

Delhi seeks close military ties with Washington

NEW DELHI, Jan 20: Long mistrustful of the United States, India now appears ready to forge close military ties with Washington following the collapse of its old Soviet ally, officials and defence analysts say, reports Reuter.

The emerging defence co-operation reflects warming political and economic ties with Washington, as cash-strapped India looks to the East for aid and investment and cast about for new strategic relationships, they said.

Lieutenant-general Johnny Corns, army chief of the US Pacific Command, arrives in New Delhi on Wednesday to chair the first ever Indo-American army committee that will look at possible joint exercises, training programmes and transfer of technology.

of US naval operations, will be one of the main guests at India's Republic Day parade on Sunday and is expected to have talks with political as well as military leaders.

Kelso will probably discuss joint naval exercises with his Indian counterparts, and the implications of the US pullout from its huge naval base in the Philippines at Subic Bay, diplomats said.

India has the biggest navy among the littoral countries of the Indian Ocean, and its army of 1.1 million troops is the world's fourth largest.

General Colin Powell, chairman of the US joint chiefs of staff, and army chief of staff General Gordon Sullivan are due to visit India around April.

as well as having tie-ups in ambitious defence projects. Defence Minister Sharad Pawar said last week.

The Soviet Union had been India's main arms supplier, diplomatic ally and key trading partner, but the Soviet collapse has thrown a once-cosy relationship into turmoil.

India wants to move faster than the US, said one diplomat. "The perception of India is changing, but it's not like the US is jumping into bed with these folks."

He said the United States wants close links with India's military to better understand its strategic goals in South Asia, a seething cauldron of ethnic conflict and local rebellions, where the Islamic world meets Hindu India and communist China.

Defence analysts said India and the United States share a

common apprehension about nuclear fundamentalism and a possible Islamic bloc stretching from Turkey to Pakistan and embracing the new central Asian republic in the old Soviet Union.

India has ancient links with the republics, which lie along the old silk caravan route, and was ruled for several centuries by Mughals who invaded from central Asia.

Meanwhile, the once-strong relationship between India's arch foe Pakistan and the United States is under great strain with Washington believing Pakistan possesses the "Islamic bomb".

Washington has chopped aid to Pakistan as a result.

Both India and Pakistan are believed to be threshold nuclear powers and Delhi is under pressure to sign the

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which it says discriminates in favour of existing nuclear powers.

Defence analysts and diplomats say Washington hopes to use the carrot of increased military cooperation and future defence equipment sales to soften the stick it is wielding to persuade India to sign the treaty.

The budding Indo-US relationship is geared not so much to purchase of equipment as synchronising strategy and building up mutual trust, the diplomat said.

"What India wants it can't afford or the US doesn't want to sell. And what the Americans want to sell, India is not interested in buying," the diplomat said.

Xinhua adds: Admiral Kelso will arrive in Islamabad tomorrow for high-level talks on co-

operation between the armed forces of the two countries despite a ban on sales of US military equipment to Pakistan.

Official sources confirmed today Admiral John Kelso, chief of operations of US navy, is coming for a three-day visit during which he will meet senior military officials of the country besides calling on President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

During the last few months, the two countries made serious efforts to revive their relations despite the ban.

Kelso's visit will be the second one by a senior US military official to Pakistan in a three-month time. General Joseph Hoar, commander-in-chief of the US Central Command, visited Pakistan for four days in November for similar talks.

The Midnight File

Explain ban on Marcos, court asks Cory

The Philippine Supreme Court today ordered President Corason Aquino's government to explain why it bans a Manila burial for the former dictator Ferdinand Marcos. The court issued the order, giving the government 10 days to answer, after Marcos family lawyers appealed to the tribunal to quash the prohibition calling it whimsical, reports Reuter.

No Japanese assistance if India makes N-bomb

Japanese Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe warned India today that Japan might eventually refuse to extend economic aid to countries that have nuclear weapons or sell conventional arms. In a meeting with visiting Indian external Affairs Minister Madhavsinh Solanki, Watanabe urged New Delhi to sign the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, a Japanese foreign Ministry spokesman said, reports Reuter.

Algerian envoy leaves Iran for home

TEHRAN, Jan 20: The Algerian ambassador to Iran left here today for Algiers, where he had been summoned after Iranian commentators had sharply criticized the Algerian government, embassy sources reported. There was no immediate indication of when ambassador Hadjar Abdelkader would return to Tehran, reports AFP.

Rohingyas

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situation" and is careful of the norms to be followed in case of border problems with neighbours, he said.

UNB adds: The Myanmar side in the meeting will be led by chief of the border security forces of Rakhaine province. He is also the provincial Police Commissioner.

The first flag meeting was held in the same border town of Myanmar on December 31, while the second at Teknaf in Bangladesh on January 4.

The two neighbours are holding meetings in a move to defuse tension along the border following a Burmese troops attack on a BDR outpost on December 21, killing a BDR personnel and injuring several.

Continuous influx of Rohingya Muslims into Bangladesh from Arakan province of Myanmar has added to the tension.

Report from Cox's Bazar says: About 200 more Arakanese Muslims have crossed into Bangladesh yesterday reportedly fleeing atrocities by Myanmar security forces.

The number of Rohingya refugees from neighbouring Myanmar now stood at about 65,000, who have taken shelter in different parts of the south eastern frontier districts of Bandarban and Cox's Bazar.

The exodus of Rohingyas from their homeland has intensified since December 21 last year.

Official sources said various problems including sanitation, food, warm cloths and shelter have arisen due to continuous influx of the refugees. Most of them have been passing miserable days under the open sky.

District Commissioner Dauduzzaman said construction work of a camp ended yesterday at Dechuapalong area of Ukha upazila which will accommodate about 5,000 people.

Meanwhile, Gonoshasthya Kendro, a non-governmental organisation, has set up camps at Dechuapalong and Maricchya making arrangements for about 25,000 refugees.

It has also been distributing food and medicine among them. A working doctor at one of the camps told UNB that about half of the refugees in the camps have been attacked with various diseases including fever and diarrhoea.

US General calls PM, chiefs of three services

Lieutenant General Johnnie H. Corns, Commanding General, US Army Pacific, who is now on a visit to Bangladesh, called Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her residence Monday evening, reports BSS.

He stayed with the Prime Minister for some time.

General Corns called on Chief of Army Staff Lt General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan at the army headquarters in the morning and discussed matters on mutual interest.

The US Ambassador in Bangladesh, William B. Milam, was also present on the occasion.

Gen Corns also called on Chief of Naval Staff Rear Admiral Mohammad Moham-inul Islam at the naval headquarters and Chief of Air Staff Air Vice-Marshal Altaf Hossain Choudhury at the air headquarters.

Earlier, on his arrival at the Dhaka Cantonment, the US Pacific Commanding General went to the "Shikha Anirban" — the eternal flame — and placed floral wreath in memory of the armed forces personnel martyred during the War of Liberation in 1971.

General Corns arrived in the city Sunday on a four-day goodwill visit to Bangladesh. He was received at the Zia International Airport by senior army officers and the US embassy officials.

Azad urges EC to ensure neutral UP election

Awami League acting president Abdus Samad Azad Monday asked the Election Commission to ensure free and impartial voting in the coming union council elections, reports UNB.

Azad, also the deputy leader of the opposition in Parliament, in a statement said people got back their confidence in voting after the February 27 parliamentary elections held under a neutral government.

The Election Commission as well as the concerned authorities should take effective steps so that voters could exercise their right of franchise independently.

"We want that true verdict of the people will be reflected through local body union council elections," he said.

Azad warned that it will have a bad consequence if the ruling party tries to manipulate the elections through black money and misuse of the administrative machinery.

The AL leader also asked the law enforcing agencies and local administration to play their neutral role in ensuring peaceful elections.

The phased voting for 3,899 Union Parishads will begin from Wednesday and continue till February 6.

50 chairmen

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(Bilachhari Upazila, Rangamati).

A union parishad, the lowest tier in the elected local administration, comprises a chairman and 9 members.

The EC says it has reports that another 46 chairmen and 290 members have been elected unopposed in different parts of the country.

Unlike the last UP polls in 1988, held in a single day, this year's balloting has been spread over 14 days (Jan 22 to Feb 6) with two Fridays kept as non-polling days.

Elections will be held in 3,899 of the country's total 4,440 union parishads.

The EC said that a total of 1,24,788 candidates, including a large number of women, are contesting in the elections. These include 17,494 candidates seeking the offices of chairmen.

Nearly five crore voters are eligible in the UP elections.

According to the EC's statistics, 4.48 candidates are contesting on an average for one post of chairman this year as against 4.30 in the previous election (1988). For each post of member, the average number of candidates is 3.05 while it was 2.97 in 1988.

The total number of candidates for chairmen is 17,494 and that for members is 1,07,294 in 2,903 union parishads this year.

The candidates for the chairman post were 18,566 and for the members' 1,15,318 in 4,317 union parishads in the 1988 elections.

BNP

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no such provision that things would have to be discussed in party forum before being placed in the House.

He said there was no reason for the party to feel embarrassed in such a situation and added "It was not a violation of the party discipline. I have followed the procedure."

Ershad's wealth amassing case

Petition for staying judgement not sustainable: AG

The hearing of the criminal revision application of the former President HM Ershad for staying further proceedings in the corruption case in the divisional special Judge, Dhaka, continued for the second day Monday before a High Court Division Bench of the Supreme Court, reports BSS.

The court comprised Justice Anwarul Huq Chowdhury and Justice Mohammad Abdul Karim.

Attorney General Aminul Huq opposed the application saying that the petition was filed with an oblique motive. The petition was filed in May, 1990. But the applicant kept silence and later withdrew the petition. If the petition is treated as withdrawn it cannot be considered at this stage as the pronouncement of date of judgement is now due.

Aminul Huq also said the petition was made with an oblique motive to delay the pronouncement of trial court judgement and also frustrate the whole trial.

The criminal law does not contemplate adjournment of the case. Petition for staying the pronouncement of judgement is neither sustainable nor maintainable in the eye of law. The criminal case was filed earlier and later civil suit was filed, he said.

He further said that in the plaint of the civil suit nothing was mentioned that the money found in the Sena Bhaban in fact belonged to the fund of Jatitya Party. The claim of money suit has no relevance with the money which was exhibited in the criminal case.

So, the application is not sustainable and the stay of the pronouncement of the judgement will lead to legal complicity, he added.

Aminul Huq further said that Ershad did not claim that the money belonged to him in his letter from January 1991 to May 7, but he told the investigation officer that the money belonged to him. Civil suit cannot be deposited without the evidence which has been produced in the trial court. Before

the announcement of the judgement this cannot be transferred to the civil court which will create another complicity in disposing the case. It is a fabulous petition, he said.

Earlier Moudud Ahmed, counsel of the petitioner said that the divisional special Judge, Dhaka has erred in law in not considering that the criminal case should not proceed while a civil case is pending over the same subject matter in the court of law.

He also said that both the impugned orders dated 20.3.91 and 11.1.92 passed by the divisional special judge are bad in law and liable to be set aside. The judgement is to be pronounced today. Attorney General Aminul Huq, Deputy Attorney General Hasan Arif and Amrui Kabir Chowdhury and Assistant Attorney General Obaidur Rahman Mostafa appeared for the state. Moudud Ahmed, Kazi Shahadat Hossain, Munsur Ali and Sheikh Rezaul Karim appeared for the petitioner.

Asad Day observed

By DU Correspondent

Various socio-cultural, political and student organisations observed Asad Day Monday.

A student leader of the Dhaka University Amanullah Mohammed Asaduzzaman was shot dead in front of the Dhaka medical college during the mass uprising against the then dictator Aynb Khan in 1969.

The Asad Day began with laying of wreaths and offering prayer at the mazar of Shaheed Asad at Shibpur in Narsingdi district.

Meanwhile, Shaheed Asad Parishad (SAP) started its five-day discussion-cum-cultural programme yesterday. A seminar on 'Shaheed Asad: Mass Uprising and the aftermath' was also held at the teacher Student Centre (TSC) seminar room of the DU in the afternoon.

The seminar was participated by Prof Kabir Chowdhury, Prof. Fazul Karim, Workers Party general secretary Rashed Khan Menon, Prof. Wadudur Rahman Mrs. Saleha Nuruddin and elder brother of Shaheed Asad engineer Rashiduzzaman. Former Chairman of the Dhaka University Mass Communication and Journalism department and President of the Shaheed Asad Parishad Dr. Shakhwat Ali Khan Presided.

Dr. Abul Kasem Fazlul Haq read out the key-note paper.

Comparing the mass upsurge of '69 and '90, the speakers said that although their contexts were different the movement of '91 was not as spontaneous as that in '69.

Prof. Kabir Chowdhury said that we should learn from the past and in case of a future upsurge we should be well-equipped to stage it properly.

Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon said that it was our holy duty to provide the exact history to the new generation.

Engineer Rashiduzzaman urged to fulfil the dreams of Asad and the other martyrs since the language Movement of 1952.

On the occasion a discussion was also held at Shaheed Asad College at Shibpur village home of Asad.

Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Mukti Andolon and Chhatra Otkya Forum also arranged similar programmes.

Sea food

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and fishmeal.

The unit will produce 10 tons of surimi and five tons of fishmeal a day. The production will stabilise at 30 tons a day eventually.

Company sources said Korea will provide about two million US dollar while the remaining value of the investment will be provided by the local company in land, factory and trawlers. Sea Resources Limited has already a fleet of nine trawlers to its credit for white fish catch. It will also add another six trawlers and three carrier vessels to its fleet for the project.

According to sources, the potential catch from the Bay of Bengal could be between 90,000 and 1,20,000 metric tons while currently different trawlers and fishingboats haul a small proportion. Moreover most of the haul is flushed back into the sea as they do not fetch favourable price. To the contrary the whole of the catch by Sea Seolim will be used in the production for surimi and fishmeal.

Later, the government renewed the initiative and prepared a model contract for oil exploration. Ministry sources said that any company could take part in oil exploration under this 'model contract'.

The foreign companies will conduct study under the supervision of Bangladesh authorities. "If oil is found, the companies will extract oil under production-sharing basis", said the sources.

United States of North Asia

MOSCOW, Jan 20: Local newspapers have urged the Urals, Siberia and Provinces in the Far East of the Russian Federation to secede and form the 'United States of North Asia', the Tass news agency reported today.

Accord on transit facilities with enclaves extended

The transit arrangement enabling the country to link up with Dahgram and Angarpota enclaves has further been extended up to next March 31, reports UNB.

The existing arrangement will expire tomorrow Wednesday.

A Foreign Office spokesman told UNB Monday that Dhaka and New Delhi had reached an understanding on further extension of the transit facilities.

It will now enable Bangladesh officials to move to the enclaves for holding coming Union Parishad elections due there on Wednesday.

This will be the third time that the inhabitants of the enclaves will exercise their right of franchise.

Earlier, they got chances to vote only in the February 27 parliamentary election and in the referendum on the 12th Amendment to the Constitution.

Under an agreement, India is pledge-bound to transfer Tinbigha corridor to Bangladesh to help her establish link with the two enclaves. But the handover is being delayed.

Trawler

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The trawler was carrying devotees from Bahicrah, Brahmananj, Narsinghpur and Pakshimul villages of Sarail upazila is Brahmanbaria district, according to the survivors.

The passengers of the Narayanganj-bound motor launch alleged that the pilot of the watercraft, without any searchlight on board, refused their pleas to rescue the passengers of the trawler after the collision. The pilot of the launch escaped after reaching Narayanganj terminal.

Police seized the launch and high officials of the district rushed to the spot.

Trawler passengers said that among the missing, six were identified as Satter Chairman (45), Abdul Hamid (70), Firoz Mia (55), Yasin (50) and Yajuddin (40).

6 killed in separate incidents

By Staff Correspondent

Six persons were killed in separate incidents in Dhaka and Mymensingh yesterday.

Of them, five were killed in the city.

Our DMCH Correspondent reports: Md. Sirajul Islam, an accountant of the Sepal Garments, was seriously injured while returning home from Gabtali by an autorickshaw at around 10 pm.

The autorickshaw was hit by a speedy truck on Mirpur Road. He was brought to Dhaka Medical College Hospital at about 11 pm.

Tapan Kumar Chakrabarty (38) was stabbed seriously by the muggers near Kalyanpur at about 6 pm.

He along with his wife, was attacked by five persons with knife and other weapons. The muggers also took away a gold chain, ear-rings and other ornaments.

A case was filed with Mirpur Police in this connection.

In a separate incident Aatur Rahman (30), a mess supervisor of BKSP skidded off with his motorcycles while trying to save a passerby. He died after being admitted to DMCH.

In another incident an unknown man (32) was crushed under train near Cantonment Rail Gate on Sunday morning. His body was brought to DMCH morgue by Cantonment Police for autopsy.

Our BAU Correspondent reports: One person was killed and five more were injured Monday afternoon at the Dohakhola Union of Gauripur upazila of Mymensingh when a truck ran over an electoral procession of a chairman candidate of the forthcoming UP election.

Ibrahim (35) of the village Gayeshkhola died on the spot in the incident. The five injured were taken immediately to the Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH).

The truck driver who remained unidentified managed to flee away.

The electoral procession was brought out by the supporters of Abdus Sattar, one of the chairman candidate of the

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