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The Daily Star

FOR HOARDING & NEONSIGNS
MODART
PUBLICITY
 17/6-B, Purana Paltan, Dhaka-1000
 Tel: 238935, 405898

VOL. II NO. 314 REGD. NO. DA 781 AGRAHAYAN 25, 1399 BS, DHAKA WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 9, 1992 JAMADI-US-SANI 13, 1413 HIJRI 12 PAGES: PRICE TAKA 4.00

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SAARC Summit postponed

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

The Seventh SAARC Summit scheduled for December 12-13 in Dhaka has been deferred by a month, Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman said last night. The summit may begin January 9.

The decision came formally from Colombo since Sri Lanka is still the chairman of the Association, the Foreign Minister told The Daily Star.

However, Rahman said, the two-day meeting of the Council of Ministers of which the Foreign Minister are members will be held as scheduled, beginning Thursday.

The Bhutanese Foreign Minister is already in the city and the other five minister including Indian Minister of State for External Affairs Raghunandan Lal Bhatta are scheduled to arrive in the city today.

Bhatta is to reach Dhaka at 3 in the afternoon.

Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's inability to attend the annual event due to what a senior Indian High Commission official said "a very fluid situation" in his country after Friday's demolition of a 16-century mosque at the temple town of Ayodhya has led to the postponement only three days before schedule.

The smashing of the mosque by Hindu militants has been described as the most shameful national event since the assassination of India's liberation hero Mahatma Gandhi.

Rao, who heads a minority government, faces the toughest test of his 17 months in power over the issue. The 71-year-old Prime Minister, a seasoned politician who served as a successful Foreign Minister under the governments of Indira and Rajiv Gandhis, is being blamed for failing to take pre-emptive steps to save the disputed shrine.

The event has evoked sharp criticism from his opponents who have demanded that he quit, and angered the Muslims who make up 12 per cent of the country's electoral population.

According to diplomatic sources in Dhaka, the decision was finalised in the evening yesterday and afterwards a formal announcement was made from Colombo.

The sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that the announcement followed "consultations" at the highest political level.

According to some sources, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia had a telephonic conversation Monday night with her Indian counterpart during which they reportedly discussed the fate of the summit.

However, when asked at the press briefing in the evening yesterday, Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman did not confirm the telephone talks. "I am not aware of it," he said.

Responding to volley of questions from reporters, the Foreign Secretary did not rule out the possibility of the postponement, although he stressed that the meeting of the Council of Ministers were on schedule.

But he remained non-committal as before: "I'm not in a position to say whether the summit will be held or not."

Then he hastened to add, "Let me make it clear that as far as Bangladesh government is concerned, we have made all the arrangements and we are ready to hold the summit. This is the position as of now."

The Door Darshan, the Indian national television network, however, reported in the evening that the summit had been postponed.

See Page 12 Col 6

SAARC CRICKET BANGLADESH 1992

Pakistan play Sri Lanka today

Sports Reporter

Pakistan take on Sri Lanka in today's match of the first ever SAARC cricket tournament today at 9:30 am at the Dhaka Stadium.

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

Pakistan now have two points from two outings while Sri Lanka, who have also played two matches, are yet to open their account.

Detailed report on Page 10.

Curfew in Bhola: Clash, police firing in city: Hundreds injured across country



Bangabandhu Avenue during hartal hours (top) and policemen acting as buffers as Nirmul body men and Jamaat activists confront one another near Paltan crossing in the city (above) yesterday. —Star photo

4 killed during hartal hours

By Staff Correspondent

At least four persons were killed and several hundred injured in police firing and incidents of arson during the dawn-to-dusk hartal across the country Tuesday.

An indefinite curfew was imposed in Bhola from 4 pm Tuesday.

Nazrul Islam, a driver working for a private company, was killed in Dhaka when he was hit by a bullet in his left eye near Baitul Mukarram mosque.

Three children died in Kutubdia when their houses were set ablaze.

Kutubdia thana sources said over telephone that the three children were reportedly killed at Ali Akbarul Union, 3 km off the headquarters, when a group of people set 51 houses of fishermen on fire leaving some 450 people homeless.

The authorities also had to impose Section 144 in Khulna and in Sylhet and Ghor to check the volatile situations.

Police used batons, lobbed tear gas shells and fired rubber bullets to break up clashes between supporters of the Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Samanye Committee and the Jamaat-Shibir-Jubo Command activists and also to disperse mobs that attacked Hindu temples.

Samanye (coordinating) See Page 12 Col 2

Jamaat-Shibir men burn National Flag

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Dec 8: The National Flag, achieved through much blood and fire, was torn here today by rowdy activists belonging to the Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing — the Islami Chhatra Shibir.

The local MuktiJoddha Sangsad (freedom fighters' council) office was damaged, its signboard destroyed and the sangsad flag torn in an attack by militant Jamaat workers, witnesses said.

Several crackers were blasted during the attack on the MuktiJoddha Sangsad at Simon Road in the town, they said.

The witnesses said that hundreds of slogan-shouting Jamaat and Shibir activists attacked the office at about 11.30 am.

The marchers stoned the office and tore the National Flag.

They also burned a banner of the Sangsad, witnesses said.

District commander of the MuktiJoddha Sangsad Mohammad Ali alleged that the Jamaat workers also damaged the victory stage set up at the local Public Library ground for the victory fair on December 13.

Heavy brickbattling started See Page 12 Col 6

Joint peace procession today

A joint meeting of the leaders of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its front organisations including Chhatra Dal, Sramik Dal, Juba Dal, JASSAS, Mahila Dal, Seccha Sebak Dal and Krishak Dal, held at BNP central office yesterday evening, strongly condemned and protested the demolition of Babri Mosque in India by Hindu fundamentalist forces, reports BSS.

Presided over by BNP Secretary General Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder the meeting demanded immediate reconstruction of Babri Mosque at its original place.

See Page 12 Col 7

AL peace procession today

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Awami League (AL) will hold a peace rally to be followed by a peace procession today with the call to maintain communal harmony. The rally will be held at the party central office at Bangabandhu Avenue at 3 pm.

AL chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina will address the rally.

NEWS BRIEFS

Indo-Bangla flag meet held

RAJSHAHI, Dec 8: A flag meeting between Bangladesh Rifles and Indian Border Security Force was held Monday on the river bank of Padma in front of an Indian border outpost. Fruitful discussions were held in the meeting on the issue of push in and curbing of smuggling. Decisions were taken in the meeting to strengthen anti-smuggling drive and to stop the push in issue. reports BSS.

Indian citizen arrested

RAJSHAHI, Dec 8: A special squad of 20 rifle battalion arrested an Indian citizen and seized some Indian goods from a bordering village Bulanpur of the district Monday. Acting on a secret information the BDR personnel led by Nayek Md Shamsul Haque arrested the person while releasing a loaded bag from a boat. The Indian citizen was identified as Abdul Majid of village Kaharpara, post Katlamari, police station Raniganj, district Murshidabad. The seized goods included Indian glass, parts of bicycle and Indian medicine, reports BSS.

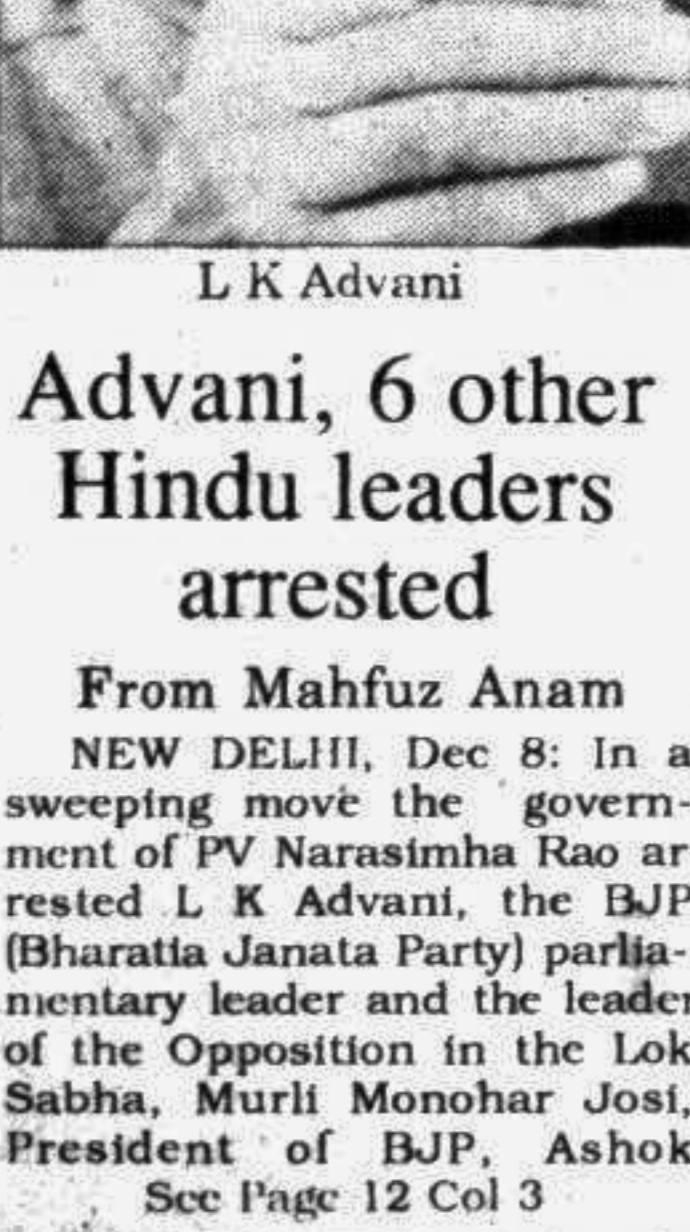
BFUJ joint meet tomorrow

A joint meeting of the outgoing and the newly elected executive committees of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) will be held tomorrow at 10-30 am at the union office at Jatya Press Club, a BFUJ press release said yesterday. All members of the two committees have been requested to attend the meeting, reports BSS.

Quake in Bay of Bengal

NEW DELHI, Dec 8: An intense earthquake in the Bay of Bengal was recorded near a remote island Tuesday, officials said, reports AP.

Troops clear Hindus from mosque site Unrest across India continues: 400 killed



L K Advani

NEW DELHI, Dec 8: With more than 400 people already dead in Hindu-Muslim riots, Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao Tuesday faced a new threat — a Hindu backlash against his decision to rebuild the mosque destroyed by Hindu radicals, reports AP.

In a rare step, the government empowered security forces to shoot rioters on sight Bombay and Bhopal, cities which witnessed large-scale violence.

Unrest continued for a second day only slightly abated in most of India's 32 states and territories, news agencies said.

In a day of swift developments, police in New Delhi and the temple town of Ayodhya arrested the top leaders of the powerful Hindu nationalist opposition, accusing them of inciting sectarian violence.

Federal troops also cleared Hindu extremists and holy men from the ruins of the mosque in the northeastern city of Ayodhya that they demolished on Sunday, where they already had begun building a temple.

The Iranian government summoned the Indian ambassador in Teheran to press demands for the reconstruction of the 16th-century Babri mosque. Hindu emotions ran high in India after reports that thousands of Muslims in neighboring Pakistan and Bangladesh attacked Hindu properties and burned dozens of temples to the ground.

The government censored photographs from a burning See Page 12 Col 8

Rao gets Cong-I backing, wins confidence vote

NEW DELHI, Dec 8: Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao today won a vote of confidence from his party and cabinet and reiterated a government pledge to rebuild a mosque destroyed by Hindu fanatics on Sunday, reports AFP.

Rao, 71, under pressure from secular opposition parties to quit for failing to protect the 16th century mosque in Ayodhya, told MPs from his Congress (I) party that he was determined the shrine will be rebuilt.

The Government may have See Page 12 Col 8

Opposition closing in on Rao

From Kuldip Nayar in New Delhi

News analysis

One fallout of the demolition of the Babri Masjid structure has been the opposition's unanimous demand for the ousting of Narasimha Rao India's Prime Minister. It has refused to recognise him as leader of the House and therefore he has not been able to sit with the Janata Dal and the Left party leaders, which he has been wanting to do, to discuss the matter.

Speaker Shivraj Patel convened a meeting of all political parties represented in the Lok Sabha but there was no settlement. Chandrasekhar, former prime minister and leader of the Samajwadi Janata Dal, said that he for one would not accept him as the prime minister and would therefore neither meet him in that capacity, nor hear him in the House.

The Communist Party (Marxists) is not all that rigid because, according to its spokesman, his successor from the Congress party would still be worse. The party does not like the two aspirants, Human Resource Development Minister Arjun Singh and Defence Minister Sharad Pawar.

The Janata Dal is expecting See Page 12 Col 1

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সরকার লক্ষ্য করেছে যে, স্বাধীনতা যুদ্ধে বীরত্বপূর্ণ অবদানের জন্য কেবল বীরশ্রেষ্ঠ পদকপ্রাপ্ত শহীদদের নিকটতম আত্মীয়দের মধ্যে ইতিপূর্বে আনুষ্ঠানিকভাবে পদক বিতরণ করা হয়েছে। কিন্তু বীর উত্তম, বীর বিক্রম ও বীর প্রতীক পদকপ্রাপ্তদের মধ্যে এ যাবৎ আনুষ্ঠানিকভাবে এই পদক বিতরণ করা হয়নি। এর পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে সরকার এই মর্মে সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ করেছে যে, বীর উত্তম, বীর বিক্রম ও বীর প্রতীক পদকপ্রাপ্তগণকে আনুষ্ঠানিকভাবে এই পদক প্রদান করা হবে। শহীদ বীর শ্রেষ্ঠদের নিকটতম আত্মীয়দের কাছে বীর শ্রেষ্ঠদের স্বরণে তৈরী 'স্মারক মুদ্রা' প্রদান করা হবে।

আগামী ১৫ ই ডিসেম্বর একটি অনুষ্ঠানের মাধ্যমে মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী এই পদক প্রদান করবেন।

পদকপ্রাপ্তগণকে/যারা জীবিত নেই তাদের নিকটতম আত্মীয়কে অবিলম্বে নিম্নে বর্ণিত সংস্থার সাথে যোগাযোগ এবং আগামী ১০ ই ডিসেম্বর সকাল ১০-০০টার মধ্যে বর্ণিত স্থানে উপস্থিত হওয়ার জন্যে অনুরোধ করা হচ্ছে:

(ক) সেনাবাহিনীর সদস্য - সেনা সদর এজি শাখা, পি-এস ডাইরেক্টরেট, ঢাকা।

(খ) নৌ-বাহিনী - নৌ সদর, অপারেশন পরিদপ্তর, ঢাকা।

(গ) বিমান বাহিনী - এয়ার হেডকোয়ার্টার ডাইরেক্টরেট অব ওয়েলফেয়ার এন্ড সের্ভিস, ঢাকা।

(ঘ) বি.ডি.আর - বি.ডি.আর সেক্টর হেডকোয়ার্টার, ঢাকা সেক্টর, পিলখানা, ঢাকা।

(ঙ) পুলিশ - রাজস্বাধিপাল পুলিশ লাইন, ঢাকা।

(চ) আনসার - ভিডিপি - আনসার সদর দপ্তর, ফিলগাঁও, ঢাকা।

(ছ) বেসামরিক - মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কল্যাণ ট্রাষ্ট সদর দপ্তর, ৮৮, মতিঝিল, ঢাকা।

পদকপ্রাপ্তদের মধ্যে যারা জীবিত নেই তাদের পক্ষ থেকে পরিবারের নিকটতম সদস্যকে পদক প্রদান করা হবে।

পদকপ্রাপ্তদের মধ্যে যারা জীবিত নেই তাদের নিকটতম আত্মীয় কে বা কারা সে সম্বন্ধে ব্যাখ্যা দেয়া হল:-

(১) পদকপ্রাপ্ত যদি অবিবাহিত হন তবে তার পিতা, পিতার অবর্তমানে মাতা এবং এদের অবর্তমানে আপন ভাই, ভাই-এর অবর্তমানে বোন।

(২) পদকপ্রাপ্ত যদি বিবাহিত হন, তাহলে তার স্ত্রী (যদি তিনি পুনরায় বিবাহ না করে থাকেন)। যদি স্ত্রী পুনর্বিবাহ করেন বা জীবিত না থাকেন তবে ছেলে বা মেয়ে এবং তাদের অবর্তমানে পিতা এবং তার অবর্তমানে মাতা।

পদকপ্রাপ্ত বেসামরিক ব্যক্তিদের পরিবারের নিকটতম সদস্য হিসাবে যারা পদক গ্রহণ করবেন তাদেরকে স্থানীয় পশাসনের নিকট থেকে পরিচিতিপত্রই নির্ধারিত স্থানে যথাসময়ে উপস্থিত হওয়ার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হচ্ছে।

এই উপলক্ষে আগত ব্যক্তি এবং তার একজন সঙ্গীর ঢাকা আসা-যাওয়ার, থাকা-খাওয়ার ব্যয় সরকার কর্তৃক বহন করা হবে।

উপরোক্ত সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ সংস্থাসমূহ পদকপ্রাপ্তগণকে এই অনুষ্ঠান সম্পর্কে বিস্তারিত তথ্য প্রদান করবে।

ডিএফপি (ডি) ২১২৪৩-৭/১২
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প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়
 গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার