

Moneyed people are with BJP No change in election scenario: V P Singh

NEW DELHI, May 28: Janata Dal leader V P Singh said today there was no change in the election scenario following the death of Rajiv Gandhi which he described as a 'setback' to the Congress (I).

India's social fabric would be affected by this setback to the Congress (I), he said, but maintained that the two remaining phases of Lok Sabha polls next month, the basic issues remain the same.

The former prime minister told PTI in an interview, we have to address ourselves to the basic problems of the masses.

Singh declined to be drawn into the post-assassination situation in the Congress (I) by saying he would not like to comment on the internal affairs of their party. "I will confine myself to the Janata Dal," he said.

Asked about possibility of his joining the Congress-I, which he had left following differences with Gandhi, Singh shot back "I was expelled from the Congress-I. Now I am on my own in the Janata Dal."

The Dal leader, who resumes his election campaign from tomorrow with a tour of Gujarat, said days of opportunistic politics were over. Singh said there was a change in the dynamics of politics. "One has to understand the polarisation that has taken place at the people's level. On one side the poor and the downtrodden are with the National Front while on the other side the moneyed people are with the BJP," he said.

He said the moneyed sections of society which were hitherto with the Congress-I had now found a party in the form of the BJP. The BJP, however, had no social base and hence was raising the facade of religion only to garner votes, he added.

The former Prime Minister said the basic need of the party was to ensure people's participation in resolution of various problems faced by the country. There are problems — those in Punjab, Kashmir or Assam — the economic problems — the unemployment problem which can be solved only by ensuring the participation of the masses in the power structure, he said.

Asked about the impact of Rajiv Gandhi's assassination on the Congress-I, Singh said the death of Gandhi was tragic. His death has given a jolt to one of the largest political parties of the country.

On the likely change in the electoral prospects of political parties following Gandhi's assassination, he said it is a solemn occasion. It is not fair to try to convert the tragedy into politics of votes. A leader is lost we should keep it at that level," he added.

To a question if sympathy wave would help the electoral prospects of the Congress-I Singh said the life of the common man—the rickshaw-puller, the unemployed youth remained the same and the need is that we address ourselves to these issues.

He said the setback to the Congress-I would naturally affect the social fabric of the nation. He, however, did not elaborate.

To a question on the Congressmen joining the Janata Dal after the Lok Sabha polls, he said, "These are the issues people will decide."

Replying to a question on portrayal of crisis in the country by the Western media Singh said he had fullest confidence in the people of the country. "They will cope with the situation," he said.

He said the country was witnessing violence. He said a lot of opportunistic politics has crept in where democratic norms mean nothing and only holding of power is the main goal. We have to seriously look at these problems," he said.

The former Prime Minister said there was no possibility of the polls throwing up a hung parliament. "The National Front-Left Front alliance will get comfortable majority in the Lok Sabha," he said. To a question how many seats he expected the alliance to win, he quipped, "We will not be hunting for quorum."

He also ruled out the possibility of formation of a national government after the elections and said "the National Front-Left Front will form a national government."

Asked to comment on Mrs Sonia Gandhi's refusal to accept the presidency of the Congress-I, Singh said it was an internal matter of the party. He also declined to comment on the possibility of a split in the Congress-I.

He said the country can be strengthened only if the people have a sense of participation. "If we want a strong India, we have to involve the people, particularly those who produce wealth. It is their solidarity which can make India strong."

The Dal leader said the National Front wanted to build a strong and united India where the masses play an active role in its government.

He said the "stability" talk by the BJP was a "pipe dream". The BJP had no presence in the south or in the east, in the Hindi heartland too, it was not in existence in Bihar, he said and added that the National Front-Left Front combine alone had a nationwide presence and could provide stability.



Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal termed Monday's incident as terrorism and brought out a procession in protest on the Dhaka University campus on Tuesday.



Pro-Awami League Chhatra League held a rally on Tuesday protesting 'presence of Razakars' on the DU campus.



Jamaat's student front Islami Chhatra Shibir protested attack on Maulana Nizami by bringing out a procession in the city on Tuesday.

Peace efforts

From Page 1 Col. 4
thorities and the political parties for eliminating terrorism from the campus, they added.

The JCD leaders also demanded immediate arrest of the killers of Dr. Shamsul Alam Milon.

Addressing the rally Khairul Kabir Khokon said presence of certain person might be protested, but on that plea foiling of a peace initiative could not be acceptable.

Speakers at the Chhatra League (S-A) rally alleged that inviting Jamaat leader Maulana Nizami on the DU campus was part of a conspiracy to rehabilitate the anti-liberation forces in the Dhaka University.

Chhatra League (S-A) Golam Mostafa Sajjan and Qamruzzaman Ansari addressed the rally.

They demanded cancellation of the probe body formed in connection with Monday's incident.

Chhatra League (N-S) and Chhatra Union also held separate rallies on the campus, where the student leaders blamed the Vice-Chancellor for Monday's incident.

UNB adds: Islami Chhatra Shibir alleged that Monday's incident on the campus occurred due to the negligence of the Vice-Chancellor. They also accused the police on duty of dereliction to duty and inaction.

At a rally held in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the evening, organised by the Jamaat's student front, the Shibir leaders condemned the "dastardly" attack on Maulana Nizami in the presence of police allegedly perpetrated by the Awami-BKSL clique.

Presided over by ICS President Aminul Islam Mukul, it was also addressed by Monsur Ahmed, Abdul Halim, Abdul Hakim and Aminur Rahman. Speakers at the rally demanded exemplary punishment of those responsible for the brutal attack.

Our Rajshahi Correspondent reports: a tense situation gripped Rajshahi University campus following a clash between Islami Chhatra Shibir activists and workers of pro-Awami League Chhatra League (BCL). The clash ensued when workers of BCL raised anti-

Jamaat slogans in a procession when Shibir was organising a rally in front of the central library at 11-30 am.

Meanwhile, 52 teachers of Dhaka University in a statement held the vice-Chancellor responsible for Monday's incident. They criticised the Vice-Chancellor for inviting an "identified collaborator of the anti-liberation forces" like Nizami and said, conspiracy was being hatched to rehabilitate the anti-liberation forces in the Dhaka University.

They said all conscious quarters of the university would resist the conspiracy unitedly.

Signatories to the statement include, K M Saduddin, Ahsanul Huq, Dr Mostafa Chowdhury, Dr Moinal Islam, ABM Khaled, Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Dr Durga Das Bhattacharjee, Dr Arefin Siddique, QAIM Nuruddin, Dr Golam Rahman and Dr Sheikhs Abdus Salam, Dr BK Jahangir, Dr Muntasir Mamun and Prof Shahadat Ali.

Sobhan

From Page 1 Col. 8
Nizami and leaders of other political parties were meeting in the VC's office on Monday.

Moulana Sobhan further alleged that the Vice-Chancellor "did not take any measure to save Moulana Nizami, on the contrary when the police rushed to the spot and arrested a number of assailants, the VC asked the police to release them and accordingly they (assailants) were released."

Moulana Sobhan said an "ezhar" was lodged with the Ramna police station in this connection specifying the names of the "assailants". The Acting President gave him a patient hearing and said that since a case has been already filed law will certainly take its own course.

Later, in the evening, the Acting President visited Moulana Nizami at a city clinic.

He expressed his deep sympathy to the injured Jamaat leader and wished his early recovery.

Minister for Law and Justice Mirza Golam Hafiz was present.

Jamaat

From Page 1 Col. 2
Islam, Dr Syed Abdullah Mahmud and others addressed it, while city Jamaat chief Abdur Kader Mollah presided. The rally was part of party's seven-day programme to protest the attack.

The speakers said the attack was launched by those who did not want stability and smooth functioning of democracy in the country. The meeting demanded resignation of the DU Vice-Chancellor, arrest of the attackers; steps to stop entry of the terrorists into the campus and measures against those conspiring against country's independence and sovereignty.

Later a big procession was brought in the city thoroughfares.

The capital was seized primarily by Tigrean insurgents belonging to the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front.

The Tigreans seek a unified Ethiopia under a 'democratic people's government' with strong socialist undertones. They say they want a broad-based transitional government followed by free elections.

The Eritreans, fighting since 1961 for the independence of the northern most province of Erettra, want a plebiscite under UN supervision.

Message from Sudan says: Around 15,000 Ethiopian soldiers and civilians have fled to Sudan, the commissioner for refugees said Tuesday.

Sudan, its resources already strained by drought, expected 150,000 more Ethiopian refugees, the commissioner said.

Abdul-Rahman Sir Elkhateem said that some of the refugees who had fled the final fighting were wounded and in immediate need of food and medicine.

On Sunday, a Sudanese army statement said 1,300 Ethiopian soldiers and military officers had defected to Sudan, some taking their families with them.

Earlier Tuesday, the Sudanese government claimed that 700 Sudanese rebels were killed fighting alongside Ethiopian government forces against insurgents in Ethiopia's civil war.

Information Minister Abdulla Mohamed Ahmed said John Garang, leader of the anti-government Sudan People's Liberation Army, fled Ethiopia to neighboring Kenya.

Wage Board writ hearing continues

The hearing of the writ petition challenging the implementation of the fourth Wage Board Award for journalists and employees of the newspapers and news agencies continued Tuesday before the Division Bench of the High Court Division, reports BSS.

Additional Attorney General Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan submitting his arguments said the third Wage Board Award was implemented by the newspaper owners, which is evident from the report of the Wage Board. The fourth Wage Board has given its award on the basis of the materials available on record in compliance with the provisions of section of Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) Act 1974.

He also submitted that the Wage Board having given its award in compliance with the law, should not be interfered within writ jurisdiction.

He further said that the newspaper owners having implemented the first, second and third Wage Board Awards without any objection, could not challenge the award, in particular the points on gratuity and income tax, which were given to the newspaper employees since 1983.

Hearing will resume today.

Diarrhoea

From Page 1 Col. 7
were not identified. The authorities have strengthened medicare operations in the district, the source said adding that 104 medical teams are working round the clock in the affected areas.

The source said "the disease is sporadic, not in an epidemic form".

The death toll rose to 55 in the district with Tuesday's deaths. Eleven died of water-borne diseases.

Another source said that the rehabilitation programme was the urgent need of the flood affected areas as relief operations have slowed down.

Addis Ababa

See Page 10 Col. 5
the United States to help restore order in the city, moved to key points and ministries around the hilly, highlands capital.

In a radio broadcast, the rebels urged foreign residents of the refugee-swollen city of 3 million to stay indoors.

The rebels appeared to have spared most residential areas in their assault, concentrating on key government buildings and the presidential palace, where the bulk of the fighting occurred before the building was captured.

The move on the capital halted—at least temporarily—relief efforts for millions of drought victims, although relief officials said an end to the fighting would allow easier access to the needy.

The Mengistu regime had often kept aid from rebel-held areas.

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Mengistu's government supported the Sudanese rebels and allowed them bases in the country. Khartoum has supported Ethiopian rebels under a succession of regimes.

The Midnight File

ROK students' protest march

SEOUL, May 28: Thousands of South Korean students marched in the streets here today to denounce the government, putting to the President Roh Tae-Woo's earlier promise to allow peaceful demonstrations. The students poured out of Sungkyunkwan University to march in protest at the death of a fellow student Saturday during a clash with police, reports AFP.

NATO leaders approve RDF plan

BRUSSELS, May 28: US Defence Secretary Dick Cheney and other NATO defence leaders approved plans Tuesday for an all-European, rapid-deployment force (RDF) that could be sent to danger spots anywhere in Europe. The ministers agreed on the broad outline of plans for the quick reaction force at the start of a two-day meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, said the Belgian Defence Minister, Guy Coeme, reports AP.

Thatcher, Pavlov hold talk

MOSCOW, May 28: Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher met Soviet Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov here today before holding talks with some 60 Soviet deputy deputies at the Kremlin. Thatcher, on a private visit here, told the deputies that further western economic assistance would only be extended to the Soviet Union if more democratic reforms were forthcoming, informed sources at parliament said, reports AFP.

Sick industries

From Page 1 Col. 4
ments made so far, and credits still lying unsettled against individual 'defaulter', he said. He suggested that a task force should immediately be set up to identify the reasons for bank credits becoming bad debts and sanctioned units turning sick. There should be accountability at all levels including those in the banking and financial sector, not merely those at the receiving end of the credits.

DCCI President Mahbubur Rahman called for a detailed identification of sector-wise 'bad' and 'doubtful' debts. The credit recovery problem must be considered in the context of the growing phenomenon of industrial sickness, he said.

There should not be any discrimination in recovery of outstanding credits between the public and the private sectors, he added.

The functionaries of other associations and chamber bodies observed that the growing sickness of industries in different sectors like jute and textiles caused repayment problems.

Syed Mohsin Ali, a prominent leader of trade and industry, mentioned about many 'extraneous' factors which caused problems for credit repayments. Faulty wage policies and severe losses incurred by the jute mills during the period of nationalisation are responsible for chronic financial problems of jute mills that were handed over to the private sector, he added.

Khorsheed Ali of Bangladesh Electronics Association stressed that the reasons for industrial sickness must be identified first to assess the real extent of the problem of bad debts.

Al-haj Md Akram Hossain, President, FBCCI, identified several factors like inadequacy of working capital support,

marketing constraints, management and technical problems, difficulties in ensuring supplies of infrastructural support facilities, unrestricted imports of finished goods and smuggling as being responsible for industrial sickness.

The FBCCI chief also raised questions about the morale of the banking personnel. 'Cover charges' are very high for obtaining credits or funds from the banks and the Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) and it is very difficult on the part of 'genuine entrepreneurs' to meet such 'cover charges' or high informal costs of credits, he alleged.

He suggested setting up of a specific time-frame for decision by the banks or DFIs about sanctioning of loans following the receipt of applications.

Meanwhile, the managing directors of Bangladesh Shilpa Bank (BSB) and Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB) gave a dismal picture about their fund recycling problems.

The MD of BSB said, 500 units out of a total of 632 funded by the bank have not serviced their loan or repayment obligations reported on grounds of industrial sickness.

The BSB's additional funding arrangements for the sick industries have further worsened the credit recovery problem because such fresh funds are not also being recycled.

The MD of ICB told the meeting that 263 units out of a total 303 in its investment portfolio were not servicing their repayment obligations. The corporation is in a financial mess and unable to fund any new projects, he added.

(More reports on the meeting of Consultative Meeting of Ministry of Industries on Business Page)

Tarawa leaves today

From Page 1 Col. 7
Force, General Stackpole said, that will always be in any democracy, however, it does not mean that the opposition voice is correct everytime when they criticise.

"We are not upset by the opposition criticism, because, we know there is no intention of establishing any kind of base here, no intention of bringing additional troops and my men came from the ships with no weapon in their hands but with strong arms and open hearts in the service of the people of Bangladesh battered by the cyclone, General Stackpole said.

"We will return to the ships for going back home. About 400 people will stay here and in Dhaka for next two weeks subject to the approval of the US Embassy and the government of Bangladesh and I will close down operation Sea Angels and return to home station at Okinawa, Japan, the Joint Task Force commander said.

Replying to a question, General Stackpole said one important point was that the humanitarian and life saving services rendered by the JTF have been done under the control of the government of Bangladesh. Everyday we held meetings at Dhaka and Chittagong and the priority in relief operation was determined by the government.

The people we had talked to in upazilas and unions have given us the impression that they understood it was their government which had been helping them with the assistance of the US Task Force Operation Sea Angels, he added.

Replying to another question General Stackpole said that the general impression of the US marines who took part in the relief operation was very positive. We hope the country to grow strong and be able to

cope with natural disasters in the future.

He said that the US marines under his command had participated in similar humanitarian and life saving operations in the Caribbean, Philippines and South Sea islands.

"We served the distressed humanity in the Philippines after the earthquake there, in the Caribbean after gorkies and the South Sea islands after typhoons," he said.

He described the damage wrought by the last month's cyclone and tidal surge in Bangladesh as the worst one he had ever seen.

General Stackpole said the government of Bangladesh had shown great concern and care for the people, the civil administration and the military personnel had been very efficient in working with the US Task Force. But the true heroes of Bangladesh are the people who have demonstrated patience and courage in coming back from such a catastrophe, he commented adding, everywhere I go in the affected areas, I can see signs of new life and people are rebuilding their homes and trees are getting green with new fresh leaves.

JU tense

From Page 1 Col. 8
The election commission had to postpone the JUCSU election. The decision was taken in two separate meetings.

The dispute between the two JCD workers began as the local JCD workers failed to get any nomination.

The 'local' students attacked the 'non-local' JCD workers on the night of May 19 and seriously injured ten of them.

However, the central committee of the JCD, JU unit expelled nine students from the party.

Khaleda

From Page 1 Col. 7
Conference. She also performed Umrah at the beginning of her visit.

Earlier on Monday, Begum Zia attended a reception hosted by the Bangladesh Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Major General (Retd) Qazi Golam Dastagir, at his residence.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia returns home this morning concluding a three-nation official trip to the Gulf.

Rain

From Page 1 Col. 7
Road, Nimalti, Nazimuddin Road and Alauddin Road face water logging because the sewer lines are inadequate.

Besides thirteen natural canals which used to serve as drains for decades have been blocked or narrowed in recent years at Taka 60 crore proposal for development of the 13 canals is lying with the authorities unattended due to paucity of funds.

The sources said diameter of at least 40 kilometres of storm sewer lines is urgently needed to partially solve water logging problem in main areas of the city.

Azizul Hossain, Deputy Director, Meteorological Department said Tuesday's heavy downpour was the outcome of a 'bubble' of a westerly low now lying over Madhya Pradesh with its trough extending upto West Bengal and Bihar.

The 'bubble' came over Dhaka causing the rainfall which remained restricted to Dhaka and its neighbourhood.

The bubble, weakened was moving northwards by Tuesday afternoon.

It is expected to cause some rainfall over Rajshahi Division, the districts of Myemensingh, Tangail and Sylhet today (Wednesday).

Congress

From Page 1 Col. 7
ment as Acting President would allow both sides enough time to rally around their final choices.

Old guard contenders are Sharad Pawar, chief minister of the economically powerful Maharashtra state whose capital is Bombay, India's economic capital, and Narain Dutt Tiwari, whose power base is northern Uttar Pradesh state, which has produced all but one of India's previous prime ministers.

The younger generation appears to be rallying around Arjun Singh, who is 61 but is seen as modern-minded. A member of a traditional Royal House, he has been a state chief minister and minister of communications and appears to be the candidate of Gandhi's inner circle.

Meanwhile, Narasimha Rao, has categorically ruled out the possibility of the party breaking up in the absence of a member of the Nehru-Gandhi family at its helm.

In an interview published in Saudi English daily 'Arab News' today, the former external affairs minister Narasimha Rao said, "In the past two we have lost presidents (of Congress-I), prime ministers and other leaders."

The Indian government today came out with a denial to the persistent rumours that the interim government of Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar was planning to declare an internal emergency and postpone the pending Lok Sabha elections with a view to "staying on in office."

The Congress-I today warned against any attempt to postpone the elections and declare internal emergency and said the move to subvert democratic process was fraught with dangerous consequences.

Editor : S. M. Ali