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Red alert across India: Rao calls for peace: Public assembly banned in Delhi, other towns

Hindu militants demolish Babri Mosque

AYODHYA, Dec 6: The government declared a "red security alert" across India and braced for Muslim backlash after waves of militant Hindus Sunday demolished a 16th-century mosque to make way for a grand temple, reports AP.

At least four Hindu radicals were killed and 100 others injured by falling debris of the Babri Masjid (Mosque), which was razed to the ground by frenzied mob of Hindus.

The government banned public assembly in two dozen towns with mixed Hindu-Muslim populations, including New Delhi where paramilitary soldiers took position at street intersections.

The "red security alert" is the maximum security caution under which security forces are empowered to shoot live ammunition.

The army was ordered to stand by in the states of West Bengal, Bihar and Kerala which have witnessed growing Muslim militancy in the past.

About six cities prone to disturbance were placed under curfew to prevent sectarian violence. India is home to 105

million Muslims. Hindus number 717 million.

Police fired bullets at a mob in the western town of Dhanod, Press Trust of India reported. Bombs exploded in Benaras. There was no injuries in either town.

Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao went on nationwide television to appeal for peace and harmony, admitting that the country faced "a grave crisis."

Rao accused Hindu fundamentalist of plots to grab power. This is an "open war against the Mechiavellian tactics... to grab power, whipping up communal frenzy to undermine the secular fabric of the nation," Rao said.

In Ayodhya, thousands of Hindu extremists wielding pickaxes and crowbars razed to the ground the mosque that they claimed stood on the birthplace of an important god, Rama.

The Hindus have plans to build a colossal temple on the site for Rama.

"Now the Muslims can get out of India," shouted the militants as the mosque came

crashing down. The end came less than five hours after thousands stormed the site, overrunning weakly guarded police barricades.

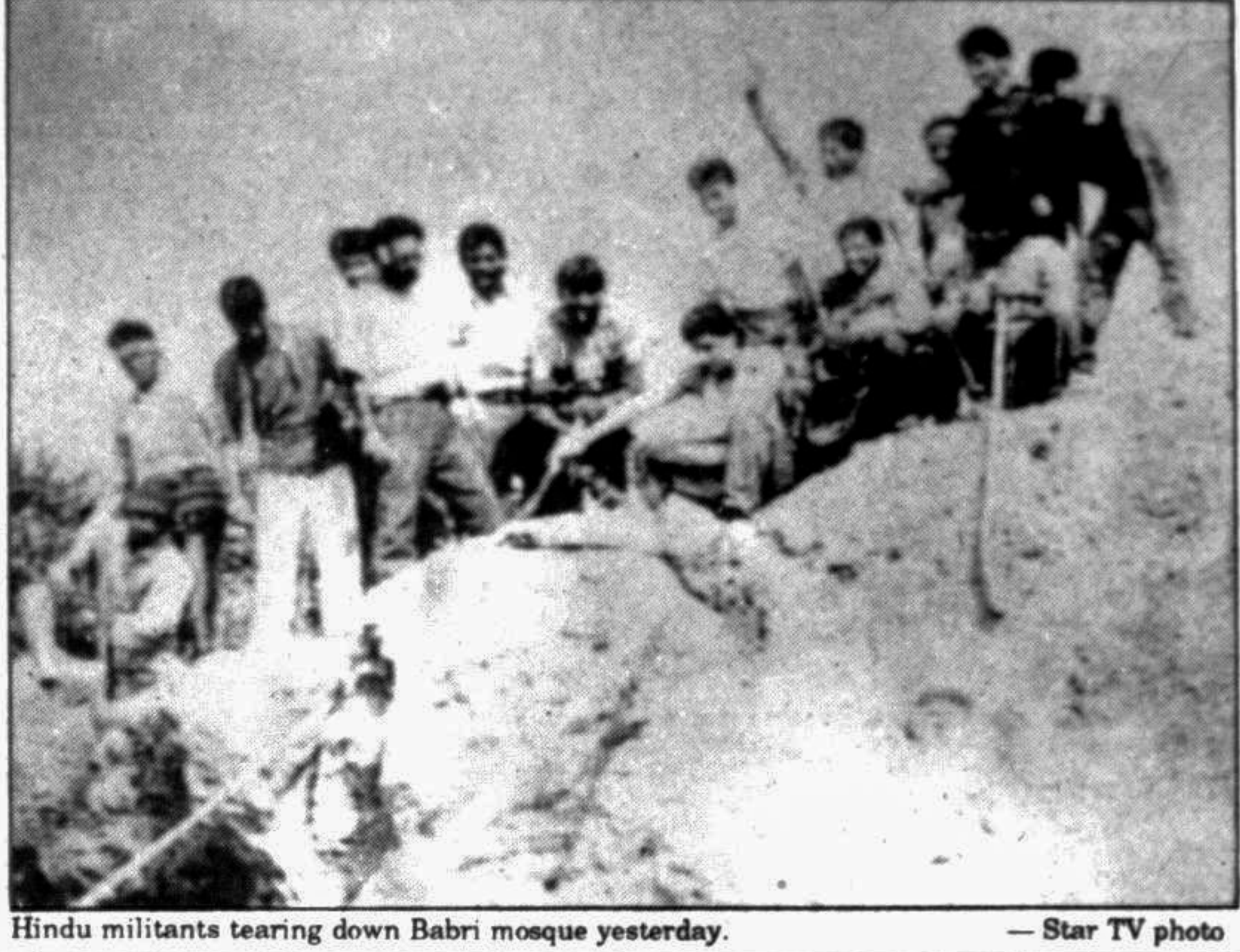
In New Delhi, 20 prominent Muslim leaders met federal President Shankar Dayal Sharma and expressed "deep anguish and pain."

About 1,000 people were killed in Hindu-Muslim riots that broke out in northern India in 1990 after Hindu extremists stormed the mosque.

In destroying the mosque, the Hindus defied a Supreme Court order and their own leaders' instructions. The incidents threatened to escalate into a political crisis for Rao.

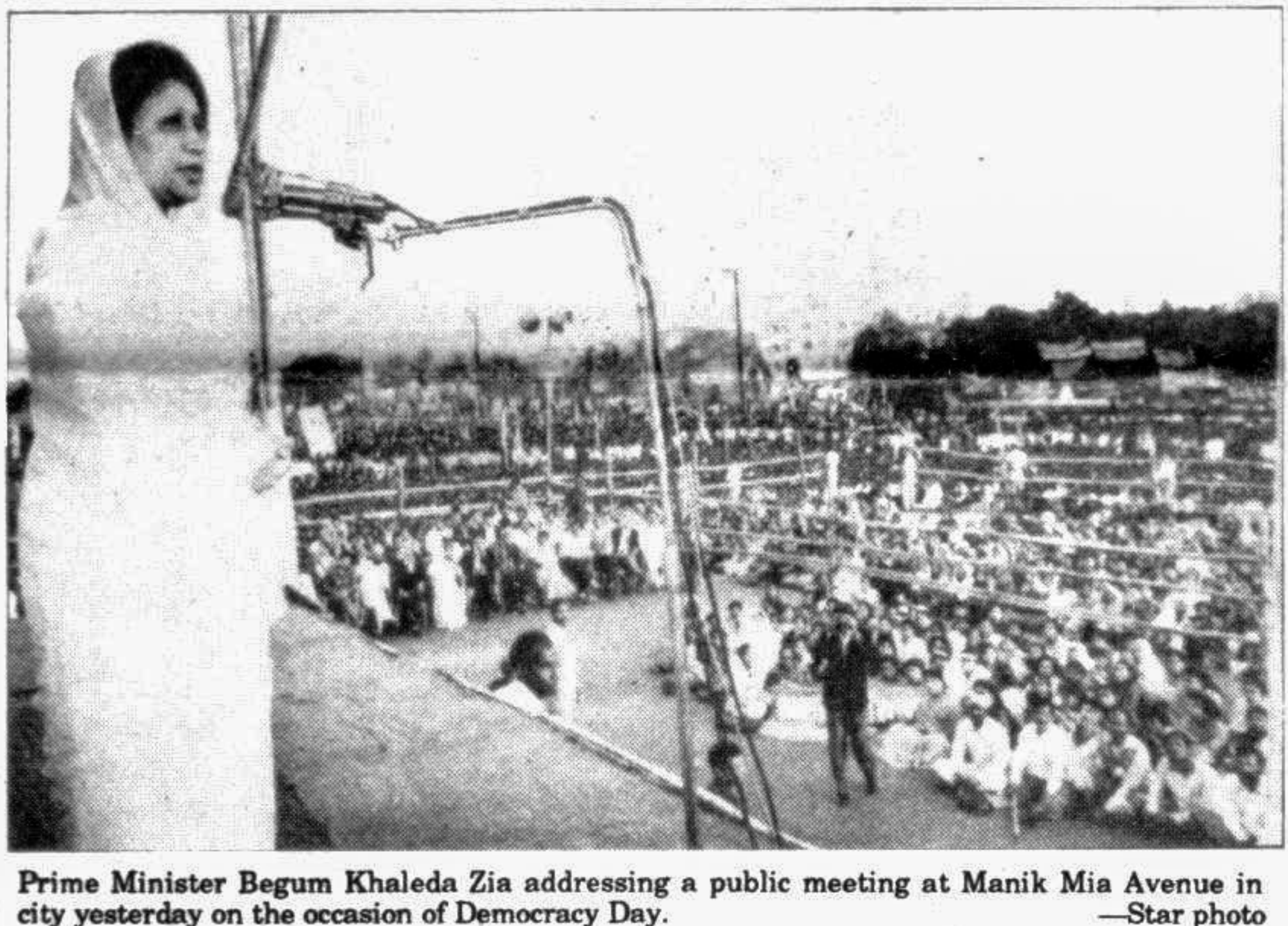
Rao has been under heavy pressure to mediate a settlement between the Hindu extremists and the Muslim committee responsible for the shrine.

In his address, Rao blamed his political opponents of the nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party that supported the temple project for fanning the communal flames. He dismissed the state government



Hindu militants tearing down Babri mosque yesterday. — Star TV photo

Abandon hartals, rebuild country: PM



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a public meeting at Manik Mia Avenue in city yesterday on the occasion of Democracy Day. —Star photo

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday blasted the Opposition for creating chaos and confusion, without any issue, in the country and cautioned those who called for a hartal this week saying that the people would give them a "befitting" reply.

"Resist those who want to import (foreign) programmes to destroy the nation, hinder the development process and strengthen the hands of autocracy," she told a massive public meeting to mark Democracy Day at the Manik Mia Avenue.

She referred to the nationwide dawn-to-dusk hartal called for December 8 and the human chain programme December 10 by the Ekatattva Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee. "There is no need for hartals today as there are no issues, we observed hartals when it was necessary but for whose benefit hartals are being called today," she retorted.

However, in a more conciliatory tone, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party chairperson appealed to all to help rebuild the nation.

"Instead of calling hartals, clear your mind and come forward to rebuild the nation destroyed during nine years of autocratic rule... programmes like hartal and human chain will only hinder the development process."

Organised by the city unit of BNP, the meeting was presided over by its president Lt. Gen (ret'd) Mir Shaukat Ali, MP, and conducted by Party Publicity Secretary and State for Communications Fazlur Rahman Patel.

The meeting was also addressed, among others, by party Vice-Chairman and Deputy Leader of Parliament AQM Badruddoza Choudhury, Standing Committee member and Minister for Irrigation, Flood Control and Agriculture M Majid-ul Haq, Secretary General and LGRD Minister Abdus Salam Talukder, Joint Secretary and Minister for

BNP has lost confidence in people, says Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday said that this government had no right to stay in power as what she said, it had lost confidence in the people.

In its past two-year-rule, Hasina alleged that the BNP government had ruined the country's economy and deceived the people.

Hasina, also the Awami League chief, was addressing a big public meeting at Shapla Square in the capital in the afternoon. The meeting was organised by Sonali Bank Employees' Union to celebrate its 20th founding anniversary.

Addressing the meeting as chief guest, Hasina said people overthrew the autocratic regime two years ago to help restore democracy, peace and stability in the country. But, she alleged, people were now sick and tired because of the ruling party's inability to run the government.

"They (the BNP men) have assumed power only to share it among themselves and thus change their own lots," the Opposition leader said, "They have forgotten the people and breached commitments made earlier to the nation."

There was no peace in public life and problems still remained unresolved due to 'faulty policies' being followed by the government, Hasina viewed.

Regarding terrorism, she alleged, the government itself was patronising terrorists in the party itself and harassing its political opponents in the name of containing violence.

"We cannot allow the hard-won democracy to be destroyed due to government in-

Prepare for 'real' change: 5-Party

By Staff Correspondent

The Five-Party Alliance Sunday urged the people to prepare for a movement for a "real" change as the aims of the anti-autocracy movement had not yet been achieved.

"We want structural change so that the power will come down to the people from the clutch of the capitalist group," Khalekuzzaman Bhuiyan, Convenor of the Alliance told a discussion meeting at Taher auditorium on the second anniversary of the fall of autocracy.

Five-Party leaders Hasanul Haq Inu, AFM Mahbubul Haq, Foyez Ahmed, Nirmal Sen, Tipu Biswas and Advocate Shamsul Haq Chowdhury spoke at the discussion.

They reiterated their support to the Nirmul Body programmes December 8 & 10 and urged the people to make it a success.

Bhuiyan said that the 1990-movement failed as the people changed only the leaders and

Bid to avert Nirmul hartal fails so far

By Nazmul Ashraf

Despite attempts, including one by the Home Minister Abdul Majid Choudhury yesterday, the government has failed so far to persuade the Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Samanaya Committee to abandon tomorrow's hartal without committing to fulfillment of its demands.

According to sources, Committee Convenor Jahanara Imam in her telephonic conversation with the Home Minister yesterday morning rejected his offer to sit for a dialogue saying that such talks would yield no result.

Imam who called the Minister over telephone in response to the Minister's request made the day before also demanded arrangement for a Committee sitting with the Prime Minister to which the Minister expressed his inability to comply.

Imam also informed the Minister that she had no objection to sitting for dialogue adding that the discussion must be on fulfillment of the Committee's demands including the formation of a Special Tribunal to try Jamaat leader Golan Azam as provided by a government-Opposition accord in Parliament.

Committee sources yesterday confirmed that the Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman had talked to the Chief Coordinator of the Nirmul Committee Col (ret'd) Nuruzzaman Saturday and that the former Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University Prof Maniruzzaman Miah met Jahanara Imam Friday.

Mia had conveyed to Jahanara Imam a government proposal for talks while the FM requested Nuruzzaman to call off the hartal, they added.

The FM earlier made a similar request to another



India march on

Sports Reporter

India recorded their second victory in the SAARC cricket tournament beating Sri Lanka by 67 runs at the Dhaka stadium yesterday.

Batting first India piled up 216 for three wickets in 45 overs with Surendra Bhawe top scoring with 81. Vinod Kamble with 62 and Navjot Singh Sidhu with 36 were the other notable scorers.

Sri Lanka got off to a bright start but succumbed later to the accurate Indian spin attack. Duminda Perera scored a defiant 53 as Sri Lanka were bowled out for 149 in 43.1 overs.

Ajay Sharma, the Indian left-arm spinner, destroyed the Sri Lankan batting with figures of five for 30.

Vinod Kamble was adjudged man-of-the-match for his timely knock of 62.

Hosts Bangladesh play India today at the Dhaka Stadium. The match starts at 9.30 am.

Detailed report and photographs on Page 10.

Govt shocked at damage of Babri Mosque

The government last night expressed its deep concern and shock at the damage of Babri Mosque in India, reports BSS.

When asked to comment on the news regarding damage inflicted on the centuries-old Babri Mosque in northern India a government spokesman said, "We are shocked and deeply concerned that such an incident took place in a democratic and secular country like India."

The government also appealed to the people of Bangladesh for moderation and to exercise restraint in reacting to the incident in the spirit of tolerance laid in Islam, the spokesman added.

PM urges people to show restraint

The Prime Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia, last night expressed concern at the damage of historic Babri Mosque in India and called upon the people of Bangladesh to show utmost restraint in the spirit of Islam, reports BSS.

Proposal for SAARC Met centre in Dhaka

By Staff Correspondent

A Dhaka-based regional institution for meteorological research is set to be established under the framework of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

A "definite" proposal to this effect was made at yesterday's SAARC Programming Committee meeting. The recommendation is only awaiting approval of the Council of Ministers of which Foreign Ministers are members.

Briefing newsmen, QAMA

Rahim, who as the leader of the Bangladesh delegation to the meeting took over as the chairman of the Committee, said that the delegates also discussed the setting up of a SAARC documentation centre, and the formation of a regional fund, approved the 1993 budget for the Kathmandu-based Secretariat, finalised a calendar of activities under the Integrated Programme of Action (IPA) and reviewed the activities of the existing institutions.

The Programme Committee did not discuss issues like the proposed South Asian Preferential Trade Arrangements (SAPTA), poverty alleviation issues or other substantive matters. Rahim explained, "It (the Committee) has a very limited agenda."

The Programming Committee sends its report to the Standing Committee formed by the Foreign Secretaries, to be

Run country in accordance with joint declaration, urges PDF

By Staff Correspondent

Patriotic Democratic Front (PDF) leaders Sunday called upon the BNP government to run the country in accordance with the Joint Declaration of the three political alliances.

Speaking at a discussion at the Purana Paltan NAP office in the capital, the leaders also demanded that the ruling party implement its pre-polls pledges and materialise the dreams of the commonmen.

PDF organised the discussion as part of its observance of

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মহাপরিচালক
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