

Hawke toppled in party coup

SYDNEY, Dec 19: Prime Minister Bob Hawke's record eight-year reign ended Thursday when he was deposed by his former deputy, Paul Keating, in labour Party coup, reports AP.

Keating's victory was the culmination of two years of bitter rivalry between Australia's two most powerful and charismatic politicians.

Hawke, challenged before by Keating, had called a special meeting of the party's 110-member parliamentary caucus to decide the leadership issue which has split the party and divided the nation.

In a procedural move preceding the planned confidence vote, Hawke resigned, then offered himself for re-election. Keating, who quit as treasurer when he failed in his first challenge June 3, won the se-

Jute, textile workers

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public sector jute industries unless the Patkai Sramik Karmachari Sangram Parishad and the government reach consensus on the issue.

According to the condition of the other agreement, the government will be able to go for further denationalisation of the cotton and textile mills only after reaching consensus on this issue with the Cotton and Textile Mills Workers Federation.

The leaders of the Bangladesh Jute Mills Association (BJMA) and Bangladesh Jute Spinners Association (BJS), which earlier expressed concern at the prospect of government's conceding to the workers' demands, were not available for comments on the agreements.

On the question of the fixing up of a 'national minimum wage', the government will within a week form a wage commission which will announce its report within the next three months. However, it has already been agreed that the national minimum wages for the jute mill workers will be fixed at not less than Taka one thousand.

According to the agreement, one representative each from the Patkai Sramik Karmachari Sangram Parishad and the Textile Mill Workers' Federation will be included in the wage commission report, according to both the agreements, will take effect from July 1991.

Under the agreement, the workers of public sector jute mills will get an interim relief of Taka 500 for the month of January and Taka 200 every month until the wage commission report takes effect.

This relief money, however, will be deducted from the salary in future.

Under the agreement between the jute workers, BJMA

Transport strike

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On Dhaka-Narayanganj route picketers were active to keep of the public transports.

Some BRTC buses, which tried to ply on the highway, went off the roads as picketers attacked them on several points. But no one was hurt.

A press release of the association said that the transport strike all over the country was a complete success. The owners' association would go on a non-stop transport strike soon if the demands they are fighting for are not met soon, the Press release said.

UNB adds: Most of the vehicles have restarted plying on the roads in the northern districts where an indefinite transport strike caused increasing sufferings to the people.

According to Transport Workers Federation sources, about 80 percent of the buses and mini buses and 70 per cent of the trucks were already on the streets now.

The strike in northern districts began since November 29 with the main demand for issuance of appointment letters to the workers.

Reports from various sources said that some transport owners have already issued appointment letters and handed them over to the workers.

In a statement issued on Thursday, a central member of the Transport Workers Federation, Abdul Momin, urged the owners to accept their demands so that they can pay all vehicles on regular schedule and thus mitigate the sufferings of the people.

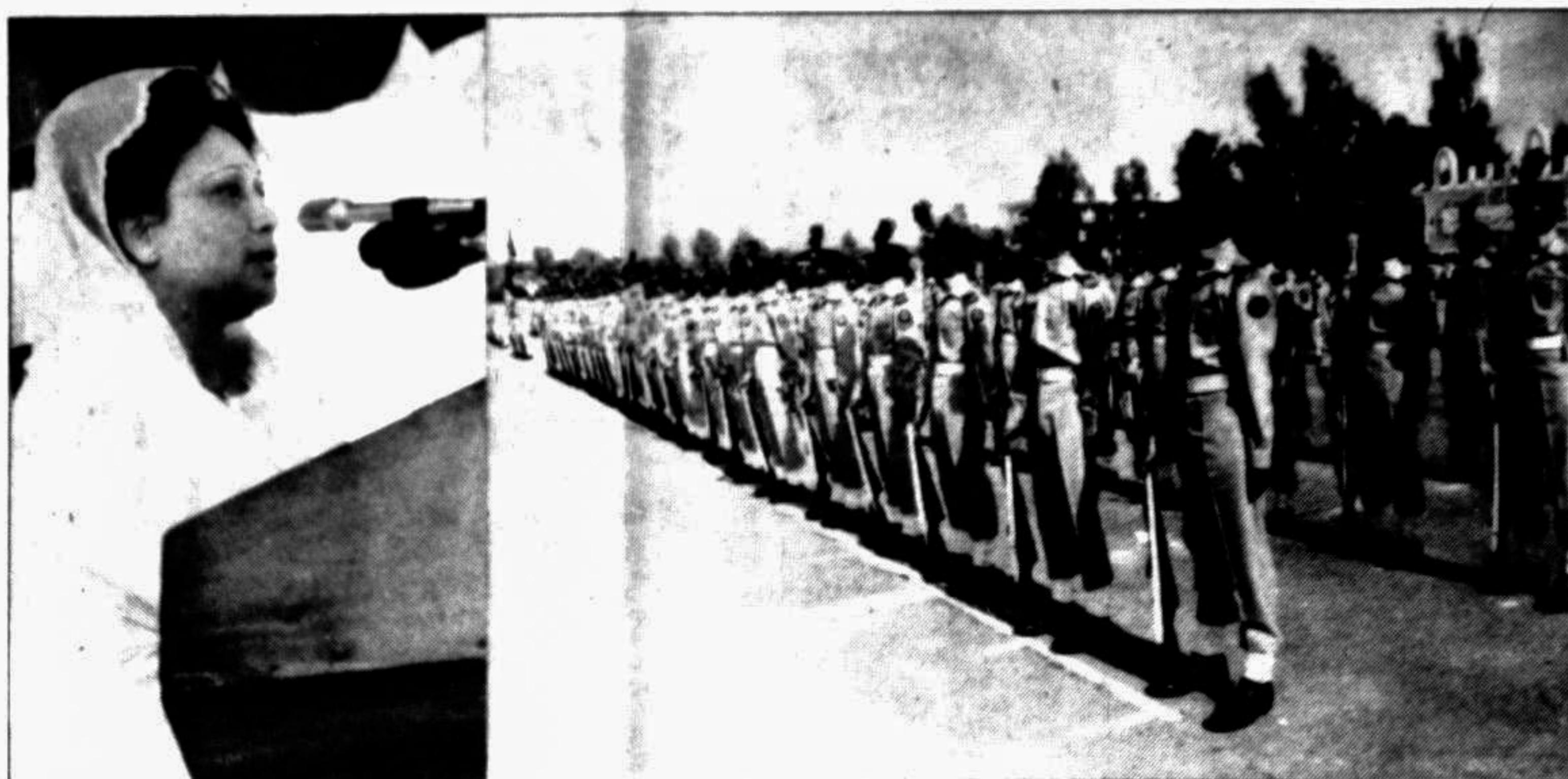
secret ballot 56-51. Three party members did not attend the meeting.

Keating, renowned for his bitter debating style, launched his bid for leadership claiming Hawke had promised to stand down as Prime Minister after the last election in March 1990.

Among Keating's first duties will be to host President Bush's visit to Australia December 31-January 3. He also faces the daunting task of healing the deep wounds that labour has suffered from the leadership struggles.

"It's a very humbling experience, and I feel the poignancy of the moment," Keating said as he emerged from the caucus room.

Hawke had no immediate comment.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing the cadets of the 25th BMA Long Course at BMA Parade Ground in Chittagong on Thursday.

—PID photo

Defence system

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tries had been receiving training.

She congratulated the newly commissioned officers including those from the Maldives and Malaysia and expressed the hope that friendship and cooperation between Bangladesh and those countries would be further strengthened.

Begum Zia said all necessary steps would be taken within the limited resources to develop the BMA.

The Prime Minister earlier reviewed the parade of the cadets and took salute at the impressive march past.

Battalion senior under officer Mohammad Asadullah Minajul Alami was adjudged the best all-round cadet and was awarded the Sword of Honour.

Another committee headed by a retired High Court judge will be formed to determine the amount of incentive bonus for the jute mill workers on the basis of production.

According to the agreement, the terminated workers of public sector jute industries who lost their jobs during the last decade for political reasons and trade union activities will be reinstated by April 30 of the next year. Fifty percent of the terminated workers would get back their job by January 30 next year, the agreement said.

The deadlock in talks between the government and the Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP), on the other hand, continued in the yesterday's bilateral meeting between the SKOP leaders and Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhutyan.

SKOP announced a two-day work stoppage to be beginning from December 22 to press for its 5-point demand. The demands include fixation of national minimum wage for the industrial workers at Taka 14 hundred, commitment of the government in writing that it would not go for further disinvestment in the public sector, repeal of certain clauses of labour laws that go against the workers' interests.

In the yesterday's meeting, the government side was reluctant to bow down to the no-further-denationalisation demand. But, according to sources, the Labour and Manpower Minister, like the Ministers of Jute and Textiles, at one point agreed to give a commitment in writing that the government would not disinvest public sector concerns without consulting the SKOP.

On the question of minimum wage, the SKOP leaders were pressing the government to settle the issue in the bilateral meeting with them while governments position in this regard was that it was the jurisdiction of the wage commission to be formed soon.

According to sources, the government side yesterday agreed to announce the amount of minimum wage within two months after the formation of the commission, although the commission will give the full report after four months. But the SKOP leaders rejected the proposal.

The contending parties also failed to reach consensus on how the anti-workers clauses of the labour law would be repealed.

They will meet again at 6 pm today.

According to the sources close to SKOP, in the wake of the withdrawal of barricade programme of the workers of jute and textile sector, the work-stoppage programme of the SKOP might be deferred in case today's talks fail.

The UNICEF Representative said that about 70 per cent of the children under the age of one came under EPI in the country. UNICEF plans to bring 85 per cent of the children under EPI by 1992 through the one lakh outreach service centres operating in the country, he added.

Dodge pointed out that the positive aspect of recent trends and developments is that the girls now constitute 45 per cent of the total enrolment in primary schools and also including a mosque-based education programme in Bangladesh, he said.

A nationwide survey conducted in February 1991 showed that Rajshahi division achieved the target of immunising over 80 per cent of the children aged between 12 to 16 months against six diseases.

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The report indicated the developing countries for spending merely 12 per cent on an average of their budgets on basic health and education services for the poor, he said.

Rich nations were also criticised in the report for allocating only about 10 per cent of international aid to health, education and family planning, he added.

UNICEF set out ten suggestions in the report which includes the implementation of the recommendations of the World Summit for Children and the increased flow of international aid based on a commitment to meeting the minimum human needs.

According to UNICEF Executive Director James P. Grant, the propositions are aimed at ending the absolute poverty of one quarter of mankind that still lives and dies of preventable hunger, disease and illiteracy.

He also pointed out that only about ten per cent of the rural households have sanitary latrines and that indiscriminate disposal of human excreta is the primary cause of diarrhoeal diseases which claims the lives of about three lakh children annually.

This issue, he said, should rank alongside the related issues of preserving the peace and protecting the environment on a priority basis on the agenda of the proposed new world order.

25 injured as workers' clash in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Dec 19: At least 25 workers were injured today in series of clashes between two rival groups at Anwara Jute Mills at Barakunda in Sitakunda upazila, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the clashes were the backlash of yesterday's (Wednesday) attack on President of Anwara Jute Mills Sramik Karmachari Union Abdur Rahman Member allegedly by BNP backed Anwara Jute Mills Sramik Union.

They said the trouble erupted at 10 this morning when Sramik Union Workers backed by Jatiya Sramik Federation (Bashar) was holding a rally protesting the attack.

Shyamoli released on bail

By Staff Correspondent

Mary Janet Shyamoli was released from the Dhaka Central Jail

Thursday morning on bail. The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Wednesday evening granted Shyamoli's bail on a bond of Taka 50,000.

Shyamoli was arrested on December 1 under the Section 54 of the Criminal Penal Code in connection with the mysterious death of Hafiz Mukhter Hossain, former chairman of Narayanganj Sadar Upazila.

Ctg dock workers management board

The government has constituted a 13-member Chittagong dock Workers Management Board for a two-year term from October 9, 1991, according to a Bangladesh Gazette Notification published on December 5, reports BSS.

The Chairman of Chittagong Port Authority and the Vice-Chairman of Chittagong Dock Workers Management Board, Chittagong will act as chairman and vice-chairman of the newly constituted board. Deputy Secretary (Port) of the Ministry of Shipping will act as the representative member of the board, the notification said.

Other members of the board are: joint labour director of Chittagong division, Director (Transport) of Chittagong Port Authority, General Manager (Operation) of Bangladesh Shipping Corporation, Iqbal Hossain Choudhury of Messrs Continental Traders, Chairman of Bangladesh Stevedores Association, Vice-Chairman of Bangladesh Master Stevedores Association, Jahangir Alam Choudhury, President of Chittagong Jatiya Dock Sramik League, Sirajul Islam, General Secretary of Chittagong Jatiya Dock Sramik League, Jamaluddin Choudhury, Executive President of Chittagong Jatiya Dock Sramik League and Abul Ilaishem, Joint Secretary of Chittagong Jatiya Dock Sramik League.

Mortality rate

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severely underweight, another 28 per cent (12-23 months) suffer from wasting and 66 per cent (24-59 months) suffer from stunting growth.

About 81 per cent of the people of the country have access to safe drinking water and only 45 per cent have access to health services.

Adult male literacy rate is placed at 47 per cent and that of females at 22 per cent in 1990 compared to 36 per cent and 12 per cent respectively in 1970.

Primary school enrollment of males during the 1986-89 (gross) period is shown to be 76 per cent and for females 64 per cent.

In comparison male enrollment in 1960 was 66 per cent and that of females was 26 per cent. The report also notes that only 20 per cent of the students of grade one reached the final grade of primary school during the 1985-87 period.

The crude death rate per thousand in the country decreased from 23 in 1980 to 15 in 1990. The crude birth rate per thousand slightly decreased from 47 to 41 during the same period.

The annual average growth rate of the urban population declined from 8 per cent during 1965-80 to 6.5 per cent during the 1980-90 period. The total percentage of the population urbanized stood at 16 per cent in 1990.

Life expectancy of females as a percentage of males in 1990 stood at 100 per cent. Adult literacy rate of females as a percentage of males in 1990 stood at 47 per cent.

Contraceptive prevalence rate among women stood at 25 per cent during 1989-90.

Maternal mortality rate during the 1980-90 period in the country stood at a staggering 600 deaths per 1000 childbearing, according to the report. Only 5 per cent of the births were attended by trained health personnel during the 1983-90 period.

The Midnight File

Gorbachev for common commonwealth

MOSCOW, Dec 19: President Mikhail Gorbachev warned today that any attempt to break up the Soviet strategic security system was dangerous and called on republican leaders to create a single command structure without delay. He also proposed a common 'Commonwealth Citizenship' for a period to prevent ethnic conflicts and discrimination. The appeal was addressed to republican leaders gathering in the Kazakh capital Alma-Ata on Saturday for a key meeting to expand and further define the new commonwealth declared by Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia on December 8, reports Reuter.

Baker sees 'new hopes' as Soviet Union collapses

BRUSSELS, Dec 19: US Secretary of State James Baker said today the collapse of the Soviet Union opened up new possibilities for even deeper cuts in the East-West nuclear arsenal. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is to airlift emergency humanitarian aid to the Soviet Union, NATO said here today. A statement issued after a meeting of foreign ministers from the alliance's 16 nations said NATO would help in the urgent transportation of food, medicine and other basic necessities, reports Reuter.

Honecker going to DPRK

MOSCOW, Dec 19: Erich Honecker will leave his refuge in the Chilean Embassy and fly to North Korea on Thursday night, the Russian Information Agency reported. Citing unidentified diplomatic sources, the agency said that the former East German leader would be taken in an armored car to Sheremetevs airport and put on a plane for Pyongyang at 10:50 pm (20:50 GMT), reports AP.

Ex-Iranian minister tortured to death?

NICOSIA, Dec 19: The son of former Iranian Oil Minister Mohammad Javad Tondguyan said Thursday he believes his father was tortured to death by his Iraqi captors and did not commit suicide nine years ago as Baghdad claims, the Iranian news agency reported. Mohammad Mahdi Tondguyan, 17, appealed to the International Committee of the Red Cross to investigate the circumstances of his father's death, said a report by the Islamic Republic News Agency, monitored in Nicosia, reports AP.

Gorbachev quits

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talks with Italian President Francesco Cossiga, is his first trip abroad since he formed the new commonwealth Dec 8 with the leaders of Ukraine and Byelorussia.

It will highlight his position as the country's dominant politician going into the Alma-Ata meeting, where he is expected to sign two landmark agreements.

One would welcome Armenia and the five Asian republics into the commonwealth as equal co-founders; the other would create a common nuclear defense.

US Secretary of State James A Baker III said Thursday he would give very firm assurances during a five-day tour of the disintegrating country that there would be strict centralized control over the Soviet Union's 27,000 nuclear weapons.

"We're very pleased with our discussions there on those issues," Baker said after arriving in Brussels from Ukraine.

He said developments in the Soviet Union would be debated there during the two-day meeting of foreign ministers of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

American officials said

Wednesday that the four republics with strategic nuclear bases Russia, Byelorussia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine have agreed to meet US conditions for diplomatic recognition, including adherence to democratic principles and nuclear disarmament treaties.

Although Baker did not grant recognition, Ukrainian officials said they expect it before the end of the year.

During Baker's visit to Minsk, Byelorussia, the chairman of the republic's parliament, Stanislav Shushkevich, said Byelorussia wants to become a neutral, nuclear-free state.

Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk said he would seek to eliminate all nuclear arms in Ukraine by the year 2000.

Kazakhstan has hedged on disarmament. Its president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, said he would like the republic to become nuclear-free but might retain some warheads if Russia does. Related story on page 5

Wrists

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Amirul Islam, Zahir Ahmed, and others appeared for the petitioners while Aminul Huq, Attorney General, assisted by AF Ihsan Arif, Deputy Attorney General appeared for the state.

The Writ Petition challenging the Ordinance was filed by the former Chairman of Gazipur Sadar Upazila Parishad, Ahsanullah Master and four others.