

Roh declares a N-free Korea

SEOUL, Dec 18: President Roh Tae-woo declared on Wednesday that South Korea is nuclear-free, an announcement aimed at increasing pressure on North Korea to abandon nuclear arms development, reports AP.

His speech on nation wide television signalled that all US nuclear weapons have been removed from South Korea, an important step in the campaign to persuade Communist North Korea to agree to nuclear non-proliferation.

Roh urged the north to unconditionally accept international inspections of its secretive nuclear facilities and to dismantle nuclear reprocessing and uranium enrichment facilities.

His speech came five days after the two Koreas signed a historic accord calling for peaceful coexistence after 46 years of division.

The agreement laid a framework for reconciliation but did not deal with nuclear issues, which has threatened immediate ratification by South Korea's parliament.

"At this moment, not a single nuclear weapon exists in our country," Roh said. He said a pledge made Nov 8 not to produce, possess or deploy nuclear weapons has been realized and he challenged North Korea to do the same.

The two Koreas have produced a charter of peace that will end a dark period in their history," he said. "Yet we cannot successfully build peace and national reconciliation without first resolving the nuclear question."

There was no immediate reaction from North Korea, which has denied its nuclear programme is weapons-oriented, although intelligence

reports indicate the north is close to building its first atomic bomb.

In a commentary in the government Rodong Sinmun newspaper on Wednesday, North Korea said it would not sign an agreement on nuclear safeguards until it could "fully confirm" that the United States had withdrawn its nuclear weapons from the southern half of the peninsula.

Roh said the south hopes to reach an agreement with the north by year's end to realize total denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, divided by the world's most heavily guarded border.

Seoul and Washington have said the issue has reached a critical stage and that the north must sign safeguards before the February meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

If the north stalls, US officials say the matter will be taken to the UN Security Council. They say intelligence reports indicate the north may reach capability to produce nuclear arms by 1993.

The two Koreas have agreed to meet at the border village of Panmunjom to discuss North Korean nuclear arms development and a joint pledge for a nuclear-free Korea but a date for the meeting remains uncertain.

Both sides have proposed meeting sometime next week.

Defense Secretary Dick Cheney last month postponed a second stage of US troop cuts in South Korea until the north's nuclear threat was eliminated. Washington still plans to trim the force to 36,000 by the end of 1992.

The Korean peninsula was divided in 1945 at the end of World War II.



Public Works Department (PWD) workers brought out a procession in the city yesterday to press their 5-point demand. —Star photo

PWD employees

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UNB adds: Some representatives of the PWD Sangram Parishad submitted a memorandum on their demands to the Works Minister, Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia.

The Works Minister informed them of the formation of a committee which will examine their demands and submit its report as early as possible.

US training 400 to topple Gaddafi?

CAIRO, Dec 18: Four hundred former Libyan soldiers are receiving training at a camp near Washington to prepare for toppling revolutionary leader Muammar Gaddafi, a leading Arab newspaper reported today.

A correspondent of the London-based Al-Hayat, who visited the makeshift camp in Virginia, said the men had been serving in Chad when they defected to the opposition Libyan National Salvation Front before being moved to the United States.

"Nothing at the camp suggests that action is imminent," the correspondent said in a front-page report with two photographs of the men.

One officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Abdullah Al-Sheikhi, said the United States had provided them with all the facilities they needed without asking for anything in return.

"If they ask us to intervene (militarily), we will not do so unless their request is in line with our goals and methods, he added.

The United States and Britain have accused Libya of masterminding the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am airliner over Scotland that killed 270 people. They have demanded that Tripoli hand over two Libyans suspected of involvement.

US officials have not ruled out military action against Libya.

The Libyans, including 28 officers, did not wear military uniform but their behaviour was purely military Al-Hayat said.

There were no arms of the camp except for US-made pistols but there was an assault

AAPSO regional meet begins in city

By Staff Correspondent

A regional conference of the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO) began in the capital Wednesday with a call for creating an atmosphere conducive to peace and friendship in the SAARC countries.

Under the changed global circumstances, a closer link among the peoples of SAARC was a matter of both urgency and importance for combating underdevelopment, poverty, debt-burden and economic nosedive, speakers at the inaugural session of the AAPSO conference observed.

Some 110 delegates from the SAARC countries are attending the three-day meet at Hotel Purbani to explore potential areas of cooperation for mutual benefit.

Inaugurating the Consultative Meeting of AAPSO National Committees of SAARC countries, Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad Shaikh Razzaque Ali said AAPSO could play a complementary role to the governments of the SAARC countries by providing a broad public platform to discuss issues relating to the promotion of regional understanding. He recalled the support of AAPSO during Bangladesh's Liberation War.

AAPSO Secretary General Nouri Abdul Razzaq said, under the backdrop of the global political changeover, the need for solidarity amongst the people of the developing countries was greater than ever.

The problems of the Afro-Asian peoples have not been solved rather increased and have become more complicated, he said.

Razzaq suggested that AAPSO should open new areas of activities in cooperation with European non-government organisations, and the UN bodies.

Bangladesh committee President of AAPSO Dr Anisuzzaman, who chaired the inaugural session, emphasised the need for political good will to create an atmosphere of peace and harmony in the SAARC region.

The inaugural session was also addressed by Secretary General of Bangladesh chapter of AAPSO Dr Syedur Rahman and Joint Convener of the preparatory committee of the conference Ramendu Majumder.

Leaders of different political organisations, professional groups, teachers and intellectuals attended the inaugural session of the conference.

The Midnight File

Gorbachev calls final Supreme Soviet meet

MOSCOW, Dec 18: Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev has called for a final meeting of the Supreme Soviet to announce "in a civilized manner" the transfer of parliamentary functions to a new inter-state structure, Tass news agency said today.

Gorbachev detailed his position on current changes in letters to the heads of republics who are to meet in Alma Ata, capital of Kazakhstan on Saturday, Tass quoted the President of the upper house, Anuarbek Alimzhanov, as saying, reports AP.

Gas leak: 200 taken ill in Calcutta

NEW DELHI, Dec 18: Poisonous chlorine gas leaked Wednesday from a water purification plant in Calcutta, injuring more than 200 people, a news report said. Press Trust of India said 20 people were hospitalized and at least 125 discharged after first aid. Panic spread in the neighbourhood after the gas leak and police patrolled the area "to instill confidence" in the people, the news agency said, reports AP.

BCCI, US govt close to settlement

NEW YORK, Dec 18: The US government and liquidators of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International have reached a tentative agreement to settle financial fraud charges, according to report published Wednesday. The Wall Street Journal quoted people close to the talks as saying BCCI may plead guilty as early as Friday to federal and state charges brought by the Manhattan district attorney and the US Justice Department.

She will reveal her identity

WEST PALM BEACH (Florida), Dec 18: The woman whose features were blotted out during the televised rape trial of William Kennedy Smith will reveal her identity in a television interview Thursday, the Palm Beach Post said today. "She made a decision to identify herself both in picture and in voice," the woman's lawyer David Roth told the daily. The attorney said the interview was conducted Tuesday at his home here and that the woman received absolutely no compensation whatsoever, either directly or indirectly. He said the woman had turned down offers of up to half a million dollars, reports AP.

Colombo's new peace package to end war

COLOMBO, Dec 18: A senior government minister has proposed a new peace package for ending Sri Lanka's 8-year-old Tamil ethnic conflict.

Suvimiamoorthy Thondaman, minister of tourism and rural industrial development, said his proposals are aimed at giving wide political autonomy to the island country's Tamil minority and were being studied by a government-appointed Parliamentary Select Committee.

The salient features of the peace plan are:

- A federal form of government for the Tamil-majority northern and eastern provinces with independent control over airports and harbours.
- Recruitment of Tamil Tiger rebels into the army and police.
- Direct foreign funding for the development of the Tamil-majority provinces.
- The proposals, enunciated last week, come amid repeated assurances by president Ranasinghe Premadasa that peace would prevail in the embattled island country in the coming year.
- "It would strengthen my hands if these proposals are approved by the government and other political parties before I take them to the Tigers," said Thondaman referring to his intended visit to the rebel-held northern Jaffna Peninsula next month.
- "To bring peace to this country only two parties mat-

ter — the government and the Tigers. It is a question of negotiating and bringing the parties together," he said.

The government has made no comment so far on Thondaman's proposals or his visit to Jaffna on the invitation of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the only Tamil militia fighting for a separate Tamil state in the north and east.

Analysts and lawmakers have been divided on Thondaman's initiatives to end the ethnic conflict that has claimed about 20,000 lives since it began in 1983.

"It is a solution for the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) and not a solution to the Tamil problem," said Kumar Ponnambalam, leader of the All Ceylon Tamil Congress.

Others believe there can be no peace without involving the powerful Tigers.

The rebels are reluctant to forward proposals themselves, but given an extensive formula they could be pressurized by the people to accept," said Parajasegaram Joseph, a moderate Tamil lawmaker from the eastern Batticaloa district.

Tamils, mostly Hindus, are 18 percent of Sri Lanka's 17 million people. Many Tamils claim economic and cultural discrimination by the majority Buddhist Sinhalese who are two-thirds of the population and control the government and the military.

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Shyamoli

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Shyamoli was arrested December 1 in connection with the mysterious death of Hafiz Mukhter Hossain, former Chairman of Narayanganj Sadar upazila, and taken on a five-day remand by Tejgaon police the same day. She was arrested under Section 54 of Criminal Code on suspicion.

Mukhter Hossain was found dead with a bullet in his head in a car parked near the Holy Cross College in Tejkuipara November 29 evening.

Lawyers Bakhtiar Rahman, M R Mahbub, M Johir Rahman Jasim and Mosharrif Hossain Kazal moved Shyamoli's bail petition while the S K Chowdhury, Sayed Rezaur Rahman and Imamul Hossain moved on behalf of the plaintiff.

Mishu's release demanded

By DU Correspondent

The Chhatra Okya Forum (COF) at a rally Wednesday in front of Home Ministry demanded immediate release of its leader Moshrefa Mishu who was arrested in connection with a dacoity case on December 13.

COF also submitted memorandum to the Ministry of Home Affairs and held sit-in demonstration.

COF acting Convener Badrul Alam who presided over the rally termed the case against Moshrefa Mishu as false and motivated.

The rally was addressed by Bidhan Roy, President of Democratic Students Union (DSU), Abu Aslam Muntu, General Secretary of Bangladesh Chhatra Samity, Suranjani Ghosh, Joint Convener of Jatiya Chhatra League and other COF leaders.

BCL protests Raja's arrest

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League-backed Chhatra League held a rally in front of the National Press Club on Wednesday protesting the arrest of its leader Mosharrif Hossain Raja.

Raja, a former general secretary of Zahurul Huq Hall Students Union, was arrested on Tuesday from Shahabag area in connection with the Galib-Liton murder case. The two JCD workers — Mirza Galib and Liton — were killed in a gun-battle between two rival groups on October 27 on the Dhaka University campus.

Presided over by BCL (S-A) President Shah Alam, the protest rally was addressed, among others, by General Secretary Ashim Kumar Ukil and Organising Secretary Kamruzzaman Ansari.

The BCL leaders said that the present government was victimising the Chhatra League workers and over 100 of them have either been detained or wanted in false cases.

They demanded immediate release of all the BCL workers jailed on 'false charges'.

Industrial chaos

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mentary force towards achieving the goal of "economic democracy", Begum Zia sought its sincere cooperation for bringing about economic development in the country.

She said that there was no alternative to industrial development under the present socio-economic conditions prevailing in the country as the scope for creating further employment in the agricultural sector was virtually nil.

"The key to industrialisation and thus development of the country is in your hands and the nation expects a lot from you," she said, adding that with sincere initiatives the potential for industrial development was "limitless".

Referring to the new industrial policy and procedural simplifications initiated by the government, the Prime Minister pointed out that 1,578 new industrial units including 21 joint venture projects were approved with a projected investment outlay of about Taka 650 crore during the past eight months.

She said that under the industrial policy, the government would play a complementary role and not a regulatory role.

Responding to the different problems raised by the representatives of the business community, Begum Khaleda Zia criticised its role in failing to protect the pampering, for political gains, of workers by the previous autocratic regime.

She said that it was the duty of the business community to protest when the wages of the workers were increased "irrationally".

The Prime Minister also pointed out that the process of destroying the industrial infrastructure of the country was initiated by the post-independence government of the country. "Unfortunately, those in power after independence destroyed all the industries in the country by nationalising them," she said.

Begum Zia recalled that sheathed president Ziaur Rah-

man took the initiative for privatising our weapons to depend more on US and European arms. This will make our future task easier when the time comes for the battle with Gaddafi's regime, Captain Nasreddin Karmous said.

Libya says its former soldiers now in the United States are prisoners who were taken during a civil war in Chad. It called for their repatriation when the US moved them in January and February to Nigeria, Zaire and Kenya before flying them to the United States.

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ADB grant

MANILA, Dec 18: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a 450,000-dollar technical assistance grant for environmental management training in Bangladesh, a bank statement said here today, reports AP.

NDP Bus workers

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Chittagong-Bandarban high ways since Tuesday morning after a brawl with local passengers.

Police said the barricade was a backlash to an altercation between bus workers and passengers over excess fare at Patia upazila Monday night.

Angry local people retributed the communication disruption by damaging about 15 buses at Patia bus stand Tuesday after the transport workers had blocked the roads.

DC (traffic) Abdul Hakim said today the problem could not be resolved as owners and workers refused to compromise.

Formal talks between the Bus Owners Association and the administration is expected tomorrow, he said.

Meanwhile, truck workers today went on strike in the port city, disrupting food and other commodity shipment from the port to other parts of the country.

146, 281 tons of rice procured since Nov 15

BOGRA, Dec 18: A total of 146, 281 tons of rice has so far been procured since November 15 during the current procurement drive in the country, reports BSS.

Of the total, 120,000 tons were procured from Rajshahi division alone.

11 launch dacoits arrested

From Our Correspondent

CHANDPUR, Dec 18: Eleven of the dacoits who swooped on a passenger launch in Meghna Tuesday have been apprehended yesterday by police at Banail village near Munshiganj.

The dacoits attacked the passengers on board Dhaka bound MV Jaltari when it reached Mohanpur village near Chandpur on Megha Tuesday and had fled away with valuables worth Taka 2.5 lakh, leaving scores injured.

Of the 30 passengers reportedly injured, 14 were admitted into the Chandpur Sadar Hospital. Some of the passengers who jumped into the river to escape the dacoits are yet to be traced out.

Yeltsin Transport strike

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around the economy after one more rough year. Humanitarian aid already is pouring in to help the disintegrating superpower get through the winter.

Meanwhile, US Secretary of State James Baker arrived Wednesday in the capital of Byelorussia amid questions over how the new commonwealth will control the old Soviet Union's nuclear arms.

Baker was to meet Byelorussian leader Stanislav Shushkevich before flying to Ukraine. All of the Soviet Union's 27,000 nuclear weapons are based in Russia, Kazakhstan, Byelorussia and Ukraine.

Baker is studying firsthand the dramatic changes in Soviet political structure and what will happen to the nation's nuclear arsenal as the centralized country splits into 12 loosely joined republics.

On Tuesday, Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev told Baker that his republic, the second-largest, will allow central control of its nuclear weaponry but won't disarm unless Russia also does so.

Boris Yeltsin has said that he wants all nuclear weapons to be based in Russia and administered by a central authority.

Met centre

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tion at the summit, with special emphasis on poverty alleviation and protection of the girl child.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's "Dal-bhat" approach to poverty alleviation has attracted considerable attention among leaders of the region.

Foreign Office sources also pointed out that the SAARC leaders are likely to take decisions on key issues like trade liberalisations, preferential trade agreement suppression of terrorism and ratification of the convention on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

Kashmir militant

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1948 border dividing the state between rival neighbours India and Pakistan and demanded the merger of northern Gilgit and Baltistan, administered by Islamabad, into a re-united Kashmir state.

The parties recently adopted a joint declaration at Lahore urging Kashmiris to join the freedom movement.

Releasing the text to reporters here Amanullah Khan, whose JKLF is one of more militant groups spearheading the bloody separatist movement for more than two years, said Kashmir wanted a republic free from Indian domination.

Khan is not supported by Islamabad which insists on implementation of a 1948 UN resolution on a plebiscite binding the Kashmiris either to accede to India or Pakistan.

Pakistan denies giving military help, but vows to continue giving political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri struggle.

The Lahore Declaration said the Kashmir issue is not a dispute between India and Pakistan over the territory's proprietorship.

The right of self-determination of a nation cannot be limited, conditioned or circumscribed," it said.

Granting Kashmir's right to self-determination was tantamount to depriving them of that right, it said.

It said any solution not based on Kashmiris unfettered right of self determination would not be acceptable to the people of Jammu and Kashmir state, or of any constitutional or moral value.

It called upon the Islamabad-controlled government of Azad (free) Kashmir to extend maximum possible material and moral support to the freedom fighters.

Stressing that Gilgit and Baltistan states, bordering China, were integral parts of Kashmir, the declaration demanded transfer of the region's control to the Azad Kashmir government.

The parties believe that "the best, most equitable and practicable solution of Kashmir issue is to reunite the forcibly divided Jammu-Kashmir state and make it a fully independent country whose geographical borders should be the same as existed before India and Pakistan's independence in August 1947.

DSA demands withdrawal of cases against student leaders

By DU Correspondent

The Democratic Students Alliance (DSA) at a rally (Wednesday) at Dhaka University demanded the withdrawal of the false cases against sixty student leaders of Rajshahi University and 24 of a Chittagong university lodged by Jamaat-Shibir.

Addressing the rally in front of the Arts Building of Dhaka University, DSA leaders Shafi Ahmed and Faizul Haqim Lala said that the government was rehabilitating the associates of the autocratic Ershad regime.

Hill districts

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of three more subjects would really help in restoring the confidence of the hill people over the policies and actions of the government that in turn could lead to an end to the long-drawn crisis in the whole Chittagong Hill Tract areas, that saw heavy casualties in unrest following acts of violence by the Shantibahini men reportedly backed by India.

"I think such steps by the government have a positive result in resolving the CIIT issue," Guatam added.

Chairman Guatam further said "The peace process of the government could have gone much ahead had the handling over of scheduled administrative subjects been made a long time ago."

"Strike the iron when it is hot" urged Guatam saying that much water flowed down the river of mistrust only because of the delay in transferring the said subjects to the Hill District Councils.

Govt-worker talks

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added.

Meanwhile, the labour leaders addressed a number of workers' rallies yesterday afternoon in different industrial areas of the country and asked the workers to get ready to successfully observe the programmes to begin from December 22.