

Gamsakhurdia declares civil war in Georgia

TBILISI, Jan 16: Ousted President Zviad Gamsakhurdia returned to Georgia today and declared civil war against his opponents, calling on supporters in the city of Zugdidi to recapture Tbilisi. TASS reported, reports AFP.

TASS, quoting a report by a local news agency fact, said Gamsakhurdia announced the start of a civil war in the republic at a rally of his backers in the western city of Zugdidi. Gamsakhurdia arrived in Zugdidi today from Armenia after spending the night in the Black Sea port of Sukhumi, according to local journalists here in the capital.

He had flown to Sukhumi late Wednesday from the Armenian capital Yerevan and travelled to Zugdidi by car early Thursday, the journalists said, quoting well-informed sources.

Gamsakhurdia fled Tbilisi on January 6 and sought refuge in Armenia following two weeks of bloody fighting in the

Georgian capital between his supporters and opponents backed by rebel national guard units.

A second rally in support of Gamsakhurdia is to be held in Zugdidi later Thursday, leaders of the armed opposition here said.

About 40 busses were chartered, for supporters in Sukhumi, opposition forces said.

Western Georgia is the home region and traditional stronghold of the ousted President.

Gamsakhurdia, a former human rights activist, was elected President of Georgia in a landslide victory in May 1991, but has since been lambasted for ruling like a dictator.

A military council took over power from Gamsakhurdia in Tbilisi and declared a state of emergency in the southern republic. On Monday the council was replaced by a provisional government.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia called on the visiting Thai Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn at Karatoua yesterday. —PID photo

PM, Thai Crown Prince talk joint venture

Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia yesterday evening called on His Royal Highness Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn of Thailand at state guest house Karatoua soon after his arrival in Dhaka on Thursday, reports UNB.

They discussed wide ranging matters including possibilities of joint venture industries in Bangladesh, import of technology between the two countries.

The Prince thanked the government of Bangladesh for a cordial reception and a very good programme which he said would facilitate him to see the socio-economic development here and come in contact with the people.

He was confident that his visit would further strengthen the existing friendly relations between his country and Bangladesh.

He referred to the visit here by his parents almost 30 years ago and hoped for more high level visits between the two countries.

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The Prime Minister mentioned the restoration of democracy and introduction of parliamentary form of government in Bangladesh.

She particularly mentioned Thailand's development in science, technology and medical fields and said there was a great scope of exchange of technology between the two countries.

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In this regard he mentioned that in the recent years there has been no high level

visit to Thailand from Bangladesh except for a brief stop-over at Bangkok by Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia last year.

The Thai Crown Prince enquired about last year's devastating cyclone and floods in Bangladesh and wanted to know how Thailand could further help in the rehabilitation programmes.

He stated that parliamentary election would be held in Thailand within two months and said a new constitution had been promulgated in his country.

The meeting was held in a very cordial atmosphere. Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand Mechai Ruchupun, Bangladesh Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman, Principal Secretary S Hasan Ahmad, Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman, Thai Ambassador in Bangladesh Vichai Vannasin and Bangladesh Ambassador to Thailand Moinul Hossain Chowdhury were present during the meeting.

Posh areas dirty enough to breed mosquitoes

By Asiuzzaman

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), still unable to procure mosquito — eradicating larvae, has identified the premises of 300 households as dirty enough to breed mosquitoes.

The DCC has filed cases against the owners of these premises.

Almost one-third of the house holds blamed for breeding mosquitoes are located in posh Gulshan area, according to DCC sources Monday.

Though such offenders are liable to be jailed for upto six months under the country's law, the DCC authorities are ready to settle for token fines, the sources said.

The legal move followed a public notice that asked city residents to keep their houses, premises clean to deprive the mosquitoes their breeding grounds. The DCC also insisted on keeping government and private offices clean, and clearing the bushes and ditches that exist in and around the city.

This clean-the-city campaign was launched as part of the DCC's drive against mosquitoes which, in the meantime, continue to menace the city dwellers.

The DCC itself has become a defaulter. It was supposed to start spraying larvae from the beginning of the mosquito season in November. But it failed to start the drive because it exhausted its stock of larvae at least 10 months ago.

A DCC source requesting anonymity said that the file to purchase larvae was processed last May but inter-departmental problems caused delay in finalising the decision.

Any kind of insecticide the DCC uses is tested at the Institute of Epidemic and Disease Control Research (IEDCR) under the Ministry of Health and Plant Protection Department at Farmgate.

The IEDCR had earlier refused to test the insecticide saying that it was not its duty but after the present mosquito menace, it tested the sample or larvae (Pyriox).

The file is now almost complete and we are expecting a supply of 6,000 litres of larvae within next week," a DCC source said adding "We will start spraying it soon after we get it."

"But it is a bit late as the high breeding season of mosquitoes will end by February," another source of the Mosquito Control Department (MCD) working jointly with the DCC, said.

The DCC source, however, said that the cleanliness programme of 2,465 kilometres of drains and hundreds of ditches in the 210 sq km city and the spraying of adulticide (Sticoflyng) were continuing since November.

"If the dwellers do not keep their houses and home-steads clean, all our efforts to control mosquitoes will be futile," the source observed.

Rohingya

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and locked in four empty food godowns in Mongdu, Akyab and Busidong townships in Myanmar.

Meanwhile, the influx of Rohingya refugees continued aggravating conditions in the makeshift camps in the bordering areas.

Officials engaged in head counting said that they were facing problems in identifying the refugees as they have mingled with the rootless mass in the district.

The officials were also facing problems in gathering information about the refugees.

The Deputy Commissioner of Cox's Bazar district who visited some makeshift camps at Dechuapalang village in Ramu upazila today ordered construction of government shelters for the refugees.

The camp dwellers were living sub-human lives in the rundown government buildings at various places in the district. A district official, who visited the camps, today said that some 2,000 refugees entered Bangladesh during the last three days, the highest influx since the trouble began in December.

People in the bordering areas of the district who went to Myanmar on an 'eight-hour transit pass' issued at the frontier check-post alleged that Myanmar troops searched their bodies before allowing them to enter Myanmar. The troops also snatched their personal belongings, they alleged.

Muhammad Hussain, a villager of Ukhiya upazila, who visited Busidong township Wednesday alleged that Myanmar soldiers took away his pen after thoroughly searching his body.

Myanmar authorities have also reportedly ordered the observation of a blackout in seven townships in the Arakan province after sun down, the visitors from Bangladesh reported.

The Midnight File

Govt, rebels sign peace treaty in Salvador

MEXICO CITY, Jan 16: Guerrillas and government officials signed a treaty Thursday ending 12 years of civil war that has ravaged El Salvador and claimed 75,000 lives. The signing took place in a televised ceremony at the capital's historic Chapultepec Castle, presided over by UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who said it opened "a new era of opportunity" for El Salvador, reports AP.

Li to represent China at UN Council summit

BEIJING, Jan 16: Premier Li Peng will represent China at the UN Security Council summit on January 31 in New York, bracketed by official visits to four Western European Countries, a Chinese spokesman confirmed today. Foreign Ministry spokesman Wu Jianmin said Li would leave January 27 for official visits to Italy, Switzerland, Portugal and Spain and to attend the UN meeting.

India-Britain accord on extradition treaty

NEW DELHI, Jan 16: India and Britain today reached a broad agreement on a bilateral extradition treaty and confiscation of the properties of those involved in terrorism. This was announced after a meeting between the visiting British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd and the Home Minister S B Chavan, reports PTL.

Saddam may be ousted soon, says Cheney

WASHINGTON, Jan 16: US Defence Secretary Dick Cheney said today that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is losing support and may be out of power soon. "It's just a matter of time till he's gone," he said in one of several interviews marking the first anniversary of the start of the US-led allied air blitz, reports Reuters.

Vajiralongkorn

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existence must form the bases of the conduct of relations among all nations within the entire world," he said.

The Prince conveyed a message from the Thai King admiring the progress and the spirit of friendship of the people of Bangladesh.

Earlier, President Abdur Rahman Biswas said Bangladesh was looking forward to a meaningful cooperation with Thailand in its quest for development.

Speaking at the banquet he said both the countries already had necessary institutional structures for cooperation in the form of agreements and a joint commission.

The President said the present government of Bangladesh was adopting wide ranging measures for bringing about social and economic progress to achieve economic self-reliance.

Turning to the bilateral relations between the two countries, the President said it had got impetus when Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman visited Thailand in 1970. "Your present visit has further consolidated the relations between our two countries," he said.

Extending his warmest welcome to the Thai Crown Prince and the members of the Royal entourage, President Biswas recalled the visit of the Thai King and the Queen three decades ago to Dhaka and hoped the present visit of the Thai Crown Prince would strengthen the existing bonds of friendship between Bangladesh and Thailand.

Appreciating the dynamic economic progress achieved by Thailand, President Biswas said the Royal leadership had inspired the Thais with a sense of purpose, direction, dignity and commitment. "As friends, your success fills us with pride and as neighbours, we look forward to learning from your experience," he said.

Reiterating his hope for bringing closer the two nations by the present visit of the Thai Crown Prince to Bangladesh, the President said that the Royal guest would carry back the deepest respect and warmest feelings of Bangladesh and its people for the King and Queen of Thailand and the people there.

Later, President Biswas invited the Royal guest, members of his entourage, Prime Minister of Bangladesh and other guests to a toast.

The Thai entourage led by the Crown Prince includes Deputy Prime Minister Mechai Ruchupun.

Earlier, four combat aircraft of the Bangladesh Air Force escorted the plane of the Crown Prince from the point of entry into the Bangladesh airspace.

A little girl presented the Prince with a bouquet as soon as the came down from the plane and the guest patted the girl.

The Crown Prince was then taken to a specially erected dais from where he took the salute.

He inspected the guard drawn from the contingents of three services as the band played the national anthems of the two countries.

The distinguished guest was then introduced to the chiefs of three services.

Economic reforms no experiment: Yeltsin

MOSCOW, Jan 16: President Boris Yeltsin said Thursday his economic reforms were not "just an experiment," and told parliament the Russian people understand the need to make sacrifices, reports AP.

"The people are taking it very courageously, gritting their teeth," he said during his first address to lawmakers since economic reforms were introduced January 2.

But he warned that the reform program remained in its infancy and was vulnerable to sabotage from hard-liners and others who oppose moves toward a market economy.

"The reform hasn't yet become irreversible, and it's not difficult to disrupt it," he said in a 22-minute speech that drew light applause.

"I disagree with the assertion that this is just an exper-

Lanka pushes for SAARC economic community

COLOMBO, Jan 16: Sri Lanka was pushing for a preferential trade agreement in South Asia in a bid to set up an economic community and compete in world trade, officials here said today, reports AFP.

President Ranasinghe Premadasa, Chairman of the seven nation South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), proposed a study on trade, manufacture and services with the aim of clinching a trade pact, an official spokesman said.

SAARC groups Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

In a statement to his cabinet ministers overnight, Premadasa said the climate for intra-regional trade was "excellent" because all countries in the region were liberalising their economies.

"There is no point in trying to gain short term advantage over others. Countries in the region should not attempt to exploit one another," Premadasa said.

He said a South Asian preferential trade agreement

should be treated as a "staging post for the achievement of a South Asian Economic Community."

"If all seven countries are mutually supportive of each other, then South Asia will emerge as a strong entity and a strong competitor in industry, trade and commerce," Premadasa told his ministers.

He had also suggested that SAARC should explore the possibility of setting up a resource bank for the promotion and exchange of experts and goods and services within the region.

The sixth summit of SAARC held here on December 21 focused on economic relations and alleviating poverty in the world's poorest region, which is home to more than one billion people.

An inter governmental group of experts would meet in the Indian capital New Delhi next month and another SAARC committee on economic cooperation was expected to meet here during mid year to discuss Colombo's trade initiative.

Three female prisoners flee Dinajpur jail

DINAJPUR, Jan 16: Three female prisoners escaped from Birampur upazila sub-jail Thursday with the help of armed people, official sources said here today, reports UNB.

They were identified as Jobida Khatun (34) and Majida Khatun (35), both convicted on charges of murder case and Maleka Khatun (36) of smuggling case.

Officials said four people with arms broke the ventilation of jail latrine and entered the female ward. Later they tore down the boundary wall and escaped with the prisoners.

District Superintendent of Jail Hemayetullah visited the spot and suspended jail guards Afazuddin and Nizamuddin for their alleged negligence of duty.

Student clash leaves 13 hurt in Serajganj

SERAJGANJ, Jan 16: Thirteen students were injured, one seriously, in a clash between activists of JCD, JSD and Chhatra League in Shahadatpur Government College today, reports UNB.

The clash broke out over admission of a group of students in the college, police and eyewitnesses said.

The seriously injured was admitted to the Potadia health complex.

Meanwhile, the college sangsad VP Sobel Rjvi and G S Saiful Alam Molla alleged that activists of Enu-backed JSD and pro Awami League Chhatra League attacked the students on the college premises with hockey sticks.

Officer in Charge of the Shahadatpur police station visited the college and said the situation is under control.

Fertiliser export target for '92-93

The country is expected to export about five lakh metric tons of fertiliser next fiscal year (1992-93), Industries Minister Shamsul Islam Khan told parliament Thursday, UNB.

Biman employees withdraw siege

By Staff Correspondent

The employees of Biman Bangladesh Airlines unlocked the entry points of the head office Thursday after a night-long siege when the authorities assured of due consideration of their demands.

The employees laid a siege to the headquarters at Mottijheel Wednesday afternoon confining top management officials to press for implementation of a separate pay scale.

Officials said the siege was withdrawn early Thursday ahead of tripartite meeting between the leaders of the employees, the Biman management and the State Minister for Civil Aviation Abdul Mannan.

The minister explained the position of the government regarding pay scale and assured of consideration of their demands, the officials said. The meeting lasted two and a half hours.

The minister assured the meeting that the pay scale for the Biman employees, which has already been finalised, would be announced soon, the officials added.

The siege, called by the Bangladesh Biman Samik Union, the CBA, was organised to press home the demand for the implementation of the pay scale as recommended by a committee formed by the government.

The minister assured the meeting that the pay scale for the Biman employees, which has already been finalised, would be announced soon, the officials added.

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Hartal in Pabna

PABNA, Jan 16: A dawn to dusk hartal was observed here today in protest of the murder of the Dasheria Union Chairman on January 12, reports UNB.

Sardar Abdur Rouf (45) the incumbent chairman and also a candidate for the coming Union Parishad election was killed in the early hours of January 12. He was the Organising Secretary of upazila unit Awami League.

In response to the hartal call by the Awami League Wednesday, all schools, shops and banks remained closed. No vehicle plied on the streets except those on long routes.

Raushan

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"I am feeling free but I now remember my mother," she said adding "My mother died while I was in jail."

In the few-minute interview Raushan looked a bit nervous and seemed to be seeking her relatives help in what would be right to say.

Asked about the charges against her, she said "What can I say about them you know it." She was flanked by her son Shaad and daughter Jebin during the interview.

Her relatives stopped her from answering to more questions saying that she was really sick and would have her dinner.

The former 'First Lady' Raushan Ershad is facing five cases on charges of corruption and abuse of power.

She was arrested December 12, 1990 with her husband former President Hussain Mohammad Ershad following his stepping down December 6 in the face of a mass upsurge.

BNP MP

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resolutions untouched. "The bill is unconstitutional and illegal," said the visibly annoyed Law Minister.

Earlier, when the House resumed after Maghreb prayer, Rab Chowdhury sought permission to introduce the Public Servants' (Retirement) (Amendment) Bill and urged that bill be sent to a committee for examination.

Opposing the bill, the Law Minister said that it required the previous recommendation of the President for its introduction under the constitutional provision.

"The Law Ministry did not know about the bill," he said, adding that it involved government money.

The Law Minister mentioned that a similar bill was already under scrutiny of the House Committee and assured that the issue would be considered by the government.

Mirza Hafiz requested the BNP member to withdraw the bill. Refusing withdrawal of the bill, Rab Chowdhury said that he had informed the Law Ministry three months ago about it. "I feel helpless at the behaviour of the minister, he often talks of tolerance and now he himself should show tolerance," said the ruling party MP.

While the exchange of words between the Minister and the MP was continuing, the Opposition Bench enjoyed it thumping the desks. However, without giving any decision about the bill, the Speaker suddenly adjourned the House at 6-30 pm to meet at 3 pm Wednesday.



Raushan Ershad after release from Gulshan sub-jail on bail being driven to her sister's residence. —Star photo

Privilege body

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sue and pointed out that distribution of wheat was being carried out in his constituency without his assent.

He said that anomalies were likely to crop-up in the 'dry season' food for work projects without the participation of local MPs in forming the project implementation committees.

He was supported by Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, Tofael Ahmed, ASM Firoz and Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim of the Awami League, Nurul Islam Moni (Independent) and Maulana Abdus Sobhan of the Jamaat.

The Opposition members said they were not consulted before the constituting of project implementation committees under Food for Work Programmes in their respective constituencies. They added that wheat was being disbursed only among committees formed by the ruling party MPs.

Terming it a "wheat disease," the Speaker urged the Deputy Leader of the House to help solve the "complicated problem".

Professor Badruddoza Chowdhury, attending the winter session for the first time after his return from a visit abroad, pointed out that the involvement of MPs in local development activities could be solved without wasting the valuable time of the Jatiya Sangsad.

He called to hold a Privilege Committee meeting on the issue and, if necessary, suspend the start of new food for work projects. However, he added that suspension of work in on-going projects would seriously disrupt the development efforts.

Opposition members demanded that the on-going and new projects under the Food for Work Programme be stopped immediately and sought a ruling from the Chair to ensure participation of MPs in local development projects.

State Minister for Relief Lutfur Rahman said that there was no scope to suspend on-going food for work programmes as it would cause disruption in the projects and create more disputes.

Mosharraf Hossain Shahjahan, State Minister for Irrigation and Flood Control, also opposed the suspension of the projects as it would cause a dislocation in development works. However, he pointed out that food for work projects under his ministry were different from those of the relief ministry.

Winding up the debate, the Speaker ruled that the issue would be resolved by the Standing Committee on Privileges Saturday and also invited the State Minister for Relief and the State Minister for Irrigation and Flood Control to attend the meeting.