

Akheri Munajat

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tinued coming to the Jtama till 9 pm. The Dhaka Mymensingh highway was crammed with hundreds of motor vehicles all day long. There was a traffic jam from Azampur, Uttara to Tongi Mill Gate from 4 pm till 9 pm.

At the Jtama, a number of eminent religious leaders delivered sermons to lakhs of people from pandal 2.5 kms in length and 2 kms in width.

Ameer of Bangladesh Tablig Jamaat Maulana Abdul Aziz (Bara Hujur), Maulana Ashraf Ali and Maulana Enamul Hasan (Hajratji) delivered sermons after the prayers of Fazz, Jehr and Asr respectively.

Meanwhile, one person died of diarrhoea at the Red Crescent field hospital at the Jtama. With this, the death toll rose to 9. Thirty others were admitted to the Tongi Hospital and Red Crescent field hospital. A total of 17 persons were referred to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Doctors said that out of the 9 dead seven had suffered from diarrhoea while two others died of old age complications.

Seven of them were buried north-west of the venue, while bodies of two other persons were taken away by their relatives.

The medical centre reported that about 3,000 persons took primary treatment

from different temporary medical centres today.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Railway authorities have made arrangements for special train services for the convenience of homebound Jtama visitors from Tongi after the concluding prayer tomorrow.

According to the special train schedule four trains will leave for Mymensingh and Akhaura at 1.10 pm, 1.25 pm, 5.00 pm and 10.00 pm tomorrow. Four trains will leave Tongi for Dhaka at 1.00 pm, 1.30 pm, 2.30 pm and 4.30 pm tomorrow.

The regular schedules of the Chittagong bound Karnaphuli Express and the Mymensingh-bound Balaka were changed. These trains will leave Dhaka at 12 noon tomorrow.

Other than these, three other special trains will leave Dhaka for Akhaura and Mymensingh on Tuesday and Wednesday.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas is expected to attend the Akheri Munajat tomorrow.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has directed all concerned ministries to take necessary measures for smooth holding of the Jtama.

All intercity trains, excepting the Mahanagar, will stop at Tongi station for two minutes to enable devotees to go to the Jtama venue. BRTC and private bus owners' associations have also arranged special services for the pilgrims.

Pre-discussion debate

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following the Business Advisory Committee meeting held a day back. Tofael claimed that the meeting decided to move a unanimous resolution on the Babri Mosque incident and keeping it in mind Majid-ul-Hoque, the Acting Deputy Leader of the House, came out with a draft and collected signatures of the opposition members of the committee at the Speaker's chamber on Saturday.

But Majid-ul-Hoque, before moving the resolution in the House, has surprisingly dropped a paragraph of the consensus resolution that sought compensation to the country's Hindu community which had its temples demolished by the culprits as a consequence of the demolition of the Babri Mosque in India.

This sort of behaviour hampered politics of consensus. Tofael said adding that not the House should decide on how the discussion on the issue should be conducted.

The Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali, at this stage, informed the House that although the discussion about a consensus resolution on the issue took place in his chamber, he was not a party to it. "What I told the committee members was that I would go for a general discussion provided they could reach a consensus on moving a unanimous resolution before 4 pm Saturday. Otherwise he had other rules to allow the discussion on the issue, the Speaker said.

Colonel (ret'd) Akbar Hossain of the ruling BNP at this point said that no resolution could be drafted before Parliament members belonging to both the Treasury bench and the Opposition deliberated on the issue. The Jatiya Party leader Moudud Ahmed, accepting technical aspects of Akbar's position said that the leaders who took initiative of adopting a consensus resolution on a sensitive issue like Babri Mosque incident should be hailed for their effort.

Halishahar

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area is still tense and we are keeping more vigil."

The old man Jalil who retired from Port service a few years ago also said that there was a simmering discontent for a long time among the local people who had also earlier frequently faced misbehaviour from a section of Navy men.

Many Navy men live with their families and some of them have shops in his locality. Jalil further added. He said that during the rampage, those Navy men's property were neither destroyed nor looted.

"Only our people and property were attacked as a sort of revenge for protesting a scandal involving a Navy man", Jalil lamented.

Meanwhile, according to a highly placed source, a plan is likely to be taken soon to provide a donation of taka one lakh for each dead person to his or her dependents in addition to other assistance for rehabilitation in a move to cool down the tension in the affected area of Halishahar.

JP to continue 3-prong fight

Jatiya Party leader Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury yesterday said his party will continue to fight from three fronts — on the street, in parliament and in the court of law — for realising their demands and maintaining the democratic process, reports UNB.

Briefing newsmen in the Sangsard Bhawan office of Jatiya Party yesterday evening, Chowdhury said they had decided to join the parliament session in view of changed circumstances.

"The situation that prompted us to boycott (the House) no longer exists", the JP acting Chairman said, adding that a new situation was created in the subcontinent following demolition of the Babri Mosque in India.



Bangladesh Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikya Parishad brought out a procession and submitted memorandum to Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsard demanding security for the minorities.

A dastardly act, MPs say

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Eight other notices with resolutions were also separately taken up for discussions, including those of Jamaat member Matur Rahman Nizam, Treasury bench member Major General Majid-ul-Huq (ret'd), AL member Tabbar Rahman Sardar, Salahuddin Yousuf, Treasury bench member Ashraf Hossain and Jatiya Party member Monirul Huq Chowdhury.

The winter session of the Sangsard began after a 13-day recess. Chaired by Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni, the question and answer session was held during the afternoon session.

The Deputy Speaker welcomed Workers Party member Rashed Khan Menon, as he returned to the House following recuperation from bullet injuries, suffered in an attempt on his life by unidentified assailants in August 17 last year.

Menon thanked the people and the members of Parliament for their support and sympathy following the attempt on his life.

Later, in the evening session when the general discussions on the destruction of the Babri Mosque began, Menon was the first to be given the floor.

Describing it as a "dastardly act in history", he said "it is not only a shame for history but is also a shame for society". He asserted that it was not a "sudden" incident as the BJP prepared for nine long years.

"We had expected the Indian government to take adequate steps... but it failed to do so because of a compromise with religion based politics."

Noting that the House was unanimous in condemning the act and for demanding the reconstruction of the mosque, Menon pleaded for a unanimous stand against the destruction of mandirs in the country immediately after the December 6 incident in Ayodhya.

"Where am I going to hide the shame that we could not protect the places of worship of the minority community here," he asked.

If Pakistan can rebuild the damaged mandirs, why cannot Bangladesh do the same? We must uphold the communal harmony which we upheld during the riots of 1964," he added.

Jatiya Party member Monirul Huq Chowdhury while condemning the destruction of the mosque and urged the government to ask India to rebuild it and put pressure on the Indian government through the United Nations and the Organisation of Islamic States to end the communal violence.

He also blamed the government for failing to protect the mandirs in the country, and called for their immediate reconstruction.

Jamaat leader Sheikh Ansar Ali pointed out that no claims were made on the mosque till 1989. Saying that there was a "conspiracy to kill Muslims in India", which he termed as a "Hindu ruled so-called secular nation".

All noted that Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao reneged on his pledge to rebuild the mosque "where puja is being performed now".

He claimed that Jamaat has proved that there exists communal harmony in this country as "no untoward" incidents took place in the country in 1990 or in 1992.

Other opposition benches roundly booed at this statement of the Jamaat member.

Treasury bench stalwart Lt. Colonel (ret'd) Akbar Hossain declared that he was speaking on the basis of the resolutions placed by Acting Deputy Leader Major Gen Majid-ul-Huq (ret'd) and said: "The action was in India while only reaction was in Bangladesh".

He said it is proven that Bangladesh was a non-communal country and that the damage to mandirs were carried out by identified circles and mercenaries. The CPB office was not ransacked because of religion, but it was done by a politically motivated circle.

Hossain asked where did the BJP get the "blueprint" that Ram was born there and a temple existed on that site. "Secularism does not solve the problem but religious freedom

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does," he said. He appealed to the House for supporting the resolution of the Acting Deputy Leader "intact, as any words added to it will divert the message and will be tantamount to supporting the dastardly act".

Awami League member Shudhanshu Shekhar Haldar, while condemning the destruction of the Babri Mosque, lashed out at the government for its failure to protect the interests of the minority community of the country.

Noting that if four state governments could be dismissed and the cabinet could resign in India, he asked why couldn't Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia take action against the police higher-ups in Dhaka.

While he was giving a detailed account of the damages to life and property of the minority community of the country, it aroused commotion among the Treasury Bench members. "We will send this information to the Amnesty International convention to be held in Geneva," he snapped back.

Demanding of the Prime Minister, who was also present in the House, to rebuild the damaged mandirs around the country, Haldar said "do not dictate me. I have a right to speak... communalism has to be destroyed".

Treasury Bench member Major Hafizuddin requested that no statement be made on the floor which can instill fear among the minority community of the country, while strongly condemning the destruction of the Babri Mosque and supporting the resolutions placed by the Acting Deputy Leader.

"Some communal forces are trying to gain political mileage out of it... we will protect the communal harmony with our blood," he declared.

Treasury Bench member Dr Abdul Moyn Khan moved a vote of thanks on President Abdur Rahman Biswas' speech delivered on the opening session on January 3. The move was seconded by Nurul Islam Moni. The House was adjourned at about 9:30 pm and will resume at 6pm today.

Khaleda

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country, the Prime Minister said their extraction would create employment opportunities and give economic progress. Coal will also solve the country's fuel problem, she added.

Referring to the local demands, the Prime Minister said work of Kushtia-Rajbari road would start soon. Textile Ministry will be directed to reopen the closed Mohini Cotton Mills, she assured. Other problems of the areas will be solved in phases.

Begum Zia also addressing the parade of the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) on the occasion of Flag Raising of a new BDR Sector Headquarters at Mirpur thana in Kushtia here this morning.

The Prime Minister later reviewed the parade and took salute.

In her speech Begum Zia said that success in building a strong economic base for the country would largely depend on effective curbing of smuggling.

"Democracy has been restored in the country. Today, its responsibility of all of us to build the country which belongs to us all. We have to unitedly build this nation... its only then that our independence and democracy will be meaningful," she said.

State Minister for Communications Fazlur Rahman, local MP, Chief of Army Staff Lt. Gen. Nur Uddin Khan, Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshall Altaf Hossain Chowdhury and other senior BDR and Army officers were present on the occasion.

"The main enemy of national economy is smuggling. Checking of smuggling is indispensable to safeguard the country's industries and set up new ones to create employment opportunities", she pointed out.

Despite resource constraints, the government determined to make the BDR more active in safeguarding the country's sovereignty, securing country's frontiers, checking smuggling and protecting national economy, she said.

The Prime Minister hoisted the flag of the headquarters of the new headquarters built on an area of 62 acres, eight miles from Kushtia town. She also planted a Christmas tree at the premises.

AL: Babri Mosque

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reaved families and those who were injured and suffered loss during the incident.

The council resolved that occurrence of such incidents was a threat to establishing democracy and rule of law in the country and said such acts had proved that the law and order had gone beyond the control of the government.

In another resolution, the council expressed its deep concern at the rise in prices of agriculture inputs and said its continuation would affect seriously the agriculture sector as well as the overall economy.

The council, in another resolution, expressed its deep shock at the deaths of party leaders and workers who died after the recent party council and conveyed sympathy to the members of the bereaved families.

Rao

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56 ministers on Saturday in a show of confidence in Rao's leadership during the crisis stemming from the Hindu-Muslim riots.

Rao said the Cabinet posts would be announced Monday.

National newspapers, opposition parties and some members of his own Congress Party have criticized Rao for not controlling the violence promptly. He is also accused of being unable to take decisions quickly.

The government's inaction during the past month appeared to have been partly caused by infighting and power struggles within his own administration.

To the extent the Cabinet suffered from a lack of cohesion, the reconstitution (of the administration) could be helpful," the Hindu, a conservative newspaper said. But, it added, the cure lies not just in a reshuffle but in drastic policy changes.

Four of Rao's ministers had quit since he set up the government in June 1991, including the commerce minister who was linked to the country's worst financial scandal. The posts were never filled.

Among the new Cabinet ministers are Dinesh Singh, a scion of a royal family who left a career as a diplomat to join politics in 1957. The 66-year-old Singh, who has twice been India's foreign minister previously, returns to the government after two years.

Another prominent nominee is Pranab Mukherjee, 57, a former finance minister. He is currently deputy chairman of the Planning Commission, the apex government body that keeps track of India's resources.

Azam's petition Hearing date to be fixed tomorrow

The writ petition filed by Prof Golam Azam praying for restoration of his citizenship will come up in the daily list on January 19 to fix a date for hearing the citizenship matter, reports BSS.

The Midnight File

France, Britain take no part in US operation

PARIS, Jan 17: France said it took no part in the American operation launched today on Baghdad. Reliable sources here said that Britain also had played no part in the operation said to be targeted on nuclear research laboratories in the suburbs of Baghdad, reports AFP.

UN to take military command of Somalia

MOGADISHU, Jan 17: The United States plans to transfer military control of Somalia to a UN command in as little as two weeks, a US spokesman said Sunday. Marine Col Fred Peck made the announcement, stressing that the Security Council had not yet adopted resolutions necessary for the transfer. It also has to decide on a command structure and the rules of engagement, he said, reports AP.

Palestinian deportees stage protest sit-in

MARJ AL-ZOHOUR, Jan 17: Palestinians deported by Israel marked one month of exile in a southern no man's land by marching toward Israeli army lines and staging a protest sit-in Sunday. No sign of a breakthrough was evident in the impasse between Lebanon and Israel over the 411 men, who were expelled by Israel on December 17 in retaliation for the slayings of six Israeli troopers by suspected Muslim fundamentalists, reports AP.

\$1.8b foreign reserve

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other social sectors for an accelerated growth, job creation and alleviation of poverty.

Saifur Rahman declared his resolution to stimulate further the economy by taking flexible stance including adoption of pump-priming measures and said 1993 would be a good year for Bangladesh.

The Finance Minister told the representatives and ambassadors of the donor countries and agencies that the economy had picked up during the first half of the current fiscal 1992-1993 and it would grow in the coming months.

Pointing to the key macroeconomic figures and upward trends, Rahman said the government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia had been able to achieve a very sound and solid macro-economic framework which had been sent to exile during the most corrupt autocrat Ershad regime.

Listing the measures undertaken by the government to restore fiscal and financial discipline, stimulate investment, liberalise the import regime and privatise the enterprises, he said "we have achieved significant progress."

We are trying to institutionalise the things with more delegation of power and it will help further accelerate the pace of project implementation, Rahman added.

The World Bank Representative said the government was determined to increase the pace of project implementation and improve aid utilisation and had already taken action during fiscal 91-92 and 92-93 to achieve this objective.

The German Ambassador said that they had supported the present government and would continue to support it for the alleviation of poverty from the country.

The US Ambassador also highly appreciated the achievements in the macro side but expressed his worry at the possible wage hike and slow pace of the privatisation.

British Ambassador Sir Colin Imray said that his country was ready to work together with Bangladesh and suggested to evolve a safety net against wage hike.

Japanese Ambassador Toshiko Saiki said that a part of his country's aid to Bangladesh was unutilised but by now situation had improved.

Advani: Riots

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6. More than 1,200 people were killed nationwide in the week after the mosque was pulled down and Advani and five other leaders were jailed for inciting religious hatreds.

The act also led to violent retribution in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Dozens of Hindu temples were razed in Pakistan and at least seven Hindus were killed in Bangladesh.

"If Pakistan has a hand (in the riots), we will force the (federal) government to take action," Advani said, addressing street meetings in mostly Hindu neighborhoods.

He did not say what from that action would take. The BJP has long advocated preemptive strikes against Pakistan for its alleged involvement in arming and training Muslim rebels in the northern Jammu-Kashmir state.

Troops lined the streets wherever the Hindu leader went, accompanied by machine gun-toting national commandos.

In most of the six areas he visited, Advani was greeted by lusty cheers of "Hail Lord Rama" — a Hindu god who Hindus claim was born on the spot where the mosque in Ayodhya was razed.

PTI adds: Former Prime Minister, V P Singh who was on an indefinite fast at the Hutatma Chowk here since Friday last for communal harmony and peace in the riot-torn megapolis, was removed to the Bombay Hospital this afternoon, police said.

Last night Singh had turned down a request by Maharashtra Chief Minister Sudhakarrao Naik, when he visited him and urged him to break the fast.

In Varanasi Dr Abdul Salam Ansari, councillor and organising secretary of the city Congress (I) committee, along with several other Muslim leaders today quit the party protesting against the Congress policy on Ayodhya issue.

In a joint statement the leaders said they are resigning from the primary membership of the party for what they called 16 disgraceful "policy of the Rao government on Ayodhya matter causing anarchy all over the country."

Police raid RU halls

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Syndicate, ordered closure of the university for three days.

The SM, Amir Ali and the Latif halls were raided but the halls where the Shibirites allegedly took shelter did not come under the police action.

Earlier, the clashes that began at 10 Saturday night with the Shibir activists launching attack on an all-party procession continued until 3 Sunday morning, injuring hundreds. About 500 rounds of gunshots were fired and several hundred powerful crackers blasted during the clashes.

At around 2.30 in the morning, the Shibirites captured the Suhrawardy Hall. Witnesses said at least 50 rooms of the hall were ransacked, seven were burnt by the armed activists of the organisation who along with some outsiders allegedly looted students' belongings.

The Zoha Hall, known to be the stronghold of the Jamaat-backed student body, and where the Shibirites allegedly took shelter and the Suhrawardy Hall were not raided.

At least 10 with stab wounds were admitted to the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital. Three of them left the hospital. Scores of students with minor injuries received treatment at the University Medical Centre.

The medical centre sources said at least 10 Shibir activists with bullet and stab wounds were referred to the RMCH. But the injured did not go to the hospital.

After the nightly clash and the police raid in the morning, panicky general students deserted the campus. Fleeing students said in at least five halls — S M, Amir Ali, Suhrawardy, Zoha and Sher-e-Bangla — no body except the

Nirmul leaders

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leaders of the Samannaya Committee including Syed Hassan Imam, Lt. Col. (retd) Abu Osman Chowdhury, Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Shahrier Kabir, Fayez Ahmed and Principal Adah Chowdhury.

Abdur Razzak MP while addressing the meeting cautioned the people against, what he said, Pakistan-designed conspiracy to jeopardize the country's sovereignty.

Razzak accused the BNP government of working for the materialisation of the 'Pakistani intrigue' by destroying the liberation was spirit and siding with the razzakaars.

The AL leader who also represents his party in the Samannaya Committee urged his fellow leaders in the organisation to steer the body to realize the common goal of restoring the spirit of the 1971 Liberation War. It would be impossible to spoil the conspiracy against the national integrity by the defeated forces of 1971 without a solid unity of the pro-liberation forces," he remarked.

Razzak blamed the Jamaat-Freedom Party circle for destroying the country's tradition of religious amity and accused the government of instigating the fundamentalists with an ill motive to divide the nation and to cling to power.

But the workers unlawfully demanded that the whole consignment in this region be unloaded at Mongla Port. On that plea, they stopped work.

The Dock Labour Management Board today met with the workers union but failed to end the crisis.

Meanwhile, the Stevedores Association said that if the workers said not resume work by tomorrow, the Association would step working in the ships from January 19.

At present, there are two mother vessels and 22 coasters carrying about 30,000 metric tons of fertilizer imported by BADC a waiting unloading.

Mongla Port labourers strike work

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Jan 17: Dock labourers at Mongla Port have begun a wildcat strike since yesterday evening.

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