

Inside Today

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Extremists wooed to get them into South Africa Talks

Political groups in South Africa are to sit down with the government on December 20 to begin detailed negotiations on a post-apartheid South Africa

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Don't think jazz belongs to times of your uncles it can be your cup of tea as well

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Prime Minister tells business community Chaos in industries won't be tolerated

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Wednesday warned against creating disorder in the nation's industrial sector.

She also warned against the creating of indiscipline and the carrying out of subversive activities saying, "We will not tolerate these in the industrial sector."

"We definitely want the welfare of the workers, but we cannot allow indiscipline in the name of politics or any other interests," she declared.

Addressing a grand conference of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers and

Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) at a local hotel, the Prime Minister said that the government had revamped its role in an effort to make more congenial the relationship between the employers and workers.

Begum Zia pointed out that to make the political democracy, achieved after a long and difficult anti-autocracy movement, more stable and meaningful "economic democracy" needs to be ushered into the country.

"By economic democracy we mean building a prosperous

Bangladesh through improving the standard of life of the citizens and arranging adequate employment opportunities for all able persons in the country," she explained.

Chaired by the FBCCI President, Akram Hossain, the conference was addressed by Dhaka Chamber President Mahbubur Rahman, Chamber of Industries President M Subed Ali, and Industrialists Makhbul Hossain, M A Gafur and M A Hannan.

Describing the business community as a vital component of the national

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Move to have positive results: Guatam Dewan

Hill District Councils get more powers

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG Dec 18: The government recently transferred three more subjects providing more administrative powers to the elected Hill District Councils of Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban in a bid to spearhead the peace process aimed at winding up the 18-year long tribal insurgency. The three subjects included livestock, fisheries and small and cottage industries.

The subjects transferred to the Hill District Councils so far total six out of 22 administrative areas scheduled by the government while the remaining 16 subjects were in the process of being transferred soon in phases, official sources said.

At the initial stage the government handed over administrative powers of three subjects relating to agriculture, health and primary education of the Hill District Councils with a commitment to transfer the rest in phases. Among the three freshly transferred subjects, livestock came into effect from December 1, 1991 and fisheries and industries from December 15, 1991, according to the letter issued by the concerned ministries to the relevant authorities recently.

The transfer of those three

more administrative powers to the hill districts followed the decision taken six months ago at a meeting of the Hill Tracts Cabinet Council held June 9 with the then Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed in the chair in which the concerned ministries were instructed to expedite the process of handing over the rest of the 22 administrative subjects.

Officials said that the three Hill District Councils were being provided with those administrative powers in order to remove the mistrust among the insurgents about the government's good intentions as well as to bring the hill people into the mainstream of development activities.

Besides, it would create an environment favouring an end to the 18-year bush war waged by tribal rebels, the "Shantibahini" official hoped.

Meanwhile, this correspondent today morning contacted the Chairman of Rangamati District Council Guatam Dewan over phone to know his reaction over the handing over of three more administrative subjects.

Guatam, thanking the government said that the transfer

Bangladesh may propose for SAARC Met centre in Dhaka

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh is expected to offer hosting a regional meteorological centre during the one-day SAARC summit in Colombo on December 21.

The first group of delegates led by Foreign Minister A S M Mustafizur Rahman left Wednesday to attend preparatory meeting for the summit. The delegation also includes Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman and Director General (SAARC) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury.

The summit declaration drafting committee meeting of foreign secretaries of the seven member-states will begin today.

The foreign secretaries' meeting will be followed by the meeting of the council for ministers tomorrow (Friday).

The one-day summit is being held as the sixth SAARC summit was aborted when three of the heads of state and government failed to turn up during the earlier scheduled date in November last.

According to Foreign Office sources, the Bangladesh proposal to host a SAARC Met Centre is likely to be a major regional project. It is expected that Bangladesh will also push for greater regional cooperation.

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Part of the Meghna Bridge protection embankment has collapsed recently.

—Star photo

Moves to break deadlock in govt-workers talks

By Nurul Kabir

Backstage parleys were on yesterday to break the deadlock in formal negotiations between the government and the workers.

Seventy-two hour programme of road and rail barricade by the workers of Jute and Textile sectors and 48-hour countrywide work stoppage programme of the Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) are to be started only after 72 hours in case the negotiations fail.

No formal meeting between the concerned parties to avert the 3-day-long shutdown was scheduled to be held yesterday.

Transport owners call strike today

Road transport owners' association has called for a countrywide day-long strike today when bus, minibus, truck and tank-lorry will keep off the roads to press for its 19-point demand including reduction of diesel prices, reports UNB.

President of the association A K Joyntul Abedin and other leaders in a joint statement today (Wednesday) said diesel

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But the concerned ministries will separately talk to the labour leaders of three different sectors today.

Jute Minister Brig. Harinaran Shah (ret'd) will talk to the leaders of Patkal Sramik Karmachari Sangram Parishad today at 11 am while the Textile Minister Major Abdul Mannan will sit with the leaders of Textile workers at 10 am.

Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan is scheduled to talk to the SKOP leaders at 4 pm today.

SKOP leaders, before meeting the Labour and Manpower Minister, will exchange views

with the leaders of Jute and Textile workers at 3 pm.

Meanwhile, the five-party alliance leader Hasnainul Hoq Inu met the Finance Minister Saifur Rahman yesterday morning to find the ways and means of solving the problem soon.

Incidentally, the five-party move for a round table discussion between the government, labour leaders and the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industries aimed at reaching a tripartite consensus on the problem has failed with the postponement of the first round of discussion scheduled to be held today.

According to the sources close to the five-party combine, both the government and chamber leaders were not sufficiently responsive to the move.

Although, no formal meeting was held yesterday between the contending parties, the Labour and Manpower Minister is learnt to have persuaded a leader of the Jute workers to sign agreement with the Jute Ministry on the basis of already agreed points of their demands, sources said.

The minister had a telephonic conversation with the labour leader, the sources

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JS session Jan 4

President Abdur Rahman Biswas has summoned a session of the Jatiya Sangsad at 11.10 am on January 4, 1992 at Sangsad Bhavan at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, an official announcement said Wednesday. This will be the fourth session of the fifth parliament, reports BSS.

Shyamoli granted bail

By Staff Correspondent

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Wednesday granted temporary bail to Mary Janet Shyamoli on a bond of Taka 50,000.

The Magistrate rejected a prayer of the Detective Branch of Police to take Shyamoli on another seven-day remand. But the Magistrate ordered that Shyamoli be present before the Investigating Officer of the DB police on December 21 for interrogation.

Earlier, the DB police took over the case of the unnatural death of Hafez Mukhter Hossain from Tejgaon police Tuesday.

The Magistrate's order was on the bail petition hearing of Shyamoli held Tuesday.

The Magistrate also ordered that Shyamoli be present in the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court January 2 next year.

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Mideast talks bogged down

WASHINGTON, Dec 18: There is little evidence that the first five days of Arab-Israeli peace talks narrowed differences on either procedure of substance, reports AP.

The Israeli team has announced plans to return home Wednesday night, and there is no agreement as yet as to when and where the next round of talks will be held.

Inner atmosphere plagued by mistrust built up over decades, Israeli negotiators have been holding separate talks with Syrian and Lebanese teams and with a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation.

On the latter discussions, President Bush implored negotiators to resolve their differences over procedure so they could talk about fate of Israeli-held territories on the West Bank and Gaza Strip and other divisive issues.

The Palestinians, eager to

be accorded the status of an independent entity, want to meet with the Israelis alone but Israel has insisted the Palestinians be a part of the Jordanian delegation.

Meeting with reporters Tuesday night after yet another fruitless round of talks, Israeli spokesman Eliakim Rubinstein counselled patience.

"We believe we are having good conversations with our friends in the Palestinian-Jordanian (delegation) even in this situation now. We believe we can do better," Rubinstein said. As a gesture to the Arab media present, he offered some remarks in Arabic.

Israel has suggested that the deadlock be broken by beginning within the frame work of a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation, breaking up into separate tracks and then reconvening as a joint forum under a preset timetable.

Of the three sets of talks,

perhaps the most difficult has been the Israeli-Syrian one.

"No progress at all yet," Syrian delegate Bushra Kanafani said Tuesday.

The two sides have become bogged down on the question of sequence. The Syrians are demanding the unconditional return of the Golan Heights, captured by Israel in the 1967 Middle East War, while Israel wants the initial phase of the talks to focus on security guarantees.

It is "very clear that the Israeli dictionary does not have the word 'withdrawal,'" Ms Kanafani said.

The Israelis, meanwhile, complained about Syria's vote against Monday's UN General Assembly repeal of a 1975 resolution equating Zionism with racism. They contended the move was proof that Syria still doesn't recognise the right of Jews to live in Israel.

PWD employees press for job security

By Staff Correspondent

Several thousand employees of the Public Works Department on Wednesday staged a demonstration in front of the Secretariat in support of their five-point demand.

The demands included abolition of the existing departmental set-up and regularisation of master-roll employees.

At a rally, Abul Mannan, Convener of the PWD Sangram Parishad, said that some 25,000 employees of the PWD department were under threat of losing jobs because of what he said "many mini-PWDs" being raised by the concerned authorities.

He said that a fresh action programme would be announced on December 29, if their demands were not met by December 28.

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Split in Russian leadership

MOSCOW, Dec 18: Boris Yeltsin's vice president has unleashed a stinging attack on his boss, charging in a newspaper article published Wednesday that the Russian government was a rudderless, disorganised "hotbed of intrigue," reports AP.

Alexander Rutaskof's comments widened the split in the top Russian leadership, threatening the stability of Yeltsin's own government as he tries to found a new commonwealth of Independent States to replace the Soviet Union.

Rutaskof stepped up his criticism of Yeltsin's radical economic reform programme and in an interview with Nezavisimaya Gazeta (the Independent Newspaper) he

accused Yeltsin of trying to run the Russian government single-handedly and arbitrarily.

Yeltsin and Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev agreed Tuesday to dissolve the Soviet Union by year's end.

It was decided that Soviet central government ministries and departments will either be dismantled or given to Russia. It was agreed that the Kremlin — the ancient fortress in the heart of Moscow — would be transferred to Russian jurisdiction, as would the Soviet State Bank.

Yeltsin has promised that the new commonwealth will provide true independence for the 12 republics of the former Soviet Union and will turn

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Govt conceding to demands of pressure groups, says NDP

National Democratic Party (NDP) leader Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, MP, has expressed concern at what he termed "a policy of appeasement" being allegedly pursued by the government in declaring arbitrary financial concessions to different pressure groups, reports UNB.

In a press statement issued Wednesday, the NDP leader disapproved salary increases of government employees, public sector workers and even members of uniformed services without any sanction of Parliament.

"It is a matter of deep concern that the democratically elected government is pursuing a policy of appeasement and declaring arbitrary financial concessions to different pressure groups," he said.

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Tk 20 crore project for the retarded

The government has taken up three projects for education, training and rehabilitation of the physically and mentally impaired children and youths at a cost of Taka 20 crore, reports BSS.

Under the projects one training centre and one manufacturing unit consisting of braile press for the blind, hearing aid for the deaf and artificial limbs for the crippled in Dhaka and one rehabilitation centre in Rajshahi will be set up for the overall welfare of the retarded persons.

This was stated by the State Minister of Social Welfare and Women's Affairs, Mrs Sarwar Rahman, at an award giving ceremony of the 'Bangladesh Parents Club of the Deaf' at the United Nations Information Centre in the city Wednesday.

NEWS BRIEFS

Irrigation devices at cheaper rate

Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development Minister M Majid-ul Haq Wednesday said that the government had decided to sell out all the irrigation equipment under Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) at a cheaper rate with an aim to extend irrigation facilities to the farmers. He was presiding over the third meeting of the standing committee on agriculture-irrigation projects at Bangladesh Secretariat in the city Wednesday, reports BSS.

Archaeological congress Dec 28

The fourth South Asian archaeological congress, organised by the Archaeological Directorate in cooperation with the Ministries of Foreign and Cultural Affairs, will begin in the city on December 28. The three-day congress will be participated by 12 representatives of the SAARC countries and 30 archaeologists and historians of Bangladesh, reports BSS.

Arms carrying prohibited

The government has prohibited the carrying of arms from December 19 to December 23 in the constituency of Bakergang-5 to ensure peaceful holding of by-election to the vacant seat of the Jatiya Sangsad on December 21, according to an official handout. This order, however, will not be applicable to members and officials of the law enforcing agencies, reports BSS.



Leaders of the Kashmiri militant factions addressing a press conference in Islamabad Wednesday.

—AFP photo

Kashmir militant factions unite for total independence

ISLAMABAD, Dec 18: Seven Pakistan-based Kashmiri groups vowed today to fight for the complete independence of Kashmir rather than joining India or Pakistan who now rule the divided Himalayan region, reports Reuters.

The main Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and six other groups said in a joint declaration the Muslim revolt in the two-thirds of the region ruled by India was a "war for complete independence of Jammu and Kashmir."

Pakistan controls the remaining third of the region. The JKLF has spearheaded the two-year-old revolt in which at least 5,000 people have been killed in clashes between the militants and Indian security forces.

The declaration issued at a

news conference follows JKLF complaints over the past several months that Islamabad was helping only those groups which want Kashmir to join Pakistan.

The groups joining the JKLF in the declaration are Jammu and Kashmir National Liberation Front, Jammu and Kashmir Plebiscite Front, Kashmir Freedom Movement, Tehrik Islami Jamhooria Kashmir, Al-Mujahideen Fil-Islam and Quami Tehrik Azadi Kashmir.

The declaration said the seven groups would resist any move aimed at "weakening or chaining the nature of the armed freedom struggle now going on in Indian-held Kashmir."

New Delhi regards the whole of Kashmir an integral part of the Indian union.

Islamabad says the predominantly Muslim Kashmiris must decide in a United Nations-mandated plebiscite whether to join Islamic Pakistan or Hindu-majority India.

"Jammu and Kashmir or any part thereof is not a constitutional part of India, Pakistan or any other country," the declaration said.

The Kashmir issue is not a dispute between India and Pakistan over the proprietorship of a territory but concerns the inherent right of self-determination of Kashmiris.

India accuses Pakistan of fomenting the Kashmiri revolt and training and arming the militants. Pakistan denies the charge saying its help for them is only moral and political.

An AFP report adds, they called for the removal of the

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