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Babri Mosque demolition sparks off violence-marred protests

Hundreds injured, temples damaged across country

Several hundred people were injured across the country yesterday as angry demonstrators, protesting the demolition of the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya in India, clashed with police.

Thousands of agitated protesters in the capital and other places took to the streets throughout the day. Demonstrators attacked temples, businesses and offices.

A number of peace processions were also brought out including an all-party peace march in the city.

Angry mobs burned a number of temples and offices around the country including the Indian High Commission Library, the Indian Airlines office and the Communist Party of Bangladesh central office in Dhaka.

At least 500 persons were injured, including about 50 policemen, as the protestors sporadically clashed with police. At least 200 people were injured in the city while another 100 were injured in the Port City.

Star Report

In Dhaka city, one temple was burned and three others heavily damaged when mobs attacked them.

Radharaniashram at Shyam-pur near Patullah was burned by a crowd at about 7 pm Sunday. The attackers destroyed images of the deity. Several houses in the neighbourhood were also torched.

The Jotkali temple, Nawabganj Rishi Para temple and another temple at Sutrapur also came under attack and were damaged.

Law enforcement agencies used gunshots, rubber bullets and tear gas shells at random to disperse the demonstrators and bring the situations under control. Section 144 was imposed in a number of towns.

A tense situation was prevailing in the city and other places while law enforcement agencies were being kept on high alert and posted at various strategic locations.

Reports of disturbances were also received from Chittagong, Comilla, Narayanganj, Manikganj, Mymensingh, Rajbari, Jamalpur, Khulna, Faridpur, Pabna, Netrakona and other places.

More than 200 were hurt in clashes between stone-throwing people and police in different places of the capital where sporadic processions were brought out protesting the failure of the Indian government to protect the

Cabinet condemns

A special cabinet meeting was held yesterday with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair to consider the situation arising from the destruction of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya in India, reports UNB.

The cabinet unequivocally and in the strongest terms expressed its condemnation of the demolition of the more than 400-year-old Mosque and those responsible for the incident.

The cabinet also expressed its sympathy for the Hindu community, has sown the seeds of distrust and divisiveness," the conservative Times of India said in a front-page editorial.

In Parliament, opposition legislators criticized Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao for failing to prevent the storming, which was announced a month ago by the Hindu groups.

Despite calls for his resignation, Rao's position as head of state and leader of the Congress Party did not appear to be threatened immediately.

In Ayodhya, thousands of Hindus started the construction of a temple on the site of the fallen mosque. By nightfall, they had built a 1,225-



Fire Service men rescuing Indian Airlines women from the airlines office in the downtown Dhaka (left) moments before the office was set ablaze (right) by mobs protesting Babri Mosque demolition yesterday. — Star photo

Communal groups banned: Hindu militants build brick platform on fallen mosque

200-plus killed in Indian riots over Babri mosque

Bharat bandh today

NEW DELHI, Dec 7: The government announced a ban Monday on fundamentalist groups after more than 200 Muslims and Hindus were killed in religious riots.

The nationwide tumult started after Hindu zealots destroyed a Muslim mosque in the northern town of Ayodhya on Sunday.

The worst carnage was in the country's business capital of Bombay, where 40 people were killed Monday. Army troops took over security in several neighbourhoods. More than 160 others were killed in at least two dozens towns spanning almost every state, news agencies reported.

Chief government spokesman S Narendra said the

government was preparing a list of organizations that will be outlawed, including Muslim fundamentalist groups. Details will be released later, he said.

The unprecedented ban would cover the World Hindu Council, which led the attack on the 430-year-old Babri Mosque.

When enforced, the ban will empower the government to seize bank accounts. The groups will not be allowed to operate offices or hold public meetings.

Narendra said authorities will take steps to rebuild the mosque and take "the strongest action possible under the law" against those who instigated and carried out the assault.

About 300,000 pilgrims had assembled in Ayodhya before the mosque was sacked.

The BJP used the temple issue to leapfrog in two elections from 2 seats to 119 in the 545-member Parliament, becoming the largest opposition party.

Sunday's attack and the ensuing riots would appear to have severely discredited the party.

On Monday, BJP leader L K Advani resigned as leader of opposition in Parliament, accepting moral responsibility for the destruction of the mosque.

The BJP... will have to pay a heavy price for its abysmal conduct. Its brand of nationalism, far from uniting the

CBI warned Rao 5 days in advance!

Star Exclusive

From Kuldip Nayar

NEW DELHI, Dec 7: Prime Minister Narasimha Rao is being blamed for failing to act in time to protect the Babri Mosque.

Rao is said to have been warned by the Central Bureau of Intelligence five days in advance that the militants may demolish the 16-century mosque.

Still, he did not take any

City rally calls for peace

By Staff Correspondent

Thousands of people took part in a peace procession led by Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Mirza Abbas MP yesterday evening to mobilize public support in favour of communal harmony.

The procession, brought out from the Press Club premises at 4 pm marched through Gulistan, Nababpur Road and ended in the Victoria Park premises. The Mayor, earlier at a rally, denounced the fundamentalists of India for ravaging the Babri mosque but said "that does not justify any fundamentalist in our country carrying out any subversive activities to destroy the traditional communal harmony."

Urging to keep peace in the

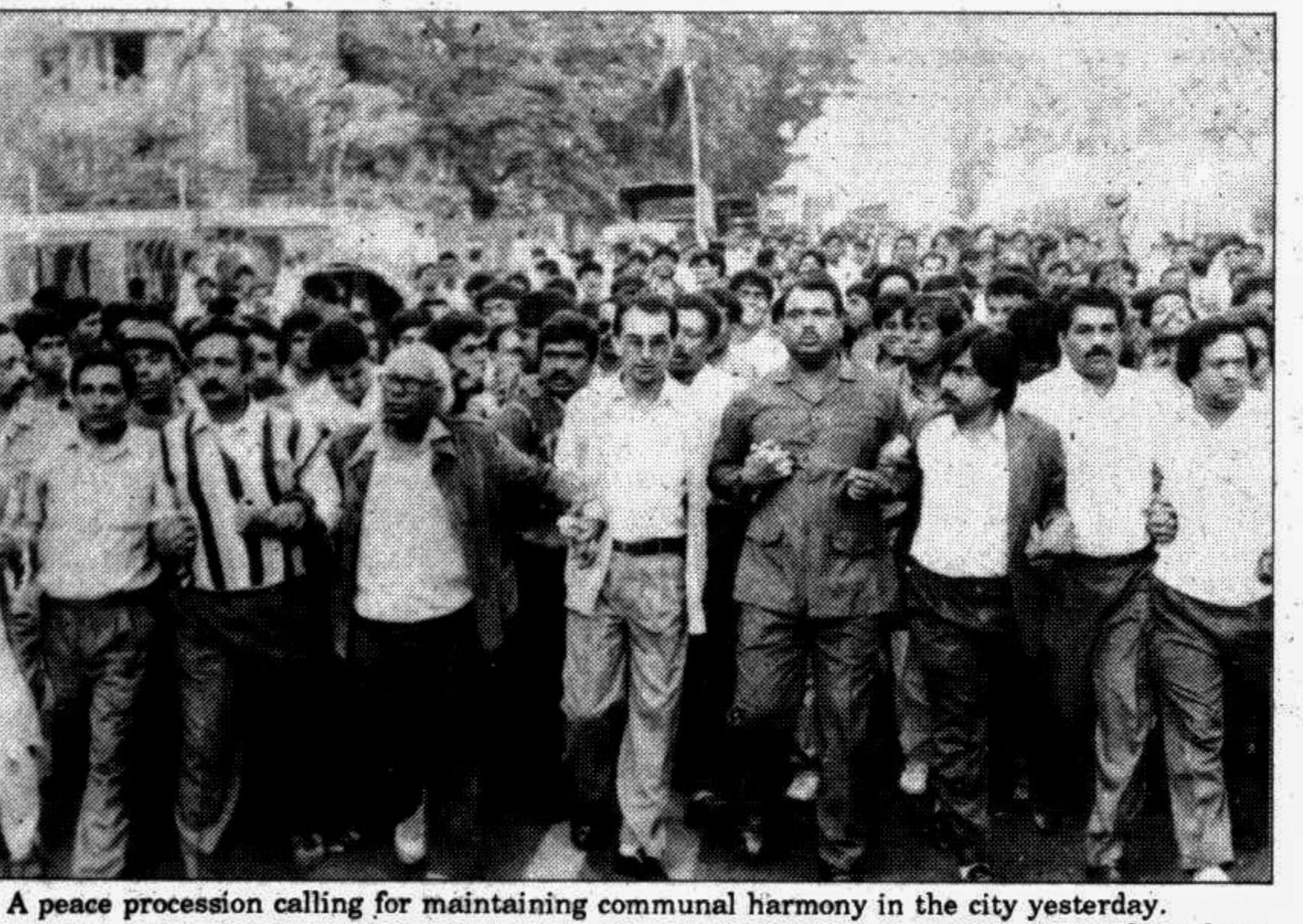
Uncertainty reigns over SAARC summit

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

With four days to go, shadows of uncertainty loom large over the Seventh SAARC Summit scheduled for December 12-13, with top SAARC diplomats now in Dhaka reluctant to rule out the possibility of a last-minute postponement, owing to the developments in India.

Cynics say Prime Minister Narasimha Rao may prefer staying back home to attending the two-day regional event in Dhaka, to set his own house in order. And such a decision, possibilities of which are getting stronger, will force the hosts Bangladesh to put off the summit to honour the seven-nation forum's Charter.

"The SAARC Charter does not permit the summit to take place with any of the heads of state and government not at-



A peace procession calling for maintaining communal harmony in the city yesterday. — Star photo

It's a shame, scream Indian newspapers

NEW DELHI, Dec 7: Indian newspapers condemned today the destruction of a 16th century Mosque by fanatical Hindus and urged that it be rebuilt as a gesture of national unity and reconciliation, reports Reuters.

Hindu militants plunged India into what Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao called a grave crisis on Sunday by tearing down the Mosque in the northern temple town of Ayodhya which they believe stands on the birthplace of their god-king Lord Rama.

"The nation must hang its

head in shame over what has happened at Ayodhya, the Hindustan Times said in a front-page editorial. The damage has been done not to the Mosque — whatever it was built on — but to what India stands for.

The Statesman in a front page editorial invoked India's independence leader and apostle of non-violence, Mahatma Gandhi, in urging that the Mosque be rebuilt.

"If the father of the nation were alive today he would ask that the Mosque be rebuilt preferably by the Hindus who destroyed it, The Statesman said.

The Hindu newspaper, in another front-page editorial, said the shrine "was razed to the ground with a barbaric savagery reminiscent of the crude traditions of settling scores in medieval history."

The destruction was "a defining moment in India's history, a moment at which the country can be plunged into dark abyss of primitive emotions threatening to erase four decades... of a progressive secular democracy."

It said the Babri Mosque, built by the Moghul Emperor Babar in 1528, should be rebuilt as a gesture towards the minority community.

India's population of 850 million is overwhelmingly Hindu, but includes 100 million Muslims.

The Indian Express in an editorial entitled "a nation betrayed" said advocates of Hindu nationalism "do not realise that their victory is India's loss in this fratricidal game."

It called for a new round of Kar Seva (voluntary religious work) to construct a monu-

Jamaat calls hartal today

By Staff Correspondent

Jamaat-e-Islami has called for a countrywide dawn to dusk hartal Tuesday protesting the demolition of the Babri Mosque.

Addressing a rally at the North Gate of Baitul Mukarram Mosque, Jamaat Secretary General, Moulana Matur Rahman Nizami also urged the people to maintain peace and communal harmony.

NEWS BRIEFS

SAARC Secy Gen calls on PM

SAARC Secretary General Ibrahim Zaki now in the city called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her Secretariat office here yesterday. During the meeting Begum Zia stressed the need for eradication of poverty from the SAARC member countries. SAARC Secretary General praised the arrangement made for holding of the Seventh SAARC Summit and appreciated the agenda of the summit, reports BSS.

Total lunar eclipse Dec 10

A total lunar eclipse will take place on December 10 (Thursday), an ISPR press release said. The moon will enter penumbra at 2-55.4 am and will leave penumbra at 8-32.7 am on the day. The moon will enter umbra at 3-39.4 am and will leave umbra at 7-28.8 am. However, the total eclipse will begin at 5-06.8 am and will end at 6-21.5 am. The magnitude of the eclipse will be 1.276, reports BSS.

55 more held on various charges

Police rounded up 55 people from different parts of the city in last 24 hours on various charges, a DMP press release said. Of the arrested, two were wanted criminals, nine accused in arms cases, two on charge of terrorism, one in kidnapping case and five for stealing, reports UNB.

JCD sweeps college union polls

SIRAJGANJ, Dec 7: Jattatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) swept the student union elections of Shahajadpur Government College and Sirajganj Islamia College today. In Shahajadpur College, JCD secured 19 seats out of 20. Shiful Haq of pro-JSD (Inu) Chhatra League and Abdul Aziz of JCD were elected VP and GS respectively. JCD won all the 19 seats in Islamia College where Papu Islam was elected VP and Aminul Islam GS, reports UNB.

41 more Rohingyas return home

COX'S BAZAR, Dec 7: Ten families of Rohingya refugees comprising 41 members today voluntarily went back to their homes in Myanmar through Rainingkhali Transit Camp, official sources said tonight, reports BSS.

SAARC CRICKET BANGLADESH 1992

Cricket comes to a standstill

Sports Reporter

The first-ever SAARC cricket tournament grinded to a sudden halt when the match between India and hosts Bangladesh had to be called off because of trouble in the stands as a sequel to the demolition of the Babri Mosque, in Ayodhya, India on Sunday.

Asked to bat first by Bangladesh captain Nannu who won the toss, India, the favourites in this four-nation tournament had scored 30 runs from 8.1 overs when trouble broke out and the game had to be abandoned.

The Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) has announced that the postponed match will now be freshly held on Thursday, December 10.

Detailed report on Page 10.

Help maintain communal harmony: Press Note

The government last night sought active cooperation from all shades of opinion and people from all sections in maintaining communal harmony in the country, reports BSS.

The Home Ministry in a Press Note, said that the government had taken all possible measures to ensure peace in the face of the situation arising out of the demolition of the Babri Mosque, in India.

The Press Note said, "the government is equally concerned and deeply shocked at the demolition of the Babri Mosque."

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Communal forces disrupting peace: Hasina

Awami League President and the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday strongly protested the demolition of the historic Babri Mosque by the communal forces of India, reports BSS.

"I am hurt at the incident of demolishing the Babri Mosque," she said in a statement.

Hasina said the communal forces of the sub-continent had been gaining strength and disrupting peace by interfering in the people's religious rights.

The Opposition Leader urged the people irrespective of caste, creed and religion to maintain communal harmony and peace at any cost.

Nirmul body adds Babri issue to hartal today

By Staff Correspondent

The Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Samannaya Committee has called a nationwide dawn-to-dusk hartal today (Tuesday) demanding fulfillment of its four-point charter of demands and also to protest the demolition of Babri Mosque in Ayodhya, India.

The Babri Mosque issue was taken up by the Committee yesterday in the backdrop of widespread violence in the country following the attack on

See Page 12 Col 2

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