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VOL. II NO. 348 REGD. NO. DA 781 RAJAB 19, 1413 HIJRI DHAKA WEDNESDAY JANUARY 13, 1993 POUISH 30, 1399 BS, 12 PAGES: PRICE TAKA 4.00

Inside Today

Article

Asia Gets Bad 1992 Report Card Page 4

International



Indian print media blame govt and Hindu nationalist politicians for fresh riots Page 5

Business

Contraband Indian goods flood Jessore Page 7

Feature

Health

Need for health education in Bangladesh Page 8

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



A Lyrical Geometrical Presentation Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

Bhutanese FM calls on Mostafiz

Visiting Bhutanese Foreign Minister Dawa Tsering called on Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman at the latter's office yesterday. The two foreign ministers discussed bilateral matters, reports UNB.

Three terrorists held in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Jan 12: A special squad of Kotwali police in two separate drives arrested three terrorists from different parts of the city last night. According to a police press release today, Shyamol Dev along with one light gun was arrested from parade corner here. On his confession, the squad also arrested Mohammad Yunus and Mohammad Hamdul Islam, both absconders from a residential hotel at Chakhat last night, reports BSS.

Zia's birthday Jan 19

BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder yesterday called for observing the birth anniversary of late President Ziaur Rahman on January 19 in a befitting manner. In a statement Talukder asked all the units of the party to observe the day through holding discussion on the life and activities of Zia, mlad mahfil and cultural functions, reports BSS.

EC to meet Mirpur by-polls candidates

The Election Commission will hold three separate meetings today with the candidates contesting for parliamentary by-election to Mirpur 11 constituency and the central and city leaders of different political parties to ensure free and fair election. The Election Commissioner Justice Abdur Rouf will sit with the contesting candidates at 10 am and will be meeting with the city leaders of contesting political parties at 2:30 pm at his office. He will also have a meeting with the central leaders of the political parties at 6 pm, reports UNB.

Iraqis raid Kuwaiti Naval base again

KUWAIT, Jan 12: Iraqi workmen crossed into Kuwait on Tuesday for a third consecutive day to remove equipment from a disputed naval base, a UN spokesman said, reports AP.

"They are demolishing buildings and taking whatever they can — windows, cables, everything," said Abdel Latif Kabbaj, spokesman for UN observers on the Iraq-Kuwait border.

He said that about 150 Iraqis in civilian clothes were taking part. They were not armed but had again failed to get the required prior approval from the United Nations for the work, Kabbaj said.

The latest foray came a day after the UN Security Council criticized Iraq's raids and demanded that Baghdad return anti-ship missiles it seized on Sunday.

But the non-binding statement by the 15-nation council contained only a vague warning of 'serious consequences.'

The United States reiterated today that it would give Iraq no advance warning before reacting to violations of UN resolutions.

The warning issued by White House spokesman Marlín Fitzwater came after the third Iraqi incursion into Kuwait.

"There would be no warning of a US response to Iraqi violations of UN resolutions, Fitzwater said, adding that Washington was studying what action could be taken with the United Nations.

"They cannot continue to violate the resolutions," Fitzwater said, adding that the latest Iraqi actions marked a 'clear pattern of violation.'

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has intensified his efforts to defy the international community, he said.

Fitzwater warned Monday that Washington would not tolerate continued violations of UN resolutions.

On Tuesday, Russia also

condemned the raids and called on Baghdad to obey the UN demands that it halt the incursions.

"The situation is too explosive to play irresponsible games," Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky told reporters in Moscow.

In Iraq, meanwhile, the newspaper Al-Qadassiya held out an olive branch to the West, saying Iraq was open to talks to achieve peace and security which guarantees the legal rights of Iraq in sovereignty and independence.

The paper blamed the nation's recent troubles on President Bush, saying he had 'criminal intentions' against Iraq. The editorial was carried by the official Iraq News Agency, monitored in Nicosia.

The incursions beginning Sunday were the latest in a series of provocative acts by Iraq.

Last week, Iraq moved anti-aircraft batteries that Wa-

shington and its allies said were threatening Western aircraft patrolling a 'no-fly' zone in southern Iraq. But Baghdad continues to shuttle the missiles about the area, US officials said Monday.

Iraq also has notified the United Nations that it has banned the use of UN aircraft in Iraqi airspace, a move that has hampered UN efforts to dismantle Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

Kuwait's Parliament met Tuesday to discuss the Iraqi incursions and was expected to issue a strong statement condemning the action and urging enforcement of UN rules.

Although Iraq has UN permission to retrieve material from the base — awarded to Kuwait in a border demarcation completed by the United Nations last November — it has failed to get the required prior approval from the UN Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission, UNIKOM, to do so.

Bombay riots claim 20 more Advani not 'ashamed' of Babri Mosque demolition

NEW DELHI, Jan 12: The BJP leader, L K Advani today categorically said that he was not 'ashamed' of the demolition of what he called the 'dilapidated and abandoned' structure in Ayodhya though it was 'unfortunate', as it was not in BJP's scheme of things, reports PTI.

Meanwhile in Bombay, Army units tightened their grip on Bombay today to halt the rampage of riotous Hindu mobs but scattered cases of arson, looting and killing continued for the seventh day running.

Police said though violence seemed to be abating, 20 more people were killed today in the Hindu-Muslim clashes that have paralysed India's business capital. The ten deaths included a councillor on the Bombay Municipal Corporation shot dead as she was leading Hindu rioters.

A heavy military presence has helped stifle the riots, described in an editorial by the

Times of India as a calculated assault by Hindus against the minority Muslim community in Bombay, a city previously known for its tolerance.

In his first news conference since he was released from Mata Tilla jail yesterday, Advani said "I am not ashamed of the act."

By pulling down the structure, abandoned 55 years ago, how could anybody consider it as a demolition of a mosque, Advani said adding it was the repeated description of a 'Babri Masjid' that led to the sorrowful events since December 6.

Nor was the pulling down of the dilapidated structure any heroic achievement for those who had done it, he added.

Advani also demanded an immediate mid-term poll as the Narasimha Rao government had lost the mandate of the people.

See Page 12 Col 8



Romania, ROK in semifinals

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Greens, the juniors of the two national selections, ended the seventh President Gold Cup soccer campaign empty-handed when they lost to FC Ploesti of Romania 2-4 at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

With this victory the Romanian side collected five points to top the Group B table while Housing Bank of South Korea finished as group runners-up by eliminating FC Tatra Presov of Czechoslovakia 4-2 in the other match of the day.

Detailed Reports on Page 10.

Bhatia hands over Rao's letter to Koirala

KATHMANDU, Jan 12: Indian Minister of State for External Affairs R L Bhatia met Nepali Prime Minister Gijra Prasad Koirala today at the central secretariat, a Foreign Ministry source said, reports AFP.

Bhatia is visiting Nepal as the special envoy of Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao and during the 30-minute meeting he delivered a letter to Koirala from Rao.

The letter explained India's inability to attend the summit meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the source said.

Prime Minister Koirala has expressed grave anxiety over the postponement of the seventh summit meeting of the SAARC heads of state or government," he said.

An unofficial source said that Koirala explained to Bhatia Nepal's current dilemma resulting from the exodus of over 82,000 Bhutanese of Nepalese origin to eastern Nepal for food and shelter.

Hartal observed at Haliahshar

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Jan 12: A dawn-to-dusk hartal was observed today in the violence-torn Haliahshar area in Chittagong port city.

The local units of opposition parties and trade unions jointly gave the call for hartal at Haliahshar area in protest against the atrocities committed by a section of Navy personnel there Jan 2-3.

The hartal callers demanded immediate punishment to those Navy personnel responsible for Haliahshar incident and rehabilitation of the affected people.

During the hartal period all types of vehicles including rickshaws stayed off the roads stretching from Barik Building crossing to Patenga Airport. Shops and other markets there remained closed. Offices, both private and public did not function and industries at Patenga-Haliahshar belt suffered a production loss due to hartal, sources said. According to Patenga Airport source, flights to and from Chittagong operated as usual.

Processions and rallies were held during hartal hours.

OIC summit ends with a call for use of force in Bosnia

DAKAR, Jan 12: A Muslim mini-summit in Dakar on Monday sternly condemned 'Serbian aggression' against Muslims in a Bosnia-Herzegovina and called for military intervention against 'strategic targets' if international mediation failed to restore peace, reports AFP.

"It is not possible to bring about effective international control (in Bosnia-Herzegovina), all the heavy weaponry should be destroyed by military means and further military operations envisaged against 'strategic targets'," the

See Page 12 Col 6



A jubilant crowd of youngsters enjoying the stately walk of a circus elephant in a city street yesterday. — Star photo

Hasina tells public meeting at Rajbari PM failed to bring 'even a mug of water' from Delhi

RAJBARI, Jan 12: Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina today blasted the BNP govt for failing to protect national interest because of its meek foreign policy, reports UNB.

Referring to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's visit to India, Hasina sarcastically said the Prime Minister had failed to bring 'even a mug of water' of the Ganges at Farakka from New Delhi.

Hasina was addressing a big public meeting at Rajbari Govt High School ground this afternoon.

Bangabandhu government realised 44000 cusecs of Ganges water but Zia and Ershad regimes had 'sacrificed' 20000 cusecs of water to India, she said.

"Had Bangabandhu been alive, the country would not have gone down to such a disastrous end due to misrule of the post-1975 regimes," she

deplored. The Opposition leader criticised the government for failing to hold the SAARC summit. People can not understand how this government would run a country when it fails to hold even an international conference like the SAARC, she said.

She also slated Jamaat leaders for visiting India at the invitation of BJP, responsible for demolition of Babri Mosque. After the meeting BJP demolished the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya while Jamaat started destroying temples in Bangladesh, she said.

Hasina called for ensuring security to the minorities both in Bangladesh and India and maintaining religious peace and amity for the greater interest of democracy and development.

Hasina, who began a five-day organisational tour to the country's south-western dis-

tricts today, said chaos, terrorism and corruption destroyed the social fabric and economic infrastructure.

She said prices of fertiliser and pesticides increased four times but the farmers were deprived of the just prices of their products. Unemployment, retrenchment of workers and burden of taxes further aggravated the economic hardship of the common people.

Referring to the upcoming pourashava elections, she urged the electorates to cast their votes in favour of Awami League candidates to solve various problems of their respective municipal areas. She introduced Abdus Sattar contesting for office of the Rajbari Pourashava Chairman.

Hasina also addressed a rally at Pangsha. On way to Rajbari, she also addressed an unscheduled gathering at Goalondo Ghat.

Shibir activist killed in clash with BCL

CHITTAGONG, Jan 12: An armed encounter between supporters of Islami Chhatra Shibir and Chhatra League in the violence-ridden port city today left a Shibir worker dead, reports UNB.

Police said the rival groups fired about 15 rounds of bullet and exploded dozens of bombs during the clash on Nawab Sirajuddowla Road near Andarkella in the evening.

Mosharrar Hossain, a 2nd year student of Mathematics of Chittagong Govt College, died on the spot during half an hour of gunfight.

The trouble erupted at about 6 pm when Shibir brought out a procession from Chandanpur and tried to proceed, towards Andarkella to protest the kidnap of their leader Ziauddin of Mohsin College. The supporters of pro-Awami League Chhatra League clashed with the processionists.

Ziauddin, allegedly kidnapped by Chhatra Leaguers in Rahmatganj area at about 5 pm, was released after the incident, police said.

Halishahar incident Many officers made OSD as Navy launches probe

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Jan 12: A drastic action is expected to follow the vigorous investigation now underway inside Chittagong naval base to bring the Navy personnel responsible for Halishahar incident to book, highly placed sources here said.

The Navy authority launched the internal investigation last Friday and is expected to complete it within few days.

Competent sources said, many Navy officials here have been placed as OSD (officer on special duty) after removing them from the command in a move to run an impartial investigation. Among them, Commodore Commanding of Chittagong Navy A Z Nizam has been replaced by Commodore Mahbul Alam and Commanding Officer of BNS Isa Khan base here Captain Gias Uddin by Captain Humayun Kabir, sources added saying that a massive reshuffle

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Processions and rallies were held during hartal hours.

JU closed: Students asked to vacate halls today

Jahangirnagar University authorities yesterday asked the students to vacate their halls by 5 pm today (Wednesday). The Syndicate took this decision at its adjourned meeting which resumed yesterday to review the violent incidents of Sunday.

The university will reopen on February 2. According to the university calendar the winter vacation was also scheduled to commence from today.

The highest body of the university has postponed all examinations till further no-

tee, Syndicate sources said.

The Syndicate has also demanded a probe into Sunday's occurrence in which several rooms of teachers were attacked by a group of students.

On Sunday, Jattayatadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists ransacked rooms of several teachers including some Syndicate members protesting the reluctance of the Syndicate to rescind punitive measures against two of its members.

Organising Secretary of JCD JU unit Moazzem Hossain and Assistant General Secretary of See Page 12 Col 1.

Benazir heads House foreign relations body

ISLAMABAD, Jan 12: The Pakistani government today appointed opposition leader Benazir Bhutto as chief of the Parliamentary Foreign Relations Committee, in a move toward political reconciliation, reports AFP.

In a dramatic development, her name was proposed by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Siddique Kanju, while Shahbaz Sharif, brother of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, seconded the proposal, parliamentary sources said.

Bhutto, a former Prime Minister, told reporters that she continued to hold the view that the present government was the product of rigged elections.

"You can say this is a first step towards reconciliation with the government," she said, denying that her appointment was result of any political bargain.

As chief of the House Committee, Bhutto, 38, would be advising the government on matters relating to the foreign affairs.

This is the first time an opposition leader had been appointed as chief of an important committee. The committee had earlier been led by the Foreign Minister.

Sources said the rules were recently changed to enable the opposition leader to lead the committee, which unanimously

endorsed the appointment at a meeting attended by Bhutto as its opposition member.

The appointment of Bhutto followed frequent attacks by her that the government's foreign policy was resulting in an 'increasing isolation' of Pakistan in the international community.

Bhutto has been waging a campaign to oust Prime Minister Sharif and demanding that fresh elections be held under a government of national consensus.

Sharif rejected the demand, but offered a political dialogue with her to settle the issues causing the tussle between the government and the opposition.



Benazir Bhutto