

AL programme for March 7

Bangladesh Awami League has chalked out an elaborate programme to observe March 7, commemorating Bangabandhu's historic speech at Suhrawardy Uddyan on the day in 1971, reports BSS.

According to the programme, a public meeting will be held at 3 pm at 'Panthapath' in the capital. Party chief Sheikh Hasina will address the meeting.

Similar public meetings would be held on the day in all organisational districts of the country.

The tape of the historic March-7 speech of Bangabandhu will be played at different parts of the capital from March 4. Party workers will bring out processions at all wards in the capital from March 4 to March 6.

In the morning of March 7 wreaths will be placed at the portraits of the father of the nation at Bangabandhu Bhaban. The national and organisational flags will be hoisted a top all the offices of the party throughout the country to mark the occasion.

JP meet Sunday

An emergency meeting of the central working committee of the Jatiya Party will be held at 5 pm at its temporary office in Gulshan on tomorrow (Sunday), reports BSS.

According to a party source the Acting Chairman of the party, Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, has requested all concerned to attend the meeting.

AL meet March 5

A meeting of the presidents and general secretaries of Dhaka mohanganj, Gazipur, Munshigonj, Manikgonj, Narayanganj, Narshingdhi districts and city Awami League will be held at party Bangabandhu Avenue Central Office at 11 am on March 5, reports BSS.

Party chief Sheikh Hasina will address the meeting.

Party General Secretary Begum Sajeda Chowdhury requested all concerned to attend the meeting.

JP calls for hartal at Bhola

BHOLA, Mar 1: Local unit of Jatiya Party has called for a dawn to dusk hartal on March 3 (Sunday), protesting alleged vote rigging in eight centres of Bhola-1 constituency, reports UNB.

The hartal call was given at a meeting of the District Jatiya Party at Natun Bazar Square this afternoon.

The meeting was presided over by District Jatiya Party President Abdul Jabbar Howladar.

Sajeda condemns terrorism

Awami League General Secretary Begum Sajeda Chowdhury on Friday condemned and protested against the terror let loose on their workers by the BNP men during the celebrations of their victory at different places, reports BSS.

She said, since the conclusion of the voting the BNP men had been assaulting her party workers at Mirpur, Mohamadpur, Demra, Lalbagh, Sutrapur, Sabujbagh, Golapbagh, Sankar, Royerbarazar, Islampur, Malibagh, Khilgaon, Tejgaon, Shahjahanpur and other places of the country.

She called upon the administration to take proper steps to stop such terrorist activities. At the same time, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury called upon the pro-liberation democratic forces to resist united such evil design and carry forward the march towards establishing democracy.

Our Kishoreganj correspondent adds: Awami League on Friday staged demonstration and rally in the town to protest what they called as "terrorism" by the BNP workers.

The rally held in front of AL office said that if the authority did not take measures to check such incidents, AL workers would face the BNP workers "hooliganism".

Benazir greets Khaleda, Hasina

KARACHI, Mar 1: Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto, the first elected woman prime minister in the Muslim world, congratulated Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina today for winning the most seats in elections, report Reuter.

"As a Muslim woman I feel especially proud to see the achievement of Begum Zia and Sheikh Hasina," she said.



Sadek Hossain Khoka the BNP candidate who defeated AL chief Sheikh Hasina in Kotwali-Sutrapur constituency in Wednesday's parliamentary election leading a victory procession in the city Friday. — Star photo

Polling free and fair

From Page 1 Col 4

names from the electoral roll and a small number of 'personation' attempts, many of which were frustrated by the party agents and the polling official. But they observed the party agents did not accuse each other of organising these offences.

Peter Shore said that they had also got some evidence of the clumsy insertion into February 1990 register of blocks of names and addresses of people who do not exist. However, no use was made of this bogus vote since nobody turned up to claim them and as such those had no effect on the results, he observed.

He said that the counting that they had observed were undertaken in an orderly way and the figures of votes cast were tallied with the numbers the party agents kept.

Peter Shore said he had no hesitation to say that from their experience of the polls this was an exemplary election, a free and fair exercise of franchise by people of Bangladesh.

About their observations of the actual conduct of the presiding officials and their staff and of the police, BDR and Bangladesh Army, he said, their behavior at the polling

stations made it plain to the observers team that the civil and military authorities were entirely neutral in the election and the security men were there simply to maintain law and order and not to favour any party.

Later the other members of the team Andrew Bennet, Martin Brandon Bravo and David Wilshire replied to the questions of the journalists. Among the MPs two are Labour and two belong to Conservative Party.

When asked about the allegation of riggings raised by the Awami League President Sheikh Hasina Peter Shore said, he did not want to make any comment against any one but added the election procedure was almost similar to that of British election system. For democratic world Peter Shore said, there are many lessons to learn from this election.

Mr Martin Brandon who also came to Bangladesh to oversee the 1986 parliamentary election said that there was a gulf of difference between the elections of 1986 and that of 1991. He said the 1986 election was highly rigged, unfair and a practice of corruption. He termed 1986 election as an 'organised corruption'.

Japanese Diet team

The six members Japanese Diet observer group appreciated that in the main the elections, under the caretaker government were conducted in a free, fair and orderly manner.

Addressing a Press conference Friday morning at Hotel Sonargaon, the Japanese team leader Hiroichi Fukuda of Liberal Democratic Party said the election was a 'substantial step toward' democratic process in Bangladesh.

About the presence of law enforcing agencies at polling centres, he said they were guarding the centres in a well-disciplined manner. There are no evidence that they were up to anything other than maintaining law and order.

Fukuda read out a statement and said that he was impressed by the cooperative attitude among the election agents representing different political parties. He said that the observer group visited 21 polling centres in Dhaka, Mymensingh and Narayanganj and found many NGO groups observing the elections on their own which was a reflection of enthusiasm for a free and fair election.

Replying to a question about the allegation of Awami

League President Sheikh Hasina she said that they did not believe that there was any rigging in the elections.

SAARC, NGO group

The 30 member non-government observer group from four SAARC countries in their first-hand report released Friday stated that the elections were conducted in substantial conformity with the electoral laws and procedures of Bangladesh and in a peaceful, fair free atmosphere.

Meet local observers

Some foreign polls' observers on Friday met with the members of Liberty Forum and Institute of Human Rights and Affairs and said the poll was free and fair.

Among the observers were Peter Shore, former Pakistani chief justice Durab Patel and former Indian chief justice Krishnan Iyer.

Present among the forum and institute members were Justice Abdur Rahman Chowdhury, Dr M Inna Ali, Justice Abdul Malek, Khondokar Mahbubuddin, Dr M A Naser, Dr Md Yousuf Ali, Tobarak Hossain, Prof Shahed Ali, MA Monaimin, Barrister KS Naha, Dr Mahzud Haq, Post Faruq Mahmud and Advocate SM Fakrudin.

Menon's call to refrain from raising allegation

By Staff Correspondent
Workers' Party General Secretary Rashed Khan Menon has felicitated the interim government and the election Commission for holding free and fair election.

In a statement on Friday Menon said February 27 polls was the first neutral election in post-independence Bangladesh.

Hailing Begum Khaleda Zia, leader of the victorious BNP, the Workers' Party leader hoped that all would come forward to transfer power to a sovereign parliament and establish an accountable government in line with the modalities of November 19, 1990 signed by the three alliances.

He urged all concerned to respect the verdict of the people reflected through the polls and refrain from marring the atmosphere by raising allegations. He also hoped that the three alliances will follow the agreement and fulfill the demands of different classes and professional groups raised during the nine-year democratic movement.

31 pc votes

From Page 1 Col 5

Of the total votes cast, BNP got 1,02,70,321 while AL 1,01,68,365, JP 38,19,867 and Jamaat 38,32,381. The total number of votes cast throughout the country was 3,30,51,136.

The division-wise breakdown of the turnout of voters is as follows:

In Dhaka division, BNP 39 per cent, AL 35 per cent, JP 8 per cent and BKSAL 2 per cent. A total of 97,70,137 votes was cast at 7247 polling centres of 90 constituencies.

In Chittagong division, BNP 31 per cent, AL 31 per cent, JP 15 per cent and Jamaat 7 per cent.

In Rajshahi, BNP 26 per cent, AL 25 per cent, Jamaat 20 per cent and JP 16 per cent. In Rajshahi division, BNP candidates won 27 seats, while JP 18, AL 16 and Jamaat seven. Out of 1,47,81,202 votes, 90,76,930 were cast.

In Khulna division AL bagged 32 per cent votes as against 27 per cent by BNP, 16 per cent by Jamaat and eight per cent by JP. BNP bagged 26 seats, AL 20, Jamaat 8 and JP one. Of 1,19,59,756 votes, 69,50,403 were cast at 4573 polling centers of 60 constituencies.

Post-poll clashes 3 girls among 14 injured in Chittagong

CHITTAGONG, Mar 1: At least ten persons were injured in a clash between the workers of two rival political parties at Ramu upazila headquarters of Cox's Bazar district this evening, police said here.

The injured persons were given first aid at Ramu hospital. Both Awami League and Jamaat-e-Islami blamed each other for the clash in which bombs were exploded and brick bats exchanged.

In another incident: Four persons, including three girls, were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital with injuries following post-poll violence in Chittagong Friday, hospital sources said.

Ershad

From Page 1 Col 2

The JP leader demanded immediate release of Ershad and said "the former President proved his popularity by winning all the five seats he contested."

Mizan Chowdhury, who suffered his first ever electoral defeat since 1954 in Wednesday's election from his home constituency (Chandpur-4), also hinted he might contest the parliamentary bye-election from Rangpur.

Accepting his defeat gracefully, the JP Acting Chairman said "this is the verdict of the people which I accept without any reservation".

Results would have been different if the Jatiya Party candidates were given the rightful facilities as enjoyed by other political parties, he said.

Jatiya Party secured the third position despite all odds, the Acting JP Chairman said and thanked the print media for giving coverage to his party.

France

From Page 1 Col 8

port and friendship to the people of Bangladesh, the spokesman said France noted that the elections were held "quite satisfactorily" and that all the political parties were able to express their views. "It is worthwhile to notice that it is for the first time in the history of Bangladesh that transition occurred in a peaceful and a democratic manner," the press release added.

The Midnight File

US troops' return to take six months

WASHINGTON, Mar 1: Defense Secretary Dick Cheney said Friday that US forces will start pulling out of the Gulf region "within the next couple of weeks." But the secretary cautioned that it could take six months to complete the pullout. Defense Department planners have said they hope to have more than half of the 537,000 American troops home within 10 weeks, reports AP.

Allied POWs in good condition

ROME, Mar 1: The Italian Red Cross has been told that all allied prisoners of war held by Iraq are in good condition. Defense Minister Virginio Rognoni said Friday. The information was given to Italy by the head of the Algerian Red Crescent who just returned from Iraq, reports AP.

Bush ends ban on contacts

WELLINGTON, Mar 1: New Zealand Prime Minister Jim Bolger and US President George Bush spoke to each other by telephone today, ending Washington's seven-year ban on such contact. The phone call was the first contact between a New Zealand Prime Minister and a US President since the former Labour government took office in 1984, reports AFP.

Iran to send Iraq food

NICOSIA, Mar 1: Iran is prepared to send food to Iraq, its foe in the 1980-88 war, the Islamic Republic News Agency reported Friday. The first shipment will include powdered milk, baby food flour, cooking oil and fruit. The agency monitored in Nicosia, said UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar was informed of Iran's decision, reports AP.

Six new ministers in USSR

MOSCOW, Mar 1: The Supreme Soviet legislature Friday confirmed the appointment of six more Cabinet members nominated by President Mikhail S. Gorbachev, the Tass news agency said. Gorbachev on Tuesday nominated 23 people to his new Cabinet. Among those confirmed Friday were Justice Minister Sergel Lushtchikov and Agriculture Minister Vyacheslav Chernomirnov. On Thursday, Defense Minister Dmitry Yazov and KGB chief Vladimir Kryuchkov were among 11 nominees confirmed, reports AP.

Three rebels killed in Lanka

COLOMBO, Mar 1: Three Tamil separatist Guerrillas and a civilian were killed in northern Sri Lanka in separate clashes between security forces and rebels, military sources said today. Three fighters of the liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam were shot dead and two wounded in an ambush by troops at Kurumbasetty in northern Jaffna district on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Iraq's defeat concerns Soviets

MOSCOW, Mar 1: Iraq's defeat in the Gulf War is causing new concern among Soviet generals about how to respond to the advanced weaponry used by the US-led military forces.

"What happened in Kuwait and Iraq necessitates a review of the attitude to army air defence and the country's entire air defence system," said Defence Minister Marshal Dmitri Yazov.

The bulk of Iraq's weapons were made by the Soviets, but Yazov said deficiencies in Soviet arms were not to blame for Baghdad's defeat.

"As concerns the quality of Soviet military technology that happened to be in the Iraq arsenal, it was the least of the causes," the Defence Ministry newspaper Red Star on Friday quoted Yazov as saying, without elaborating.

The war showed the Soviet air defence system "has weak spots," said Yazov, and the military will hold a conference to discuss the advanced technologies used by the US-led coalition in the war.

He spoke during legislative hearings Thursday and his remarks were reprinted by Red Star. He did not mention the destruction of Iraq's Soviet-made tanks or other weapons in the six-week war.

On February 12, Red Star carried an article by a former Soviet military adviser to Iraq, Lt Col Vladimir V Golovko, who said the Allied forces in the Gulf had extensive intelligence on Iraqi armaments.

He also said Iraq was holding some air defences in reserve and had weaponry that was less up-to-date than US warplanes.

"And as for Soviet missile launchers and equipment supplied to countries, including those in the Middle East, they can unfortunately be employed for chemical and bacteriological warfare," analysts Andrei Kortunov and Alexei Izyumov wrote in an article on the Soviet military-industrial complex.

There has been little Soviet comment on Iraq's use of Soviet-made Scud missiles and launchers to attack civilian targets in Israel and Saudi Arabia.

The analysts, quoting Western figures, reported the Soviet Union has a 28 per cent share of the world arms export trade and that 32 per cent of Soviet armaments go the Third World.

They said the Kremlin does not always collect on the sales, however.

"For example, Algeria, Iraq, Libya and Syria repaid only 23 billion dollars out of more than 45 billion dollars in Soviet credits for military technology by January 1, 1989," the analysts said.

Barrister Rafiq

From Page 1 Col 8

Press Club Rafiqul Islam Miah said about 200 supporters of Jahangir Alam attacked him when he went to visit Hyderabad centre at about 12 noon.

He received forehead, arm and leg injuries and was given first aid at a hospital. His forehead, right arm and leg were bandaged when he was addressing the conference.

He lodged a case under Section 324 (attempt to murder) with Muradpur police.

Rafiqul Islam Miah, who defeated Jahangir Alam by 1500 votes, said he could have won with greater margin if the AL candidate had not resorted to violence.

Kaifu

From Page 1 Col 8

cess in Bangladesh.

He said Japan has demonstrated keen interest in the democratic process in Dhaka. For this a parliamentary delegation has also been sent to Bangladesh to observe election, he added.

Kaifu hoped that the successful democratic process would further strengthen the existing friendly relations between the two countries.

The Japanese premier recalled his visit to Bangladesh in May last and the rousing reception accorded to him by Bangladeshi people.

Hasina's call

From Page 1 Col 8

Holy Shab-e-Barat today (Saturday), the Awami League President urged the people to seek divine blessings for removing all wrongs, injustice, hunger, poverty, deprivation and exploitation.

Hasina said corruption, injustice and non-Islamic activities plagued the entire nation following 15 years of autocratic rule.

She wished the holy night would bring prosperity and freedom for all.

The Awami League chief also called for the withdrawal of all Israeli troops from the Arab lands and bringing permanent peace in the Middle East through restoration of an independent Palestine State.

The city unit of Awami League will hold a milad mahfil on the occasion of Holy Shab-e-Barat.

Shahabuddin

From Page 1 Col 7

view that elections were held in a free, fair, neutral and peaceful manner. The Commonwealth observer group, the National Democratic Institute of the United States, the Japanese observer team and the European Parliament observer group have mentioned the elections as an unprecedented example to follow in the country, he added.

Praising the role of democratic minded people, the Election Commission and the officers and employees involved in the holding of the election, Justice Shahabuddin said they had earned appreciation from all quarters for their untiring efforts. He said, members of police, ansar, BDR and mobile army units deployed for maintaining law and order performed their duties sincerely and honestly.

Justice Shahabuddin said the union parshads and the pourasavas which had been given collective responsibilities under an ordinance helped maintain peace and order in their respective areas.

The Acting President congratulated all those functionaries who extended cooperation in smooth holding of elections.

Iraqi, Allied commanders

From Page 1 Col 7

they (Iraqis) realise that the best way, or the best peaceful relationship, is to go on and take matters in their own hands and make a new lease on life."

British Prime Minister John Major said the world should treat Iraq as a pariah as long as Saddam remained in power.

"We very much hope that his own people will deal with him in the way he so justly deserves," he told Parliament in London.

Arab political analysts say Egypt, Syria and the six Gulf Arab states who have troops in the coalition force will be unable to deal in future with a Baghdad ruled by Saddam.

"We do not want to meet him anymore or see his face again," a senior Egyptian official said in Cairo.

But analysts warn that Saddam will not easily admit defeat and leave power quietly.

Reports from Baghdad say Iraqis are also beginning to question Saddam's leadership in private and that debate will intensify as the defeated army trickles home in disarray.

But for the last two days new songs have been broadcast telling the world and Iraqis that Saddam is still a popular leader and will remain in power.

Awami General Norman Schwarzkopf, Allied Commander in the Gulf, is expected to lead the coalition team charged with settling the last military issues of the war at talks with the Iraqis.

Iraq has agreed to the talks but their timing and location has still to be set.

Although Bush said he wanted to bring American's fighting force back home as quickly as possible, White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater played down thoughts of an overnight withdrawal. "Don't delude yourself," Fitzwater said. "It took seven months to get in and it's going to take a lot of months to get out."

Bush said he was pleased by the quick Iraqi response to his 48-hour deadline for agreement on a meeting to arrange an exchange of war prisoners. US and Kuwaiti detainees and other military aspects ahead of a formal end to the war.

He predicted confidently that Baghdad would now comply with all Allied demands.

According to AFP, Bush also said Thursday he was con-

vinced Iraqi forces that overran Kuwait August 2 would have invaded Saudi Arabia as well if the United States had not deployed a massive force to protect the Kingdom.

Bush's statement came during a photo session with the Saudi Ambassador, Prince Bandar Ben Sultan, who agreed with the President.

The British Commander in the Gulf said in Riyadh Friday, up to a year could be required to repatriate the 40,000 British troops in the Gulf with their material.

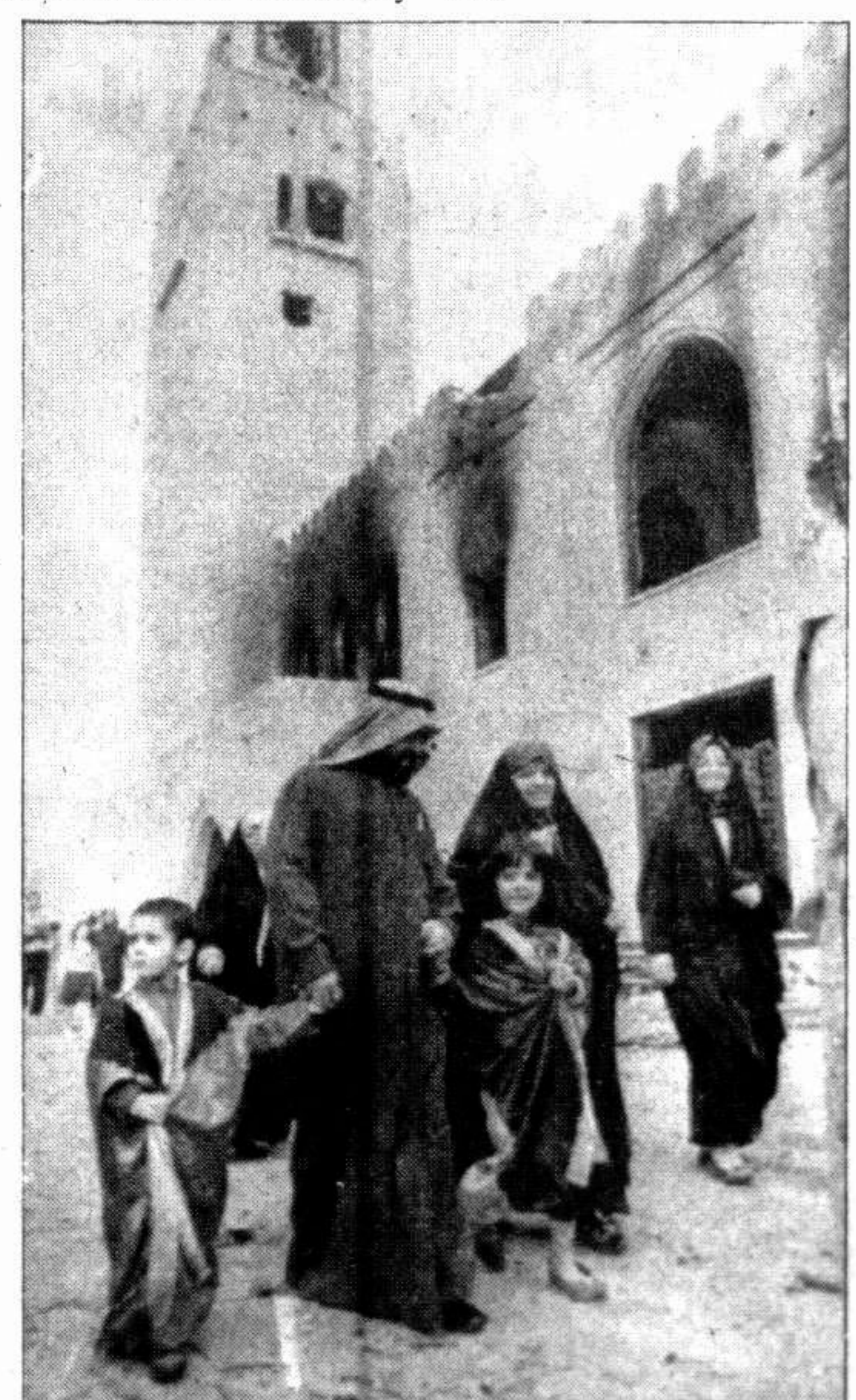
French Foreign Minister Pierre Joxe said Thursday, his country is ready to rapidly withdraw its 14,000 troops from the Gulf or alternatively

leave them to help keep the peace under UN leadership.

Meanwhile, President Francois Mitterrand called for efforts to lay the foundations of a just peace for all, within the framework of the United Nations, once conditions for a lasting ceasefire were met.

Meanwhile, Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz today called for the immediate withdrawal of US led forces in southern Iraq and accused them of persisting in attacks.

AFP says, in a broadcast on official Iraqi radio, monitored in London by the BBC, Aziz said Allied forces near southern Iraqi towns are making attacks incompatible with the ceasefire.



A Kuwaiti family walks through the courtyard of the office of the Emir of Kuwait in Kuwait City February 28 surveying the damage caused by Iraqi troops. —AFP photo.