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VOL. III NO. 26 REGD. NO. DA 781

The Daily Star

MAGH 27, 1399 BS,

DHAKA TUESDAY FEBRUARY 9, 1993

SHABAN 16, 1413 HIJRI

12 PAGES: PRICE TAKA 4.00

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Rao for SAARC summit every two years

NEW DELHI, Feb 8: The Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, yesterday supported a suggestion to hold the SAARC meeting once in two years instead of meeting every year, which, he felt, was becoming 'rather difficult', reports PTI.

Interviewed on BBC World Service, Rao said instead of the existing 'structured meeting' once a year, the leaders of SAARC countries should meet anytime in one of the SAARC capitals.

He did not agree with a questioner that SAARC was dying a slow death. It is not dying a slow death. It is quite alive. It will be more alive as we go along, he said.

Without naming Pakistan, he said recent attempts by some of the SAARC members to bring in bilateral and trilateral issues and, thereby violating SAARC ground rules, had vitiated the atmosphere.

"If we stick to ground rules,

there will be no problem," he said.

The Prime Minister said there was some hesitation among SAARC members to enter the field of economic cooperation in the region.

He said there were some 'hurdles' in enhancing regional economic cooperation and there was need to overcome them.

Narasimha Rao on Sunday also rejected the proposal for a five-nation summit to resolve the nuclear issue in South Asia, saying that the matter when discussed between India and Pakistan will lead nowhere.

Rao said India refused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which was going to be reviewed (in 1995).

The NPT should become applicable to all, said Rao emphasising India's demand that the nuclear problem could not

be solved on a regional basis.

The problem was global in nature and solutions had to be global, he said.

He recalled the plan of action proposed in 1988 by the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, which called for a full scale and total nuclear disarmament within a specific time-frame.

Rao said partial measures would not help in tackling the disarmament issue.

Reuter adds: Rao said his economic reform programme had been neglected because of Hindu-Muslim violence.

"Our attention was necessarily diverted to this problem of internal peace," he said in reply to a viewer's question.

"We have come out of the worst part of it and we have now gone back to the economic agenda," Rao added.

The violence, in which more than 2,000 people died, began when Hindu militants

demolished a 16th century mosque in the northern town to Ayodhya on December 6.

Rao said that, although there had been "a temporary slowing down" of the reforms, the economy had resumed top priority.

"We are making up for the lost time," he said. "I have no doubt it will come back to its original speed."

Rao launched a near-total reversal of India's protectionist policies when he took office in June 1991, throwing open the economy to foreign investment and dismantling bureaucratic controls on business.

Some newspapers have said the programme has lost much of its momentum.

The phone-in was the first to have been broadcast live worldwide on BBC World Service radio and television and it was also beamed directly to India in Bengali and Hindi on radio only.

Five including three Sarbaharamen killed in Gopalganj

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, Feb 8: Five persons including three members of the outlawed Sarbahara Party (Quamrul Group) were killed at Kotalipara thana of the district Saturday and Sunday, police and witnesses said.

The Sarbaharamen were beaten to death by the villagers. Two others were shot dead by the Sarbahara workers during an exchange of fire with police.

The agitating villagers in their thousands also gouged the eyes of all the seven Sarbahara Party members who had demanded Taka 50,000 from the Chairman of Kandi Union Parishad.

The Sarbaharamen killed were identified as Jahangir (35) of Bisharkandi village under Banoripara thana, Delwar Bepari (35) of Shatla village, Uzirpur thana and Quamrul

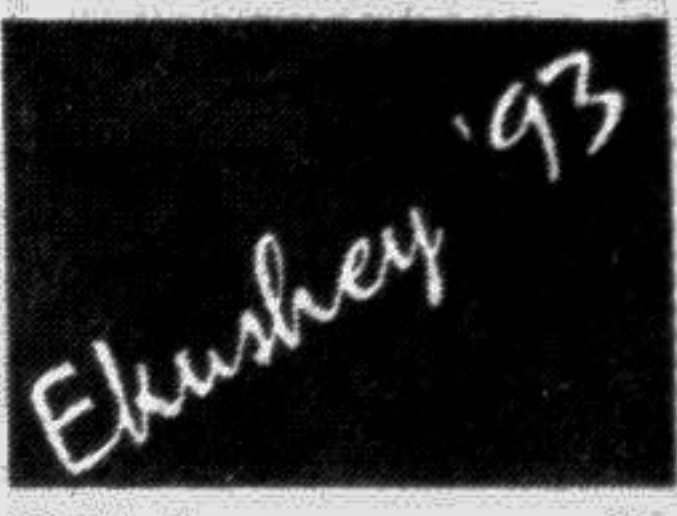
(40), Nayakandi village, Banoripara, police said.

The two villagers killed in the incident were Krishna Kanta Biswas (30) and Binoy Kanta Biswas, both of Dharabashal village, they added.

According to police and villagers, the seven-member Sarbahara team went to the house of Kandi UP Chairman Monon Boiraj at Dharabashal village at 9 am Saturday and demanded the amount.

The Chairman, however, managed to flee from the scene on the plea that he was going to the bank to draw the money.

On receipt of the news from the Chairman, several thousand villagers rushed to the spot and started chasing the Sarbaharamen who in turn began firing in a bid to escape See Page 12 Col 3



Visitors crowd book fair

Star Report

Bangla Academy premises was crowded with thousands of visitors on the eighth day of the Amar Ekushey Granth-amela Monday.

The government holiday on the occasion of the holy Shabe-Barat yesterday might have contributed to the increase in the number of visitors.

As part of the Ekushey programmes, Bangla Academy organised a discussion on two more books in the afternoon. The books are Rashid Haider edited "Smriti 1971 (Fifth part)" (memories of 1971) and Ahmed Rafiq's "Bhasha Andolaner Smriti O Kichhu Jigyasha" (memories of language movement and some See Page 12 Col 6

Mirpur by-election results AL creating confusion knowingly: Talukder



Salam Talukder at press conference. —Star photo

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder yesterday said that the Awami League made the "baseless" allegations about manipulation of the Mirpur by-election results "knowingly" to create "unnecessary confusion".

Addressing a crowded press conference at the party's Naya Paltan central office, he also noted that re-polling could only be done when polling was suspended or postponed in a centre, while citing the relevant law under the Election Act.

Terming the charges raised by the AL "unnecessary issues", Talukder, also the LGRD and Cooperatives Minister, refuted allegations against the ruling party of poll result manipulation and media coup.

Noting that the Chief Election Commissioner, politicians, diplomats and journalists had all termed the by-election free, fair and peaceful, the BNP Secretary General said: "There is no confusion as far as the See Page 12 Col 7



Devotees offering munajat at a city mosque on the holy night of Shab-e-Barat. (Story on Page 12) —Star photo

134 killed as planes collide over Tehran

TEHRAN, Feb 8: An Iranian airliner carrying Muslim pilgrims collided with a military plane and exploded Monday, killing all 134 people aboard just minutes after they left Tehran's main airport, civil aviation authorities said, reports AP.

Witnesses said passengers were blown out of the plane after the nose of the military plane crashed into the tail of the passenger liner, Iran's Islamic Republic News Agency reported.

Most of the wreckage of flight 962 fell in a 500 square metre (600-square-yard) open area on a military base, IRNA said. It missed heavily populated areas that have sprouted up around Tehran's notoriously dangerous Mehrabad airport.

The airliner was bound for the holy city of Mashhad when the accident occurred at 10:15 am (0605 GMT) in clear skies. All 119 passengers and crew of 13, including a Russian pilot, were killed, IRNA cited Iran's civil aviation organisation as reporting.

No information was given about the crew of the Russian-designed Sukhoi military

plane, but IRNA reported that the pilot and co-pilot were believed killed. Earlier, IRNA cited witnesses as saying they saw one crewman parachuting.

One witness said that two military jets were flying near the Russian-built Tupolev airliner when one of them hit its tail. Two explosions were heard, the sky filled with smoke, and passengers and pieces of the plane tumbled to earth, IRNA reported.

Hasina hints at ousting BNP govt

By Staff Correspondent

Once the government's anti-people activities go beyond tolerance the AL will apply all means necessary to oust the BNP from power, Sheikh Hasina told this an AL Central Working Committee meeting Sunday morning.

Out of a total of 61 members of the committee, 32 were present at the meeting where the AL chief Sheikh Hasina was the main speaker. See Page 12 Col 6

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
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বিজ্ঞপ্তি
 ১৫ই ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৯২ তারিখ হইতে সরকার ৩ বৎসর মেয়াদী জাতীয় বিনিয়োগ বণ্ড বাজারে ছাড়িয়াছেন। আয়কর অধ্যাদেশের ৪৫ অথবা ৪৬ ধারার অধীনে যে সকল করদাতা কর অবকাশ ভোগ করিতেছেন তাহাদের করমুক্ত আয়ের কমপক্ষে ১৫% এই বণ্ডে বিনিয়োগ করিবার শর্ত রহিয়াছে। সংশ্লিষ্ট আয় বৎসর সমাপ্ত হইবার ৯ মাসের মধ্যে এই বিনিয়োগ সম্পন্ন করিতে হইবে। যে সকল করদাতা এখনও এই বিনিয়োগ করিতে পারেন নাই তাহারা ৩০শে জুন, ১৯৯৩-এর মধ্যে উল্লিখিত শর্ত পূরণকল্পে এই বণ্ডের মাধ্যমে বিনিয়োগ সম্পন্ন করিতে পারিবেন। উল্লেখ্য, এই শর্ত পরিপালনে ব্যর্থ হইলে কর অবকাশের সুবিধা বাতিলযোগ্য হইবে। এই বণ্ড বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক এবং সোনালী ব্যাংকের সকল টেক্সটাইল শাখা হইতে ক্রয় করা ও ভাঙ্গানো যাইবে। প্রয়োজনে, এ বিষয়ে অতিরিক্ত তথ্য জাতীয় রাজস্ব বোর্ডের কর অনুবিভাগ হইতে জানা যাইতে পারে।
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RMC closed sine die 2 more RU students succumb to injuries

By Staff Correspondent

Two more Rajshahi University students injured in Saturday's clash have died in hospital raising the death toll to five and generating fresh tension in the town.

Meanwhile, Rajshahi Government University College and Rajshahi Medical College have been closed.

Tapan Chandra Roy and Amjad Hossain Nutan succumbed to their multiple stab and bullet injuries at the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) early Sunday and Monday noon respectively, hospital sources said, adding that following the death several hundred people brought out a procession in the city violating authority's ban.

Tapan was an activist of Bangladesh Chhatra Union while Amjad was a worker of Jattiyatabadi Chhatra Dal(JCD), both had been in coma since See Page 12 Col 3

Joint chamber accord during Mahathir's visit

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

The national chambers of Bangladesh and Malaysia are set to sign an accord to found a joint chamber during Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's February 12-14 visit, officials said.

They said that the visit, aimed at boosting bilateral trade and investment, was expected to yield significant results towards better cooperation in these areas.

His meeting with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Saturday and talks at other levels will deal with such issues as setting up of joint ventures in private sector, renewal of the bilateral cultural agreement, assistance in the field of sports, cooperation in agriculture, amendment to the existing civil aviation agreement and employment of Bangladeshi labour in Malaysia.

In some of these areas, agreements, which are being worked out, may be signed. The Malaysian Prime Minister, accompanied by spouse Detin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah binte Mohamad Ali, will be leading an 18-member official delegation and also bringing along a team of businessmen and investors who will hold meetings with local chamber leaders to discuss prospective joint ventures and investment in Bangladesh, the officials said.

The official delegation includes Foreign Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, International Trade and Industry Minister Rafidah Aziz, Deputy Minister in Prime Minister's Department Abdul Hamid Othman.

On February 13, Mahathir will inaugurate the Malaysia Trade Centre in the city sponsored by the Malaysia-Bangladesh Venture Ltd (MBV), a joint venture company set up by some entrepreneurs of the two countries. See Page 12 Col 7

Rohingya issue: MOU with UNHCR likely today

Bangladesh and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees are likely to reach an accord today on the welfare and repatriation of the Rohingya refugees, reports UNB.

Werner Blatter, Director at the UNHCR Asian Bureau, will hold the second round of his talks with the Foreign Ministry officials today before signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The formal agreement will be signed during UNHCR chief Sadako Ogata's planned visit to Bangladesh, officials indicated here yesterday.

Usha Jute Spinners — in Closure under Section 6(6) of the Employment of Labour (Standing Orders) Act, 1965 of the Bangladesh Govt., being victim of unfortunate situation, draws kind attention of the elected democratic Govt.

It is deeply regretting that due to instigating speeches and threats at the mill gate meeting on 10/01/93 and its continuation forced the situation of the mill gradually deteriorate.

In spite of our all possible efforts and appeals to different ministries of Govt., we failed to save this 100% export oriented mill having 600 workers plus staffs and officers from virtual closure. Noteworthy that export during 1991-92 was 7.4 crore taka and projected export for 1992-93 is worth 9.5 crore taka. Threats, terrorism and anarchism of unruly elements in and around mill area refrained workers from the work resulting downward production.

Production of the mill on Saturday 30/01/93 came down to 0.82 MT and Sunday and Monday to nil against 11.00 MT (App) daily production.

Being victim of the situation, management was compelled to declare 'closure' from 02/02/93. It is a matter of interest that the said meeting was held in the name of boosting development and production, sponsored by local union parishad chairman and chief guest was honourable Member of Parliament. We have no alternative other than begging for Govt's firm action for saving the industry from such activities.

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