

Husseini to steer Palestinian team at Madrid conference

AMMAN, Oct 21 : Palestinians from Jerusalem will be on an advisory committee directing the delegates who enter the conference room at Madrid, Palestinian sources said.

A Palestinian delegate to the talks, Ghassan Al-Khatib, told Reuters that to circumvent Israeli objections the agreement includes a steering committee of Palestinians who do not meet Israel's conditions to be in the delegation itself.

"There will be invitations to a number of Palestinians not as members of the delegation but as an advisory team or steering committee that will consist of Palestinians from Jerusalem and the diaspora," he said.

Palestinian sources in Jerusalem said on Sunday that activist Faisal Al-Husseini would direct the delegation and Hanan Ashrawi would be its spokeswoman.

The two negotiators, who have met Secretary of State James Baker on at least 10 occasions over the past eight months, are from Jerusalem and openly speak for the PLO.

"It's like watching shadow puppets, now you see the PLO, now you don't," said one diplomat.

US assurances to the PLO on the Madrid talks were still insufficient, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat said in Cairo.

Asked about the thorny problem of representation for Palestinians from East Jerusalem, he said, "Wait until the conference to see how we

have solved this."

Israel has said it will not meet with Palestinians from the city, which it regards as its indivisible capital.

Jordan has accepted PLO proposals which allow the organisation substantial back seat role at the Madrid peace conference without giving Israel an easy excuse to back out, Palestinian sources and officials said in Amman today.

Jordan and the PLO will set up a joint command, led by King Hussein and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, and a second-level supervisory body of Jordanian cabinet ministers and PLO executive committee members, they said.

The two sides will announce agreement on a joint team including Palestinians acceptable to Israel but ultimately directed by the Palestine Liberation Organisation, they added.

Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin said today Moscow would push to solve the problem of Jewish settlements in Arab occupied territories during the Middle East peace conference.

Pankin, speaking to reporters at Amman airport before leaving for Cairo as part of a tour to wind up preparations for the conference, co-sponsored by Washington and Moscow, welcomed Israel's decision on Sunday to join the conference.

"This point (settlements) was one of the issues we discussed in Jordan and the

Soviet Union, being one of the main sponsors, will do all it can to help solve this issue," he said.

Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the United States and the Soviet Union, say Jewish settlements on territories occupied on the 1967 war are an obstacle to peace.

The Arabs want Israel to stop building new settlements as soon as the Madrid talks start.

Israel, which is trying to absorb tens of thousands of Soviet and other Jewish immigrants, refuses to do so.

The three-phase peace talks will be held on the basis of UN resolutions 242 and 338, which call for Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories in exchange for peace with its Arab neighbours.

Israel today set free 14 Lebanese Muslim prisoners held by its proxy militia in South Lebanon, in a step which could lead to the release of more Western hostages in Lebanon, military sources in Tel Aviv said.

The measure follows reports that Israel on Saturday received conclusive information on the death of one of its soldiers missing in Lebanon since February 1986.

Sunday UN officials in Lebanon said an American hostage held by a pro-Iranian Shiite movement would be released within 24 hours if Israel freed some of its Lebanese detainees.



Zeenat Barkatullah and Sarwar Ahmed on stage at the Shipakala Academy auditorium Monday on the occasion of the 10th founding day of the Academy Officers Association. — Star photo

Babri Masjid body demands UP gov't dismissal

NEW DELHI, Oct 21 : The Babri Masjid Movement Coordination Committee (BMMCC) today demanded dismissal of the Uttar Pradesh government for its failure to prevent the VHP from starting excavation near the disputed shilanyas site, reports PTI.

This was nothing short of abdication of constitutional and legal responsibility by the state government, which should have stopped the commission of a patently 'illegal act', the BMMCC convener, Syed Shahabuddin, said here and demanded intervention of the central government.

Condemning the VHP and the UP government for this 'illegal act' Shahabuddin said, 'this is more than connivance or abetment, collusion or conspiracy'.

No less a person than LK Advani has confirmed that the real purpose of the acquisition of the disputed land is to pave the way for the construction by VHP, he said.

Another report said : The cabinet committee on political affairs today discussed the situation arising out of the UP government's decision to acquire land near the disputed shrine at Ayodhya.

This was the first assessment of the situation in Ayodhya by the highest political body of the government after the Prime Minister's return from Harare.

Before leaving for Harare, the Prime Minister had stated that the government was planning to convene a meeting of the National Integration Council to consider the vexed issue.

Quake

From Page 1 Col. 4

ring out over the hills bringing in victims.

A separate helicopter had left the capital carrying geologists and seismologists to the devastated districts to assess the possibility of severe aftershocks or new tremors, officials said.

Dwivedi said that, luckily, the flying weather was good and reconfirmed that Indo-Tibetan Border Forces as well as their medical personnel were flying and trekking down from the nearby border with Tibet to assist with relief operations.

So far, he said, the injured were being treated at improvised district disaster centres because of the impassibility of the roads, while food and medical supplies were being flown in.

Border Security Force troops were working with the Indo-Tibetan Border Force on road clearing and bridge repair, the officials said.

The quake shook vast areas of northern India, including the nine million residents of the capital, New Delhi, panicking millions, but damage in most areas away from the epicenter was minor, officials and residents said.

PM shocked

Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia Monday expressed deep shock and grief at the disastrous earthquake in northern India yesterday resulting in death and devastation on a large scale, reports BSS.

In a message to the Indian Prime Minister, PV Narasimha Rao, Begum Khaleida Zia extended heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the members of the bereaved families.

The message said : "It is with a deep sense of shock and grief that we have learnt about the disastrous earthquake which shook parts of northern India yesterday resulting in death and devastation on a large scale.

On behalf of the government and the people of Bangladesh and on my own behalf I extend to you, excellency, and through you to the members of the bereaved families, our heartfelt condolences and sympathies.

Please accept, excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Mizan demands adequate steps to protect Chandpur town

From Our Correspondent
CHANDPUR, Oct 21 : Acting Chairman of Jatiya Party Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury today demanded of the government proper steps to save the Chandpur town from erosion of Meghna river.

Addressing cross section of people while visiting some affected areas of the town, he alleged that government plan was too inadequate to the need to save the town. Moreover, most of the construction and reconstruction works are being done through the contractors belonging to the ruling party who are not doing their work honestly and sincerely, he alleged.

Fighting drags on in Y'slavia despite truce

ZAGREB, Oct 21 : Overnight fighting around Dubrovnik, the Adriatic jewel of secessionist Croatia, killed six people and fighting was also reported around the east Croatian stronghold of Vukovar, media said Monday, reports AP.

The 0830 GMT attack targeted a base near the Nabatych district where three Israeli soldiers were killed and two injured in a blast Sunday for which Hezbollah's military wing claimed responsibility.

A spokesman for the Israeli army in Jerusalem confirmed the attack and said the Israeli aircraft returned safely to base after 'destroying objectives in Hezbollah bases near Jibsheet.'

Before the air raid Israel's Proxy militia in Lebanon pounded with shells for 30 minutes three villages near Israel's self declared security zone in south Lebanon in reprisal for the Sunday bomb attack.

Israeli officials Sunday held Syria responsible for the attack against its soldiers and said the matter would be raised at the Middle East peace conference due to begin October 30 in Madrid.

Israel will raise Syrian responsibility in operations by terrorist organizations carried out from the Bekaa valley, which is under Syrian control, Israeli cabinet director Yossi Ben Aharon said on state radio Sunday.

Syria currently maintains around 35,000 troops in Lebanon, mostly in Beirut and in the eastern part of the country.

The pilot project covers 13,700 hectares of land between Dhaleshwari and Pungti rivers near Tangail town.

The purpose of the pilot project is to see if the flood control system could be improved through controlled drainage and embankments because it has been found that unplanned construction of dams for flood control caused water stagnation.



Water Development Board officials taking Dutch experts around the project site in Tangail.

Diarrhoea claims 69 more

Diarrhoeal situation in 29 flood-hit districts deteriorated further with 69 deaths Monday, reports UNB.

Officials said on Monday 3,699 people were also attacked with the disease during the period and total of 1,24,635 since September 1.

With the fresh deaths, the toll from diarrhoea rose to 1,869 since it erupted with flood onslaughts early last month.

While the situation improving in the northern belt, the disease is spreading in Jamalpur, Tangail, Netrakona and Kishoreganj districts, they said.

Of the 69 deaths, Netrakona had the highest number of 12 followed by Kishoreganj 10, Bogra 8 and Jamalpur, Tangail and Habiganj 5 each.

A total of 1,122 people have died of diarrhoea in 16 northern districts of the country since September 1.

District-wise break-up of the deaths are: Panchagar 59, Thakurgaon 78, Dinajpur 63, Nilphamari 214, Lalmonirhat 37, Kurigram 73, Gaibandha 72, Rangpur 59, Joypurhat 58, Bogra 86, Naogaon 93, Chapainawabganj 6, Rajshahi 36, Natore 32, Sirajganj 28 and Pabna 128.

The number of medical teams working in the affected areas has been increased to 2,396 to cope with the situation.

Authorities have ordered more makeshift medical camps to be set up in addition to 384 already in operation in the affected areas.

Appeal rejected

From Page 1 Col. 3

who appeared on behalf of the appellant M. Saleem Ullah, Advocate submitted that in view of the 12th Amendment to the Constitution there remains no cause for prosecuting the appeal for invoking the relevant articles that had been repealed by the 12th Amendment.

M. Saleem Ullah, had filed a petition leave to appeal before the Appellate Division against the judgement of the Division Bench of the High Court Division which had summarily rejected it but issued a certificate to file an appeal to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

India

From Page 1 Col. 4

6.5 to seven occurred once a decade and one with a force of 7.5 to eight took place once a century along the northeastern faultline.

The 'thrust fault' lay along the Himalayas, the foothills of which are in India, and which 'perched on a layer of rocks in motion' are the springboard for all major Asian quakes, the reports said.

In the last major earthquake in the area, in August of 1988, an estimated 900 people died in the Indian state of Bihar and neighbouring Nepal. Tens of thousand more were left homeless.

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Kazi Zafar

From Page 1 Col. 8

Division against the judgment of the Vacation Division Bench of the High Court Division given on September 16 which had rejected his applications for ad-interim bail.

One case had been filed against Kazi Zafar Ahmed for abuse of power as a minister regarding import of sugar by the TCB at a higher rate than the international tender rate causing financial loss to the government.

Another case concerned violation of the detention order under Section 7(B) of the Special Powers Act.

The trial began on May 13 in absentia as Kazi Zafar remained a fugitive from law and justice since December 26, 1990. The Court earlier framed the charge against him under Section 7(B) of the Special Powers Act, 1974.

Kazi Zafar was arrested on May 16 from near the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban and was sent to Dhaka Central Jail.

Abdul Malek, senior advocate and Shamsul Huq Siddiqui, Advocate-on-record appeared for the petitioner.

Alhaj M Shamsul Alam, Deputy Attorney General and Sharifuddin Chakladar, Advocate-on-record appeared for the state.

Five-party

From Page 1 Col. 7

has turned into a political problem and, hence, needs political move for a solution inu said.

Apart from the alliance move, the JSD leader said, his party was raising volunteer squads with students to guard against campus violence, crippling academic life.

He said his party and the alliance would also initiate agitations soon on the basis of a six-point programme.

The programme includes removal of the process of usurping power, freeing the administration from bureaucracy and economy from looters and elimination of communalism.

Our Staff Correspondent adds: The Five-Party Alliance said the Prime Minister's statement on the situation in northern districts was "unfortunate and devoid of reality."

It reiterated that famine-like situation was prevailing in those districts and urged the government to realise the reality and face it unitedly.

The alliance said that the people expected that the Prime Minister would visit the areas and make herself abreast of the situation and take appropriate measures to cope with. But without doing this, she like the previous rulers ignored the problems by saying that it was a mere propaganda by some newspapers, the alliance said.

The Five-Party observed that the Awami League government in 1974 had also ignored the reality.

Israeli jets bomb south Lebanon

SIDON (Lebanon), Oct 21 : Israeli fighter jets today, bombed a deserted base of the pro-Iranian Hezbollah movement in southern Lebanon, regional security sources said, reports AP.

The 0830 GMT attack targeted a base near the Nabatych district where three Israeli soldiers were killed and two injured in a blast Sunday for which Hezbollah's military wing claimed responsibility.

A spokesman for the Israeli army in Jerusalem confirmed the attack and said the Israeli aircraft returned safely to base after 'destroying objectives in Hezbollah bases near Jibsheet.'

Before the air raid Israel's Proxy militia in Lebanon pounded with shells for 30 minutes three villages near Israel's self declared security zone in south Lebanon in reprisal for the Sunday bomb attack.

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Syria currently maintains around 35,000 troops in Lebanon, mostly in Beirut and in the eastern part of the country.

10th Amendment

From Page 1 Col. 8

provides for 30 seats to be reserved exclusively for women members who shall be elected by the 300 Members of Parliament to be elected from single territorial constituencies by direct election under Article 65(2) of the Constitution.

The Rule was issued on 13.12.90 by a Division Bench of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court comprising Justice Fazele Hussain Mohammad Habibur Rahman and Justice Abdul Hasib on the state and others.

The petitioner alleged inter alia that the Amendment violated the basic structure of the Constitution and cut and destroyed the very root of democracy and a democratic system of election, and that the members elected in the general election to Parliament having not been empowered by the electors to elect the women members in the reserved seats, the amendment is ultra vires and invalid being contrary to Article 122(1) of the Constitution, which provides that "The election... to Parliament shall be on the basis of adult franchise."

19 die in Gujrat road accident

NEW DELHI, Oct 21 : At least 19 persons were killed and nine others injured today when a luxury bus collided with a petrol tank truck in the western Indian state of Gujrat, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported. PTI quoted police as saying the accident occurred near Haripur village in Rajkot district, no further details were immediately available, reports AFP.