



Two women march beneath the Communist Party flag during a peace demonstration by leftists parties yesterday in New Delhi calling for a rededication to secular values. —AFP photo

### Police arrest 600 BJP women activists

NEW DELHI, Dec 22: Over 600 women activists of BJP were today arrested after they held a demonstration here protesting against restrictions on the darshan of "Ram lalla" at Ayodhya and marched towards parliament violating prohibitory orders, reports AFP.

The women, broke police cordon and rushed towards parliament after staging a demonstration on the parliament street near Patel Chowk for about two hours.

The workers were, however, stopped they went beyond the Patel Chowk and arrested for violating restrictions imposed under Section 144 of CrPc, police said.

Chaotic conditions descended on Patel Chowk as several hundred women and other activists ran in different directions in a bid to proceed towards parliament. Traffic on all roads meeting the round about remained affected for quite some time.

Police swung into action and took the entire crowd into custody at Parliament Street police station.

A total of 1,458 activists belonging to the banned RSS, VHP, Bajrang Dal and the Jamiat-e-Islami Hind were arrested from various parts of Madhya Pradesh till this morning.

Of these, 532 belonged to the RSS, VHP(448), Bajrang Dal (366) and Jamiat-e-Islami Hind (112), official sources that 103 offices of these banned bodies had also been sealed all over the state.

AFP adds: Thousands of Indian communists waving red flags marched here today to condemn the razing of the Babri Mosque by Hindu zealots and the subsequent bloody Hindu-Muslim violence.

An estimated 15,000 members of four Leftist parties

### Indemnity body

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the Treasury bench and the Opposition in Parliament was a must for giving hard-earned democracy a stable foundation. Then the Minister proposed a further extension of time to the committee to try to narrow the difference of opinion again between the BNP and the AL on the indemnity issue, the Committee sources said.

The concerned parties, however, agreed that the report on the Indemnity Ordinance (Repeal) Bill would be submitted to Parliament in its coming session.

The bill seeking removal of the constitutional bar on trying the people involved in the killing of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was moved in the House by the AL leader and Chief Whip of the Opposition in Parliament Mohammad Nasim August 8, 1991.

Sheikh Mujib, the then President of the country, was killed in a military putsch August 15, 1975.

Khandaker Mostaque Ahmed, Mujib's cabinet colleague, took over state power following the military putsch and promulgated the Ordinance

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### Wanted persons blast crackers, escape police arrest in city

By Staff Correspondent  
A group of allegedly wanted persons blasted crackers and escaped when police went to arrest them at Rayer Bazar in the capital early Tuesday.

On a tip Dhanmondi police raided an under-construction building at Rayer Bazar at around 2 am Tuesday but the gangsters hurled crackers at police and escaped, according to a police source.

### 'Govt hiding facts about violence over Babri Mosque demolition'

By Staff Correspondent  
Two members of Parliament Tuesday accused the government of hiding the fact about the magnitude of violence in the country following demolition of Babri Mosque in India.

Tofael Ahmed of Awami League and Suranjit Sengupta of Ganatantri Party at a press conference at the National Press Club Tuesday said that the death toll and the extent of damage to property were higher than were reported in the newspapers after the violence erupted across the country early this month.

Representative from the Combined Committee for Communal Harmony Syed Hassan Imam was present at the conference.

The two MPs who separately visited Dhaka, Sylhet and Sunamganj claimed that those districts were the worst affected areas of the country where the residents were still in panic.

The government took the stand that nothing serious had happened over the Babri Mosque issue and so the Prime Minister or any of the ministers visited the affected areas," Sengupta alleged.

He said that some 50 temple in Sylhet and Sunamganj including 18 in Sylhet towns were damaged. The century old Shahitite Parisad library was not even spared by the hoodlums, he added.

The MPs alleged that many violence-victim were still residing under open sky without relief of any kind of help from the government.

They said that the PM should visit the affected areas and should allow at least the NGOs to work there.

### Shahriar Press Club president, Shawkat secy

Hasan Shahriar, Special Correspondent of Dainik Ittefaq and Shawkat Mahmood, Chief Reporter of Dainik Dinkal were elected President and General Secretary of the National Press Club for a two-year term (1993-1994), reports BSS.

Zahir-Shawkat panel won 13 posts out of 17 while Shahriar-Helal panel secured four seats at the Press Club polls held here Monday.

According to the results announced by the Election Commission yesterday, Shahriar polled 230 votes as against 213 secured by Zahirul Hoque, Special Correspondent of Dainik Bangla for the post of President while Shawkat captured 286 votes as against 158 got by Ehsanulkarim Helal, Special Correspondent of BSS. It is to be noted that Shawkat was re-elected as General Secretary of the Club.

Other office bearers are: Khondoker Monirul Alon, City Editor of Dainik Khabor — Senior Vice President, Abdul Baten, Joint News Editor of Daily Ittefaq — Vice President (unopposed), Moazzem Hossain Bulu, Senior Photographer of Bangladesh Observer — Treasurer and Badrul Alam, Principal Correspondent of Banglabazar Patrika and Abdur Rahman Khan, Senior Reporter of the Telegraph — joint secretaries.

The elected members of the Press Club Managing Committee are: Syed Abdul Kahar, Assistant Editor of Dainik Bangla, Ziaul Hoque, Assistant Editor of Dainik Ittefaq, Swapan Kumar Shaha, Shift-in-charge of BSS, Abdul Halim Chowdhury, Senior Photographer of Bangladesh Times, Quamrul Islam Chowdhury, Economic Correspondent of BSS, Syed Lutful Hoque, Artist of Dainik Bangla, Mostafa Kamal Mazumdar, Special Correspondent of the Telegraph and Nurul Huda, Special Correspondent of BSS, Zahiduzzaman Faruq, Economic Correspondent of Dainik Ittefaq and Baby Moudud of Daily Ittefaq.

Moazzem Hossain Bulu who was re-elected as treasurer polled the 311 votes highest among all the office bearers and members while Syed Abdul Kahar got the 273 votes highest among the members.



A group of youths demonstrating against President Abdur Rahman Biswas' visit to Jagannath College as chief guest at the centenary celebration of the college yesterday. —Star photo

### Japanese aid

From Page 1 Col 7  
Annually, he added, Japan provided around 300 to 350 million dollars in aid to Bangladesh and if it was not utilised effectively, there would be criticism and public pressure in Japan against continuing the same level of assistance.

He pointed out that as more countries were seeking Japanese assistance, it would not be easy to increase the level of the aid commitment to Bangladesh.

"People in Japan would say that Bangladesh cannot digest 350 million dollars so we don't have to continue that level," he said and that is a very dangerous argument which might occur at any moment if this 530 million dollar unutilised amount should remain that way.

However, he added that earlier this year talks with the government were held and an agreement was reached to improve the aid utilisation situation.

"We are trying to intensify our dialogue with the government in order to improve the utilisation and to make our assistance more effective."

In addition to the slow utilisation of aid, the Japanese envoy said that there were problems also with adequate and proper operation and maintenance of the completed projects. "We would like to see that the efficiency of the bureaucracy will be improved and very hard effort made for good operation and maintenance of the completed projects."

The largest bilateral donor of Bangladesh, Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA), since 1972, totals 5.53 billion dollars. Of which, 3.85 billion dollars was provided as loans while 1.68 billion dollars as grant assistance.

Ambassador Saiki noted that the present Japanese aid policy towards Bangladesh was to increase the grant aid and reduce the loan amount in the aid package.

"We want to increase our grant aid and decrease the loan amount because loans mean that you have to pay it back with interests and in fact grant assistance is increasing gradually, particularly the debt relief grant assistance."

On attracting Japanese investment to Bangladesh, he pointed out a number of problems from the viewpoint of foreign investors.

"The number one problem is the labour relations, to put it bluntly, the problem of militant labour is a big concern for those who consider investing in Bangladesh because labour dispute in the form of hartals and other strikes makes their production schedule very unpredictable."

In addition, the Japanese envoy said, there were problems of very different customs and practices, slow bureaucracy and red tape.

"These are problems which should be improved by the effort of the Bangladeshi people."

However, he added that the labour situation was much better in the export processing zones than elsewhere in the country.

"In view of the difficulties, I am considering promoting Japanese investments in the export processing zones for the near future and hope that investment outside would become more intensified in the remote future."

Ambassador Saiki was optimistic about keeping up the level of aid commitment in the future. "As an ambassador here, my ultimate mission is to keep up the level of Japanese assistance to Bangladesh."

He hoped that cooperation with Bangladesh would continue through Japanese assistance, particularly in human resources development and further consolidating the country's infrastructure.

"My hope is that in the twenty-first century, Bangladesh will become another Japan in South Asia."

Details of the interview are on Page 8

### Police baton charge demonstrators at Johnson Road

By Staff Correspondent  
Police resorted to baton charge to disperse a group of demonstrators wearing black badges and holding black-flags at Johnson Road in the city Tuesday morning.

A group of youths were demonstrating near Azad Cinema Hall while President Abdur Rahman Biswas was returning through after inaugurating the centenary celebration of Jagannath University College, witnesses said.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas inaugurated the two day function while a group of college students protested his presence as the chief guest, said witnesses.

Police said that when a group of youths were demonstrating on the route of the Presidents' return, they immediately resorted to baton charge to clear the road of demonstrators. But no arrest was made, police added.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) convenor Khalekuzzaman Bhuiyan expressed his resentment at the police assault on students of Jagannath College.

In a statement Tuesday, the BSD leader said that the attack was made because they opposed the decision to invite President Abdur Rahman Biswas as the chief guest in the centenary celebration of the college.

### Newsmen robbed

By Staff Correspondent  
Two journalists of The Daily Star were held up and their valuables robbed by miscreants in the city in the small hours of Tuesday.

The miscreants, numbering four, riding a Toyota car stopped the baby taxi carrying Chief Reporter Shaiful Bashir (Chapal Bashir) and Staff Reporter Masud Hasan Khan after overtaking it in front of the Wapda building in Motijheel.

They then, snatched away cash, camera, wrist watches and the government press accreditation cards of the two journalists at dagger-point.

A case was filed with Motijheel police but none was arrested.

### Opposition trying

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people and do not want progress of the country... they are trying to create terrorism and indiscipline in national life," she said reminding "of the famine, curbing of the press, introduction of one-party rule and corruption that characterised the post-liberation government."

The Prime Minister also accused the nine-year autocratic rule of misappropriating public money.

Begum Zia said her government has been going by the BNP's election pledges, mentioning the exemption of agricultural loans up to Tk 5,000 and land tax up to 25 bighas, increasing the age-limit for government services up to 30 years and allowing press freedom.

### Hasina

From Page 1 Col 6  
Hasina reiterated her allegation against BJP of India and Jamaat-e-Islami of Bangladesh, saying the demolition of Babri Mosque and eruption of communal violence took place in the region after the meeting between BJP leader LK Advani and Jamaat leaders in New Delhi.

She urged the Indian government to reconstruct the mosque on its original site.

Presided over by Demra thana Awami League Secretary Safar Ali the rally was also addressed by Amir Hossain Anu, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Mohammad Afzal, AFM Mahbubul Haq, Abdul Mannan Chowdhury and Syed Hasan Imam.

### The Midnight File

#### Rajshahi govt college closed sine die

RAJSHAHI, Dec 22: Rajshahi Government College was today closed sine die after a violent clash between Shibir and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal activists that left some 23 students injured, six seriously. Authorities also ordered residents to vacate hostels of the university-college by this (Tuesday) evening as tension mounted on the campus. All students left their dormitories by 6pm, reports UNB.

#### Clinton selects security team

LITTLE ROCK, Dec 22: President-elect Clinton has selected a national security team anchored by former Carter administration diplomat Warren Christopher as secretary of state and Wisconsin Rep. Les Aspin as defence secretary, transition and congressional sources said Tuesday, reports AP.

### AL Secy accuses

From Page 1 Col 4  
be held guilty of heresy certainly it is not our leader Sheikh Hasina. Rather it is Mr S.M. Ali, who should first practice before preaching others.

However only mitigating factor is that most of Mr. SM Ali's statements regarding Sheikh Hasina for that matter on any issues domestic, social, political on Bangladesh is based on hearsay because of his long absence of about two decades from Bangladesh.

The following facts would indicate that Mr Ali was obsessed with his own ideas and one-sided views that led to his failure not to bother to find out the truth before sparring several columns of his own newspaper. Thank God he did not use others. During Begum Zia's last official visit to India, in clause II of the Joint Communiqué issued on behalf of the Prime Minister of India and Bangladesh it was clearly laid down that Bangladesh accepts the fact that there are many illegal immigrants from Bangladesh residing in India.

Such admission by the Head of the Government and that too in foreign soil gave Indian Government legal and an inevitable excuse to push back hundreds and thousands of Muslim from India. In fact Indian High Commission in Bangladesh also took that very stand for explaining the expulsion of mostly Indian Muslim citizens from India. How can Mr Ali construe that Sheikh Hasina indulged in personal attacks when she just pointed out such a blunder on the part of Khaleda Zia which jeopardized national interest of Bangladesh and also the fundamental rights of the Muslim of India.

Again regarding the meeting between Jamaat Islami leaders and Mr. Advani and other leader of the BJP, it is an open secret. Media were full of information with photographic coverage. Can Mr Ali refuse such allegations particularly when JAMAT leaders or BJP never dared to contradict such statements? Sheikh Hasina's statements, as stated above, is not only based on evidence but the same is now a public knowledge.

Last but not the least, we would request Mr. Ali to see the obvious truth and for the sake of honest journalism, side with the truths. Today the BNP/JAMAT axis is engaged in distorting the history of liberation movement. In place of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib, they try to impose Ziaur Rahman as the liberator of Bangladesh. Zia's name is placed above Bangabandhu as the leader of Bangladesh independence struggle during Begum Zia's recent speech on Independence Day celebration in Dhaka. Often Awami League is abused for entering into 25 years pact with India. Further Awami League is accused of promulgating Special Powers Act. Why? BNP is now in power! Why don't they terminate the friendship pact with India if that is injurious to the interest of Bangladesh? Why don't they repeal Special Powers Act, more so when AL themselves are advocating for the real of the same. Far from repeating it, they enacted another black law, i.e. Anti-Terrorism Act 1992.

It is Sheikh Hasina who came out with the strongest condemnations against the destruction of Babri Mosque. Yet unfortunately some one like Mr S.M. Ali would not hesitate to depict her as pro-Indian.

Awami League under the able leadership of Sheikh Hasina fought for the independence of freedom of press. She would continue to do so despite such unfortunate commentary of Mr. Ali.

Only a few days back Dr A Q M Badruddoza Choudhury, Deputy Leader of the Parliament and Senior Vice President of BNP called JAMAT as anti-liberation force who do not believe in the existence of Bangladesh. If so, why cannot we expect that Mr. Ali to ask BNP to disassociate themselves from remaining in power with the support of such anti-liberation forces. Lastly, Mr Ali be better advised to follow his own preaching and come out in full force against those BNP/JAMAT axis who are out to destroy the image of

In his rejoinder, Zillur Rahman says that Sheikh Hasina's statements are not only based on evidence but the same is now public knowledge.

The fact that these meetings took place is indeed public knowledge. We also know, BJP leader L.K. Advani had also called on Begum Khaleda Zia. But what is the "evidence" that these meetings dealt with the demolition of the historic mosque in advance or, in the case of Rao-Khaleda talk, as well as with New Delhi's "push-back" operation?

If Hasina's speech at Chittagong failed to produce the evidence, Rahman's statement has avoided this question altogether.

Instead, the AL General Secretary raises issues which were not highlighted in my commentary simply because we had dealt with them quite extensively in our editorials, signed articles and commentaries since our inception nearly two years ago. In these pieces, we had focused on failures of the government in many different areas, sharply criticized a number of individual ministers by name for their dismal performance, taken a firm stand against communalism (described in my column last Friday as "immoral") and, in a signed article by our Executive Editor Mahfuz Anam, pleaded with the political parties to treat Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman as two of our greatest national heroes. Supplements we have produced on our martyred intellectuals and on other national occasions would disprove any notion, again hinted in Rahman's statement, that our paper, or I myself in particular, might be part of the "BNP/Jamaat axis." Finally, would such guest columnists of this paper, as Shah AMS Kibria, an adviser to Hasina, Zillur Rahman Siddiqui and Rehman Sobhan, all strong critics of the BNP government, regularly contribute to The Daily Star if the paper I have the honour to edit was part of the anti-AL lobby that Zillur Rahman suggests in his statement?

A non-partisan independent newspaper cannot — and indeed should not — please all the parties all the time. Herein lies the credibility and strength of The Daily Star. As I found out during my conversations with both Begum Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina that these two leaders view the role of The Daily Star with understanding and perhaps even with some respect. I am sure, Sheikh Hasina would never have made such uncharitable, even malicious, remarks about our newspaper and me as contained in the statement of Zillur Rahman.