

Benazir urges US to resume military aid

KARACHI, Jan 5: Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto on Sunday urged the United States to resume military aid to Pakistan despite misgivings about its nuclear programme, reports AP.

"The stoppage of US aid has hurt our conventional defense capability. I would urge the US government to release essential military aid, which our army and air force badly need," said Ms Bhutto, whose party was routed in 1990 elections following charges of corruption and abuse of power.

In October 1990, the United States cut off aid including dollars 573 million already promised for the ensuing year to pressure Pakistan to end a nuclear programme that US analysts say is aimed at obtaining nuclear weapons. Most of the money went to Pakistan's military.

Pakistan contends the nuclear programme is aimed solely at producing badly needed energy. Pakistanis also argue that Washington's nuclear policy is discriminatory, punishing some countries while turning a blind eye to others such as India, which detonated a nuclear device in 1974.

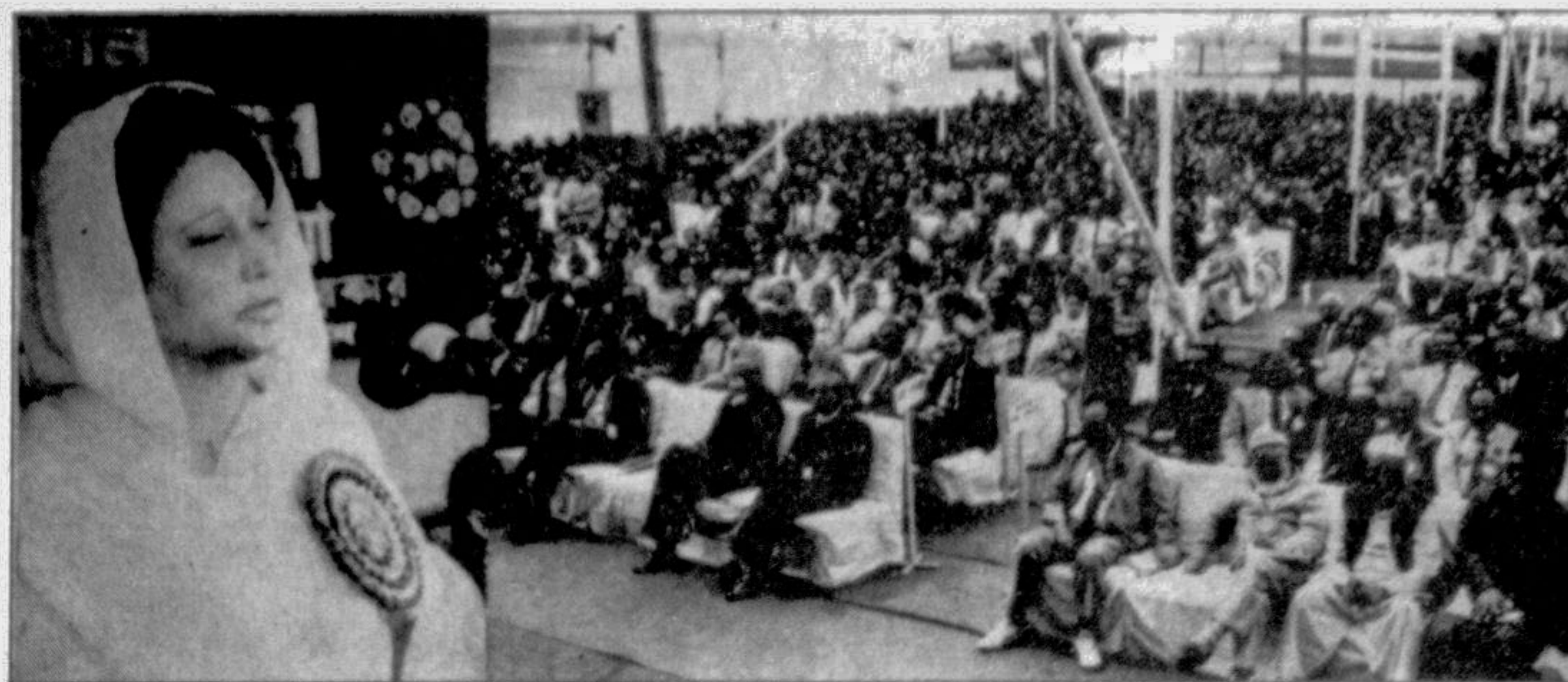
Predominantly Hindu India and Islamic Pakistan have been antagonistic neighbours since their creation in the 1947 partition that ended British colonial rule of the subcontinent. They fought wars in 1948, 1965 and 1971.

Pakistan is trying to get weapons deals with China and Arab nations. The Indian military, meanwhile, has been hurt by the collapse of its main arms supplier, the Soviet Union. The Indians have been working to improve relations with the United States as a possible source of arms.

"If America is getting closer to India, we would not mind as long as it is not at the cost of Pakistan," Ms Bhutto said. "The US should not abandon Pakistan now."

She issued the statement on the anniversary of the birth of her father, the late Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who reportedly set out in the mid-1970s to make Pakistan the first Islamic country to possess atomic weapons.

Bhutto was overthrown in a 1977 military coup that his supporters contend was engineered by the United States to stop Pakistan's nuclear programme. He was hanged two years later.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing the opening session of the IEB convention in the city yesterday. —PID photo

PM

From Page 1 Col 4

crats responsible for the country's economic backlash and urged the government to take measures for changes in the administrative system.

Later, the Prime Minister distributed IEB medals for 1991 to three distinguished personalities for their contribution in the field of engineering.

The recipients are: Prof. S.M. Nazmul Haq (posthumous), S.M. Al-Hussain and S.M. Shahidullah.

A special medal was also awarded to engineer A.M. Manjurul Alam who died in an accident while on duty at the Ghorasal Urea Fertilizer Factory on June 19 last year.

Workers strike work at Chittagong port

CHITTAGONG, Jan 5: A day-long strike by the Clearing and Forwarding Agents Employees' Union brought the operation at Chittagong port to a standstill Sunday, reports UNB.

The strike was called by the Union to press its five-point demand which includes pay hike, formation of welfare fund and issuance of appointment letters.

Secretary of the Port Authority M.A. Mannan said delivery function in the port faced a total deadlock today due to the strike.

Despite the strike, the clearing and forwarding agents were learnt to have rejected the demands of the employees union.

Top officials on study tour

A 19-member team of senior officials of the rank of Joint Secretary leaves for Bangkok today (Monday) on a fortnight's study tour. The tour is part of the three-month-long eleven senior staff training course arranged by the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre, official sources said today, reports UNB.

Two criminals rounded up

Tejgaon police yesterday arrested two notorious criminals following a surprise raid to their hideout at Begunbari area.

Khaleda asks JCD workers Form joint bodies to curb terrorism

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Sunday called upon the members of Jatiya Abadi Chhatra Dal for taking up initiatives to form a combined committee with other student organisations for checking terrorism effectively, reports BSS.

"As the largest student organisation you have a greater responsibility of maintaining proper and healthy trend of student politics with fortitude and patience," the Prime Minister told the leaders of the elected college student bodies of JCD of greater Faridpur district who came to meet her at her Sugandha office.

The Prime Minister said teachers should also be in-

involved in the combined committee for eradication of terrorism.

Begum Zia said, the JCD members had to play a pioneering role to motivate misled students back to the path of an ideal life.

The general students are now coming under the flag of JCD as they have the faith that it will always uphold the politics of development and peaceful atmosphere, she added.

The Prime Minister further said that the new and young leadership had to be groomed in JCD as well as in other front organisation of BNP to avoid stagnancy in the sphere of nation building activities.

Bid to foil UP polls to meet iron hand: CEC

COX'S BAZAR, Jan 5: The Chief Election Commissioner, Justice Mohammad Abdur Rouf, today called upon the people in general and the political parties and contesting candidates in particular to extend their all out help in holding the coming union parishad elections in a peaceful atmosphere, reports BSS.

Speaking at a cross section of people at Teknaf Upazila, the Chief Election Commissioner said that none would be allowed to create disturbance in the spontaneous participation of the people in the coming union parishad polls.

He said that any evil attempt to foil the elections would be dealt with an iron hand.

Task Force team recovers Tk 9 lakh goods

By Staff Correspondent

Members of the Anti-smuggling Task Force Sunday raided a secret warehouse in the capital and recovered about three thousand and five hundred pieces of smuggled sarces, officials said.

They said that acting on a tip, from the Customs Intelligence, a Task Force squad swooped on the Bangabazar Market at Fulbaria in the capital and recovered the Indian cotton sarces, stockpiled in a secret warehouse.

According to officials, Sunday's catch was valued Taka nine lakh.

Another team of the Task Force also raided the Gulshan Market-I.

The team however returned empty handed, sources said.

Md. Helal Uddin Helal, Convener of the Dhaka Metropolitan City Market Convening Committee, a platform of the shop owners, said that no untoward incident took place during the four-hour-long raid which began at 10 am.



A task force team recovering smuggled sarces from Bangabazar Market in the city yesterday. —Star photo

Defence concocted story to save Ershad: AG

The defence evidences in the corruption case against deposed president Ershad were yesterday described by the prosecution as "absolutely blatant lies, concocted and fabricated" and designed to save the accused, reports UNB.

Making a strong argument in favour of the main charge of amassing wealth beyond known sources of income against the accused, Attorney General Aminul Haq dashed down the defence claim that the money found in Ershad's official residence belonged to Jatiya Party.

It is absolutely a blatant lie that more than Tk 2 crore was raised by Jatiya Party through subscription from its rank and file and the money kept with party chairman Ershad for buying the party house, observed the Attorney General.

Ershad was charged by the Bureau of Anti-corruption with amassing wealth of Tk 2,21,65,238 including a cash of Tk 1,90,81,565 beyond known sources of income estimated at around Tk 73 lakh. The money found wrapped in sarces and clothes in 22 trunks was seized from Senabhaban, his official residence, soon after he was overthrown by a mass movement.

Continuing his argument the Attorney General referred to the defence evidence of Jatiya Party resolution of July 11, 1990 and submitted nowhere it was mentioned in the resolution that subscription will be raised for the purchase of the party house.

Again, he contended, according to the party constitution Jatiya Party's highest body is the presidium and the second highest is the central ex-

ecutive committee. But is not clear which committee adopted the resolution for raising the fund.

The prosecution recalled deposition of defence witness Shah Moazzem Hossain (JP Secretary General) who said the party central committee had not decided to raise the fund. He could neither say which committee adopted the resolution.

Therefore, the very basis of fund raising as claimed by the defence falls through. "It is absolutely a concocted paper of resolution to save the skin of Ershad," observed the Attorney General.

The Attorney General further recalled the statement of defence witness Tajul Islam who was claimed to have authorised to collect funds from the party rank and file. He contended that Tajul Islam had categorically stated that he himself did not receive money, office clerks (numbering six) did it from whom he (Tajul) later collected.

Whereas, the Attorney General argued, all the nine other defence witnesses said they had deposited the subscription to Tajul Islam. The inconsistent statement of the witnesses showed the defence claim is fictitious, he said.

Again, Tajul failed to give identity and addresses of the Jatiya Party office clerks who received the money so that they can be brought to the stand as witness. Aminul Haq pointed out.

The receipts against payment of subscription bears the signature of the office secretary. But the party constitution provides the receipts should have signature and seal of treasurer and general secretary,

the prosecution argued. The prosecution also pointed to the interpolations in money figures in the Jatiya Party registers which were submitted to the court as defence evidence. This, he said, tantamounts to forgery.

About the party constitution produced in the court by the defence, the Attorney General observed "it is fabricated, forged and a product of afterthought".

The Attorney General contended that it (constitution) bears no date of printing, name of the publisher nor the printing house. He said under the Printing and Publication Ordinance 1973 every book and paper published should have those and a copy should be submitted to the relevant department of the government. The so-called constitution of Jatiya Party suffers from gross violation of the law, he added.

This copy of the Jatiya Party constitution provides for keeping funds with the party chairman and that funds may be raised without giving receipt signed by treasurer and the secretary general.

This book was published after initiation of this case even the printing press refused to divulge its name," the Attorney General submitted.

A different copy of Jatiya Party constitution produced by the prosecution was published by party secretary general Mahmudul Hasan on January 15, 1984. It provides for keeping party funds with bank and that joint signature requires for withdrawal of money.

The defence claimed it was a draft constitution which was later finalised with amend-

ments. The word "draft" was however not mentioned anywhere in the book.

Again, the prosecution argued that section 5 of the Political Parties Ordinance 1978 provides that all funds of a political party should be deposited in scheduled bank. Keeping funds with party chairman negates the existing law.

The Attorney General referred to the seven letters Ershad wrote to the Authorities including the Home Ministry following his detention. Nowhere in those letters he mentioned that he left behind such a huge amount of money of Jatiya Party at Senabhaban.

He argued that the accused had adequate chance to inform the authorities. It is an absurd proposition that he would not inform the authorities about Jatiya Party's money kept with him which he left behind in his official residence.

The Attorney General further argued that Mustafizur Rahman, brother-in-law of Ershad who was on the 8-member inventory committee that prepared the list of articles at Senabhaban also did not claim that the money belonged to Jatiya Party.

It was the onus absolutely on them (the defence) to prove that the money belonged to Jatiya Party, prosecution is not bound to examine each and everybody, argued the Attorney General.

He mentioned the unusual manner in which the money was kept in 22 trunks, and the unusual time of raising fund when the situation was boiling to a mass upsurge.

Referring to the defence

The Midnight File

UN envoy sees little hope of ceasefire in Somalia

NAIROBI, Jan 5: A special UN envoy said Sunday he saw little hope of obtaining a ceasefire between warring clans in the devastated Somali capital of Mogadishu. James Jonah, UN undersecretary for African affairs, made a surprise return to Mogadishu on Saturday for talks with the leader of one of the factions, President Ali Mahdi Mohamed, reports AP.

Germany's refugee-capacity 'largely exhausted'

BONN, Jan 5: Germany's ability to take in more refugees has been "largely exhausted" after a record number of asylum-seekers — more than 2,50,000 people — arrived last year, a senior government official said Sunday. German Interior Minister Rudolf Seiters said Germans are growing impatient over seeing their tax money go to paying for room, board and social services for more and more refugees, reports AP.

China urges Israel not to deport Palestinians

BEIJING, Jan 5: China on Sunday urged Israel to reverse its decision to expel 12 Palestinians following the slaying of a Jewish settler. "We urge the Israeli side to reconsider the decision and stop the deporting," the official Xinhua News Agency said, quoting an unidentified Foreign Ministry spokesman, reports AP.

Wage Commission

From Page 1 Col 8

clude five representatives from the SKOP and one each from the Patkal Samik Karmachari Sangram Parishad and the public sector Textile Mills Workers and Employees Union.

The SKOP leaders submitted the list of their representatives in the proposed Wage Commission on December 29, a day after the scheduled date of announcing the Wage Commission was over. The leaders of the jute and textile workers however selected their representatives much earlier.

According to the official sources, the Prime Minister approved the proposed Wage Commission yesterday and it is likely to be announced today.

According to the agreements and the MOU signed earlier, the Wage Commission will announce the 'national minimum wage' for the industrial workers within two months after the formation of the Commission while it will submit its complete report within four months.

The workers of jute and textile sectors and the SKOP were simultaneously struggling to press their six, eight and five point charter of demands that include fixation of minimum national wage for both the private and public sector at Taka 1400, halt to disinvestment in the trade and industries and repeal of certain clauses of labour laws that allegedly go against the interests of the workers.

Of these, the government meanwhile gave its word in black and white that it would not go for further disinvestment unless it could reach a consensus with the labour leaders on the issue.

A 12-member joint committee for scrutinising the existing labour laws has already been formed with seven members from the workers side and five from the government. This committee would prepare a report suggesting that the government repeal

certain clauses and form some new ones. The first meeting of this committee is scheduled to be held tomorrow.

About the Wage Commission report, the Jute Minister Brig Hannan Shah (rtd) and Abdul Basheer, a labour leader separately told The Daily Star yesterday that they were hopeful about a solution that would secure the interest of the workers on the one hand and ensure increased productivity on the other.

Jail wardens

From Page 1 Col 4

and held a rally at the parade-ground Sunday evening, jail sources said.

The wardens, at the rally also demanded a civilian be appointed IG (Prisons). They said that ousted president HM Ershad introduced appointment of the top post from among the army personnel.

About 277 jail wardens in Chittagong Central Jail also did not draw their salaries till Sunday and demonstrated in demand of removal of the salary-discrimination, our Staff Correspondent from Chittagong reports.

Twenty-three jail wardens at Gazipur District Jail also did not draw their salaries of December raising the same demands, our Gazipur Correspondent says quoting sources.

About 215 jail wardens in Khulna jail also demonstrated inside the barracks raising similar demands and did not take the salaries of last month, our Staff Correspondent from Khulna reports.

Jail wardens say their pay was two-lake higher than that of a police constable during the period between 1923 to 1962. After that period, pay-structure of the wardens and the constables was same, they point out.

In the new pay-scale, their basic pay has been fixed at Taka 975 whereas the the personnel in other agencies of the same rank draw Taka 1050 as basic effective last month.

Govt meetings

From Page 1 Col 8

In case of holding any urgent meeting on Saturdays or before 12-30 pm, permission from the Prime Minister will be required.

The directive will be effective for all ministries, departments and head offices of all nationalised and autonomous organisations.

The latest directive supersedes all previous circulars and instructions on the subject.

Writ

From Page 1 Col 8

Paurashava filed the writ petition challenging the Paurashava (amendment) Ordinance 1991.

Dr Kamal Hossain, B K Das, Mahmudul Islam, Kazi Shahabuddin Ahmed and Shamim Hossain appeared on behalf of the petitioner while Deputy Attorney General, A Y Saichuzzaman, appeared for the state.

Rohingyas

From Page 1 Col 3

security forces were not allowing the Bangladeshis to enter Mongdu despite having transit passes.

The returnees further reported seeing Myanmar troops taking war preparations.

Rohingya Muslims who entered from Arakan alleged that repression on the Muslims there was continuing.

Bangladesh has also strengthened security along its border with Myanmar following reports of a troop buildup by that country.

Editorial on Page 4

Editor: S. M. Ali

Executive Editor: Mahfuz Anam

Published by S. M. Ali on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motiheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, and printed by him at Offset Printing Dialogue Publications Ltd., 19 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215. Editorial, News and Commercial Offices: 28/1, Toynebee Circular Road, Dhaka-1000. Tel: PABX: 245061-3, 246023-4. Editorial and News: 863036. Commercial: 863035. Fax No: 88-02-863035. GPO Box No: 3257. GRAM: DAILY STAR, DHAKA.