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Shantibahini hand suspected : Hartal called to protest massacre

14 killed as blast blows off launch

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 2: A powerful bomb exploded on a motorlaunch cruising along a hilly river in Rangamati district this afternoon killing 14 people and injuring another 20.

Officials said that the time-set explosive suspected to have been planted by tribal terrorists blew off part of ML Akhter killing 10 tribals and a non-tribal on board.

Three others died later at the Chittagong Combined

Military Hospital after being lifted by helicopter from the spot along the Kachalong river near Mahillah village in Langadu upazila, some 30 kilometers off Rangamati town.

The motorlaunch, carrying about 50 passengers, from Marishya in Baghaichhari upazila of the hilly district was bound for Rangamati town.

The dead included seven children.

The seven injured, also airlifted to the Chittagong CMH,

were under treatment while another 13 passengers injured in the blast were admitted to the Rabhat Hospital in Langadu upazila headquarters.

The injured admitted to the CMH were identified as Abu Bakar Siddiqui (31), Abdul Hamid (44), Abu Hossain (10), Ishaq Mia (35), Santosh Kanti Das (30) and Mithun (10). Another person could not be identified.

The injured at the Rabhat Hospital included Jasmine

tribal passenger was Ripon Kumar Das, a resident of Marishya Bazar.

High civil and military officials visited the spot.

UNB adds: The brutal act of the subversives sparked a wave of protests such as demonstration, launch strike and hartal in the hill district Monday.

An all-party protest meeting held in Rangamati town Sunday afternoon condemned the massacre and called for a half-day hartal in the district

Monday.

The Bangalee Pahari Gana Parishad and the Islami Chhatra and Juba Sena brought out two processions in the town protesting the incident. They also called for observing "mourning day" tomorrow (Monday).

Launch owners and workers associations jointly called for an indefinite launch strike in all routes from Rangamati, demanding proper investigation. See Page 12 Col 7

Countdown to Shaheed Day

By Staff Correspondent

When Muhammad Ali Jinnah, first Governor-General of Pakistan, declared on March 11, 1948 that Urdu would be the only state language of the newly-formed country, it came as a clear sign that a new form of colonialism was about to be imposed upon the people of East Bengal to replace the British one.

Whatever Jinnah's announcement might have meant to the Punjabis, Pathans, Baluchis and Sindhis, none of whose mother tongue is Urdu, the Bengalees refused to take it lying down.

The very fact that Urdu, a language native to North India but not to part of Pakistan, had to be imposed on all parts of the new state, exposed an essential weakness, to put it mildly, behind the logic of its creation.

More importantly, the sinister implications of Jinnah's declaration were not lost on the student community and the emerging intelligentsia of East Bengal, where nearly 100 per cent of the people had preserved, nurtured and enriched their mother tongue Bangla despite being ruled for centuries by people who patronised other languages such as Sanskrit, Pali, Persian and English at various stages.

Back in the 18th century, a wily Italian philosopher named Nicolo Machiavelli had provided some valuable advice to Prince Lorenzo of Renaissance Florence on how to deal with conquered people.

If Machiavelli had said, the conquered people had a language, culture and history of their own, then it would be very difficult to keep them under rule. The solution, he suggested, was to utterly destroy their language and culture and erase from their collective memory and vestiges of their own history.

In other words, make them wily Italian philosopher named Nicolo Machiavelli had provided some valuable advice to Prince Lorenzo of Renaissance Florence on how to deal with conquered people.

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Bangladesh Bank Annual Report

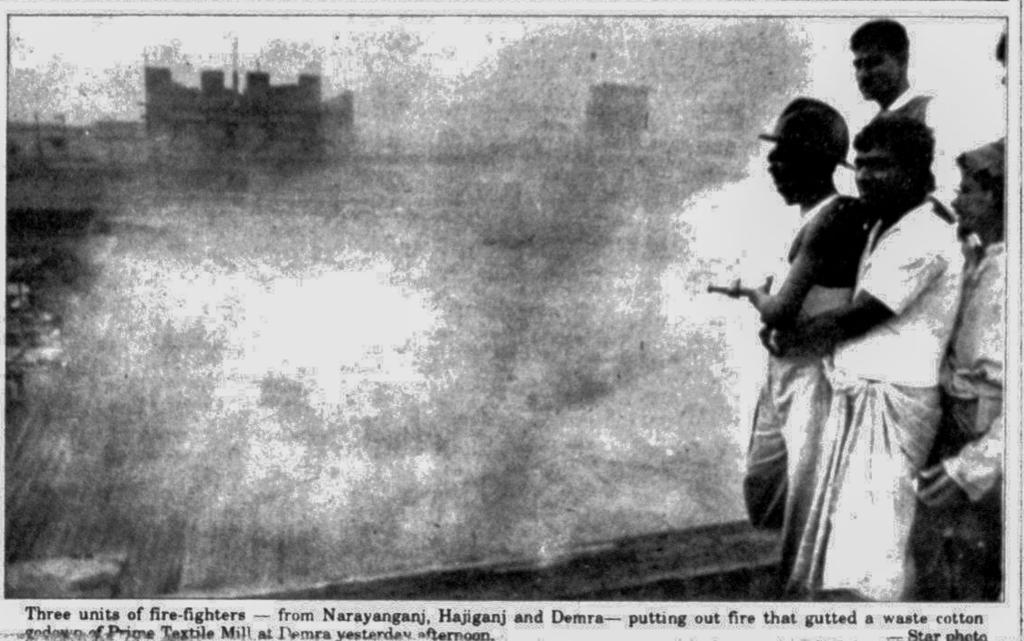
Economists take forecast with a grain of salt

By Mahfuz Ullah

Despite forecasts of bright prospects for the current financial year by the Bangladesh Bank, leading economists of the country have expressed pessimism about the general health of the economy.

The forecasts came in the annual report of the Bangladesh Bank for the year 1990-91 released to the press yesterday (Sunday).

The bank's report predicts 'in view of the present socio-economic situation, it can be expected that the process of economic development will accelerate during 1991-92 provided the inflow of foreign assistance and weather conditions remain favourable. As a



Three units of fire-fighters — from Narayanganj, Hajiganj and Demra — putting out fire that gutted a waste cotton godown of Prime Textile Mill at Demra yesterday afternoon. — Star photo

Myanmar orders sending Rohingya rebels to firing squads

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Feb 2: Myanmar Saturday ordered its troops to step up action against the insurgents inside the territory after a government-set deadline for surrender had expired January 31.

Reports from across the border Sunday said that the military commander of Rakhaine (formerly Arakan province) Major General Myo Nunt during a visit to Busidong military station Saturday ordered to intensify military campaign against the pro-democracy activists.

Addressing the troops, he also ordered to set up 'firing squads' to punish the rebels, according to the reports.

The reports add that no member of any rebel group laid down their arms inside Rakhaine to respond to the authority's offer that ended on January 31.

The reports say that pro-democracy movement began to crystallise in the Rakhaine province with series of street protests at several township.

Hundreds of students and people led by All Burma Students Front took to the streets of Akyab town Saturday and Sunday to protest military repression.

Rohingya Welfare Association Joint Secretary Nazrul Islam says that at least 50 people were injured as troops opened fire on the agitating marchers on the streets of

Directive to settle property disputes of the displaced from India

The Land Ministry has issued a directive to the Deputy Commissioners to settle all the undisputed property within three months to alleviate the hardship of displaced families from India living in Bangladesh, reports BSS.

The government in a hand-out advised the displaced families from India in Bangladesh to contact the respective Deputy Commissioners or Additional Deputy Commissioners (revenue) for proper settlement of their cases relating to exchange of property.

The handout said that the government has observed that these displaced families have exchanged documents of property before September 6, 1965 with those leaving Bangladesh (the then East Pakistan) and applied to the district administration for regularisation of the exchanges but large number of them are still awaiting settlement.

To mitigate the hardships of the displaced families regarding exchanges of their property the Land Ministry on December 21 last year directed the Deputy Commissioners to settle all those undisputed cases within three months.

The handout said the disputed cases should be settled within six months and if necessary registration should be completed.

The handout said camps could be set up at upazila level

See Page 12 Col 8

Water talks : Indians term Teesta data ticklish

By Staff Correspondent

A new information exchange and verification system on the flows of the rivers Meghna and Brahmaputra will be initiated between Bangladesh and India from March this year.

This was disclosed at a joint press briefing Sunday following the day-long Indo-Bangladesh secretary-level meeting on the water-sharing of the common rivers held at the Sonargaon Hotel.

The five-member Indian delegation to the talks was led by the Indian Water Resources Secretary Dr. Madhab Anand Chitale while the Seven-member homed side was led by the Secretary, Ministry of Irrigation, Water Resources and Flood Control, M Asafuddin.

Leaders of the two delegations said that the discussions, held for about four hours in two sessions, centered on four common rivers — the Ganges, Meghna, Brahmaputra and Teesta.

They pointed out that there were no disparity in the data, collected by each side, on the flow of water in the rivers, Ganges and Teesta.

However, they noted that the dependability on the data of the flow of the rivers, Meghna and Brahmaputra, came into sharp focus at the meeting.

Describing it as a 'ticklish issue', the leader of the Indian team said that the problems of dependability on the data on the two rivers prevented both

disperse the mob. About 100 people were injured in the police action, witnesses said.

The arrests include Delwar Hossain Patwari, chairman candidate of Sahadevpur union and Abul Bashar, a member candidate of Kadla union.

A Jamalpur report adds: Police on duty at a polling centre in Sharishabari upazila foiled an attempt to disrupt the election results Saturday midnight.

A group of youngmen attacked Satpota Union polling centre at Char Sharishabari at around 12 mid night and tried to snatch away the ballot boxes.

During the clash a police officer, Belayat Hossain, Sub-Inspector of Sharishabari up-

Withdrawal of ban on wet blue leather resented

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Finished Leather Exporters' Association (BFLEA) on Sunday resented the government decision to lift ban on export of wet blue leather till December and said the finished leather units would be facing severe crisis of raw materials due to this decision.

The association said ban on wet blue leather export was imposed on 1990 mainly to earn higher foreign currency by exporting finished and crushed leather. Instead, the association observed, if export of wet blue resumes, the finished leather units set up at the cost of Taka 300 crore would be laid off. It added that the country would also lose about Taka 500 crore in foreign currency annually.

The association further observed that the lifting of ban would reverse the development of the finished leather sector as it would become uncompetitive in the global market due to lack of raw materials.

It said the ban on wet blue was not imposed suddenly; rather, it was decided in 1987 by the government after discussing the issue with concerned quarters.

The association urged the government to reconsider its decision on lifting the ban on wet blue leather.

He was optimistic that a "fresh chapter of cooperation" could be started between the two nations to resolve the water-sharing problems. He said that he got a "positive response" from his Indian counterpart who assured him of referring the Bangladesh viewpoint to his government.

However, Asafuddin noted that a lot of political goodwill would be needed to solve the problems.

The secretary-level talks, the sixth in the series, ended with a decision to report back to respective governments. A joint press release on the meeting is expected to be issued today before the Indian delegation leaves for home.

A ministerial-level Joint Rivers Commission meeting will be held in New Delhi next month.

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UP polls: DC's office gheraoed, over 50 held on 10th day

Voting in at least one centre was postponed yesterday (Sunday), the 10th day of the union parishad elections, reports UNB.

Barring few stray incidents, elections were held more or less peacefully yesterday in 176 unions of 21 upazila in 20 districts, Election Commission sources said.

With this elections were completed in 2,874 out of 3,899 unions.

Polling was postponed at a centre in Jagadishpur union in Chougacha upazila of Jessore district yesterday following a clash between the supporters of a UP chairman candidate and the police personnel.

Witnesses and Jessore dis-

tribut election control room sources said the clash ensued following exchange of words between on duty police personnel and a chairman candidate of the union at Marua Government Primary School centre.

Later, the situation deteriorated as the supporters of the chairman candidate pelted stone at the cops. At one stage, the mob tried to set fire to the polling centre but was chased away by police. Several people received minor injuries in the melee.

The Presiding Officer postponed polling in the centre as the situation went out of his control, the sources said.

A Lalmonirhat report said,

about 5 to 7 thousand people gheraoed the Deputy Commissioner's office yesterday protesting the arrest of a union parishad election candidate.

Police arrested Ramzan Ali Master, a UP election candidate of Shaptbari union of Aditmari upazila of the district Saturday for allegedly casting false votes. He is also the president of the upazila unit of Jatiya Party and Vice President of the district Jatiya Party.

Submitting a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner the agitated protesters demanded immediate release of Ramzan Ali Master.

Jatiya Party activists called a half-day hartal in Aditmari upazila headquarters today

protesting the arrest of Ramzan.

In Chandpur, more than 50 people including a chairman candidate were arrested Sunday from Kadla union for creating troubles following the union parishad polls on Saturday, police said.

Witnesses and police said about a thousand strong people demonstrated in front of Kachua police station demanding release of two persons arrested earlier and pelted stones resulting in injuries to several inmates of the thana.

A strong force of BDR and police from the adjacent Shaharati police station rushed to Kachua and resorted to blank fire and lathicharge to

azila was seriously injured. He was rushed to the upazila health complex but later transferred to police hospital in Dhaka as his condition got critical, hospital sources said.

Police arrested four people in this connection from the spot.

Opponents of Joinal Abedin, the elected chairman of Satpota Union, unable to win in the three other centres allegedly attempted to suspend the election in the union. The attack was conducted when the officials were counting the votes.

Polling will be held today (Monday) in 309 unions of 40 upazila in 34 districts.

Help consolidate democracy, PM urges MPs

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Sunday called upon the parliament members belonging to both Treasury and Opposition benches to help consolidate democracy in the country, reports BSS.

She was speaking at the prize giving ceremony of the indoor sports competition of Parliament Members Club in the country premises here Sunday evening.

Speaker Shakh Razaque Ali, who is also the Chief Adviser to the club, Chief Whip and President of the club Khondakar Delwar Hossain and outgoing Secretary of the club Shahjahan Straj MP, also spoke on the occasion.

Begum Zia, who is also the chief patron of the club, said, "We must work together to give parliamentary democracy

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