

Pak army chief to visit India Delhi, Islamabad see era of better ties

ISLAMABAD, Aug 20: Pakistan welcomed today a forward movement in relations with arch-enemy India and said a solution to their problems could lead to harmonious ties, reports Reuters.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mohammad Siddique Khan Kanju told parliament that Pakistan would continue to seek a negotiated settlement on all outstanding issues with India, particularly disputed Kashmir state.

"We welcome the forward movement in our relations, Kanju said, commenting on two agreements signed in New Delhi on banning chemical weapons and a code of conduct on treating diplomats. The minister was opening a foreign policy debate in the senate (upper house) a day after senior officials of the two sides ended talks in New Delhi on an unusually upbeat note.

India announced today that Pakistani army chief General Asif Nawaz would visit New Delhi soon, but said the dates had not yet been set.

Kanju said he was confident progress on Pakistan proposals for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament in South Asia would usher in an era of



Awami League rally at Bangabandhu Avenue after yesterday's hartal.

—Star photo

Hartal paralyses country

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rupted while long distance buses stayed parked at the terminals in the outskirts of the city.

The Purana Paltan and its adjoining areas were the main trouble spots during the hartal hours Thursday where pickets locked in several rounds of clashes with police.

At around 11:20 am several cocktails were blasted during a procession of pickets at the Purana Paltan Square. They also stoned police as the law enforcers blocked them and tried to keep the road free for traffic.

from Chittagong says: All type of vehicles including rickshaws stayed off the roads and highways while the shopping arcades and markets remained closed. Most of the office in the city, both private and public could not function normally due to thin attendance and banks could not operate in full swing. Carrying of cargo to and from Chittagong port was suspended. Mills and factories at Nasirabad and Sitakundi industrial belts stopped operation during the hartal period.

Our Correspondent from Sylhet says: A peaceful dawn to dusk hartal was observed here yesterday.

All type of vehicles were off the road during the hartal hours. Road communications remained snarled. Dhaka-Sylhet bus service did not ply.

Attendance in government, private offices and banks were thin and did not function normally.

Islam Bokul, secretary zila Awami League in the chair.

Our Narayanangj Correspondent adds: Hartal was observed peacefully throughout the town.

At 8 am yesterday hartal activists pelted stones at a Dhaka bound train at the Narayanangj station damaging the wind shield of the engine.

Four Narayanangj bound trains were stopped by the activists at the Chasara Station.

Launch Terminals and educational institutions remained closed for the day while all traffic on the Dhaka Narayanangj road was suspended. Few workers reported to duties in the industries of the town while the markets remained closed.

Police lobbed four tear gas shells to disperse the pickets.

At Bijaynagar a police Sub-Inspector Nazrul obstructed a group of photo-journalists and allegedly misbehaved with them. The Sub-Inspector also pointed his pistol at the photo journalists but did not fire.

In another round of clashes with police in the Bijaynagar area police went into action using batons and firing teargas shells. They arrested two persons including Nirmul Committee leader Ahmed Khan but later released them following public protest on the spot.

Our Staff Correspondent from Khulna adds: Dawn to dusk hartal was observed here peacefully. All the roadside shops, commercial establishments, banks, insurance companies, private offices remained closed. Classes were not held in all the educational institutions. All type of vehicles including rickshaw remained off the road. Long route coach services from Khulna remained

responsible for the assassination attempt.

Our Correspondent from Gaibandha reports: Dawn-to-dusk hartal was observed in the district peacefully. Shops and educational institutions remained closed. Vehicles were off the roads. Trains including intercity express were detained for hours in different locations. Lawyers boycotted the court in support of the hartal. No untoward incidents were reported.

A joint procession of the opposition parties paraded the main streets and held road side meetings.

Our Sathkhira Correspondent adds: Dawn-to-dusk hartal was observed in the district peacefully. Business establish-

ment reports, three persons were injured in two separate attacks on the pro-hartal processionists in the district headquarter during the hartal hours.

No ferry at the Doulatdia-

Cement bungle

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any Romanian company. When the supply period came the Indian firm failed to get the cement from its possible sources. One source said that the Romanian company, from whom the suppliers thought they would buy cement, was sold to a German company.

In the backdrop of its failure, the Indian firm sought to supply the same quantity of cement from the CIS, a proposal turned down by the Council Committee in July.

As things stand today, the cancellation of the contract is a matter of time, despite pressure exerted by the firm's influential local agent.

The local agent, insisting that TCB's bureaucratic bungle had made things difficult, is now trying to save the performance guarantee (PG), five per cent of the 59.39 lakh dollars total cost. But the TCB is about to encash the guarantee money that comes to about Tk 1.15 crore.

Authorities sources said that the failure on the part of the suppliers angered the Council Committee members and a Cabinet minister insisted that action be taken against the firm and its local agent.

However, the agreement itself gives immunity to the defaulting firm until the January 1993 deadline expires.

Meanwhile, the TCB imported 5,500 metric tons in May and June from India, 11,000 metric tons from Korea and LC has been opened to buy 20,000 metric tons of Chinese cement from a Hong Kong firm, to be shipped by this month.

The TCB has also reached an agreement with an Indian firm to import 20,000 metric tons of cement. Arrangements are underway to import another 50,000 metric tons of Chinese cement.

der. As the first consignment did not arrive on time, cement prices rose in the months of June and July with private importers monopolising the market.

Of an annual demand of 20 lakh metric tons, the TCB was to import eight lakh tons to play its traditional role of market stabiliser, the private importers were to bring in another eight lakh tons while the rest was to be produced by the local cement factories.

In 1991-92, the TCB was far from its import target and ironically, the domestic output came to approximately 2.5 lakh tons. But the private firms imported more than their quotas to balance the demand-supply situation.

Concerned quarters point accusing fingers for the debacle at the Council Committee, a body of ministers that looks after the Tk 15 crore plus government purchase.

They suggest that the Committee, ignorant of past records, directed taking the entire one lakh tons from the Indian firm, which quoted an attractive 59.39 US dollar per metric ton brushing aside TCB's pragmatic proposals.

According to sources, the TCB had advised that the required quantity be bought from at least three sources—40,000 tons from Romania, 30,000 tons from India and another 30,000 from Korea—to avoid any possible disaster as had been the case in such deals over the years. Since 1974, concerned sources say, Romania and the former Soviet Union have defaulted in shipments of cement.

Informed sources said that the India Exim Ltd had made the commitment without reaching a firm contract with

Five-Party's claim

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view with us, regarding the investigation although we have indicated who might have made the attempt."

The rally, held on the Topkhana Road to protest the attempt on Menon, demanded a ban on Jamaat, Shibir, Freedom Party and Jubo Command. It was addressed, among others, by Nirmal Sen, Mainuddin Khan Badal, Nayem Jahangir and Tipu Biswas.

Nirmal Sen said, "We did not want much from the government, but only the security to get back home safely," he said. "If the government fails to ensure that much, it should resign."

The leaders said that the government had compelled us to take to the streets against it. Demanding resignation of the Home Minister Abdul Mattin Chowdhury, Badal said, "Mattin shrugged off our suggestions regarding the Menon-assailants and he is misdirecting the effort to arrest them."

The leaders told the rally that they identified the assailants as anti-liberation ac-

tivists because those activists a few days ago declared a hit-list of persons they call Indian Agents. The list included the names of Menon, Ratan Sen and other pro-liberation leaders.

They also declared that since the Five-party alliance had no trust in government investigation it had formed an investigation committee of its own to probe into the Menon incident. The committee would soon announce its report, and expose the assailants, they said.

Urging people to take up self-security measures against terrorists as every citizen had the right to self-defence, Inu said the Five-party would soon announce a greater movement to enforce the ban on political activities by anti-liberation force.

Jahangir said that through the peacefully-observed hartal people had proved that they had not pardoned the Razakars and that they wanted trial of the Menon assailants.

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The Midnight File

Arabs urge US to remain neutral in ME talks

DAMASCUS, Aug 20: Arab participants in the Middle East peace talks said Thursday they will attend next week's round in Washington and urged the United States to remain impartial in the talks. The two-day summit was called following the US decision to free \$10 billion in loan guarantees for Israel, where the new government has frozen most—but not all—building of new Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, reports AP.

De Klerk to sit with opposition

PRETORIA, Aug 20: President F W de Klerk on Thursday accused the ANC of trying to wreck constitutional talks and said the government will meet with allied groups to consider solutions to the nation's problems. The plan for separate talks appeared designed to pressure the ANC to return to the table. The government will not be forced into 'sitting on our hands' while constitutional talks are stalled, de Klerk told a news conference. De Klerk said he met Thursday with the anti-apartheid Democratic Party and the mostly Zulu Inkatha Freedom Party, the ANC's main black rival, reports AP.

Quake jolts Central Asia: 50 killed

MOSCOW, Aug 20: A strong earthquake that jolted Central Asia killed dozens of people in a remote valley in Kyrgyzstan, a news agency reported Thursday.

The earthquake, which the US Geological Survey measured at 7.5 on the Richter scale, struck Wednesday morning. Its epicenter was reported to be in the sparsely populated Susamyr Valley of Kyrgyzstan, about 370 km (235 miles) northeast of Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

The quake was felt in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and China, over a range of 500 km (300 miles), according to news reports and the Uzbekistan Seismological Institute.

In a dispatch from Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, the ITAR-Tass news agency said up to 80 people had been killed in the Susamyr Valley, including at least 14 who were killed by falling rocks in the village of Toluk.

Several villages on the slopes of the Susamyr range were destroyed, and the fate of many shepherds was unknown, ITAR-Tass added.

The evening newspaper Izvestia said at least 20 people were killed and 200 injured. Only one road leads to the region, but it was blocked by a rockslide at a tunnel, the newspaper said.

Emergency crews were sent to the area and relief workers were clearing roads, ITAR-Tass said. Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev cut short his vacation to fly to the area Thursday, the news agency added.

Matin

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Khaleda Zia would like to 'give the change a more formal colour in the weekly cabinet meeting next Monday', sources added.

The Prime Minister, according to sources, is also considering some other changes in the Cabinet portfolios.

BNP sources said that the change was being delayed for 'political reasons'. The reasons, sources said, included among others 'an evaluation of the Opposition attitude towards the government.'

However, it would not be surprising if the incumbent Home Minister were replaced by someone else other than Oli Ahmed.

A kitchen cabinet member, preferring anonymity said that while reviewing the law and order situation the policy planners had failed to find an answer to the question on how to combat the 'ill-intentioned' move by a certain quarter responsible for the deterioration in the law and order situation.

The meeting of the kitchen cabinet, however, opined that the attempt on Rashed Khan Menon, had politically affected the image of the government, sources added.

AL, allies

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A source present at the meeting said on condition of anonymity that the people's response and the taken steps by the government will decide the course of the opposition movement programme.

Awami League leaders Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, Tofael Ahmed, Abdur Razzak, Mohiuddin Ahmed, Sheikh Abdul Aziz, Abdur Mannan, Amir Hosain Amu, Communist Party leaders Safiuddin Ahmed Manik and Nurul Islam-Nahid, National Awami Party (NAP) leader Pankaj Bhattacharya, Alhaj Abdus Samad of Gana Azadi League, Suranjit Sen Gupta of Ganatantri Party, Hasanul Huq Inu of JSD (Inu), Khalequzzaman Bhuiyan of BSD (Khaleq), Mirza Sultan Raja of JSD, Bimal Biswas of Workers' Party, JSD (Siraj) chief Shahjahan Siraj, and Sramik Krishak Samajbadi Dal leader Nirmal Sen were among the 36 leaders present at the meeting.

Monir

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earlier on Thursday submitted a prayer to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate seeking five-day remand for further questioning. But the Magistrate granted only two-day remand for each.

Unidentified assailants shot and wounded the Workers' Party leader near his party office at Topkhana Road in the city at around 8:35 pm Monday.

Police picked up the former MP and his brother early Tuesday and detained in the Detective Branch office at Mintu Road for questioning. Police arrested them on the following day in connection with the incident and they were sent to the Dhaka Central Jail after being produced before the chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court on the day. Police, however, did not submit any prayer for remand Tuesday.

A top police official said, the former MP and his brother were being interrogated at the Detective Branch but he declined to disclose anything for convenience of the investigation.

The official said Police launched a massive hunt for the assailants during last three days but failed.

"We are getting closer to the clues and the culprits will be detected soon" said a top police officer.

When asked about the Workers Party's allegation on the attempt on their leader, the police officer further said, "we do not brush aside any allegation and clue. We are looking into everything."

Workers Party leaders alleged that activists of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Chhatra Shibir and Jubo Command had hands in the attempt on Rashed Khan Menon.

Meherpur Govt College closed sine die

MEHERPUR, Aug 20: The Government College here has been closed sine die following a series of clashes between Islam Chhatra Shibir and Chhatra League M-1, reports UNB.

At least four students were injured in the clashes between the two feuding parties in and around the campus during the last few days.

Menon

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letin said: "The condition of Menon has continued to show improvement. However, he is under careful monitoring for complications and consequences, possible in such extensive injuries."

Menon, also the convener of the Five Party Alliance, was shot and injured by unidentified gunmen near the Workers Party office at Topkhana Road Monday.

BSS adds: Attending surgeons and physicians said Menon was recovering well and responding positively to the treatment.

Talking to newsmen, Menon's elder brother A Z M Enayetullah Khan who visited him (Menon) last night at the Intensive Care Unit, said Menon was recovering well.

Enayetullah Khan who stayed for a couple of minutes beside the bed of Menon said: "Menon talked to him more freely on Thursday than he did on Wednesday."

Replying to a question regarding the possible sending of Menon abroad for treatment, Enayetullah Khan said: "Menon is getting the best of treatment and care at the Combined Military Hospital. There is no need to send him abroad for treatment."



Agitated people damaging a car inside a motor workshop at Segun Bagicha during hartal hours.

—Star photo

suspended during the hartal period. Attendance in government offices was thin. But work in mills and factories in Khalishpur, Daulatpur Industrial Area was as usual. Mongla Port, however, functioned normally. No untoward incident was reported. Special police force was deployed at different points of the city.

Sarbadallo Hatta-0-Shantrash Pratirodh Committee arranged a protest rally at Shaheed Hadis Park in the evening. Presided over by Talukdar Abdul Khaleq MP, the rally was addressed, among other, by Dr Ganendranath Bala, Atzpur Rahman, Advocate Abdul Halim, Harun ur Rashid MP, Khalid Hussain, Nuruzaman, and Sk Abdul Aziz. A procession was brought out in the city after the rally.

BSS adds: A dawn to dusk hartal called by the opposition political parties passed off peacefully in Rajshahi yesterday.

Educational institutions remained closed and examinations could not be held at Rajshahi University and Bangladesh Institute of Technology (BIT).

Shops and business establishments remained closed during the hartal period. The government offices, however, functioned. Vehicular traffic also remained off the street.

A rally of the opposition parties was held at the Bhubanmohan Park in the afternoon. The speakers at the rally strongly condemned and protested attack on Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon, and demanded punishment of the culprits re-

ments, kutchha bazars remained closed. Classes in educational institutions were not held.

Vehicles were off the road. Attendance in offices were very thin.

BSS adds: A dawn-to dusk hartal was observed in Pabna today peacefully.

No untoward incident took place during the hartal period. Shops and business establishments remain closed. Vehicles were off the road.

In the afternoon, a public meeting was held with Rafiqul

Aricha ghat operated during the hartal hours. The dawn-to-dusk hartal was observed completely in the district.

According to our Correspondents, peaceful dawn-to-dusk hartal was also observed in Jessore, Madaripur, Chuadanga and Jhalakathi.

Our Gazipur Correspondent adds: Four persons were injured in cracker explosions in a procession in Gazipur town during hartal Thursday morning.

Three murdered in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Aug 20: Three persons, including a father and his son, were killed brutally and two others injured seriously by miscreants Tuesday night.

According to police, miscreants numbering about ten chopped to death Khokai Mondal (55) and his son Islam Uddin (28) of Kutubpur the same night.

In another incident the same night, miscreants numbering about eight and equipped with deadly weapons gheraoed a hotel at Sasta bazar under Mohespur thana and hacked, the hotel owner Rahmat Ali (55) to death. His wife, Aklima, and hotel worker Babul were critically injured during the attack.

Both the injured were rushed to Mohespur Hospital.

Enmity may be the reason behind the killing, police said.

Parties thank people for observing hartal

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of Bangladesh Awami League, Five-Party Alliance, Patriotic Democratic Front (PDF), Ganatantri Party and JSD (Siraj) have congratulated the people for making Thursday's day-long hartal a success.

The leaders at a joint meeting with Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina in the chair said that yesterday's hartal had reflected the people's no-confidence in the government.

The meeting, held at the Mintu Road residence of the leader of the opposition, said that by observing the country-wide hartal people 'expressed their resentment at the unabated terrorism fostered by the government'.

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