

NATO opens doors to East European states

ROME, Nov 8: NATO leaders declared a new era of co-operation in Europe today, offering formal ties to former East European adversaries, but differed sharply on how to deal with the crumbling Soviet Union, reports Reuter.

An eight-page Rome declaration on peace and cooperation, issued on the last morning of a two-day summit, declared: "The peoples of North America and the whole of Europe can now join in a Community of shared values based on freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law."

But the 16 leaders clashed behind closed doors on the Soviet Union, with French President Francois Mitterrand accusing the allies of adopting a hectoring tone and doing too little to prevent a disintegration of the Soviet state, officials said.

Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez also urged support for a central authority, they said.

France dissociated itself from a NATO statement which urged all Soviet authorities to respect international law and meet arms control and human rights commitments.

A French official said Mitterrand told the allies "he feels the statement... takes far too high a moral tone. He feels much more should be done to support President (Mikhail) Gorbachev and prevent a disintegration of the union."

The summit adopted a new military strategy but the final declaration omitted all mention of proposals the United States, Britain and the Netherlands for a wider world role for NATO in the post-Cold War era.



BNP leaders offering fateha at the mazar of President Ziaur Rahman on the National Revolution and Solidarity Day Thursday. —Star photo

Delhi incited Bhutan to boycott SAARC summit, say Indian papers

NEW DELHI, Nov 8: India's ruling Congress (I) Party yesterday expressed disappointment over the cancellation of a South Asian Summit one day earlier in the Sri Lanka capital, reports AFP.

The Congress (I) was looking forward to "fruitful deliberations" at the summit and its cancellation "for obvious reasons has been a disappointment," a party spokesman told reporters here.

"We do hope that the summit will be rescheduled at the earliest," spokesman C P Thakur said.

Many Indian newspapers Thursday blamed Delhi for the cancellation, with some saying it could have gone ahead with a

representative of the Bhutanese King standing in for him.

Today newspapers also speculated on the possibility that India had wrecked the summit by instigating Bhutan to stay away, a charge denied by a Foreign Minister spokesman.

"This allegation will continue to be made and no special significance need be read into it and (it) should not be treated with greater consideration than what it deserves," the spokesman said at a Wednesday briefing.

"Every country is a sovereign entity and takes decision in the light of its perceptions of its national inter-

ests," he added.

Under a 1987 pact between New Delhi and Colombo, Indian soldiers were stationed in Sri Lanka for almost three years up to March 1990 to fight Tamil guerrillas waging a separatist campaign in the island's northeast.

Premadasa was an ardent critic of the Indian military presence. Recent disclosures that he had armed the Tamil guerrillas to fight the Indian troops have further cooled Colombo's relations with New Delhi.

In 1989, Premadasa refused to host the SAARC summit in Sri Lanka, saying Indian troops should return home first.

Khaleda talks bilateral issues with 3 leaders

COLOMBO, Nov 8: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia seized an opportunity of establishing personal rapport and discussing bilateral issues with three South Asian leaders during her three-day state visit to Sri Lanka, reports UNB.

Begum Zia, who was in Colombo with the leaders of Sri Lanka, Pakistan and the Maldives, had separate bilateral talks with each of them at which she stressed on more interaction among the South Asian nations for working together to alleviate poverty.

In her talks with President Premadasa this morning, the two leaders underscored the need for further expanding bilateral trade relations and establishing direct air links between Dhaka and Colombo, Foreign Minister ASM Mustafizur Rahman told reporters accompanying the Prime Minister.

During the talks, President Premadasa put emphasis on exchanging professionals, including the doctors and engineers, for participating in the development of the two countries.

On Friday, Begum Zia as well as Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the Maldives President Mameen Abdul Gayoom — escorted by their host President Premadasa — flew to Kandy, the little historic resort town.

Commission

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Maldives. He said in each of the South Asian countries radical decisions had been taken to transform economies and give fresh impetus to private initiatives.

The Sri Lankan President stressed the need for technological inflows, joint ventures and a process of trade liberalisation among the South Asian nations. He said "a regional trade agreement must be our larger goal."

The Sri Lankan President was of the view that the SAARC countries should work toward the establishment of a South Asian preferential trade area in 1997. He believed that South Asia could gradually move toward the establishment of a South Asian economic community.

Ishaq

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countrywide protest and a spirited campaign by the opposition under former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

As some sponsors included the ruling party leaders the opposition claimed that the family of industrialist-turned-politician Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and some of his political allies were involved in the illegal borrowing.

The President's invitation follows a series of meetings of opposition leaders at Nasrullah's residence here in the past two days in discuss fears that Sharif might try to influence the financial probe.

Communists demand trial of Gorbachev

MOSCOW, Nov 8: Thousands of communist die-hard shouting for Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev to put on trial crowded into Red Square today in a bizarre demonstration of loyalty to Lenin on the 74th anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution, reports Reuter.

"Lenin, Lenin, Lenin," they shouted, surging forward to the steps of the mausoleum which holds the mummified corpse of the founder of the now-crumbling Soviet state.

"Wake up, Ilyich" said one placard, calling Lenin by his middle name.

The Midnight File

US taking hard look at EC

sanctions against Yugoslavia: Bush

ROME, Nov 8: The United States was "taking a hard look" at sanctions against Yugoslavia, President George Bush said here today after the European Community asked the United Nations to embargo oil supplies to the Balkan state in a bid to stop the civil war there. "I've not made a final decision," he told a press conference after the NATO summit. He was studying the question with Secretary of State James Baker and expected to announce the American stand "in a not too distant future." Bush hailed the EC for its "leadership role" in the Yugoslav crisis, reports AFP.

US selling more Patriots to Saudis

WASHINGTON, Nov 8: Bush administration officials have informed members of congress that the United States intends to sell 14 more Patriot missile batteries to Saudi Arabia, Defense Department sources said Friday, reports AP.

Haiti orders arrest of Aristide

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Nov 8: Haiti's provisional government has issued arrest orders for ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and his prime minister, Rene Preval, the state television station announced, reports AFP.

Bronislaw to be asked to form Polish government

WARSAW, Nov 8: Polish President Lech Walcsa will ask Bronislaw Geremek, a former Solidarity adviser and a leader of the Democratic Union (UD) party, to form a government, presidential spokesman Andrzej Drazycynski said today, reports Reuter.

Maxwell Communication shares fall further

LONDON, Nov 8: Shares in Maxwell Communication Corp. PLC hit by worries over the media company's future following Robert Maxwell's death, fell a bit further on London's Stock Exchange Friday. Shares in its sister company, Mirror Group Newspapers PLC, continued to climb, reports AP.

Kashmir paralysed by strike

SRINAGAR, Nov 8: A three-day strike called by Muslim guerrillas to mark the visit of a group of European MPs to India got under way Thursday, crippling the entire Kashmir valley.

All banks, shops and business establishments were shut here and in other Muslim majority towns across the valley, and the only vehicles plying the roads were those of India security forces, witnesses said.

Attendance in government offices was also thin, officials said.

The strike call was given the Muttahida Jehad Council, a united front of rebel groups fighting to secede Kashmir, the only Muslim dominated state in India.

A Council spokesman said Muslims wanted to show their "anger and anguish" over the "continued violation of human rights" in Kashmir by security forces.

Khaleda urges leaders

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the visit of the late President Zia to his country and said President Zia had a vision for the whole of South Asia which the people and government of Sri Lanka value with honour.

Nawaz Sharif has expressed dismay at the postponement of the SAARC summit at the eleventh hour and said it has disappointed all.

Sharif, who flew in here Thursday morning on a state visit, appreciated the Sri Lankan government and its people for the preparations to make the summit a success.

He said the people and government of Pakistan are steadfast friends of Sri Lanka and assured that Pakistan would always stand by Sri Lanka in order to ensure the eventual success of the SAARC summit.

Sharif said, small and medium-sized states must be assured of their security and sovereignty through equitable and just settlement of regional disputes.

Weapons of mass destruction must be eliminated regionally and globally while democratic and human rights upheld and preserved, he said.

Meanwhile, Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa on Thursday expressed disappointment over the last-minute cancellation of a regional summit but said he was happy that three South Asian leaders still decided to visit.

"It is unfortunate that we could not go ahead with the sixth SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation). We are however happy to welcome the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, the President of The Maldives and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, he told a state reception.

The reception to welcome Begum Khaleda Zia, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom and Nawaz Sharif replaced the official opening of the scheduled summit of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The meeting was postponed on Wednesday when Bhutanese King Jigme Singye Wangchuk said he was unable to attend because of domestic problems.

Premadasa said the King had told him on November 1 that due to the troubled situation in the south of Bhutan and

Nine receive burn injuries in city, Savar

By DMCH Correspondent

Six persons received burn injury in two separate fire incidents in the suburban Kadamtali and at Dagarmora near Savar on Thursday.

Three others were electrocuted at Azampur in Uttara Model Town in the city the same day.

A fire at the Uzala Match Factory at Shampur, Kadamtali left five people with burn injury. No details of damage was available. The injured persons are Hakim (35), Mahbub Alam (20), Abdul Huq (50), Makbul (30) and Badal (15).

One person received severe burn injury and two vehicles were burnt when five broke out at a motor workshop at Dagarmora, Savar.

Injured Mahbub, a carpenter was admitted to Savar Health Complex.

The two vehicles, a minibus and a microbus, were inside for repair when fire broke out at this Sumi Motor Works.

Three persons received electric shock when they were trying to bring out a tube-well from a store room. The tube-well was later found connected with a 440 volt electric line in the store room.

The injured persons Majnu (30), Kabir Hossain (30) and Kazimuddin (32) were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

OIC meeting on telecommunication opens

The Second OIC Ministerial Meeting on Post and Telecommunications was opened in Bandung, Indonesia, by President Soeharto on Thursday, according to a message received here Friday, reports UNB.

About 20 ministers of Post and Telecommunications from OIC countries, including Bangladesh, attended the conference.

OIC (Organisation of Islamic Conference) Secretary General Dr Hamid Al Gabid, Islamic Development Bank (IDB) President Dr. Ahmed Mohamed Ali and representatives of various OIC institutions and international organizations also attended.

Bangladesh delegation to the conference, led by Post and Telecommunication Minister M Keramat Ali, included Post and Telecommunication Secretary M. Azizul Haque and Bangladesh Ambassador to Indonesia.

The Bangladesh Minister had a meeting with President Soeharto and conveyed greetings of President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia. During the meeting, discussions were held on possible cooperation including joint venture investment between Bangladesh and Indonesia in various fields, particularly in telecommunication and postal services.

Philippines storm death toll rises to 3,444

ORMOC (Philippines), Nov 8: Workers used dump trucks and earth movers Friday to speed the mass burials of bodies that could spread disease, after more than 3,400 people died in floods and landslides in the central Philippines, reports AP.

Roman Catholic priests offered prayers and sprinkled holy water as bulldozers covered the graves. More than 2,000 people were still missing after Tuesday's inundation on Leyte and Negros islands.

For the survivors of Tropical Storm Thelma, President Corazon Aquino rushed emergency food and medicine to Leyte, 350 miles (560 kilometers) southeast of Manila.

Officials said 3,009 people were killed in Ormoc, a one-thriving port and agricultural center of about 160,000 people. The city was hardest hit by the storm, which dumped at least 148 millimeters (six inches) of rain on steep mountainsides left

AL observes anti-autocracy day Nov 10

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League General Secretary Begum Sajeda Chowdhury MP on Friday urged all the units at the party to observe November 10 as anti-autocracy day.

In a statement she said that on this day in 1987 Noor Hossain sacrificed his life to free the country from autocratic rule.

The sacrifices of Noor Hossain and other patriotic people forced the autocratic ruler to step down on December 6, 1990, she said.

The AL Central Committee will hold a discussion meeting at the party's central office to mark the day. AL chief Sheikh Hasina will preside over the meeting.

barren by unchecked logging, setting off huge mudslides.

At least 435 deaths were reported elsewhere on Leyte and Negros, bringing the overall death toll 3,444, according to the Office of Civil Defence.

Ormoc Mayor Maria Victoria Locsin said 700 unclaimed bodies had been buried in mass graves and about 600 others would be interred as soon as possible to prevent disease.

Workers Friday used digging equipment to scoop out mass graves in a hillside cemetery. Dump trucks then ferried the bodies to the site and dropped them into the graves.

Jyoti visits Tinbigha Nov 12

CALCUTTA, Nov 8: Elaborate security measures were being made to ensure law and order in and around Tinbigha in Coochbehar district in view of the proposed visit of the Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu on November 12, according to official sources here today, reports PTI.

This followed a high-level meeting at Writers' Buildings where the state's Chief Secretary, N Krishnamurthy, the Home Secretary, Manish Gupta besides senior police officials were present.

The Home Secretary is scheduled to leave for Tinbigha on November 10. The Inspector General of Armed Police Surendra Singh had been entrusted with the task of deployment of police forces in maximum number to be drawn from the adjoining districts, the sources added.

The State Intelligence wing had also been alerted against any attempt of breach of peace during the Chief Minister's visit, the sources added.

Blast destroys Beirut American Univ building

BEIRUT, Nov 8: A powerful bomb blast destroyed the administration building of the American University of Beirut before dawn Friday, Police said a Lebanese employee was feared killed and eight people were injured, reports AP.

No one immediately claimed responsibility, although security guards described a shootout with suspects who snuck in to plant the bomb before escaping. Iranian-backed Shiite Muslim factions had threatened attacks on American targets in protest against recent Arab-Israeli peace talks in Madrid.

The blast tore down the two-story College Hall and toppled the tall clock tower at the main gate to the sprawling campus.

Hasina

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scrap all black laws including the Special Powers Act, make radio and television autonomous and exempt interest of agricultural loans upto Tk 10,000.

The BNP had promised to ensure food for the people in exchange of vote for the "sheaf of paddy" but, the people are now starving in the northern districts.

"The ruling party has failed to save the people from deaths and diseases. On the contrary, it is denying the fact."

People started losing faith in democracy and parliamentary system because of the government's failure and "undemocratic attitude," she said adding people will not pardon this government/ if hard-won democracy falls.

Referring to the indemnity Bill, the Awami League leader said "such black laws cannot remain in force in a civilized country. It must be scrapped and deleted from the Constitution for restoration of the law," said Hasina.

She warned that Faruq Rashid's allegation of Zia's involvement in the killing of Bangabandhu would prove true if BNP does not support the Indemnity Ordinance (Repeal) Bill.

Hasina called for taking effective steps to maintain communal harmony in the country saying the government would be held responsible for any breach in communal harmony.

Reiterating her party's commitment to ensuring people's right to food and work, she said Awami League will continue its struggle for a democratic society free from exploitation and subjugation.

She asked the party workers to strengthen the organization at the grassroots level to establish democracy as an institution and achieve people's economic emancipation.

Presided over by Khulna City Awami League President Advocate Manzurul Imam, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Salauddin Yusuf, MP, Sheikh Harunur Rashid, MP, and Mostafa Rashid Suja, MP.

SAARC summit

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It was reported in a section of newspapers.

When asked whether it was true that India did not want to see Ranasinghe Premadasa to become the Chairman of SAARC, as it was speculated by different diplomatic quarters Begum Zia also refrained from making any comment.

The Prime Minister said the summit could take place in December in a different form since the Programming Committee under the aegis of the senior officials, and the Standing Committee made up by the Foreign Secretaries had held detailed discussions and even the foreign ministers had met. "This summit could be business like and for a short duration," Begum Zia added.

Asked about the existence of any "big brotherly" attitude in the SAARC, the Prime Minister said all were equal in the grouping and she believed that all members were equally keen to see the SAARC move ahead.

The Prime Minister also replied in the negative to a question if the meeting of four leaders in Colombo could hurt other nations who were not in the Sri Lankan capital.

Asked about her personal initiative to break any stalemate that might have emerged in the SAARC, the Prime Minister said Bangladesh had conceived the idea of SAARC and certainly it would be the

50 feared killed

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Hundreds of people from the nearby villages thronged the scene of the accident, but they could do nothing to rescue the victims. Some injured passengers were given first aid at a local hospital.

Last December, another tragic accident at the same spot claimed 45 lives when a bus fell into the river while crossing the Shahbajpur bridge, damaged during the liberation war and now under construction.

UNB adds: Abul Kashem Pathan, a local journalist who lost five members of his family in the tragic accident, survived the accident along with his son Suman. The father and the son had got down from the bus for polishing their shoes at that ferry ghat, it added.

One Shahabuddin also lost five members of his family including his newly-wed wife Salina (18), her mother and three sisters-in-law.

One person died and 33 others were injured in two separate road accidents in Manikganj and Narayanganj on Thursday.

Thirty people were injured, 13 of them seriously, when a mini bus plunged into a roadside ditch in Shibaboy along the Dhaka-Aricha highway after its radiator exploded.

According to eye witnesses the Aricha-bound minibus from Dhaka hit a Rickshaw van and then fell into the 25-foot deep ditch after its radiator ex-