

Yeltsin's power

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the people," the lawmakers said in their sharply worded "Appeal to Russian Citizens."

The Congress ended the sweeping powers that lawmakers granted Yeltsin after the failed coup by Communist hard-liners against the Soviet state in August 1991. Yeltsin used the powers to accelerate market and democratic reforms and to challenge the central Soviet government, which collapsed in December 1991.

The 1,033-member Congress, elected in 1990 before the Communist collapse, consistently opposed market reforms, and never legalized the private ownership of land. Hard-liners in the Congress managed to harness growing discontent with economic hardships, including a 20 per cent drop in production and 2,000 per cent annual inflation rate last year.

Referring to Constitutional Court decisions, the appeal said the "main law of the country has been constantly violated, many of the presidential decrees contradict it, and this is doing more and more damage to the Russian state."

"Bitter experience has brought deputies to the conclusion that Russia must give up extraordinary measures and powers. Society can develop normally only if all statesmen and institutions of power, political parties and movements, each citizen, strictly observe the constitution," it said.

Before adjourning, the lawmaker turned down Yeltsin's plan for an April 25 referendum. They said such a vote would have "dangerous consequences for the state and territorial integrity of the Russian Federation."

Khasbulatov and several leaders of Russia's autonomous republics and regions spoke against the referendum, warning it could lead to the breakup of Russia.

"Most regions say, 'For God's sake, stop it! Don't do it! Don't rock the boat!'" pleaded Ivan Chetin, a representative of the Komi autonomous republic in north-central Russia.

Yeltsin said Friday he would "assume responsibility for this referendum and for keeping order during it."

But Khasbulatov shot back Saturday: "There will be no responsibility on the president, or on me, if a breakup happens. The responsibility would be borne by the people."

Then, in a wary reference to Mikhail Gorbachev, who presided over the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Khasbulatov added: "We have already had one president who said he assumed responsibility."

On Friday, the lawmakers sharply cut Yeltsin's powers by scrapping a deal they had struck with him in December that preserved some of his authority.

Yeltsin has said he needs the powers to implement reforms over the heads of Soviet-era apparatchiks. Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Shakhrai said the restrictions mean "the end of the peaceful transition of power."

On Saturday, lawmakers shelved the question of whether to have early, simultaneous elections of the president and parliament. They voted 688-144, with 14 abstentions, to have the smaller standing legislature, the Supreme Soviet, take up the issue at a later session.

Yeltsin has agreed to early elections, but not to be held at the same time, while Khasbulatov wants simultaneous voting. Elections for parliament currently are scheduled for 1995 and for president in 1996.

Most public opinion polls have indicated greater popularity for Yeltsin than the Congress.



Leaders of Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) called on Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina at her Minto Road residence yesterday. — Star photo

Ministers

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Hannan Shah communicated with neither the BJMC officials nor the jute mills leaders until 9:30 pm about his absence from the meeting, scheduled at the BJMC at 8 pm.

The jute leaders waiting at the Workers Party office until 9:30 pm went back disappointed.

The jute leaders prior to leaving the WP office, where they were scheduled to receive the Minister's telephone call, contacted the BJMC Chairman Moniruddin Ahmed who also expressed his ignorance about the minister's arrival.

The Chairman replying to a jute leader's query said, "I am also waiting as you are."

A jute leader Shah Alam commenting on the matter told the paper, "The Minister couldn't have done so if he had had the minimum sense of courtesy."

"Most of our leaders from outside Dhaka had to cancel their journeys home to attend the meeting. Some of them even collected their bus or train tickets and now they would have to suffer", Shah Alam informed.

However, a BSS report at midnight last night said, Jute Minister ASM Hannan Shah yesterday called upon the labour leaders to call off their proposed strike on March 15 and 16 considering the overall situation of jute industry and the present economic condition of the country.

The Minister made the call while he was talking to the labour leaders from different parts of the country at (BJMC) office.

Leaders of Patkal Sramik Sangram Parishad will meet the Jute Minister today at 11 am at BJMC head office to find ways to avert the strike.

No further move

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mandated that the recommended minimum wages be declared null and void to give way to a new Wages Commission that will consider the wage hikes in the context of productivity.

The government has assured the employers that it will not bow to the illogical demands of the trade unions. But the trade unions, citing economic hardships of their workers and the government's pledge to implement the minimum wages have decided to go ahead with the strike.

On Saturday they met with the Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, leader of the Five-Party Alliance, Ganotantik Chhatra Oikya leaders, garments workers' leaders and transport union leaders to mobilize support for the strike.

Sheikh Hasina and others backed the trade unions in their strike, labour leaders said.

The SKOP also held a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club and then marched the streets shouting slogans in support of its demands and strike.

Sheikh Hasina told the labour leaders, who met her at the Awami League central office yesterday morning, "We stood by you in the past in your movement to realise the just demands of the workers. You will always find us in your struggle," she added.

Sheikh Hasina called for immediate implementation of the government-SKOP agreement.

The labour leaders told Hasina that their 5-point demand was incorporated in the Joint Declaration of the three

alliances but that the present government had not taken any effective steps to meet them.

On the contrary, they alleged that the government had repeatedly violated the agreements signed with the unions, resorted to repression and termination of workers.

Extending her support to the workers demands, Hasina accused the government of not implementing the agreements and said that the government's indifference and violation of agreement is responsible for the present unrest in industrial sector.

Hasina was accompanied by AL leaders Zillur Rahmap, Amir Hossain Amu, Abdul Jallil, Ataur Rahman Kaiser, Dr Mizanul Haque, MP, Shahjahan Khan, MP, and others.

The labour leaders present included Abdus Salam Khan, Dr Wajedul Islam, Nurul Islam, Abdullah Sarkar, Fazlul Haq Mantu and Abdul Matin Master of the SKOP and Abul Bashir of Patkal Sramik Karmachari Sangram Parishad.

Meanwhile, the SKOP in a statement yesterday reiterated its call to implement the Wages Commission proposals, announce national minimum wages, remove crisis in the industrial sector and release workers, arrested under the Anti-Terrorism Act on the basis of government-labour accords, signed earlier, before the planned March 15-16 shutdown.

If the government failed to do so, it would be held responsible for any consequences in this regard, the statement warned and called on all concerned to make the 48-hour strike an all-out success.

Jasimuddin's anniversary of death today

The 17th death anniversary of poet Jasimuddin will be observed here and elsewhere in the country today in a befitting manner, reports BSS.

Bangla Academy, Jasimuddin Academy and Kabi Jasimuddin Hall of Dhaka University will hold discussions on the life and work of the late poet. Milad mahfils have also been organised on the occasion.

The family of the late poet will hold a milad mahfil and Quran khwani at 10, Kabi Jasimuddin Road, Kamalapur here in the afternoon.

Bangladesh Television and Radio Bangladesh will put up special programme on Pallikabi. All regional stations of Radio Bangladesh will relay the programme simultaneously.

Quran khwani and milad mahfil will also be held at the mazar of the late poet at Ambikapur of Faridpur District and at Ansaruddin High School there which was established by Kabi Jasimuddin.

Kabi Jasimuddin Smriti Sangha at Sadar (east) of Noakhali and Kabi Jasimuddin Pathagar at Companiganj, Noakhali will hold milad mahfil and Quran khwani on the occasion.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Lokgiti Shilpi Goshthi at a meeting here yesterday announced the names of the recipients of Kabi Jasimuddin Memorial Award-1993.

The recipients are: Dr Mohammad Abdur Rashid — management, D P Barua — journalism, Ataul Karim — social service, Manzur-e-Mowla — literature, Mohammad Abu Taher — banking, Nazrul Mohammad — industry, Deenul Islam — education, Abdul Latif and Dilruba Khanam — music, Shukla Sarkar — dance, Kazi Abu Zafar Siddiqui — TV personality, Tarana Halim — television acting and Mahmood Khatun and Zinat — film acting.

Scimiter case

Charge framing against Lakhani deferred

By Court Correspondent

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Saturday deferred the date for charge framing to April 10 against the Scimiter official arrested last year.

Muslim Lakhani, the Vice President of Scimiter Oil Exploration Company appeared before the court yesterday and the deferment order was granted on the plea that his Chief Counsellor Barrister Rafiqul Haque was presently away from the country.

Lakhani, a Pakistani national was arrested in connection with producing government documents fraudulently.

Shelali Murder

Salma's bail prayer rejected

By Court Correspondent

The bail prayer of Umme Salma Islam, an airhostess of Bangladesh Biman who was arrested on charge of murdering her maid, was rejected by the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Saturday.

Advocate Golam Sarwar submitted before the Court that her bail is essential for breastfeeding her year-old baby at home.

Salma, whose husband lives abroad, was arrested from her Mirpur residence Wednesday in connection with the unnatural death of Shelali.

Later, the accused made a confessional statement before the magistrate about the killing.

BDF confce date shifted

Bangladesh Democratic Forum will announce its Preparatory Committee for National Grand Conference on March 20 instead of March 15 in a press conference at Dr Kamal Hossain's 7/C New Baily Road residence, says a press release.

Special adviser

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Special adviser would call on the Prime Minister shortly after her arrival in Dhaka.

On Monday morning Madame Lauvergeon will visit Jamalpur to see a flood control project.

The same day she will call on the President.

The Foreign Minister, A S M Mostafizur Rahman will host a dinner in her honour tonight.

The foreign office said that her programme includes call on the Foreign Minister, the Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation, and the State Minister for Irrigation and Flood Control.

The Midnight File

3 Kashmir leaders shot dead

SRINAGAR (India), Mar 13: Security forces today shot dead three leaders of two Muslim militant groups fighting for the secession of Jammu and Kashmir state from India, state government officials said. Both encounters took place in Srinagar, which is the summer capital of the northern border state, the officials said. Hilal Ahmed, 45, chief commander of the Jamaitul Mujahideen, and Tabasulul Islam, Ahmed's self-styled military advisor, were killed in an exchange of gunfire with security forces in the Noorbath area of downtown Srinagar, reports AFP.

President Diouf re-elected

DAKAR, Mar 13: Senegal's constitutional court announced today that President Abou Diouf was re-elected in elections three weeks ago. The result of the February 21 poll was delayed after the opposition claimed Diouf's ruling Socialist Party had rigged on a major scale, reports Reuter.

Snow blankets Washington

WASHINGTON, Mar 13: A major snowstorm battered the capital on Saturday, closing airports, snarling roads, canceling classes and shutting down the museums of the national Smithsonian Institution. The massive winter storm was part of a weather system that barreled up the East Coast early Saturday, spawning tornadoes that left at least seven dead, reports AP.

Eight JP leaders granted bail

Eight Jatiya Party leaders and workers charged with unleashing violence under the Anti-terrorism Act were granted bail yesterday, reports UNB.

Sirajul Hossain Khan, Syed Abu Hossain Babla, Mahbul Haque Dolan, Saifur Rahman, Taiyebur Rahman, Iqbal Hossain Raju, Shah Mastin Billah and Harun-ur-Rashid were enlarged on bail when they surrendered to the court.

They were sued on December 24 by the OC of Tejgaon thana for damaging vehicles, attacking police, blocking roads and creating anarchy by blasting cocktails.

They surrendered yesterday morning before the court of District and Sessions Judge and prayed bail.

Barrister Moudud Ahmed appeared for the accused. After hearing the petitioners, Sessions Judge Nasrudin Ahmed ordered their ad-interim bail.

Two women held with heroin

By Staff Correspondent

Kotwali police arrested two women and recovered 200 grams of heroin from a house in Kasattuli area of the capital late Friday.

Police said that they arrested Farida Begum and Asia Begum after they had recovered the drugs from the house.

The police on a secret tip searched the house of the women.

The arrested were produced before the court, said a press release of the police.

71 new garments industries set up in 2 months

By Staff Correspondent

A total of 71 new garments industries were installed during the last two months, Bangladesh garments manufacturers and exporters association (BGMEA) sources said Saturday.

The said that 1354 units were set up in the year 1992 while the number rose to 1425 until February this year.

However, 50 out of the total 71 newly set up industries still did not go for production, the sources said.

Most of the new apparel industries were woven units and these worked on sub-contract basis for the larger ones, the BGMEA sources added.

According to BGMEA, the country's garments sector earned Taka 5302 crore in foreign exchange during 1992.

PM: Fertilizer

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could be produced in Bangladesh.

They also mentioned that 'Katabogh' and 'Kalitira', two high quality rice, were being produced in the country. Rice Research Institute has already evolved another high variety rice B-26, they added.

The Prime Minister reminded the officials of the bumper rice production this year and asked them to carry out their jobs properly to help continue the nation's efforts to attain food security.

Mymensingh clash

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authorities, eight of the injured, with rubber bullet wounds, were admitted to the hospital while a number of others were released after first-aid treatment.

The rail and road communication from the district town remained suspended till 2:30 pm.

The Mymensingh Jute Mills was closed in October last year and the authorities attempted to post a lay-off notice last week but workers thwarted the attempt.

Witnesses said that several thousand workers, of the nearby jute mills, and students belonging to Chhatra League and Chhatra Union, blocked the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway near the Shambaganj Bridge at around 9 am.

Police lathicharged to break-up the barricade. Later, the protesters re-grouped and gathered near the railway station.

Witnesses added, the protesters damaged nine railway track points, 10 motor points and five underground signal points about 200 metres from the station.

The processionists then proceeded to the railway station and damaged the stranded inter-city Ekota Express at around 10 am, witnesses said.

Aminul Huq new NSI DG

By Staff Correspondent

Brigadier Abu Jafar Md Aminul Huq, Bir Bikram (ret'd) has been appointed Director General of the National Security Intelligence Directorate. According to an official announcement, Brigadier Aminul Huq, who was serving as the Director General of the Anti-Corruption Bureau on a contractual basis, has been appointed to the new post as DG of NSI under the same contract with the status of a Secretary.

DUTA

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at an emergency meeting of the Association with DUTA President Dr. K M Mohsin in the chair, a press release said.

Referring to proposed changes in the Dhaka University Ordinance-1973, DUTA suggested that opinion of teachers should be taken into consideration before bringing about any change in the ordinance.

DUTA has already taken necessary steps for taking opinion of the teachers in this regard, the release said.

Editor : S. M. Ali

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Published by the Editor on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed by him at The Sangbad Ltd., 36 Parana Paltan, Dhaka. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices : House No. 11, Road No. 3, Dhanmondi B/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX : 500092-4. Advertisement : 500091 (Direct) Fax No. 88-02-963035. GPO Box No. 3257. GRAM : DAILY STAR DHAKA.

Keating claims victory

SYDNEY, Mar 13: Prime Minister Paul Keating claimed victory for his Labour Party government in Saturday's general election, reports AP.

With about three-fourths of the national vote counted, analysts predicted that the government would maintain its seven-seat majority in the House of Representatives over the opposition Liberal-National coalition. The vote breakdown was not immediately available.

Meanwhile, police and BDR personnel today rescued the Deputy General Manager of the Mills, who was gheraoed at his residence for the last seven days by the agitating workers at around 1 pm.

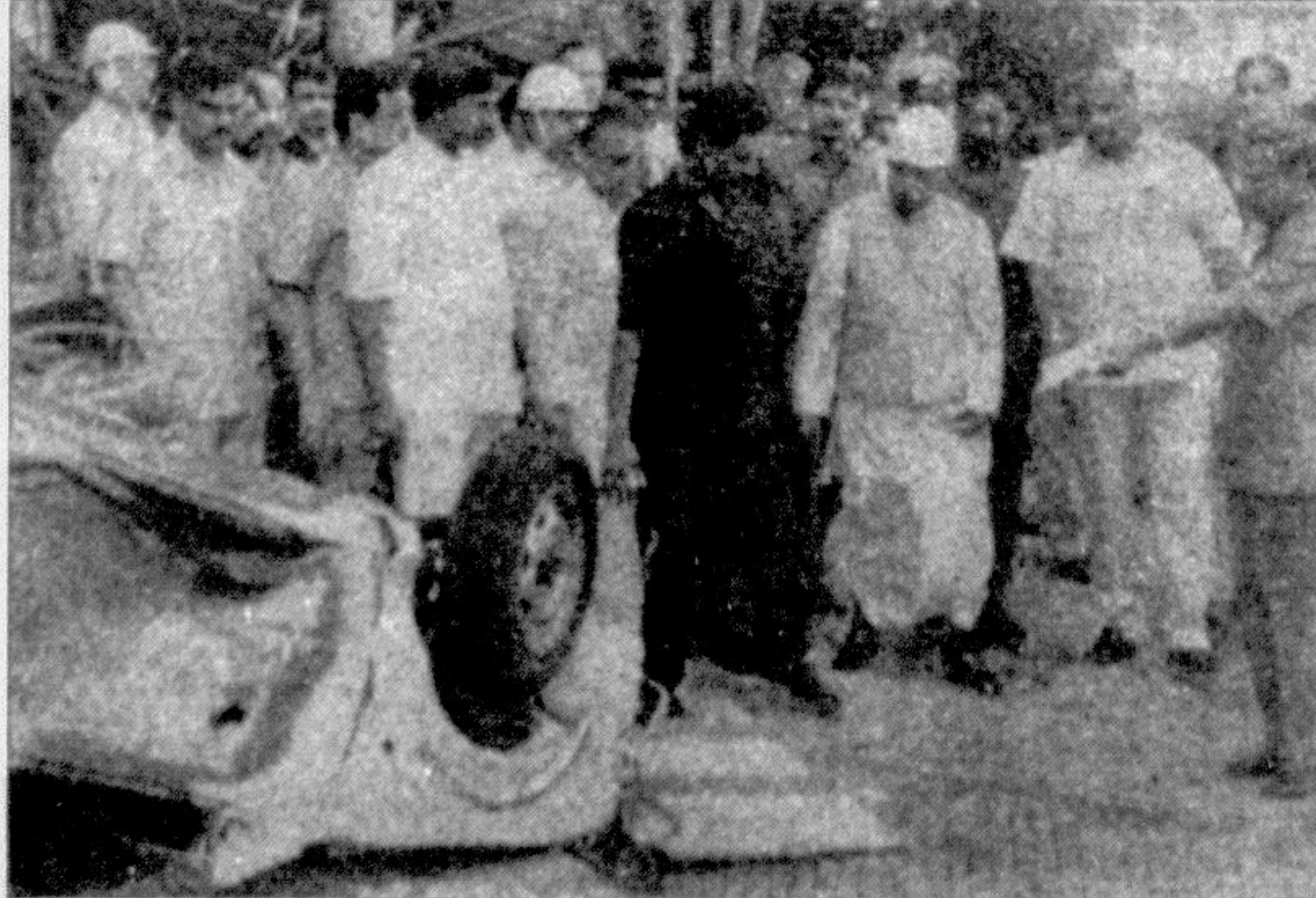
Kotwali Police arrested 13 persons from the mills premises. A contingent of police and BDR remain posted at the mills.

According to the Signal Engineer at the railway station, over Taka two crore worth of damages were done at the station.

In a press release, the JSD (Inu) backed BCL demanded the immediate withdrawal of the lay-off notice at the Mymensingh Jute Mills and also called for the immediate release of arrested student leaders Nurul Islam Chunnun and S M Babul.

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Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao (third from right) wears a hard hat as he tours the bomb devastated Air India Building on Saturday in Bombay. Second from right is Sharad Pawar, Rao's former Defence Minister who is now Chief Minister of Maharashtra. — AFP photo

Bombay : Delhi to hit back

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kar Dayal Sharma hinted at reprisals if any other country were found to be involved.

Indian security officials were widely quoted as saying they suspect Pakistan was behind the bombings, but they offered no proof to support their theory.

New Delhi routinely accuses Pakistan of arming and training Muslim fighters in Kashmir who seek to split off the far northern state from India, either to merge with Pakistan or become independent.

No one claimed responsibility for the attack Friday, which killed more than 300 people and wounded about 1,100, according to hospitals surveyed by news agencies. The possible motives are numerous in a country that has witnessed ethnic, religious and nationalist violence in 46 years of independence.

Bombay police chief Amarjit Singh Sharma today blamed Sri Lanka's separatist Tamil guerrillas for Friday's serial bombings. The first suspicion naturally goes on the LTTE

(Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam). They have the technology and they have proved it," Sharma said in a news conference.

He said explosives used in the 11 incidents of bombings were 'Never seen in India, neither used by terrorists here.'

Meanwhile, a spate of bomb alerts in New Delhi's diplomatic and commercial districts today kept police and army experts busy amid fears of a recurrence of the Bombay bombings in the Indian capital.

Police sources reported at least three bomb alerts Saturday in the city's central and diplomatic districts, but said no explosive devices had been found in the heavily-patrolled city.

Police have asked Delhi residents not to touch unclaimed baggage, toys, boxes or unidentified objects as a precautionary measure.

Officials feared the bomb wave could reignite the Hindu-Muslim clashes that rocked Bombay for nine days in January, but no incidents were

reported overnight. There was no evidence to link the attacks to religious rioting.

This is definitely the work of a big group," Chakravorty told The Associated Press, without elaborating.

Earlier, United News of India reported that hotel security staff caught a man suspected of planting at least one of the 13 bombs that exploded across Bombay on Friday.

Police were searching for five Muslim guerrillas from the disputed province of Kashmir and for a hotel owner of Iranian origin with links to a fundamentalist group, the agency reported.

Immediately after the explosions, a few Hindu and Muslim gangs were seen looting shops and burning cars, but police swiftly quelled trouble and state authorities called for federal troop reinforcements.

Bomb squads from police and intelligence agencies scoured burned out vehicles and scattered metal shards strewn through the high-rise city center today for traces of explosives or triggering devices.