

Palestinians won't join today's ME talks

TUNIS, Jan 26: A top PLO official said Sunday Palestinians would not participate in the next round of Middle East peace talks unless the composition of the Palestinian delegation is modified.

Palestinian participation in the Moscow talks in "inopportune," said Yasser Abd-Rabbo, head of the Palestine Liberation Organization's information department and a close aide of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.

"The cohorts of the Middle East peace conference (Washington and Moscow) have rejected all formulas proposed by the Palestinian leadership on Palestinian participation in the Arab-Israeli negotiations," Abd-Rabbo said at a news conference.

He said the Palestinian negotiators should be in a "delegation that also groups representatives from the occupied territories as well as the diaspora."

In peace negotiations that began last October in Madrid and later continued in Washington, Palestinian representatives were part of joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegations.

Multilateral Middle East talks scheduled to open Tuesday in Moscow are for the first time drawing China and Japan into what had been a regional and two-superpower affair, reports AFP.

But Syria and Lebanon, key players sharing borders with Israel, have refused to attend the third phase of a conference that opened in Madrid on October 30, saying no progress has been made to make Israel withdraw from their land.

Israel meanwhile faces the possibility of a change in government that could limit its mandate at talks co-sponsored by the United States and Russia on January 28 and 29

and that are expected to focus on procedures.

The Moscow discussions, the first international event there since the collapse of the Soviet Union will focus on security and disarmament, water, the environment and economic cooperation in the Middle East.

For the first time, Asia's major powers are in the picture, with China expected to play a larger role since it established diplomatic ties with Israel last Friday — a precondition for participation.

Japan has offered to host meetings of a special multilateral steering committee tasked with handling management of the peace talks by setting future agendas.

Despite Syria's and Lebanon's absence, Jordan has accepted to attend and the Palestinians were expected to show up despite their reticence.

Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi said the Palestine Liberation Organization — which did not participate in earlier rounds — should be present in Moscow.

Visibly absent are Iran and Iraq, both shunned by the United States, despite their strategic importance, geographic ties to the rest of the area, and their potential for conflict in the region.

Arab participants have warned that the peace process could collapse if Washington approved guarantees on 10 billion dollars in loan to house new Jewish immigrants and if Israel continued settlements in the occupied territories.

Invitations have gone out to the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council, Canada, the United Nations, the European Community, the European Free Trade Association, Turkey and North African states except Libya.



Dhaka College teachers checking ID cards of the students during the College union election yesterday. The Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal swept the Union election bagging all but two posts. The Bangladesh Chhatra League (S-A) won the posts of Assistant General Secretary and Drama Secretary. — Star photo

300 more tribal refugees back in 3 days

RANGAMATI, Jan 26: More than 300 tribal refugees came back here in the last three days from Udaipur frontier camps in the Indian state of Tripura, raising the number of returnees to 1,242 since January 1, reports UNB.

Official sources said about 60 to 70 tribals were entering into the country daily as a result of torture by the local terrorists and economic hardship. Ramendu Bilash Chakma, who returned on January 12 with 100 others, informed that each and every refugee in every camp in Tripura had been leading a sub-human life and eight to 10 people died of hunger, diarrhoea and other diseases every day.

Amendments to JS Rules of Procedure tabled

The report of the Standing Committee on Rules of Procedure containing several amendments to conduct the business of the Jatiya Sangsad was laid before the House for consideration by the Chief Whip Khondkar Delwar Hossain Sunday evening, reports BSS.

Four more TV relay stations planned

The government has taken up necessary steps to expand the country's television network by setting up four more television relay stations, reports BSS.

This was informed at the third meeting of the standing committee on Information Ministry Sunday with Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda in the chair.

The meeting was told that nine television relay centres were now covering 70 per cent area of the country and 15 per cent television coverage would be increased after the completion of four new stations.

It also said various development projects were now underway for modernising the radio and television.

The meeting was further informed that the government had already taken up effective measures to set up second transmission centre at Chittagong.

The Information Minister told the meeting that more opportunities would be created for wider participation of creative and talented artists in

Israelis training

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properties of the Rohingyas, rehabilitation of the evicted refugees, compensation and restoration of their legal and political rights.

Refugees said that the SLORC regime had begun detaining the Rohingyas school and college students in Rakhaine.

Authorities earlier this month had shut down 30 junior and high schools and the only degree college at Akyab township of the province.

The Myanmar troops have also launched search operations in the Rohingyas houses for students after taking lists from the educational institutions.

Another report said that Myanmar troops were pulled back from along the road to the Mongdu township from Teknaf Sunday in view of Tuesday's flag meeting.

People living at the bordering villages in Cox's Bazar have alleged that the Myanmar authorities imposed restriction on the movement of the Bangladesh citizen who visited their relations in Myanmar with eight hour transit passes.

They said that the visitors were barred from moving and were thoroughly searched before being allowed to enter Myanmar territory.

The Myanmar security forces also took away pens, umbrellas, spectacles and other personal belongings of the visitors, they alleged.

UNB adds: Myanmar has deployed two divisions of its army which includes highly mechanised infantry and artillery brigades in addition to combat troops. They have also reportedly stationed several of their air force jets at the air fields near the border.

Yangon has put its forces along the border on alert as it is reported to have been taking a full-scale war preparation.

The situation is gradually taking serious turn as hundreds of Rohingyas Muslims continue to pour into Bangladesh escaping alleged political, racial and religious persecution by the authorities there.

According to official count, about 25000 Rohingyas have so far poured into Bangladesh.

The unofficial figure of the refugees have been, however, put at more than 60000.

The forthcoming flag meeting is intended to have threadbare discussions on the issues arising out of the violation of human rights embodied in the UN Charter.

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman recently told the press that influx of Rohingyas problems will figure prominently at the meeting besides the issues relating to the attack on the BDR outpost by the Myanmar security forces.

Bangladesh, pursuing a policy of peaceful coexistence, is trying utmost to resolve the issues peacefully in a spirit of friendship and good neighbourliness.

Meanwhile, many countries, particularly the Muslim states are reported to have expressed concern over the situation and plight of the Burmese Muslims and their eviction.

They have expressed their solidarity with Bangladesh in its stand in tackling the issues. Burmese Foreign Minister U Onx Jaw is due in Dhaka early next month to have talks on early return of Rohingyas to their homeland.

As per an agreement reached during Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman's visit to Yangon in November last year, Bangladesh authorities are preparing a list of the Rohingyas refugees to be submitted to the Myanmar government.

Walkouts mark passage

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took part in the deliberations which lasted for nearly two hours.

Participating in the discussion on the Upazila (Repeal) Bill, promulgated through an Ordinance earlier, opposition members blasted the Treasury Bench for ignoring their privileges through promulgating the Ordinance by passing the Jatiya Sangsad.

They described the bill as undemocratic and said that it had belittled parliament and its sovereignty. It was also pointed out that as there were ongoing cases in the courts against the Ordinance, the bill may also be sub-judicial. It was alleged that the repealing of the upazila system was designed to make the local government system partisan to serve political and party interests.

Speaker Sheikh Razaque Ali quoting from Kaul said that the rule of sub-judicial cannot stand in the way of legislation. "Parliament's main function is to make law and sub-judicial cannot stand in its way," he added.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Adbus Samad Azad, while taking part in the debate, was bitterly critical of the government for promulgating the Ordinance by ignoring the Jatiya Sangsad.

Describing it as an "autocratic act" of the democratic government, he said that the honour and dignity of the sovereign parliament had been tarnished.

Endorsing the views of other opposition MPs, Samad Azad demanded that the bill be placed either to elicit public opinion or to a parliamentary select committee.

Winding up the discussions Salam Talukdar dismissed various arguments of the opposition members and observed that the matter was small and simple and did not warrant participation by such a large number of members.

Noting that the provision for promulgating ordinances was there in the original Constitution of 1972, he stressed that ordinances would be promulgated whenever necessary in the future.

He pointed out that every ruling party had the right to frame rules for local government along with the right to dissolve any existing one to build better relations between the government and the local government, as per the Constitution.

About the accusation that the Ordinance was promulgated with a partisan outlook, the minister-in-charge asked the opposition to cite an example of partisan politics regarding the upazila system.

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AL leader Tofael Ahmed while describing the bill as an

Iran recruiting former Soviet N-scientists

LONDON, Jan 26: Iran is recruiting former Soviet nuclear scientists to help build an atomic bomb, according to a report published in the Sunday Times, reports AP.

The newspaper, quoting unnamed Iranian political and scientific sources, said Iran was offering \$360,000 to "some of the top brains in the former Soviet Union."

The report said several Soviet scientists had visited Iran, but it was not known whether they signed contracts, an Arabic magazine reported last month that Iran had taken advantage of the chaos in the crumbling Soviet Union and purchased three nuclear weapons.

The AL-Watan Al-Arabi also reported that Iran hired more than 50 Soviet nuclear experts at salaries of \$5,000 a month to assemble the components of the three bombs.

There has been no independent confirmation that Iran possesses nuclear weapons. But Western defense experts say the threat is a serious one in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse.

AFP from Bonn adds: Nuclear experts from the former Soviet Union have already been recruited by countries that want to build atomic bombs, according to NATO Secretary General Manfred Woerner.

Without naming specific countries, Woerner told the German magazine Bunte have information that they have tried to recruit specialists with atomic know-how from

the former Soviet Union, several have already been recruited.

A number of western leaders have expressed fears of a nuclear brain-drain to Third World countries.

On Friday, the United States acknowledged it was considering hiring nuclear experts from the former Soviet Union to prevent this happening.

Woerner said the migration of such specialists was even more dangerous than the presence of nuclear arms in the Commonwealth of Independent States which replaced the Soviet Union.

Prime Minister made chairperson of Investment Board

The Jatiya Sangsad Sunday passed the Investment Board (Amendment) Bill 1992, making Prime Minister as the chairperson of the Investment Board, reports BSS.

Industries Minister Shamsul Islam Khan, who piloted the bill said that previously the head of state was the chairman of the board when the country was run under the presidential system but it was needed to be amended as the Prime Minister was now the chief executive of the country.

Winding up the discussion on the bill Shamsul Islam Khan said it would be easy to take decision by the board when it was headed by the Prime Minister.

AL workers gherao Khulna DC office

From Staff Correspondent KHULNA, Jan 26: Over 400 workers and supporters of the Awami League Sunday gheraoed the offices of the Deputy Commissioner and the Khulna Metropolitan Police Commissioner demanding arrest and punishment to those who attacked and damaged the party office last week.

They held a rally in front of the party office near Hadis Park and brought out procession in the city before handing over memorandums of the demand.

City president of the AL Advocate Monjurul Islam, Vice-President Lutfar Rahman and District Unit Vice-President Monirul Islam addressed the rally.

The elections were held at the Teachers Students Centre (TSC) of the DU from 8 am to 1 pm Sunday.

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Published by S. M. Ali on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed by him at Offset Printing Dialogue Publications Ltd., 19 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: 28/1, Toynebe Circular Road, Dhaka-1000. Tel: PABX- 246023-4, 245061-2. Advertisement: 245063 & Ext. 20. Fax No. 88-02-863035. GPO Box No. 3257. GRAM: DAILY STAR, DHAKA.

The Midnight File

Khmer Rouge leaders to stay in royal palace

PHNOM PENH, Jan 26: The Supreme National Council (SNC) decided today to let Khmer Rouge leaders live in the Royal Palace and to house the UN peacekeeping headquarters at the former US embassy.

Prince Norodom Sihanouk made the proposal in a surprise announcement that received applause from those present, sources who attended the meeting said, reports AFP.

13 killed as mine blow up bus in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, Jan 26: At least 13 people were killed and 32 wounded when a landmine tore a bus to pieces in eastern Sri Lanka today, hospital sources said. They said the dead included two air force personnel, reports Reuter.

Meningitis killed 100 in Uganda last month

KAMPALA, Jan 26: A meningitis outbreak in northern Uganda has killed 100 people in the past month, officials said today. Social events have been banned to reduce the risk of infection and 20,000 doses of vaccine have been sent to the area, they said, reports Reuter.

Belarus begins transfer of N-arms to Russia

MOSCOW, Jan 26: The first group of tactical nuclear weapons have been taken from Belarus to Russia for destruction, the Tass news agency reported Sunday.

Leonid Privalov, deputy chairman of the Belarus parliament's Commission for National Security, told journalists covering the visit of French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas that the former Soviet republic was committed to becoming a neutral and nuclear-free state.

"Belarus will get rid of strategic weapons approximately in 1996 or 1997," Privalov was quoted as saying.

He said, "at present, Belarus does not see an adversary, either near its borders or elsewhere, whom it would need to fight."

Belarus Foreign Minister Pyotr Kravchenko told the Russian Information Agency that the transfer of the tactical weapons was the first step toward getting rid of all nuclear weapons.

"We hope that Belarus will be the first member nation of the Commonwealth of Independent States to become a nuclear-free zone," he said.

Neither Tass nor the Russian Information Agency said how many missiles were included in the first batch being sent to Russia. There are approximately 27,000 nuclear weapons in the arsenal of the former Soviet Union.

Hearing of Motiur's bail petition begins

The hearing of the bail petition filed by Maj (Retd) Md Motiur Rahman, known as Peer of Shimulia began before a division bench of the High Court Division Sunday, reports BSS.

The bench comprised Justice Habibur Rahman Khan and Justice Mohammad Abdul Mannan.

Earlier, Peer Motiur Rahman's bail petition had been rejected by the Sessions Judge Court, Kishoregonj.

Biman employees

From Page 1 Col 8 grand rally in Dhaka to announce the programme of greater movement. Employees from Chittagong, Rajshahi, Jessore, Cox's Bazar, Sylhet and Syedpur stations would join the grand rally, he added.

"We may start our greater campaign with token work stoppage which will intensify gradually" the union president said. He alleged that the authorities' intransigence was lingering the crisis which was also causing harm to the national flag carrier. No official of the Biman management was available for comment on the latest situation.

UP Election

From Page 1 Col 7 upazila under Khagarachari Hill Tracts district as situation went beyond the control of election officials in those centres, the source further said.

According to police sources, members of the police force had to resort to four rounds of blank fire at the Kanaighat union of Kanaighat upazila under Sylhet district following eruption of clashes between the supporters of rival candidates at 2.30 pm. The situation was brought under control and polling was suspended there.

'Knife the healer the killer'

From Page 1 Col 3 protesting the LGRD minister's remark that the government would continue to promulgate ordinances in future.

Earlier, opposition members, terming the abolition of the upazila system by promulgating an Ordinance "an autocratic practice" of the government, said that it was not necessary, especially when a democratically-elected parliament was present in the country.

Salam Talukder, LGRD Minister and the Secretary General of the ruling BNP, while refuting the opposition's argument said that the promulgation of an ordinance was not contrary to the constitutional provisions of the country. The provision of promulgation of an ordinance and then turning it into an act in Parliament with the mandate of the majority of the members was incorporated in the Constitution by the AL in 1972, the LGRD Minister added.

Since it was not unconstitutional, the government, if necessity arose, would go for promulgating more ordinances in future, Talukder concluded.

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Review meet on Pali rationing

A review meeting of Pura and Pali rationing system was held Sunday with Food Minister M Shamsul Islam in the chair. The meeting was attended, among others, by Food Secretary Ataul Haq, Director General of Food Mahe Alam and other concerned high officials. The minister said all necessary steps would be taken to provide and preserve the facilities of recipients through rationing system, reports BSS.