

Mosque demolition a 'grave situation', says Indian SC

NEW DELHI, Dec 6: Terming the demolition of the Babri Masjid-Ram Janambhoomi structure at Ayodhya by Kar Sevaks as a "grave and grim situation", the Supreme Court said tonight that "it is a great pity that a constitutionally elected government could not discharge its sensitive duties in a matter of this magnitude", reports PTL.

"This is the first time that an assurance by the state government that it will protect the structure and carry out the court orders has been violated" a Division Bench, comprising Justice M N Venkatachalliah and Justice G N Ray, observed during an emergency hearing on an application seeking the appointment of the centre as a receiver of the disputed properties.

The judges said the damage that had been done to the disputed structure could not be undone by any amount of restitution and the demolition had induced a few phase in the constitutional development of the country.

Expressing great concern over the repercussions of the demolition, the judges said "the whole thing is innocent lives were being put to danger all over the country."

Senior Counsel for the state government, KK Venugopal, who appeared before the judges "in this mo-

ment of great tragedy" agreed with the judges that the repercussions were mind-boggling for the future of the country. "Your lordships, I believe I owe duty to this court. I hang my head in shame for what has happened."

The court, which was moved to consider the appointment of a receiver, said in a brief order that no further orders were required to be made on this plea in view of the submission of the Attorney General, Milon Banerjee, that the President of India had promulgated Article 356 following the resignation of the chief minister and his council of ministers. The hearing started with the observation by Justice Venkatachalliah that the court was meeting under the shadow of a "grim constitutional situation."

The judge told Venugopal "Your (state) assurances were not carried out. It was a design (demolition) not accident."

At this stage Venugopal said according to a BBC report the police had turned their backs and marched away. The BBC, however, did not flash any pictures of the demolition but its correspondent had reported that the structure had been overruled.

"Apparently the police did not get any orders to use force and the domes were demolished," he said.



Sheikh Hasina addressing a public meeting organised by the Sonali Bank Employees' Union at Sapla Square in city yesterday. — Star photo

Hasina

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tributions of the professional groups and the trade union bodies in the anti-autocracy movement, the Opposition leader blamed the government for not fulfilling their demands despite specific commitments in this regard.

Hasina criticised the government bitterly for not paying bonus to the bank employees and accused it of misappropriating foreign aid.

She reiterated her allegation of the government's politicising the administration and indulging in corruption and nepotism.

The AL chief demanded a proper labour policy, fulfilment of the 11-point charter of demands of the bank employees union and condemned government "dillydally" in materialising its agreement with the Bramik Karmachari Otkya Parishad (SKOP).

Hasina assured the bank employees of her party's all-out cooperation in realising their demands.

Maintain communal harmony at any cost: Hasina

Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed her profound shock at the destruction of the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya in India, reports UNB.

"I express my deepest concern at the situation arising out of dispute over the Mosque," she said in a statement last night.

Hasina said the communal forces had raised their ugly heads again in this subcontinent to disturb peace by interfering with the religious freedom of the people and human rights.

Each person should have the guarantee to perform religious rights, she said, added any interference with this freedom of religion could not be accepted.

The opposition leader appealed to all for maintaining an atmosphere of fraternity and cordiality at any cost against possible deterioration in relations between different religious groups, including Muslims and Hindus.

"I appeal to all concerned to remain alert so that peace is not jeopardised by any means", Hasina said.

Pabna tense

PABNA, Dec 6: Several hundred people took to the streets in Pabna town tonight to protest the demolition of the Babri Mosque.

Witnesses said the processionists chanted anti-Indian slogans and ransacked several shops.

Tension was prevailing in the town.

Five-party

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not the autocratic structure. He urged the people to get ready for a structural change.

He said that because of constitutional compulsions Ershad escaped punishment for his misdeed in nine years and was allowed to hand over power smoothly.

The Five Party alliance leader who chaired the meeting said that keeping the Fifth and Eighth amendments intact, democracy could never be established in the country.

Shamsul Huq Chowdhury said that aides of the autocratic ruler had just changed their colours and become the right hands of the present government.

Nirmal Sen said that this government had promised that autonomy to radio and television would be ensured but that the people now knew the reality.

It remained the propaganda machine of the government that used it as its personal property. Press freedom was being controlled by centralised advertisement distribution, he alleged.

Hasanul Huq Inu said that the BNP government had joined hands with the anti-independence fundamentalist forces betraying the people and spirit of the Liberation War.

He said that the people would one day rightly respond to this betrayal.

Inu also said that the simplest promise this government could fulfil was the repealing of black laws. But this government presented another black law to the people in the name of Anti-terrorism Act.

PM urges people

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The Prime Minister also called upon the people of Bangladesh to maintain peace and social harmony at any cost following the teachings of Islam, the religion of peace.

She said that the people of Bangladesh firmly believed in harmony between the communities and peace which they would maintain at all cost.

She said that Islam being the religion of peace, taught all to exercise restraint and to be tolerant to others' faith and belief.

Dal-bhat approach to help alleviate poverty, says Bhutanese FM

Bhutanese Foreign Minister Dawa Tsering yesterday expressed his firm confidence that the forthcoming seventh SAARC summit would be a great success under the new chairperson, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, reports BSS.

Tsering, who arrived here yesterday morning to attend the SAARC Foreign Ministers' conference before the summit, told newsmen at the airport that he hoped many important decisions would be taken at the summit to strengthen co-operation among the member countries towards poverty alleviation.

He appreciated the "Dal-bhat" programme, enunciated by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and said it would help alleviate poverty in the region.

Exercise tolerance, urges Bukhari

NEW DELHI, Dec 6: The Imam of Jama Masjid, Syed Abdullah Bukhari, today appealed to the Muslims to exercise patience and tolerance in the wake of reported damage to the Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid at Ayodhya, reports PTL.

Based on the recommendations of the technical committees in the 13 agreed areas of cooperation under the IPA, the

SAARC met centre

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formally adopted. The Standing Committee that deals with most substantive issues begins its three-day meeting today.

Foreign Secretaries have all arrived in the city to attend the meeting.

Rahim said, "A definite recommendation has been made that the Meteorological Research Centre should be established in Dhaka." A panel of experts last month at a meeting in Dhaka finalised the proposals on the institution styled "SAARC Meteorological Research Centre."

He said that the proposed Centre would coordinate among the national met institutions and was basically aimed at "exchanging climatological information and data."

On the other proposed institution, Rahim said, the Programming Committee decided that an expert group would meet early next year in New Delhi "to finalise the details of the SAARC Documentation Centre to be set up in India."

The Committee, composed of senior officials, recommended that "an expert group meet in Pakistan to finalise the terms of reference, sources and modalities for a SAARC regional fund."

Based on the recommendations of the technical committees in the 13 agreed areas of cooperation under the IPA, the

Delegates also made a list of 'about 60 different short-term activities such as seminars, training programmes and workshops' to be hosted by the member countries throughout the year 1993.

The Programming Committee also approved the budget for the functioning of the SAARC Secretariat. "It will be roughly 7,35,000 US dollars... less than this year's."

For the year 1992, the estimated budget is 7,82,405 US dollars. The SAARC year of accounting is the calendar year.

India contributes the highest with 33 per cent of the budget, followed by Pakistan's 24 per cent, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal give 11 per cent each. Bhutan and the Maldives provide five per cent each.

This budget does not cover the expenses of the other SAARC activities like meetings, seminars, workshops which are borne by the host countries.

The Committee approved the programmes under the SAARC Audio Visual Exchange (SAVE) upto next September. A SAVE meeting in Nepal sometime in May or June will deal with the programmes of the rest of the year.

Under SAARC, there are two other regional institutions — the Dhaka-based SAARC Agricultural Information Centre (SAIC) and the Kathmandu-based SAARC Tuberculosis Centre.



Jamaat Secretary General Matiur Rahman Nizami addressing a rally in city yesterday in observance of Democracy Day. — Star photo

'Discard mentality of eliminating opponents'

By Staff Correspondent

The Secretary General of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Maulana Matiur Rahman Nizami Sunday said politics should always be confronted with politics to make democracy sustain.

"The mentality of 'eliminating' opponents should be discarded for the sake of democracy," Nizami said urging all to behave democratically.

Maulana Nizami was speaking as the special guest at a rally of Jamaat on the occasion of Democracy Day at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram mosque.

"If we act democratically and establish the law of Allah, all the problems like hunger, poverty and social crimes can be removed from the society", Nizami said.

He stressed the need for taking immediate steps for socio-economic development and said a national consensus was needed to remove all kinds of moral decay, corruption and obstacles in the way of development. The rally presided over by ATM Azharul Islam, city unit president of Jamaat was also addressed, among others, by Maulana Abul Kalam Md Yusuf, Shamsur Rahman, Nayeib-e-Amir of Jamaat, and other Jamaat leaders Saiful Alam Khan Milon and Ali Ahsan Md Mojahid.

Nizami accused the television authorities of not inviting any of his party leaders to the programmes on mass upsurge and said that only the leaders of the three alliances were in-

Does a mother cry 21 years after her son's death?

By Staff Correspondent

Can a mother shed tears for her son's death? Can a mother still be aggrieved 21 years after her son was tortured to death?

According to Jamaat-e-Islami's Maulana Abul Kalam Yusuf, this is all utter nonsense.

During yesterday's rally at the north gate of the Baitul Mukarram Mosque, Maulana Yusuf ridiculed Jahanara Imam saying that she was not really shedding tears for her son.

"It is said that her son died in 1971. But does a mother cry 21 years after her son's death? She is being persuaded to pretend to cry. She just wants to create anarchy in this country," the Maulana said while addressing the rally.

Jahanara Imam's son, Rumi, a freedom-fighter, was captured by the Pakistani Army on August 13, 1971 in Dhaka. His body was never found.

JP Presidium meets today

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Party Presidium meets today (Monday) afternoon to discuss some major issues including the possible change in secretaryship and new committee for Jatiya Mahila Party.

Babri mosque

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of Uttar Pradesh, which is led by the BJP, and put the state under federal rule.

In Ayodhya, pilgrims set up roadblocks using concrete slabs, old furniture and wooden logs to prevent 30 busloads of federal riot police from coming in.

Outnumbered policemen at the site retreated to a nearby police station and watched as the Hindus, dressed in the orange colors of the fundamentalists, completed their task unhindered.

When they were finished, a huge pile of stone, mortar and bricks was all that was left of the mosque that had stood for 430 years. The Hindus used 30-foot-long (9-meter-long) wooden poles to push the rubble down the hill.

Outer walls surrounding the building were flattened along with steel barricades and barbed wire.

More than 300,000 Hindus had gathered in Ayodhya, which normally has 41,000 residents, to destroy the mosque, which is no longer used for prayers.

On Sunday, the crowd used grappling hooks to climb up to the mosque's roof, indicating that the action was planned in advance.

Just before the hour decreed by astrologers as auspicious for the work to begin, dozens of people climbed onto a platform near the mosque to dance and chant slogans.

Stones began to fly in the direction of the police. Then a cheer went up from the opposite side of the mosque, and hundreds of people poured into the building.

Ayodhya, an important destination for pilgrims has about

9,000 Hindu temples and 250 mosques.

PTI adds: The Congress (I) yesterday condemned the storming of the disputed Mosque at Ayodhya by Kar Sevaks as "an act of treachery."

The party spokesman, Mr VN Gadgil, said the Uttar Pradesh government had "very inefficiently" handled the situation.

The West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu, today urged the Prime Minister, PV Narasimha Rao, to immediately dismiss the Uttar Pradesh government and take stern measures to control the situation arising out of the storming of the disputed Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid Complex at Ayodhya by Kar Sevaks yesterday afternoon.

The former Prime Minister and Janata Dal leader, Mr VP Singh, yesterday said the storming of the disputed Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid Complex by Kar Sevaks at Ayodhya should be condemned in strongest possible words.

Bandh in WB today

Meanwhile, the ruling left front in West Bengal Sunday night called a 24-hour bandh in the state tomorrow in protest against the communal activities of the BJP-VHP combine and "total failure" of the centre to promote secularism, unity and communal harmony.

The left front in a statement here said that the attack on the Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid was an unprecedented act and a slur on secularism.

The Congress-I government at the centre "had totally surrendered to the communal BJP-VHP combine", the statement added.

BJP govt in UP dismissed, assembly dissolved

NEW DELHI, Dec 6: The 18-month old BJP government in Uttar Pradesh was dismissed tonight and the state assembly dissolved, reports PTL.

The decision to dismiss the state government was taken at an emergency meeting of the union cabinet which met soon after the storming of the Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid complex in Ayodhya.

The President, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma, issued the proclamation dismissing the Kalyan Singh Government under Article 356 of the constitution.

The UP government was held responsible for its failure to maintain law and order in Ayodhya.

Earlier, the President strongly deplored the "vandalism" that caused damage to "the masjid in Ayodhya" and directed the Prime Minister Narasimha Rao to initiate appropriate and expeditious steps to uphold the rule of law, the maintenance of public order and protection of all law abiding citizens.

Protest in city over Babri Mosque demolition

By Staff Correspondent

Sporadic processions were brought out in the capital Sunday evening protesting the attack on the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya, India.

Security was stepped up at different places in Dhaka including Sutrapur, Shankharibazar, near the Dhakeshwari temple at Bakshi Bazar area and near the Indian High Commission at Dhanmondi. Police also swung into action at some places to disperse the crowd.

However, no major untoward incident was reported.

SAPTA to safeguard interests of smaller nations, says SAARC Secy Gen

SAARC Secretary General Ibrahim H Zaki yesterday said smaller nations of the region should not be worried about the South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA), reports BSS.

Talking to newsmen on his arrival at the Zia International Airport, Zaki said "the clauses are so articulated in the agreement (SAPTA) that there should not be any fear among the smaller countries."

The Midnight File

25 killed in Afghan fighting

KABUL, Dec 6: At least 25 people were killed and more than 200 wounded as fighting between two Mujahideen guerrilla groups in Afghanistan's interim government spread to central Kabul today witnesses and doctors said. Heavy artillery and rocket fire between the Shooraa-i-Nazar group of Defence Minister Ahmad Shah Masood and the Shiite Muslim Hezb-i-Wahdat rocked Kabul's Jami Matwand area on Saturday the artillery and small arms duels were concentrated west of the capital, reports Reuter.

Panic's candidacy rejected for second time

BELGRADE, Dec 6: The Serbian electoral commission today rejected for the second time the candidacy of moderate Yugoslav premier Milan Panic in elections for Serbian President. The commission sat to reconsider its ban after the Serbian Supreme Court on Saturday overturned it and referred the case back for another decision, reports Reuter.

Abandon hartal: PM

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raising the demand for establishing the spirit of independence, had in fact buried the same by instituting one-party rule and curbing the freedom of the press.

"The spirit of independence has been established by the BNP through restoration of multi-party democracy, freedom of the press and independence of the judiciary," she said.

The Prime Minister noted that, for the first time, the government would be distributing gallantry awards to the Freedom Fighters ceremoniously in recognition of their contributions in the war of liberation.

Saying that the government had shown respect to Nur Hossain, killed during the anti-autocracy movement, through the release of a special postage stamp.

But, Begum Zia pointed out that a particular political party, talking of showing respect to Shahid Dr. Milton, was on the other hand sheltering his killers.

She said that the same party had brought a no-confidence motion against the BNP government in Parliament by joining hands with the defeated autocratic forces and even boycotted Parliament with them.

She alleged that those who amassed wealth during the autocratic rule were not to create anarchy and indiscipline to hinder the development work of the government.

The Prime Minister called upon the Opposition to discard the path of violence and confrontation and instead pursue constructive political programmes.

Noting that democracy had been established through nine years of relentless struggle and sacrifices of many, Begum Zia called for united efforts to remove poverty, consolidate democracy and ensure the basic needs and fundamental rights of the people.

"After establishment of democracy, poverty is the biggest problem before us... if we all work together we will be able to build a poverty-free Bangladesh."

Begum Zia warned the Awami League, without naming it, that the people would reject it for ever if it continued collaborating with the autocratic forces to destroy democracy.

Referring to the Anti-terrorism Act Begum Zia claimed that only those harbouring terrorists were critical of the law and calling it a "black law."

"Peoples' verdict mattered most in a democratic setup and people demand safety, security and peace in the society, she said and warned that no one involved in anarchy, terrorism, extortion and other similar crimes would be spared.

However, the Prime Minister assured that no innocent person would become its victim.

Pointing out that after pas-

PDF

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the autocracy ouster day. Presided over by Alhaj Abdus Samad, the discussion was addressed by PDF leaders Pankaj Bhattacharya, Nurul Islam Nahid, Dilip Barua and Hafez Mohammad Danial, Convenor of the Supreme Court Bar Association Coordination Council Advocate Shamsul Huq Chowdhury and Sammitul Sangskrtik Jote leader Faiz Ahmed.

Speaking at the discussion, CPB General Secretary Nurul Islam Nahid said "the aspirations of the people in establishing an exploitation-free society is fading away and they are becoming frustrated."

The CPB leader demanded that the government implement the accord reached with the Opposition in Parliament on the withdrawal of cases against the 24 sponsors of Golan Azam's public trial.

Pankaj Bhattacharya accused the present government of failing to eliminate terrorism and mismanagement in the economic sector.

He held the ruling party responsible for intervening in the judiciary.

Meanwhile, committee chief Jahanara Imam in a press statement last night reaffirmed that the hartal and the human chain programmes would be held on schedule.

She also called upon the people to make the programmes successful and not to be confused and misled by any propaganda.

Nirmul Body

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minister who had also termed his talks with Committee leaders 'friendly discussion'.