was not invited to such meetings, Begum Zia said in her opinion, the Jatiya Party was not a party at all. 'We do not think a party which had perpetrated autocracy believes in democracy, she said.

She asserted that the economic situation was good and the country would forge ahead in the path of prosperity. Begum Zia claimed that, through hard and sincere work, her government had earned admiration at home and abroad. Achievements made in the past nine months were greater than those of nine years of autocratic rule, she said pointing out that the present government had taken over power in a socio-economic chaos. Natural disasters had added to problems, she said.

Begum Zia told another questioner that the secretary-level talks were held on Ganges water-sharing. Talks on the handling over of Tin-Bigha corridor was progressing, she said.

she said but, at the same time, they smashed vehicles on streets if police took action against trouble-mongers.

She told a questioner that the government occasionally had meetings with leaders of different political parties to consult them on important national issues. The government believed in democracy and wanted to rule with the consent of all.

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JP: Ershad Day

From Page 1 Col. 5 gathered at a place not far from the previous JP city office at Allahwala Bhaban which angry mob attacked and damaged last December after Ershad's fall.

The activists at the rally shouted slogans like "break the jail and release Ershad" and "stop repression on our activists".

Presided over by city JP president Abdus Salam, the rally was also addressed, among others, by whip of the JP parliamentary party Montrol Hui Chowdhury, MP, Vice Chairman Mahbulul Huq Dolon, Jatiya Mahila Party Chairman Begum Razia Fiaz, Jatiya Sramik Party leader Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar and Joint Secretary Shamim Al Mamun.

A procession of the Jatiya Party later paraded the city streets.

Our Gazipur correspondent reports: The Acting Chairman of Jatiya Party Muzannur Rahman Chowdhury said the repression unleashed on the leaders and activists of his party has crossed all previous records.

Addressing a rally at Gazipur bus terminal Thursday, the acting chairman demanded immediate release of the party chief Ershad and other political detainees.

Launching a scathing attack on the ruling BNP, he said Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia had failed to keep her election pledges and frustrated the aspiration of the common mass.

A life for a hen

By DMCH Correspondent

A young man had to give his life in the city for accusing his neighbour of stealing a hen Thursday morning.

Shiblee, 20, a resident of North Road, Bhuterjoli, lost his life and accused his neighbour Kolloi of stealing. At a stage in the argument that began between the two, Kolloi stabbed Shiblee in his chest.

Fatally injured Shiblee was immediately rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) from where the doctors referred him to the Chest Disease Hospital at Mohakhali. But the victim succumbed to his injury on the way to Mohakhali.

Tribals

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five years. He further said that the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) and Shantibahini members have tightened security in and around the refugee camps to prevent the tribals returning home.

Despite the close vigilance by BSF-Shantibahini, a total of 300 refugees of Chakma, Marma and Tipra tribes returned home during the last seven days, officials said.

The returnees risked their life and came through Logang and Puzgang of Panchhari upazila, Naratchhari and Juraidihari of Dighinala upazila and Tairang, Achaling and Kadamtali of Matrang upazila.

Earlier on December 4, some 130 refugees returned home in Khagrachhari district bringing the total of tribal returnees to 420 in less than two weeks.

Besides, 25 others returned from India through different borders of Bandarban upazila on December 6, officials said.

Jihad

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ment of children should be of the highest priority," the declaration said.

A session on economic co-operation urged member states to reduce barriers to trade and find appropriate solutions to the problems of the indebtedness of African states.

Saudi Arabia promised during the summit to forgive the debts of the poorest states in the OIC.

One point not mentioned in the document was democracy. Political change is sweeping through Africa and four long time autocratic presidents have lost their jobs in the last year to free elections.

Aid donors are insisting on political reform and no conference in black Africa is now complete without promises of greater democracy.

King Hussein of Jordan, who has permitted a limited amount of parliamentary democracy, was perhaps the only Arab delegate to utter the work in open debate.

"Since, the good of the community necessitates justice, democracy becomes essential in building the just society to ensure the widest participation in thought and action in the progress towards the achievement of human rights in freedom and equality," the King said in Tuesday.

Judgement

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or place so it was not legally barred to abolish any tier.

In this context, the repeal ordinance could not come into conflict with the Constitution, he said.

Referring to the gradual development of local government institutions in this country, Aminul Huq said no particular tier of local bodies had ever been made permanent or fixed; it was changed by decisions of the executive or legislature at various times.

The upazila had never been declared as administrative unit in accordance with the Constitution, he added.

Concluding his three-day long submission on behalf of the petitioner, the councillor Barrister Amirul Islam told the court the ordinance had come as an invasion of the government on local bodies.

Article-11 of the Constitution referred to the representation of the people in running local bodies but the Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNO) who were now running the upazila were not local representatives, he argued.

If an ordinance can destroy local representation or a local body, how can one say that the Constitution is the supreme law, he questioned.

Barrister Islam further submitted that proper representation at all levels had been sought by the relevant constitutional provision — which now stood violated by the ordinance.

Articles 9 and 11 of the constitution had been introduced to protect the local bodies from the narrow partisan interest of the executive which, at different times, brought changes hampering development at the local level, Islam added.

The Midnight File

Bush to host confce to aid Moscow

WASHINGTON, Dec 12: President Bush will hold an international conference early next month to coordinate humanitarian assistance for the people in the collapsing Soviet Union, Secretary of State James A Baker said Thursday. In a prepared speech, Baker said the country was undergoing a "promising democratic revolution" that already has ended any fear of a nuclear war with the United States. "Yet, the dangers are equal in scale to the opportunities," he said, reports AP.

Li's tribute to Rajiv

NEW DELHI, Dec 12: The Chinese Prime Minister, Li Peng, called on Mrs Sonia Gandhi, widow of former premier Rajiv Gandhi, this morning. The meeting lasted 30 minutes. Li had paid glowing tributes to the late Rajiv Gandhi at a banquet hosted in his honour by the Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao last night. The late Prime Minister's visit to China in 1988 in particular injected new vitality into our bilateral ties, he said, reports PTI.

Japanese farmers rally against rice imports

TOKYO, Dec 12: Chanting "No foreign rice," thousands of farmers rallied on Thursday to demand that Japan's government stand up to foreign pressure to lift its ban on rice imports. Japan, which is the world's largest importer of agricultural products, has justified the ban by arguing the island nation must maintain self-sufficiency in its staple food. But farmers are worried the government will give in to demands by the United States and the European Community to open the market. The farmers say they cannot compete with cheap rice produced by more efficient and large-scale growers in other nations, reports AP.

Imported goods

From Page 1 Col. 7 the governments of Bangladesh as well as those of neighbouring countries. The draft report primarily concentrates on India as it dominates as the trading partner country in this illegal trade.

Because of the prospects of earning lucrative returns from illegally exporting the legally imported items, importers are encouraged to concentrate on those items.

The BIDS report points out that, in the case of Bangladesh, import of soyabean and palm oil, milk products, electronic components, garment materials, used clothes, contraceptives and petroleum products has increased by leaps and bounds every year.

The findings of the report also indicate that other major imported items (illegally exported to India are cement, fertilizer, motor parts, insecticides, blanket, watch and clock, calculators, camera and photographic films and emergency lights and other items.

The increased import of these items cannot be reasonably justified by the trend of local increases in demand, the report adds.

The growth rate of imports during the year 1987-88 stood at 33.53 per cent. For individual items, for example, import of synthetic materials during the same period had a growth rate of 84.04 per cent and stood at a total of Taka 3555.15 million compared to Taka 243.95 million in 1980-

81. Over Taka 702 million worth of used clothes were imported during 1987-88 compared to Taka 217.11 million in 1980-81.

Milk products emerged as a major imported item being smuggled out in recent years. Import of milk products jumped to 24.53 per cent in 1987-88 and stood at Taka 2143.34 million, compared to Taka 595.38 million in 1980-81.

Illegal export brings in very lucrative returns for the owners of garment factories, the report notes. The factory owners bear the cost of formalities under the back-to-back letters of credit system and inflate the required amount of fabrics needed for a particular order.

This scenario, the study shows, bears a tragic consequence for the textile industry and for the legal importers of textile items who face a very uneven competition from the garment industries.

A dramatic increase in the import of video cassette players and recorders has been noticed in recent years. Liberalisation of legal import of such components facilitates the illegal import of these items for re-export to India.

Business circles view that this new-found prominence of these items in the legal import bill should be seriously examined in the light of changing patterns of illegal export from Bangladesh to India and other neighbouring countries.

India, China

From Page 1 Col. 7 their own views and decide their own destinies in the political and economic fields," said Indian Foreign Ministry spokesman Ansh Seth.

While directing their attention to the West, Li and Rao barely touched on the unresolved border dispute that led the two countries to war in 1962.

The two leaders agreed, however, the boundary problem was "not an obstacle in our joint efforts to expand, strengthen and consolidate relationship," said Seth, speaking for both governments.

Officials said the border question may have come up in a private meeting between the two leaders that followed the formal two-hour session. Another working meeting was set for Friday.

China says India is holding 36,000 square miles (90,000 sq km) of its land along India's eastern border, India says China is occupying 14,500 square miles (37,700 sq km) that it set in 1962 on its western front.

Although no country was mentioned by name, the reference to President Bush's phrase of a "new world order" made it plain that they were objecting to US policies.

Both countries have complained of pressure, either on economic reforms or human rights, from Western governments and their financial institutions which they see as interfering in their internal affairs.

Seth said the leaders also agreed "to promote peace at home and abroad," and quoted Li as saying the days were over when China hoped to expand its revolution to its neighbours.

China will never use force or local communist parties to export its system," Li assured the Indians.

Earlier Thursday, 12 Tibetans broke through a police cordon and set alight the Chinese flag outside the gate of the Chinese Embassy before they were hauled away in a po-

lice van. About 400 people, mostly Tibetans, have been arrested for trying to demonstrate or had been placed under preventive detention before Li arrived.

India has given sanctuary to 1,10,000 Tibetans who fled their homeland after the 1950 Chinese invasion, and has allowed the Dalai Lama, the spiritual and temporal Tibetan leader, to operate a government-in-exile from his soil.

But the Indian government also ordered its security forces to prevent any embarrassment or disruption during Li's visit.

Seth said Li did not repeat a complaint made earlier by the Chinese ambassador that India was failing to keep a promise to prevent anti-Chinese political activity by the Tibetans.

The spokesman said Li expressed appreciation for India's recognition of the Tibet as an autonomous Chinese province, but said no more on the subject.

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Sharbahara man shot dead

By Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Dec 12: Tofazzel Hossain, 25, reportedly a Sharbahara Party activist was shot dead this morning at village Arjay-Narayanpur, Jhenidah Sadar allegedly by the armed activists of the Biplob Communist Party.

At about 8 am a group of armed activists of the Biplob Communist Party reportedly raided the house of Tofazzel who was trying to flee but was gunned down by the armed men. Following serious bullet injuries he died on the way to hospital.

A case was lodged with Jhenidah thana and the body was sent to Jhenidah morgue for autopsy.



AL rally in observance of the protest day in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Movement if Indemnity Ord not repealed, says Nasim

By Staff Correspondent

Mohammad Nasim, Awami League leader and Chief Whip of the Opposition in parliament Thursday threatened to launch a movement if the 'heinous' Indemnity Ordinance were not repealed in the winter session of the Jatiya Sangsad (JS).

He was speaking as chief guest at the annual conference of the Chhatra League (S-A) Mirpur Bangla College unit held at the college compound.

The Awami League leader asked the Chhatra League workers to be prepared for the movement.

The repressive measures taken by the government against the Chhatra League workers were part of a blueprint to destroy the democratic atmosphere in the country, he remarked. He said that the government was using the Dr Milton murder case as a weapon to harass their workers.

"It will not be surprising even if the government arrest us and implicate with Milton murder case," Nasim said.

"We wanted to cooperate with the government in all aspects of governance as constructive opposition. But unfortunately, the government, taking democratic attitude for weakness, is hitting us below the belt," he said.

He alleged that some of the real killers of Dr Milton had already left the country per courtesy of the government and some of them were moving freely with the Prime Minister.

Menon blames BNP, AL for reviving terrorism

By Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Dec 12: Five-party leader Rashed Khan Menon today blamed both Awami League and BNP for reviving the terrorist activities in educational institutions, reports UNB.

Both the parties have violated the seven point code of conduct which they agreed upon earlier to eliminate campus violence, Menon said while addressing an election rally here this afternoon.

The rally was also addressed by five-party leaders Hasanul Haq Inu, Nirmal Sen, Khalequzzaman, Dr Shah Alam and the party candidate for Bakerganj-5 constituency Abdus Sattar.

Burmese troops

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Soldiers patrolled the university area in central Rangoon and blocked all access to it. A foreign resident who spoke on condition of anonymity said several hundred troops with armoured personnel carriers and trucks were on the streets. After two days of demonstrations, the capital was quiet Thursday.

Students were at the forefront of the pro-democracy movement the military crushed in September 1988, killing thousands of people. As part of that crackdown, the junta closed all secondary schools, colleges and universities.

Editor: S. M. Ali