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The Daily Star

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69 Iraqi planes flown to Iran so far

Kuwait made a minefield

Kuwait has been turned into a big minefield with about half-a-million deadly devices laid by Iraqi troops. US Marine officers said on Monday, report agencies.

Allied war planes pounded the cities across Iraq including border towns round-the-clock. Iraq claimed that its anti-aircraft guns had downed three more Allied bombers.

US military sources reported at least 69 Iraqi planes had flown to Iran so far. Allied forces have resorted to fresh waves of bombings on oil installations in Kuwait reportedly causing more oil slick into the Gulf.

AFP reports from Saudi Arabia: Huge minefields are among the extensive defences built by Iraqi troops, which include 12-foot (four-meter) tall sand berms, oil-filled ditches, razor wire and buried storage tanks filled with explosive butane, they said.

The main Iraqi minefields are just north of the Saudi-Kuwaiti border, according to

- * US fighters bomb oil terminal to halt stick.
- * Oil stick fire reported by subsides.
- * Allied air raids across Iraq round-the-clock.
- * 22,000 sorties flown so far.
- * Ground assault likely within 2 weeks: Mitterrand
- * Civilians, car caravans bombed by allies: Refugees.
- * 36 Iraqis seek asylum in Iran.
- * 3 Allied planes downed on Monday: Iraq
- * Iraq still has chemical, biological weapons potential: Moscow.
- * Blanket of black smoke hanging over southern Iran.

Major George Cutchall, a Marine Corps mine expert.

He said most of Kuwait would be mined by the time an Allied offensive begins. Kuwait is going to be turned into one big minefield, he said.

Major Cutchall said the figure of half-a-million mines in Kuwait was a "conservative estimate."

Iraq has up to 20 million mines in its stocks, including mines from the United States, France and the Soviet Union, he added.

The Marine officer said the mines range from "toe poppers," which can rip off a foot, to anti-tank charges that can blow a 60-ton M1A1 tank five feet (1.5 meters) into the air.

One of the most frightening is the 'Bouncing Betty,' which when stepped on pops into the air about chest level and explodes.

"This guy (Iraq) knows what he's doing and he likes it," he said.

See Page 10 Col. 7



A US soldier looks into a used Patriot missile container in a Patriot anti-missile base in Tel Aviv. — AFP Photo

Inside today

International Assassination threat



Iraq has issued a blistering personal attack on Egyptian President Mubarak and claimed he would be assassinated soon. Page 5

Feature

Science and Technology There are still technical problems to be solved before the unfolding of an artificial 'solar fire' as a source of energy. Page 6

Article

Hawke to go the same way as Thatcher?



Australian Premier Bob Hawke and Treasurer Paul Keating at loggerheads. Page 4

National

Shrimp culture disturbs ecology The rapid and unplanned growth of shrimp farming is causing havoc with the country's fragile environment. Page 9

NEWS BRIEFS

100 Iraqi planes flown to Iran

LONDON, Jan 28: Around 100 Iraqi combat and transport aircraft have flown to Iran over the past three days, military sources said today, according to a late night report by Reuters.

Gasoline prices fall

LOS ANGELES, Jan 28: Gasoline prices fell more than 3 cents a gallon over the past two weeks despite the eruption of war in the Middle East and a Gulf oil spill that surpassed the Exxon Valdez Calamity.

Summit to be put off

WASHINGTON, Jan 28: The White House strongly suggested today that a planned February summit between President George Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev would be postponed because of the Gulf war, reports Reuters.

Israeli air raids

SIDON (Lebanon), Jan 28: Israeli warplanes staged air raids in south Lebanon today and Palestinian gunners put up a barrage of anti-aircraft fire, witnesses said. A dozen warplanes took part in the operation which began with repeated low level flights over Sidon, 40 km (25 miles) south of Beirut, and Palestinian refugee camps on its outskirts, reports Reuters.

BNP pledges multi-party democracy, free economy



BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia announcing the election manifesto of her party in a press conference yesterday. — Star Photo

By Staff Correspondent

The election manifesto of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was announced in Dhaka on Monday with commitments to establish multi-party democracy and market oriented economy to build a happy and prosperous Bangladesh.

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia announced the manifesto at a crowded press conference at the Banani office of the party expressing hope that the people would give the mandate in favour of her party programmes. She assured that if her party was voted to power people would enjoy unfettered democracy in a prosperous and corruption free society. She called upon the people to compare the rule of BNP with that of other parties and claimed that the BNP period was the golden era of Bangladesh.

Begum Khaleda Zia said that BNP ended the one party rule introduced by Awami League in 1975. She assured that her party would repeal all black laws including the Special Powers Act and will ensure

JP, BNP two sides of same coin: Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League chief and Eight-party Alliance leader Sheikh Hasina on Monday blamed all post-75 governments for curbing fundamental rights of the people and plundering national wealth.

The AL chief was addressing a public meeting at Kawran Bazar. She said that the Jatiyo Party and the BNP were two sides of the same coin.

Criticising bitterly the BNP regime she said the founder of this party late President Ziaur Rahman never came to power through the peoples mandate, rather he betrayed the cause of the masses.

She said Awami League was formed to fight for the cause of democracy, but BNP and Jatiyo Party originated from the identical quarters only to grip power and national wealth.

When Awami League was in power all sorts of anti social activities including racing were forbidden although secularism was embodied in the Constitution, she claimed. But the BNP and Jatiyo Party governments eliminated the spirit of the Liberation War secularism and patronised what she said wine sale and heroin, the post-75 governments used to.

See Page 10 Col. 2

Khaleda wants Ershad's trial before polls

By Staff Correspondent

BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia has demanded trial of deposed president Ershad before the election and his immediate transfer to the Central Jail.

She told a questioner on Monday at the press conference that jail is the suitable place for corrupt and criminal person.

She said Ershad should be tried by a tribunal before the election.

BNP Secretary General Salam Talukder said deposed president Ershad could be tried by a special tribunal.

Hindus, Muslims battle in Bombay: Five killed

Bombay, Jan 28: Five people were killed when Hindus and Muslims battled each other in a Bombay slum and police opened fire to drive them from the streets, police said today, reports Reuters.

They said three people, including a woman, were shot dead and tow stabbed to death in the Sunday night riot in the impoverished Jogeshwari area of Bombay, India's commercial capital.

More than 1,000 paramilitary police went into the area to enforce a curfew on Monday. At least four people were killed in Jogeshwari in December as some of the worst Hindu-Muslim riots since independence from Britain in 1947 swept India. Nearly 900 people were

killed in the last four months of 1990 as tensions between India's 100 million Muslims and 850 million Hindus were inflamed by a Hindu militant campaign to take over the site of a mosque in the northern town of Ayodhya.

Lawmaker shot dead
AFP adds: A state lawmaker of India's governing party was shot dead Monday outside a hospital where he had been admitted for heart treatment, PTI reported.

Gunmen fired from a car when Bhopal Singh was strolling outside the P.L. Sharma Hospital in the northern city of Meerut, killing him instantly and seriously wounding his guard, the news agency said.

The killers' identity and motive were not known.

Mr. Bhopal Singh was a member of Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar's centrist Janata Dal (Socialist) Party and a lawmaker in the legislature of Uttar Pradesh state.

Police said Mr. Bhopal Singh and three of his guards were arrested December 7 on charges of murdering two men in Meerut, but were released on bail. The lawmaker was subsequently admitted to the P.L. Sharma Hospital.

Kashmir

PTI report from Srinagar: Three persons, two of them policemen, were injured in militant firing in Kashmir valley since last night, official sources said.

Lathi-wielding procession to Gulshan Feb 2

By DU Correspondent

A joint rally of students and professionals on the Dhaka University campus on Monday announced that a lathi-wielding procession will be led to Gulshan on February 2 to drive former president Ershad out of his villa to the Central Jail.

Organised by the All Party Students Unity (APSU), the rally was participated by the representatives of various professional groups including teachers, lawyers and journalists.

On Sunday, APSU steered a students march towards Gulshan demanding Ershad's transfer to the Central Jail. APSU issued an ultimatum of 24 hours for his transfer to the jail when the marchers were obstructed on the way.

The rally also announced a countryside demonstration on February 4 to campaign for a halt to the Gulf war. (Detailed report on page 3)

Jamaat will introduce interest-free economy

The Acting Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, Mr. Abbas Ali Khan, said if his party was voted to power it would introduce interest-free economy, emancipate the peasants and withdraw certificate cases, reports BSS.

Addressing a reception, accorded to him by the people of Kamalapur area at the government primary school premises Mr. Khan said the Jamaat would also ensure security of life and property.

He said land tax would not be realised in an Islamic state, where only the rich farmers would have to pay 'ushar'.

Presided over by Mr. Abdul Mannan, the reception was also addressed by the city secretary of the Jamaat Mr. A.T.M. Azharul Islam.

The Jamaat chief said the people do not believe in the statements of the political parties, which had enjoyed state power earlier, that democracy would be re-established if they were voted to power.

"They had introduced one-party system, and bagged the press" he said adding that very party was now trying to describe its era as 'golden period' to mislead the people.

No secret pact with India: Kamal Hossain

Awami League president member Dr. Kamal Hossain on Monday called upon the people to vote for 'boat' in the next month's parliamentary election to restore their lost rights, reports BSS.

Referring to the 25-year agreement with India, the former Foreign Minister said there was no secret pact or entente. All post-1975 governments hailed that agreement, he said, according to the press release.

Probe into abuse of power by Roushan

A Star Report

The commission headed by Justice Anwaruddin Ahmed has started investigation into alleged corruption and abuse of power by Roushan Ershad, wife of deposed president H.M. Ershad.

The commission is now examining the evidence regarding irregular allotment of a commercial plot to her by Rajuk at Kawran Bazar, procurement of huge bank loans and overseas travels with big entourage.

The commission is learnt to have written a letter to Rajuk on Monday to submit all documents regarding allotment of the plot. The available documents revealed that Rajuk allotted the commercial plot at Kawran Bazar in the name of Roushan from Mymensingh. She suppressed the fact that she is the wife of (former)

President Ershad in the affidavit submitted to Rajuk. The plot was given to her without an auction by Rajuk which is the normal procedure, according to a source. The commission found it an irregular act by Rajuk and Roushan Ershad is charged with abuse of power as the wife of President.

The Foreign Office has been asked by the Commission to submit the details of Roushan Ershad's travels abroad along with the list of her entourage and the purpose of the visits. The commission is learnt to have received allegations that Roushan used to visit different countries with big entourage with her and the television crew. On many occasions the Bangladesh embassies were asked to

See Page 10 Col. 3

Govt transports won't ply on Fridays

The Government has decided not to allow buses, minibuses, trucks and all categories of diesel run transports of Government, semi-Government, autonomous bodies and nationalised organisations to ply on Fridays excepting for emergency, reports BSS.

The Government has also imposed a total restriction on the use of transports of these organisations for picnic and other recreations.

The decisions were taken at a meeting of the Council of Advisers held Sunday night at Bangabhaban with Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed in the chair in view of the likely adverse effects of the Gulf war on the international supply of petroleum products.

The Council of Advisers also decided that all shops, business organisations and markets excepting those beyond the purview of the existing government restrictions should close down positively at 7 pm.

All petrol pumps of the country shall remain closed on Fridays. Petrol pumps in urban areas will be closed down at 6 pm while those on the high-

See Page 10 Col. 8

25 hurt as AL, BNP workers clash in Ctg

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 28: At least 25 persons were injured in a clash between the workers of Awami League and those of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) at Boalkhali upazila here today.

The clash ensued when both the parties brought out processions at the same venue. Details of the incident could not be gathered. Police were deployed there.

Hartal

All Party Students Unity (APSU) Bashkhali unit called a day-long hartal there today (Tuesday) demanding the withdrawal of the name of Mahmudul Islam Chowdhury, the former Mayor of Chittagong City Corporation, from the managing committee of two local colleges. The Anti-corruption Department filed two corruption cases against him.

29 Planning Commission task forces preparing reports Political leaders to be briefed on development problems

By Staff Correspondent

Reports of the task forces set up by Planning Commission will be presented to the leaders of political parties and the members of parliament by the first week of March.

Planning Commission sources said the draft reports would be ready by the middle of February.

About 250 professionals involved in 29 separate task forces are reviewing the development problems and issues in different sectors of the economy.

The sources said, "they are the best available talents and are competent to examine the major socio-economic issues from the national perspective and recommend policy options or alternatives in the present

context for the political leadership under democracy and public accountability".

A series of briefings will be arranged for the leaders of major political parties and alliances with the convenors of individual task forces after the presentation of the final reports. This will be aimed at facilitating more intensive discussions between the political leadership and the professional groups for pinpointing the areas of actions for "sustainable development", the sources said.

The task forces are working independently and are expected to recommend at least three policy options in each sector, insiders in the Planning Ministry stated. The

groundwork for the political leadership whether in government or in opposition will be prepared well so that identification of problems and possible alternative solutions do not take much time, they added.

The policy options will provide ample ground for "manoeuvrability" in areas needed by the political leadership, the informed sources said.

Planning Commission insiders observed that the immediate outlook for the economy provided no cause for alarm. The Gulf war is a different issue and its impact on the short-term situation involves questions many of which are

See Page 10 Col. 4

Absconding ex-ministers likely to surrender

The absconding ministers of deposed Ershad regime are likely to surrender before January 31, the deadline set by the caretaker Government, reports UNB.

A police high official, citing intelligence reports, said Monday that "wanted" ministers including Prime Minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed were in the queue for surrender.

The interim Government on January 24 ordered 10 former ministers including premier Kazi Zafar to report to the Dhaka Central Jail authorities within 7 days. The ministers are Nazimul Rahman Manju, Lt. Col (Retd) Zafar Imam, ABM Ruhul Amin Howlader, Anisul Islam Mahmud, Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu, Kazi Feroz Rashid, Abul Hasnat, Sheikh Shahidul Islam, Anwar Hossain

Manju and Sardar Amzad Hossain.

Ruhul Amin Howlader and Kazi Feroz Rashid were arrested on January 26 and sent to the Dhaka Central Jail with 120 days of detention under the Special Powers Act.

As per warrants of arrest, ministers, are liable to one-year rigorous imprisonment and fine or both in failure to give themselves up to the jail authorities.

The warrants from the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate court also provided for attachment of their property unless they surrender before the deadline.

Most of the ousted ministers, hiding since the Ershad regime was toppled on December 6, have filed nominations through their repre-

sentatives as Jatiya Party nominees.

The All-Party Student Unity (APSU) is persistently demanding arrest and trial of all ministers and close associates of Ershad. The students, are also pressing for shifting Ershad to jail from a Gulshan house.

JP supporters arrested

BHOLA, Jan 28: Two supporters of Jatiya Party were arrested on Sunday after a clash with Awami League involving pasting of posters, reports BSS.

Jatiya Party supporters reportedly objected to pasting the posters of AL and tore the posters.