

Indian troops disarm 100 Kashmiri cops

SRINAGAR, Apr 27: Indian army soldiers on Tuesday disarmed about 100 Kashmiri policemen and seized all weapons from their armoury in a bid to stem growing unrest in the local constabulary, reports AP.

About 5,000 local policemen have been on an indefinite strike since Thursday to protest against the alleged killing of a colleague by soldiers.

The police force, which is dominated by Kashmiri Muslims, and the mostly-Hindu soldiers have been fighting an Islamic separatist movement in Jammu-Kashmir state since late 1989. But the police force has been largely sidelined by the soldiers in the anti-insurgency war.

At the same time, many of the state's Muslim civilians resent them for aiding the fight against the pro-independence guerrillas, who have vast popular support.

During the past five days, the policemen have openly demonstrated against the army, marching through Srinagar, the state's summer capital, brandishing their automatic rifles and guns.

On Tuesday, soldiers took away the guns of about 100 policemen who were on armed duty at the district police barracks and seized the remaining weapons in the armoury, a senior police official said.

Sher-e-Bangla

From Page 1 Col 5

Jatiyatabadi Sangskritik Jote and Islamic Foundation also organised discussions to mark the day.

Leaders and workers of Bangladesh Awami League led by its chief Sheikh Hasina placed wreaths at the mazar of Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Haque at 8 am to pay tributes to the late leader.

Among the central leaders, Abdus Samad Azad, MP, Begum Sajeda Choudhury MP, Zillur Rahman, Amir Hossain Amu, Abdul Jalil, Mozaffar Hossain Poltu, Mozaffar Hossain Choudhury Maya were present on the occasion.

They offered fataha and prayed for the leader on his 31st death anniversary.

ncellor of Islamic University Prof Muhammad Hameed also spoke on the occasion.

Responding to the demands of the university authorities, she gave the assurance that more funds will be allocated for the university and a residential hall will be constructed for women students in the next fiscal year.

A police outpost will be set up for the safety and security of the university teachers and students, the Prime Minister said.

One more bus will be given to the university to ease the transport problems of the students, she said.

By arresting Golam Azam (in early '92), the government provided Azam a safe shelter from the public anger, he said and added, now Azam's position had been strengthened by awarding him the citizenship.

Such developments have been strengthening position of the fundamentalists in the country, against which the people in growing numbers were coming up to resist, the leaders added.

Later the Samannaya Committee brought out a protest procession from Bangabandhu Avenue.

He called for a new round of peace negotiations under the auspices of the UN Security Council, conducted by foreign ministers of its five permanent members—Russia, the United States, France, Britain and China.

"The Russian Federation will not patronize those who stand in the way of peaceful accord," Yeltsin said.

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Jahanara Imam, Convener of Nirmul Samannay Committee, addressing an all party meeting at Bangabandhu Avenue in city yesterday. — Star photo

Jahanara Imam

From Page 1 Col 5

They said, the citizenship of Azam was restored on the ground that he was by birth a Bangladeshi. The leaders said, the citizenship of Azam was cancelled in 1972 for his anti-Bangladesh activities and heinous crimes during the War of Liberation. Golam Azam yet remained to be tried as a war criminal, after which the question of his citizenship might arise, they added.

Kazi Aref Ahmed said, "since the purpose of law is to serve the people, not vice versa, we can expect the Court to reflect the People's Court verdict."

Col (Retd) Abu Osman Chowdhury said that Jamaat violated the Constitution by making Azam, a foreigner, its top leader, but the government had accused the Nirmul Committee leaders of violating the Constitution by organising a movement against such an act of Jamaat.

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United movement

From Page 1 Col 7

Abdul Jalil, Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, Obaidul Qader, Abdul Mannan and Siddique Rouf of Awami League, Hasanul Haq Inu, Kazi Aref Ahmed, Mainuddin Khan Badal, Sharif Nurul Ambia, Khalequzzaman Bhuiyan, Saiful Haq and Bimal Biswas of 5-Party Alliance, Nurul Islam Nahid, Dilip Barua and Alhaj Abdus Samad of PDF, Azizul Islam Khan, Afzal Hossain and Saiful Islam of Ganatantri Party and Faizul Hakim of Ganatantrik Biplobi Jote.

Meanwhile, UNB adds: In a resolution, the meeting said the ruling BNP had not only failed to run the country but also indulged in a deep conspiracy to destroy spirit and tradition of the great Liberation War.

"This BNP has posed a threat to the Bangalee entity and national existence through patronisation of killer groups of 1971 — Jamaat-Shibir-Freedom Party and Juba Command."

Besides, it alleged, the government had resorted to repressive measures against the opposition by imposing declared or undeclared restrictions denying people's democratic rights to public meeting, procession, strike and hartal.

On April 25, Dhaka city was put under siege by police cordons to thwart the sit-in strike sponsored by the National Coordination Council of Ekattarer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul

Committee, resulting in injuries to more than 300 people.

The resolution also said the people would not accept, nor tolerate any conspiracy against the spirit of independence achieved through the liberation struggle. The forces upholding the Liberation War will not also remain silent in this situation.

"Any law or provision challenging the existence of Bangladesh cannot be acceptable on the soil of Bangladesh," said the resolution.

The all-party meeting urged the people to build an all-out resistance against the forces opposed to the war of independence.

The judiciary has no independence, it said, adding efforts are being made to set the judiciary against the existence of Bangladesh.

The meeting called for resisting this "evil move", saying law and the Constitution of the country are meant to preserve the achievements of the War of Liberation. But the law and Constitution are put in the process of distortion and self-destruction.

"Conspiracies are also being hatched to make controversial the Bengalee nationhood which has got recognition with a pool of blood."

Such a situation can no longer be tolerated in the interest of the country's independence, sovereignty and existence, the resolution said.

On information, Kamarkhand police rushed to the scene and resorted to lathi-charge and dispersed the mob.

The train reached Sirajganj two hours late, with almost all its windows panes destroyed.

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Indian boeing crash: Pilots charged

AURANGABAD (India), Apr 27: Police said today they had charged the pilot and co-pilot of an Indian Airlines plane which crashed, killing 55 people, with negligent flying.

"They will be arrested," a police spokesman told Reuters in the western Indian city of Aurangabad where the Boeing 737 crashed on Monday.

Pilot S N Singh and woman co-pilot Monisha Mohan are recovering in hospital from the crash, which occurred as the plane was taking off from Aurangabad.

Meanwhile, investigators have recovered the 'black box' flight recorders which may explain why the Boeing clipped a truck on take-off and crashed, officials said today.

A team from Boeing headquarters in Seattle was due in Bombay shortly to join the investigation into India's fifth major air crash in less than five years, the officials said.

There was no immediate comment from the Indian investigators probing the burned-out shell of the aircraft near the airport at the western city of Aurangabad.

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The Midnight File

Indian fighter plane crashes

NEW DELHI, Apr 27: An India Air Force Mig-21 fighter plane crashed while landing at Rajasansi airfield in the western city of Amritsar today, the Press Trust of India reported. The pilot survived the crash at the air base in Punjab State. Defence officials told the news agency, reports AFP.

Eritreans vote for independence

ASMARA (Eritrea), Apr 27: Eritreans have overwhelmingly voted for independence from Ethiopia in a referendum that formalized a rebel victory in Africa's longest liberation struggle, vote organizers said Tuesday. The three-day independence referendum, which ended Sunday, was held to cement its separation from Ethiopia. Residents have been celebrating in the streets of this capital almost non-stop since Thursday night, anticipating the expected election victory, reports AP.