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Russia-India accord on debt, defence

NEW DELHI, Jan 28: Russian-Indian relations got a double boost on Thursday as President Boris Yeltsin announced a debt agreement and said the two countries would build factories to make military spare parts, reports AP.

Yeltsin also rejected US efforts to block the sale of a Russian cryogenic rocket that Indian officials say they want to boost a telecommunications satellite into stationary orbit.

After nearly five hours of talks with Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao, Yeltsin announced that the two countries had resolved a dispute over how much India owes Russia for military and commercial trade during the Soviet era. But he declined to disclose the exact terms.

"It was a compromise," Yeltsin told reporters as he and his wife Naina toured the Qutab Minar, an ornate 11th-century stone tower in New Delhi.

India was claiming it owed Russia \$12 billion, while Russia was insisting the debt was \$15 billion. The dispute stemmed from the sharp drop in the value of the rouble, which on Tuesday slid to a record 568 per dollar, down from 493 roubles last week.

The two countries agreed to build factories to manufacture spare parts for aeroplanes, tanks and other equipment that the Soviet government sold India at bargain rates, an Indian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Shiv Mukherjee, said at a news conference.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, India has been unable to get enough spare parts for its mostly Soviet military arsenal.

In another possible arms deal, Russia is vying with British Aerospace and Dassault of France to sell India 88 military jet trainers, a deal valued at \$500 million, according to Indian sources. The planes can also be used as short-range fighter jets.

PTI adds: Yeltsin today extended support to the Indian stand on the Kashmir issue and to the unity and integrity of the country.

The Kashmir issue figured in the talks between Yeltsin and Narasimha Rao during which the Russian leader was informed of New Delhi's position that Kashmir was an integral part of India.

AFP adds: British Prime Minister John Major wrapped up his visit to India today after failing to turn the tide in favour of British Aerospace (BAE) in its dogfight with France's Dassault to sell trainer jets to the Indian air forces.

A possible Russian bid for the multi-million dollar contract to supply India with Advanced Jet Trainers (AJTs) re-surfaced meanwhile as Russian President Boris Yeltsin arrived here hot on the heels of the British Premier.

India's air force needs to replace the trainers that are presently being used to convert pilots to the latest fighter planes, but New Delhi has been holding back on awarding the contract because of a lack of funding.

India also hopes to acquire Mig-36s during Yeltsin's visit, but experts say that without an AJT to train the pilots the swingwing Soviet-built jets would be useless.

India aims to buy some 50 AJTs at a cost of up to 700 million dollars in its second largest military deal since 1986, when Sweden's Nobel Industries bagged a 1.3 billion dollar contract to supply artillery pieces.

Separate action programmes announced

Death of DU student leads to storming of DMCH

Star Report

The death of a Dhaka University student led to the assault on a doctor and a rampage in the Dhaka Medical College Hospital in the capital Thursday.

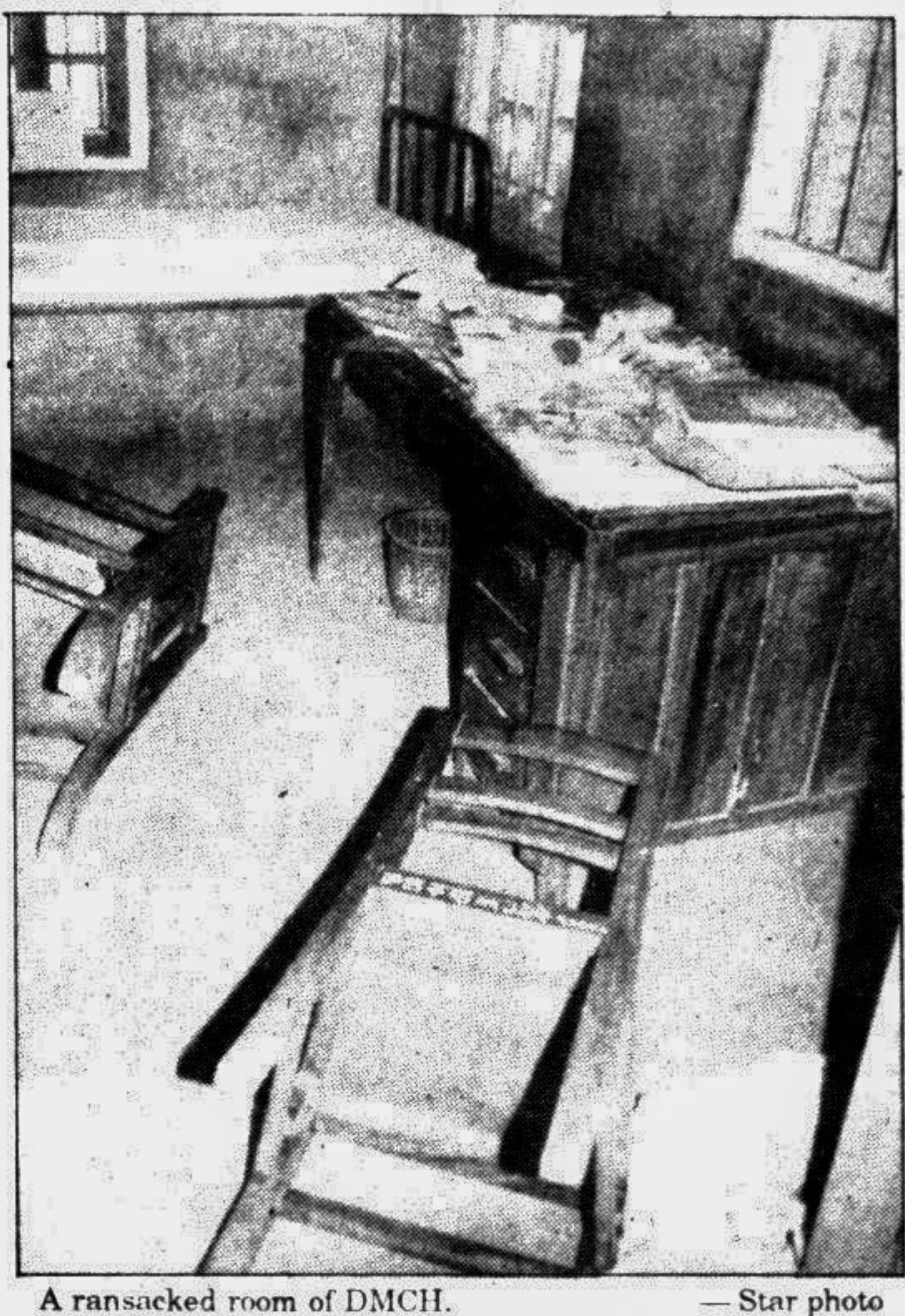
Hundreds of DU students staged a noisy demonstration in the DMCH premises Thursday alleging negligence in the treatment of injured Yusuf Ali Sheikh, a third year student of the Arabic Department.

Sheikh died after being shifted to the hospital. He had earlier been hit by an express train near the Khilkhet crossing in the Cantonment area in Dhaka.

He was knocked down by the train at about 9 am while crossing the railtrack to catch the University shuttle bus 'Khonika'.

Doctors, nurses and other staff of the hospital will wear black badges today (Friday) and observe a half-day token strike tomorrow (Saturday) to protest.

See Page 12 Col 6



A ransacked room of DMCH. — Star photo

Malaysia scraps visa restrictions

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 28: Malaysia has scrapped a rule setting restrictions on visas for visitors from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, a high-ranking official said Thursday, reports AP.

Works, Posts and Energy Minister Sanglimuthu Samy Velu told reporters the decision to withdraw the rule, introduced in December, was made at a Cabinet meeting on Wednesday.

The new rule had required people from those four countries to get sponsors here before applying for visas at Malaysian Missions.

See Page 12 Col 7

UAE bans child jockeys for camel race

ABU DHABI, Jan 28: The government of the United Arab Emirates took measures Wednesday to ban the use of child jockeys in camel racing, reports AP.

New rules require that jockeys must not weigh under 45 kilograms (100 pounds). No age limit was given, but the weight restrictions would effectively rule out children under 12.

See Page 12 Col 2



FACE-OFF IN DUJ: Zahurul Haq (left) and Shahjahan Min, top leaders of two camps of the Dhaka Union of Journalists talk during their visit to The Daily Star unit last night prior to the DUJ annual general meetings today. While the general members press for unity, the leaders have kept apart giving rise to an overwhelming question — will the petty gripe wipe the smiles off the leaders' faces and turn the face-off into crossfire today? — Star photo

Misgivings on Rohingya issue disappearing, says Mostafiz

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman returned here from a week-long visit to the United States during which he had talks at the United Nations on the 'Rohingya' refugees issue and bilateral discussions at Washington with the new United States administration, reports BSS.

"The visit has been a great success," he told newsmen at airport and said the UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali was expected to visit Bangladesh at the earliest opportunity.

Replying to questions, he said whatever misgivings had developed on the 'Rohingya' issue was now disappearing and the repatriation issue had again taken a positive turn.

See Page 12 Col 2

Shun politics of hartal, confrontation: PM

DINAJPUR, Jan 28: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today called for shunning politics of confrontation, hartal, terrorism and vehicles destruction to create a peaceful atmosphere so that the government could continue its development process, reports BSS.

Addressing a huge public meeting at Bara Maidan here the Prime Minister said work and only work should be the prime task of all against the hartal, siege, damage of vehicles and terrorism, being perpetrated by a section of opposition parties.

She said those who give frequent hartal calls on flimsy grounds and threat to paralyse the Jatya Sangsad cannot be the friends of the people.

"They (opposition) highly talk of democracy and don't believe in it," Begum Zia said adding that all of us should see why the hartals were being called frequently and whose interests were being served.

The Prime Minister urged the people to involve themselves in the ongoing development process and said the creation of road blockage by calling hartal and closing schools, colleges could not help bring development to this poor nation.

She regretted that we often go for criticising and shifting responsibilities to others shoulders for any faults instead of dedicating ourselves to more work.

Presided over by Khurshid Jahan Huq MP, president Dinajpur district BNP, the meeting was addressed among others by Education Minister Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar, Syed Shahidul Huq Jamal MP, See Page 12 Col 1

Indian statement undesirable: Salam Talukdar

BNP Secretary General Barrister Abdus Salam Talukdar yesterday termed the Indian statement issued following the resolution adopted in the Bangladesh Jatya Sangsad regarding the Babri Mosque as regrettable and undesirable, reports BSS.

In a statement Thursday he said the Indian government, all democracy minded parties and Indian people at large themselves condemned the construction of a temple at the demolished Babri Mosque site. Besides several countries and millions of people throughout the world.

As the consequences of the incident, not only hundreds of innocent Indian people lost their lives, but it also caused, damaged to property in some other countries.

Talukdar said as the government of India should see why the hartals were being called frequently and whose interests were being served.

The Prime Minister urged the people to involve themselves in the ongoing development process and said the creation of road blockage by calling hartal and closing schools, colleges could not help bring development to this poor nation.

She regretted that we often go for criticising and shifting responsibilities to others shoulders for any faults instead of dedicating ourselves to more work.

Presided over by Khurshid Jahan Huq MP, president Dinajpur district BNP, the meeting was addressed among others by Education Minister Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar, Syed Shahidul Huq Jamal MP, See Page 12 Col 1

NEWS BRIEFS

Dhaka team to join UNOMOZ

Bangladesh is sending a 27-member team of army officers to join the United Nations Operations in Mozambique (UNOMOZ) at the call of the United Nations, an ISPR press release said yesterday, reports BSS.

PM visits Harun Mollah's residence

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia visited the Mirpur residence of former BNP parliament member Harunur Rashid Mollah on the occasion of his chehelum here yesterday evening. She spent some time with the family of late Mollah and talked to his widow and children, reports BSS.

Kamal goes to London

Democratic Forum leader, Dr Kamal Hossain left Dhaka yesterday for London to attend a meeting of the Commonwealth Human Rights Advisory Commission starting on Saturday. He is expected to return by 6 February, reports BSS.

Biman's Calcutta flights rescheduled

The departure time of the Bangladesh Biman flights BG 091 and BG 095 bound for Calcutta today has been rescheduled at 20.00 hrs and 23.15 hrs instead of 14.40 hrs and 19.50 hrs respectively, reports BSS.

Golam Hafiz leaves for London

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz left Dhaka last night for London on way to Uganda to attend the thirty-second session of Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC) to be held in Kampala from February 1-6, reports BSS.

BNP, AL chiefs plan 3-day Mirpur tours

By Staff Correspondent

Campaigning in the Mirpur by-election scheduled for February 3 is expected to get a further boost with the chiefs of the ruling BNP and the opposition Awami League each planning three-day visits to the constituency.

The Awami League President Sheikh Hasina starts her visit today (Friday) while the BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's tour begins tomorrow (Saturday).

According to sources in the two parties, Hasina would address six public meetings between January 29 and 31 in different parts of Mirpur to seek votes for the AL candidate Kamal Ahmed Majumder.

During her visit, Hasina is likely to talk to and exchange opinions with a cross-section of people in a bid to convince the electorate.

According to AL leader's itinerary, she will address two public rallies today — one at Baluaghat High School ground at 2:00 pm and the other at Kamarpara School field, Harirampur Union, at 3:00 pm.

She is scheduled to address a rally at Upashahar Government Primary School at 3:00 pm and another at Lalmatir Math at 4:00 pm tomorrow.

On the concluding day of her three-day election campaign, Hasina would address two public meetings — one at Gabtali playground at 3:00 pm and the other at number 10 Golchakkar at 4:00 pm.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia begins her three-day campaign for the BNP candidate in the by-poll Syed Mohammad Mohsin by addressing a public meeting at number 10 Golchakkar tomorrow afternoon and concludes her publicity tour through leading a procession on February 1.

See Page 12 Col 3

Help ensure free fair poura polls: CEC

The Chief Election Commissioner, Justice Mohammad Abdur Rouf, yesterday called upon the leaders and workers of all patriotic political parties to rise above narrow interest and help ensure free and fair pourashava elections to uphold national dignity, reports BSS.

Addressing the nation over radio and television on the eve of elections to 91 pourashavas out of a total 106, Justice Rouf said the Election Commission was determined to ensure free and fair elections to pourashavas to be held on January 30. Our main objective is to carry forward the democratic process to institutionalise democracy through free and fair elections, he said.

In this context, the Chief Election Commissioner referred to the last general elections and by-elections to the vacant seats, referendum and union parishad polls which, he said, were free and fair.

See Page 12 Col 4

One killed in Comilla poura poll violence

By Staff Correspondent

COMILLA, Jan 28: Tension gripped in the town following the killing of a person in a pourashava election violence here today (Thursday), police and witnesses said.

Twenty six-year-old rickshaw-puller Abdur Raqib was shot and killed by unidentified gunman at Uttarcharhar area this afternoon when he was protesting ransacking of a election campaign office of chairman candidate Jashimuddin, they said.

Jashimuddin, a candidate of Ganotantri Party is backed by local Awami League and other parties.

Later, in a press conference leaders from All-party Alliance blamed the armed activists of ruling BNP for the killing while the rickshawpullers' association called a day-long strike in the town on Friday.

Local leaders of AL, Communist Party, Five-party See Page 12 Col 8

ESCAP executive secretary tells Star Consensus on economic issues vital

By S Y Bakht

National consensus on major economic issues will greatly accelerate the implementation of the newly formulated industrial policy of the country, said Raifeuddin Ahmed, the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP), yesterday.

After a policy is approved there are other subsequent steps which have to be taken, he said, and if this process is undertaken in an atmosphere of national consensus it stands a much better chance of success.

In an interview with The Daily Star, Raifeuddin also dwelt on the problems of implementation of policies experienced by the countries of the region, role of ESCAP in promoting the development of the private sector, future priority areas for the Bangkok-based organisation and also about the ongoing changes in the UN system.

The new industrial policy adopted in Bangladesh, he noted, indicates the commitment of the government towards greater encouragement of the private sector and initiates the process for change and for restructuring.

The policy also encourages an export oriented industrialisation rather than the earlier emphasis on industrialisation to substitute imports adopted by many developing nations, he added.

Just the adoption of the policy does not change the circumstances, he observed, there are other steps which have to be taken.

"So, the policy which has been agreed upon has to be given practical content by careful assessment of existing legislations in consultation with the private sector and, of course, the labour sector, because these are the two partners in the joint endeavour of industrialisation in the country."

The steps which have already been taken have to be broadened, he pointed out, and the existing laws which have an impact on industrial development need to be looked into carefully. "And the public administration, namely the bureaucracy, also needs to adapt itself to the new situation."

Furthermore, the managerial skills need to be upgraded and greater facilities must be

See Page 12 Col 7

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