

Delhi ready to face Pak threat: Rao

GURUVAYUR (Kerala), Feb 9: The Prime Minister, PV Narasimha Rao, today said India is ready to face any threat from Pakistan, reports PTT.

Rao was speaking to newsmen after worshipping at the famous Sri Krishna temple here this morning.

Answering a question regarding the plan of JKLF chief, Amanullah Khan, to cross the line of actual control on Feb 11, Rao said an all-party meeting scheduled to be held tomorrow would review the situation.

After the meeting, a joint statement would be issued, elaborating the stand of the government and political parties in this regard, he added.

AFP adds: The Indian Foreign Minister said today that talks between the Indian and Pakistan foreign secretaries would go ahead some time next month despite the current border tension in Kashmir.

Madhavstigh Solanki, however, said there would be no discussion on Kashmir during the talks, a date for which has yet to be finalised, as long as Pakistan continued its alleged support to Muslim militants fighting for secession from India.

The last round of talks between the two foreign secretaries were held in November in Islamabad and were aimed at improving relations strained mainly over the issue of Kashmir, the northern third of which is controlled by Pakistan.

Sircar, Hasina

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operation especially of the students, guardians and members of parliament to help peaceful holding of the examinations.

The House however, witnessed a gross violation of the Rules of Procedure of the House with Sheikh Hasina's attack on the government after the statement of the Education Minister.

The Education Minister, earlier, informed the House that the government had two consecutive meetings with two different groups of the striking teachers from 5 pm to 10 pm on Saturday.

He said that one group — comprising the representatives of the Principals Council, College Teachers Association, Bangladesh Teachers Association, Bangladesh Teachers Association Unity Front and others — had felt that the problem could be resolved through discussions and was ready to call off the strike while the other representing Teachers Association, Teachers Association Federation, College-University Teachers Association maintained that they could call off the strike only after the demands were met.

The second group, said the minister, despite government's intention of meeting some of the demands, wanted the examinations postponed until the acceptance of all the demands.

The Education Minister said that it involved Taka 122 to 128 crore to meet the demands of the teachers.

The budget of the current fiscal year cannot bear such an extra burden. It would not also be possible for the government to impose another round of taxes on the people within 11 months of BNP's ascent to power, the minister added.

The government, however, is sympathetic to the teachers' problems and it has already formed a three-member cabinet sub-committee headed by the Finance Minister to consider a new pay-scale for them and explore the ways and means of collecting the extra money the minister informed the House.

After the delivery of the Education Minister's statement, Sheikh Hasina immediately took the floor and started severely criticising the government for ignoring the interest of the teachers on strike.

Comparing the present government with that of the Jatiya Party she said that they fallen autocratic regime also resorted to ignoring the teachers' interest and went for holding the examination with the help of police.

She said that the government after passing a bill that ensured salary increase of the President on the plea of inflation and price hike of the commodities, now opposes the same thing for the suffering teachers.

The Speaker at this stage tried to persuade the Leader of the Opposition not to violate the Rules of Procedure by deliberating on the issue after the minister had already made a statement on the same.

But the opposition leader, infuriated by the Speaker's interruption, said, 'Mr Speaker, you are spilling my time and do not do it. Then she continued to deliberate on the issue saying that she had been elected to Parliament to look after the people's interests.

She, however, finally called upon the government to find a settlement with the teachers immediately.

At this stage, Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury, the Deputy Leader of the House sought permission of the Speaker to say something about the incident. Dr Chowdhury, in an oblique reference to Sheikh Hasina's violation of the Rules of Procedure of the House unanimously adopted by the MPs belonging to both the Treasury and Opposition benches, said those who always talked of parliamentary democracy should abide by the norms and values of the system.

Refuting Sheikh Hasina's accusation against the government he said, 'the government is not the owner of the public exchequer but its manager obligated to equitably distribute it among the people.'

'We do not believe in stunts', Dr Chowdhury said adding 'we are trying to solve the problem from the practical points of view.'

Shaheed Day

From page 1 Col 8

August 19, 1947. Sitting by the table of editor Abul Kalam Shamsuddin in Azad's Calcutta office, I was savouring the taste of the new-found independence. At that moment, an Azad staffer came in and asked, 'What will be our stand on the issue of state language?' The Ittehad (Calcutta based Bengali daily edited by Abul Mansur Ahmed) is leaning towards Bengali. The editor chatted for a while and then said, 'Ours will be the same, but go a little slowly.'

It was clear from Shamsuddin's cautious approach, according to Umar, that although the Azad had withdrawn his decision to oppose Bengali, the paper would not play a prominent role in supporting Bengali as the Ittehad was doing.

Further more, the Azad backed the government completely during the first phase of the Language Movement in March, 1948. But the Azad took up a strong anti-government stance after the firing of Feb 21, 1952.

M R Akhter Mukul, in his 'Ekushey Dalit', said that the Azad's about-turn could have been the result of an internal conflict within the Muslim League.

M R Akhter stated that, according to political observers of the time, Maulana Akram Khan's conflict with the Muslim League leadership may have been behind Azad editor Shamsuddin's decision to resign from the Provincial Assembly on Feb 24.

Azad proprietor Maulana Akram's views on the language issue was revealed less than a year before the killing of students in Dhaka, when he presided over an All-Pakistan Urdu Conference in Karachi on April 15, 1951, and explained his position in the following words:

'Those East Pakistanis who oppose Urdu are receiving support and inspiration from that quarter which opposes everything that is Islamic. Because they think that Urdu represents the culture of the Muslims of the Indo-Pak sub-continent, that is why they have a hatred for Urdu.'

The Maulana's comments, quoted in Umar's trilogy, produced a torrent of protests in Dhaka, but it indicated the line the Azad was following on the language issue, until Feb 21, 1952.

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday approved the promotion of senior civil servants of different cadres. Minister of State for Establishment Nurul Huda was present. —PID photo

654 officials

From Page 1 Col 7

for the posts of assistant secretary since the process started on December 12.

The government announcement added that the promotion process would continue and the second round of interviews for the post of assistant secretary would begin shortly.

BSS adds: According to the handout, many higher posts including those of Joint Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries have been lying vacant for a long time. Immediately after the independence of the country, a large number of officials were appointed in several batches of different cadre service. These officials became eligible for promotion in the mid eighties.

But promotion to the posts of Joint Secretary and Deputy Secretary remained virtually stopped since 1985. Consequently, this created frustration and aversion to duties among the lower level officials eligible for promotion along with creating stagnation in official work, the handout added.

It pointed out that the present government has annualised the quota system of the Matin Committee to enable the capable officials of all cadres to work in the administration as well as higher level posts. The provision introduced during the autocratic regime of not appearing in the promotion examinations has also been dispensed with.

As a result, capable officials of different cadres have been promoted to vacant posts on the basis of justice and fairness. In this connection, the handout mentioned that due to stoppage of promotion for a long time, many capable officials have retired from service out of frustration for not getting promotion.

Under the present process of promotion and on humanitarian consideration, for officials, whose date for going to leave preparatory to retirement was imminent, have been promoted to the post of Joint Secretary.

The handout laid stress on career planning and continued training of the officials for enhancing efficiency in the administration and maintaining it. The government is quite conscious about it and is taking steps for imparting training to the newly promoted officials in phases.

The government expressed the hope that after getting the long desired promotion these officials would discharge their responsibilities in the socio-economic development with renewed vigour.

The officers promoted to the rank of Secretary are: AHM Abdul Hal, Dr AKM Mashur Rahman, Habibur Rahman and IU Malik.

The officers promoted to the rank of Additional Secretary are: Dr Mirza MA Jalil, Shah Abdul Hannan, Amanul Islam Chowdhury, Abdus Sobhan, Abu Mohammed, Mesbahuddin Ahmed, MM Shamsul Haque, MA Hena, SM Akram, Sheikh Hashmat Ali, Md Anwarul Alam, AMA Khan Chowdhury, ABM Siddique, AM Jalaluddin, Mohiuddin Azad, M Hafizuddin Khan, MAM Ziauddin, KG Mostafa, Ataur Karim, Moniruzzaman Chowdhury, Matur Rahman, Syed Amirul Mukl, Syed Yusuf Hossain, Mamunur Rashid, Sadat Hossain, MM Reza, Ahbab Ahmed, Md Ismail Hossain, KM Izazul Haque, Syed Margub Morshed, Anwarul Islam and Khandker A Haque Meah.

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Foodgrains as grant for '92

About 7.33 lakh tons of foodgrains will be available as grant from donor countries to meet the shortage during the current year, Food Minister Shamsul Islam Khan informed parliament lastnight, reports UNB.

The Speaker tried to impress upon Hasina the point but failed. As the Opposition leader finished her statement the Deputy Leader of the House Badruddoza Chowdhury gave replies to her criticisms.

Dhaka's concern over environment situation

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh has expressed grave concern over the worsening environmental situation particularly in its north western region at a United Nations meeting on the environment.

Environment and Forest Minister Abdullah Al Noman, who returned home Saturday after a three-day special session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi, Kenya, said that he raised the issue of desertification in the north western part of Bangladesh and also the increase in salinity in the coastal areas of the country due to the unilateral diversion of the Ganges water by India.

The Environment Minister was speaking at a press briefing at his Secretariat office Sunday morning. He led a four-member Bangladesh delegation to the special UNEP session under an action plan for the integrated management of fresh-water resources.

The Minister said that the developing countries at the Nairobi meeting demanded new and additional financial resources and transfer of technology on non-commercial basis from the industrialised UNEP members, the lions-share contributors to the environmental pollution and global warming.

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More than 17 per cent of the Sundari trees in the Sundarbans were dying because of the increasing salinity. Noman said adding that the country's lone newsprint industry in Khulna was also facing severe scarcity of sweet water.

The Minister said that some 22,889 square kilometres of land in the country would go under water if the sea level increased by only a meter. The sea would also engulf 13.7 per cent of the country's total agricultural land and 28.29 per cent of the forest land if the present rate of deforestation and other damages to the ecology continued.

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Seen from the gallery

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It could be either because of ignorance or lapses in following the Rules of Procedure. There are no reasons to believe that it is ignorance rather it is safer to term it lapse. And the lapse was amply expressed in the House yesterday.

As the Speaker was going to open discussion on the report of the standing committee on privileges relating to wheat distribution, circulated earlier, the opposition members raised objections.

Comments by Tofael Ahmed and Shahjahan Siraj proved that, as members of the committee, they were not careful before finally okaying the report.

Tofael, realising the mistakes, managed to save face by offering a self-criticism. But Shahjahan Siraj cut a very sorry figure when he said that he had signed a blank paper.

The witty Speaker, in reply, had the message for Shahjahan Siraj when he said 'you should be ashamed for signing a blank paper.'

Earlier, the Speaker once rebuffed Shahjahan Siraj for trying to shout his point through. The annoyed Speaker said: 'why does he (Shahjahan Siraj) do it all the time?'

The Rules of Procedure were amended a few days ago to deal with the unruly members. Nevertheless, the Speaker found it quite difficult to enforce discipline. Even the Leader of the Opposition, Sheikh Hasina failed to show any respect for Article 300 of the Rules of Procedure.

Immediately after Jami-ruddin Sircar, the Education Minister, had made a statement on the teachers strike, Sheikh Hasina wanted to make a statement. Article 300 of the Rules of Procedure says 'a statement may be made by a minister on a matter of public importance with the consent of the Speaker but no question shall be asked at the time the statement is made.'

The Speaker tried to impress upon Hasina the point but failed. As the Opposition leader finished her statement the Deputy Leader of the House Badruddoza Chowdhury gave replies to her criticisms.

6 killed, 70 hurt in road mishaps

By Staff Correspondent

Six persons were killed and 70 others injured in road accidents in the country yesterday.

Our Gazipur Correspondent says, at least 40 people were injured, eight of them seriously, when a Dhaka-bound BRTC bus plunged into a roadside ditch yesterday at 3 pm on the Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway near Islamic University.

UNB from Khagrachari adds: A pedestrian was killed near Panchari upazila headquarters when a speeding jeep hit him behind yesterday afternoon.

BSS from Rangpur reports: At least five persons died on spot and 30 others were injured in the early morning when a night coach from Dhaka on way to Kurigram met a fatal accident at Mirbag, about seven miles from Rangpur town.

All the injured persons were admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Girl's body recovered

By Staff Correspondent

Mohammadpur police recovered the body of Nargis Chowdhury, 16, from her residence at Sher Shah Suri Road, Mohammadpur yesterday morning.

Family sources of Nargis said she was demented and committed suicide by hanging at her bedroom Saturday night. Nargis was found dead in the morning, they added.

Her body was sent to the morgue of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

A house wife, Amena Khatun, 20, was admitted to DMCH with serious stab injuries yesterday afternoon.

Amena during an altercation she was attacked with a 'dao' (sharp weapon) by her husband at her residence at north Goran.

Parveen, 14, was admitted to DMCH yesterday after she was raped by her brother-in-law. Her condition was said to be critical.

Food autarky

From page 1 Col 8

requirement in 1990-91 fiscal year had been 189 lakh metric tons of which 91 per cent was met with the local production and the rest 9 per cent was imported.

Answering another question the Food Minister informed the House that the government had signed agreement with five countries for importing food under the current fiscal year. A total of 2,67,957 metric tons of food will be imported from Australia, Canada, Japan, Norway and Germany, he said adding that contact would be signed soon with the United States, France and the EEC to import 4,65,000 metric tons of food more.

The government has a target of purchasing 5,50,000 metric tons of rice during the current season, Shamsul Islam told another questioner. Till December 31, 1991, 2,35,814 metric tons of rice was collected by the government, the minister added.

According to the food policy, food stock has been targeted this year at nine lakh metric tons. However, the World Bank has proposed the stock at 6 to 9 lakh metric tons, the minister told the Sangsad.

Power workers

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came from the Energy and Mineral Resources Minister at meetings with the trade union leaders Saturday and Sunday, a BBS statement said.

The minister also formed a committee headed by the Joint Secretary (administration) of the Ministry to ensure progress in finding a solution to the problems of the power sector workers.

The meeting was attended by BBSU General Secretary Abdus Salam Khan, Assistant General Secretary Nuruddin Sheikh, Secretary, Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Chairman of the Power Development Board (PDB) and the Dhaka Electric Supply authority (DESA) and other high officials and trade union leaders.

Workers of the PDB and the DESA are demanding implementation of a government-union agreement signed last September 25 on a separate pay scale, overtime in the new pay scale, removal of disparity in pay, overtime for non-technical employees, grid allowance and a balanced setup.

Various problems of the power sector, particularly the huge system-loss and arrears bills, came up for discussion. The meeting stressed the need for coordinated efforts to solve the problems of the sector.

However, the BBSU statement added that if, as per the discussions, the government fails to arrive at a logical solution to the 5-point demands in due time, the union will renew its call for the 72-hour strike.

The Midnight File

Indian troops seal border with Pak Kashmir

JAMMU (India), Feb 9: Indian security forces have sealed the border between India and Pakistan in Kashmir to prevent separatists from crossing into the Indian ruled part of the Himalayan state defence officials said today. They said troops took up positions along the disputed frontier, including a UN monitored ceasefire line to thwart a march by Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) militants. Meanwhile Pakistani police used batons and tear gas today to stop Kashmiri militants reaching a border village ahead of a banned march across a ceasefire line into Indian ruled Kashmir, militant sources said, reports Reuter.

Mitterrand, Gorbachev misled me: Saddam

ANKARA, Feb 9: Iraqi President Saddam Hussein charged in a newspaper interview published here today that French President Francois Mitterrand and former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev 'misled' him ahead of the Gulf war, reports AFP.

Emergency in Algeria

NICOSIA, Feb 9: A state of emergency has been declared in Algeria, Algerian television said in a report monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, reports Reuter.

Transport strike

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'However, no solution could be reached at the meeting which lasted about two hours,' Khan said.

Sources said that the Home Minister had told the meeting that the demands of the transport owners could not be met at the moment because it needed approval from the Finance Ministry. Finance Minister Saifur Rahman is due from Rome, Italy today at 6 am.

The meeting which started at about 11 am was adjourned till 6 pm because of the sudden invitation from Home Minister for a discussion.

It resumed in the evening and was again adjourned till 11 am today (Monday).

The meeting was called to discuss the overall situation arising out of the strike.

Leaders of the transport owners also expressed their regret for the inconvenience of the people because of the strike and urged the government to accept their 'rightful demands'.

Meanwhile, prices of vegetable, fish and other food items Sunday recorded a sharp rise by an average 9.18 per cent in the city bazaars due to the strike.

A press release of the Bangladesh Consumers' Association (CAB) said that prices of all kinds of fishes increased by an average 35.22 per cent, prices of vegetable soared by 21.23 per cent, meat of all kinds increased by an average 13.14 per cent, pulses rose by 12.69 per cent and other essential commodities including sugar, salt and tea recorded a rise by 8.57 per cent as compared with the prices of February 6 and 7.

Prices of rice of all kinds showed an upward trend by an average 3.10 per cent in the bazaars. However, prices of flour remained static, the CAB press release said.

Milon murder

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day of the trial, Sunday

Among the witnesses, Dr Mamun Alias Abdullah-Al-Mamun, Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Nurul Huda, a guard of the Bangla Academy and Abul Hossain were ordered to be produced before the court yesterday.

Dr Mostaq Hossain, plaintiff of the case, was also absent on the second day of the trial.

Of the 14 accused, 10 persons arrested so far, were produced before the court yesterday.

Public Prosecutor (PP) Abdur Razzak was absent yesterday.

APP Mahbub Ahmed, APP Mohammad Mostafa and APP Nurul Islam, who are moving on behalf of the prosecution, yesterday pleaded for time to the second Additional Session Judge, M Ismail Mia.

Continuing for About 15 minutes, the Judge adjourned the court at about 11.15 am. The court will sit again today (Monday).

Degree exams

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district headquarters today and a grand rally in front of the National Press Club at 10 am on February 15.

UNB adds: Similar arrangements have been made for the examinees under Chittagong University where 32,680 students are sitting in 70 centres for the examinations.

Meanwhile, striking teachers in Chittagong have planned to meet at the Shaheed Minar and later demonstrate in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office today.

Post-poll clash

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chairman of Sindurpur union, Razzaqul Haider of Rajapur union, Taher Ahmed Miah of Purbha Chandapur union, Tajul Islam of Yakubpur union, Abu Sufian of Maubhuyan union, A K M Abdul Haque of Jalaskar union in Daganbhuyan Upazila.

Serajul Islam was elected chairman of Kalidah union, Sheikh Baherullah of Lamua union, Abul Kashem of Farhadnagar union, Master Mafzal Haque of Dolia union, Taherul Islam of Motobe union, Nurul Karim Bhuiyan of Baligaon union, Shahabuddin Sikdar of Charshadi union, Ahsan Ali of Pangachia, Abdul Khaleque of Dharmapur union, Shamsul Haque Bhuiyan of Kajtrabagh union, Amin Hossain of Chamua union in Sadar upazila.

Dinajpur

'Another report from Dinajpur says, eleven persons were elected chairman unofficially in Chitribandar upazila.

According to official sources, Moftuzuddin was elected chairman of Nasirpur union, Shah Mohammad Foyzar Hossain of Potejangpur union, Tamjuddin of Tetulia union, Azizul Haque Shah of Shatnalar Union, Shah Mohsin Ali of Ishapur union, Abul Hossain Chowdhury of Abdulpur union, Nurul Islam of Shaifara union, Aminur Rahman Sarkar of Amarpur union, Anil Kumar Ray of Aulapukur union, Shah Md Motur Rahman of Virail union, Azizul Hoque Mondol of Punt union.

Per capita food

From Page 1 Col 6

tional food average availability is around 20 percent above the requirement level almost all people have the purchasing capacity to atleast buy enough food.

Under this consideration, the per capita food availability situation in Bangladesh and other South Asian countries are much below the satisfactory level of requirement, the study shows.

In India and Nepal, per capita daily food availability is only 99.8 and 92.9 per cent of the requirement while in Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, it is little over 100 per cent, which, according to Qureshi, is not enough to ensure food for all.

Among the 30 countries in the FAO's Asia-Pacific region, food availability is at satisfactory levels in Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, Malaysia, North Korea, South Korea and Tonga. In these seven countries, food availability is more than 20 per cent above the requirement level.

The paper said that due to shortages in food availability, the incidence of undernutrition is very high in Bangladesh, Nepal and Cambodia. It is also high in India, Pakistan, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

Regarding the countries in the South Asia, the study report said that all the countries in this sub-region have a common problem of the shortage of food availability for human consumption.

The paper suggested that the strategies that could ameliorate the problem include, higher per capita food production, improved food distribution in order to lower the coefficient of variability, target-oriented feeding programmes and fair pricing.

'The management of this problem calls for the attention of the SAARC to encourage technical and economic cooperation for this purpose', the paper concluded.