

Indian troops gun down 31 Kashmiri militants

Srinagar, India, July 5: Indian security forces gunned down 31 suspected Muslim militants in fierce clashes in Kashmir and remained locked in combat with the rebels today near the border with Pakistan, reports AFP.

Rebel sources also claimed to have downed an Indian military helicopter with gunfire, but the report could not be immediately confirmed as fighting raged in two districts of the northern Himalayan state.

Six militants died when troopers launched an amphibious attack Monday in Malangan, a picturesque island on Wular Lake in the border district of Baramulla, police said in Srinagar, Kashmir's summer capital.

The soldiers had sailed to the island 50 kilometres (30 miles) north of Srinagar in dinghies and were searching for militants when the Muslim snipers sparked off the encounter by shooting at the troops, Kashmir state adminis-

tration spokesman Nazim Saigub said in New Delhi. In a clash Monday in the mountainous Gulmarg area, also in Baramulla district, paramilitary forces killed five militants, Kashmir police chief Bahwinder Singh Bedi said. He said a gun battle was continuing in the former Ski Resort, where a week ago troops killed nine people including civilians while searching for militants in an Islamic shrine.

Two more militants, an Indian army major and a soldier died Monday in a clash in Anantnag, a southern Kashmir district which has been relatively free of secessionist violence.

The powerful Hezbul Mujahideen secessionist group claimed Monday it downed a military helicopter killing an unspecified number of combat troops, but the report could not be verified.

Bedi said that in a shootout late Sunday, border guards intercepted and shot dead five

Muslim rebels who infiltrated Kupwara district from the Pakistan-controlled northern tip of Kashmir. Eight more rebels died in separate overnight violence linked to the Muslim militant campaign for Kashmir's separation from India, he said.

Police meanwhile reported discovering the bodies of five murdered civilians, one of them a woman abducted and killed by a Muslim militant group.

Bedi charged that Pakistan was trying to boost militancy in the valley by pumping more sophisticated arms and well-trained elements into Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state.

All such attempts would be foiled, the police chief said.

Islamabad denies charges that its arms and trains Muslim militants fighting for an end to Indian rule over Kashmir, whose ownership is disputed by the two embittered neighbours.

Bosnian Muslims to lift blockade of UN base

Visoko, Bosnia-Herzegovina, July 5: Bosnian Muslim authorities have agreed to lift a blockade of a UN military base here, the United Nations protection force said today.

The lifting of the blockade in Visoko, Central Bosnia, is supposed to pave the way for the release of two Bosnian Croat military leaders sheltering three other Bosnian army troops had demanded should be handed over to them as war criminals, an UNPROFOR source told AFP.

Rasim Delic, the Commander-in-Chief of the Bosnian Armed Forces, has given instructions for the two Croat officers to be allowed to be driven back to (their headquarters in) Kiseljak," a UNPROFOR source said.

But Bosnian troops manning the blockade were still waiting at 4:00 PM (1400 GMT) for orders to allow the Croats through.

Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban added that his forces would release four Muslim officers by way of exchange.

The mainly Muslim Bosnian army had set eight anti-tank mines outside the camp, which houses a Canadian UN battalion, to demand the handover of the two military leaders.

the heels of the dismantling of similar blockades by Bosnian Croat forces who on Sunday barricaded the entrance of the UN headquarters in Kiseljak, west of Sarajevo, with two trucks and blocked the road from Kiseljak to the capital city.

Those blockades, designed to force an end to the Visoko blockade by the mainly Muslim forces, were removed overnight, UNPROFOR said.

In Bosnia itself, shelling in Sarajevo killed at least four people and wounded 31, including a dozen children, hospital sources said.

Shevardnadze escapes death in Abkhazia

Tbilisi, Georgia, July 5: Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze narrowly escaped being killed when a shell exploded close to his car while he was travelling through the rebel region of Abkhazia, a presidential aide said today, reports Reuters.

Shevardnadze was not injured in the blast, which occurred on Sunday night as he was driving in a three-car motorcade to the town of Shroma to talk to soldiers taking part in the fighting.

Sharif invites Benazir

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this country," he said. The army has governed Pakistan for much of its 45-year history and the Army Chief has traditionally been the most powerful arm of the troika, with the President and Prime Minister, that rules Pakistan.

The military insists it is neutral. Sharif refused to comment on statements by several senior cabinet ministers that his 32-month-old government might hold elections after the removal of his arch-enemy, the President.

Bhutto proposed the President, the Prime Minister and the leader of the Opposition sit down for talks on her proposal. She stressed the need for redistribution of power that would strip the President of the right to dismiss the National Assembly while preventing concentration of power in the hands of the Prime Minister.

Ishaq Khan used that power to sack Bhutto in 1990 and again on April 18 when he sacked Sharif, accusing him of corruption and misuse, and called elections. The Supreme Court overturned that decision and restored Sharif 39 days later.

The government says the President is behind the latest crisis sparked by the refusal of the provincial government in Punjab to comply with a parliamentary resolution last week imposing direct federal rule.

Government sources have said Sharif might agree to mid-term elections if the President stepped down and he regained control of Punjab, the largest and most powerful of the country's four provinces.

Diplomats and political analysts said it was unlikely the army would impose martial law if Sharif did not comply. They said Waheed could ask the President to exercise his power to dissolve parliament in the event of non-compliance.

The tug-of-war between Sharif and the President for political control might force the army to intervene, according to many commentators here, but so far history has failed to repeat itself.

Today's anniversary of a pre-dawn coup staged by late General Mohammed Zia ul-Huq on July 5, 1977 against former premier Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, passed without incident.

Former Army Chief Zia attended an American Independence Day function here on July 4 and that same night overthrew Bhutto and ran the country for the next 11 years until his death in a mysterious plane crash in August 1988.

Meanwhile, Nawaz Sharif, leading a 29-member delegation, left for Istanbul today to participate in the 10-nation Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) summit, officials here said.

The state-run Pakistan Times said he had curtailed his visit in view of the tension-ridden political situation in the country and would spend only one night in the Turkish city.

If war breaks

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shall rest in the President's.

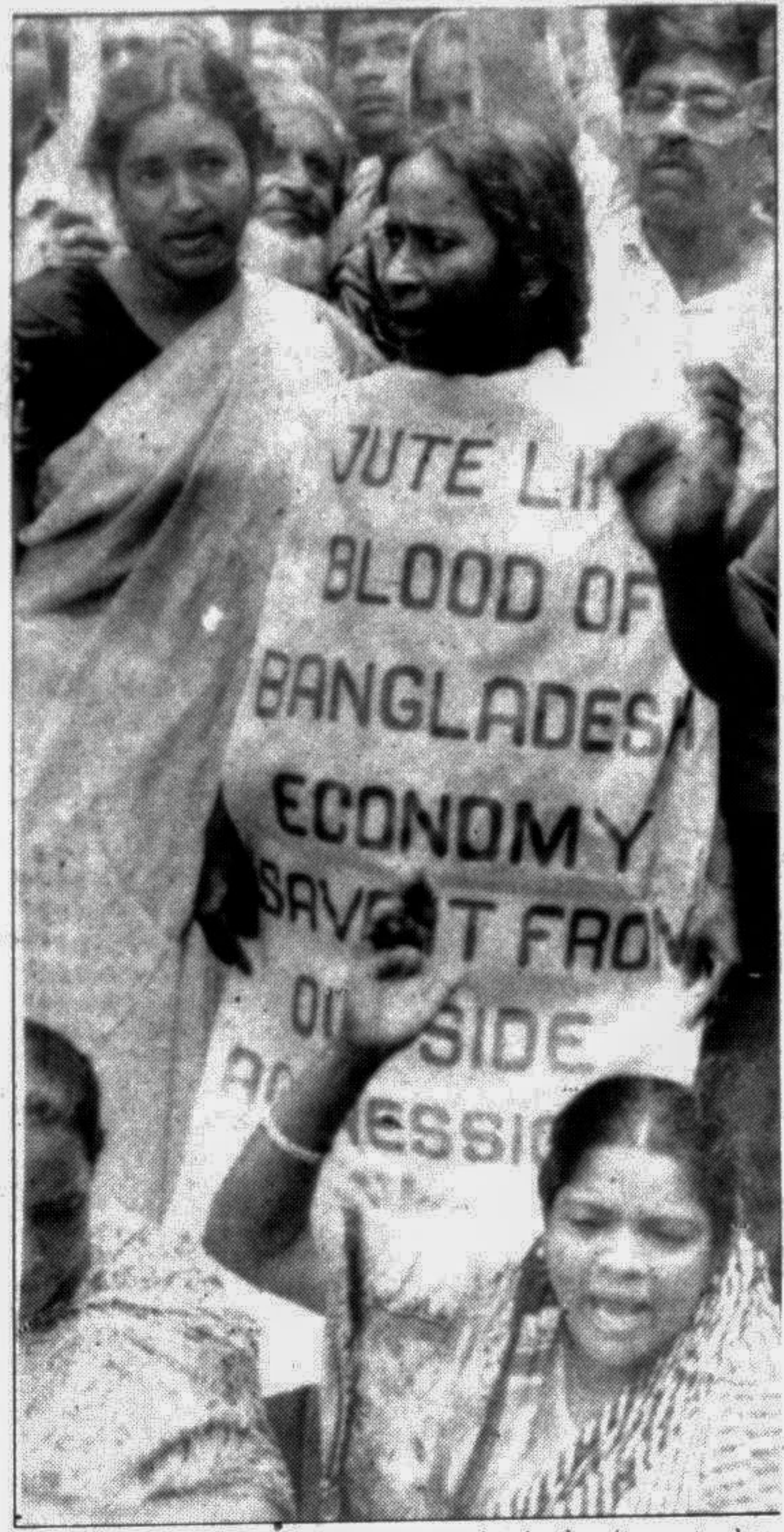
Naseem said Pakistan's leaders had to decide whether to have a presidential form of government or a parliamentary system. He added that the existing structure is called parliamentary, but in actual practice the Prime Minister does not enjoy the necessary power.

He rejected the opposition's call for snap polls as a solution to the political turmoil that erupted when Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif moved to limit President Ghulam Ishaq Khan's power.

He said the basic issue of centralising power had to be examined, and that if the opposition agreed, the government would be willing to discuss the issue in Parliament.

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BJMC workers brought out a procession in the city yesterday protesting move to disinvest the corporation. — Star photo

Industries Minister tells JS Khulna Hardboard Mills yet to be sold out

Talukdar. Explaining the position of the Hard Board Mills, the Industries Minister said keeping in view the present government's policy to disinvest industries under sector corporation in line with open market economy an inter-ministerial working committee had invited international tenders for the disinvestment of the mills as per a decision of the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC).

He said the tenders were opened on May 31 and the inter-ministerial working committee would send them to privatisation board after scrutiny.

The recommendations of the board would be sent to ECNEC which will give a decision, he added.

Shamsul Islam Khan said the Industries Ministry had no power to sell an industry under sector corporation.

The Industries Minister, however, invited the opposition member to submit documents in support of the allegation that the Khulna Hardboard Mills was sold out to one Abul Hashem at a cost of only Taka four crore.

Five-party plans hartal to beef up labour agitation

By Staff Correspondent

The five-party alliance is planning to call a day-long hartal on July 19, the first day of the proposed SKOP and other labour bodies-led 48-hour country-wide shutdown.

The proposed hartal would be aimed at strengthening the on-going labour agitation, sources said.

A July 10 convention of the Five-Party in the city is likely to adopt the hartal proposal.

The central leaders of the alliance are now having parleys with leaders of the Awami League, the four-party Patriotic Democratic Front, and other left-leaning organisations to mobilise their support for the July 19-20 labour strike.

Meanwhile, top leaders of the SKOP are likely to call on Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina on her return from France to solicit her support for the labour shutdown, sources said.

Scam: SC rejects appeal to prosecute Rao

NEW DELHI, July 5: India's Supreme Court today rejected a public interest appeal seeking prosecution of Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao for allegedly accepting a bribe from the broker at the centre of the country's biggest financial scandal, reports Reuters.

Judge M P Singh dismissed the public interest petition on the grounds that the federal police agency, the Central Bureau of Investigation, was already probing the allegation.

Stockbroker Harshad Mehta said last month he paid Rao 10 million rupees to secure protection and political patronage, Rao has denied the charge. Mehta is accused in a 1.28 billion US dollars securities fraud involving money from inter-bank dealings that was diverted to fuel prices on the Bombay Stock Exchange. He is free on bail while facing charges of bribery, fraud and currency violations. Surat Singh, a Delhi lawyer, had filed the public interest petition for prosecution of both Rao and Mehta, in India, anyone can file a public interest petition on any matter.

Clinton proposes special G-7 meet

SAN FRANCISCO, July 5: President Bill Clinton called today for a special meeting of Group of Seven experts at Camp David to discuss remedies for unemployment in the world's industrialised countries, reports AFP.

"I have asked my top economics and labour advisors to invite their counterparts from the leading industrialized nations to a meeting in the coming months," the President said during a stop off here on his way to the economic summit in Tokyo.

This meeting, which could take place at Camp David, can be a first step in getting all our job generators running at full speed once again," said Clinton, referring to the presidential retreat in Maryland.

NDA slates budget

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of the Nationalist Democratic Alliance (NDA) yesterday said that the 1993-94 budget would turn the country into a market for foreign items and smuggled goods in the name of an open economy.

The NDA leaders, in a press conference held in the city, said that the real wages of labourers in the country had decreased as a result of the structural adjustment policies (SAP) and the farmers were deprived of a just income because the government had withdrawn subsidies from the agriculture sector.

The press conference, addressed by NDA chairman former President Khandker Mushtaque Ahmed, executive chairman Col (Retd) Khandker Abdur Rashid and secretary general Anwar Zahid was attended, among others, by advocate Ataul Haque Khan, ASM Sulaiman, A Razzak Chowdhury and others.

The NDA leaders observed that all previous governments in the last 22 years had followed wrong policies which had endangered the national interest. They stressed on the need for carefully analysing the faults in past policies and finding appropriate solutions to all the problems.

The NDA demanded the government should make the 1993-94 budget 'more consistent' and introduce bonuses on export earnings to encourage industrialisation and exports.

The NDA leaders also demanded special allocation in the budget to rehabilitate the sick industries of the country and to make those profitable.

Answering questions from journalists, Khandker Mushtaque Ahmed, who was President of the country from August 15 to November 4, 1975, said that he had refrained from public meetings to avoid possible violence.

UP Bill

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(Amendment) Bill, 1993 introduced in the House by LGRD Minister, Barrister Abdus Salam Talukdar, on February 10 this year.

The House also extended the time limit by another 30 days to submit the report of the Standing Committee on Law, Justice and Parliamentary committee on the private member's bill seeking separation of judiciary from the executive branch as urged by the member-in-charge of the bill Salahuddin Yusuf (AL).

Lasting three hours fifty minutes the House was adjourned by the Deputy Speaker, Humayun Khan Pannai, at 8.05 pm till 4 pm today.

BNPPP meet

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Parishad or District Council Bill, introduced in the House Sunday, which proposes election of the parishad's chairman by the elected representatives of the Union Parishads.

The MPs suggested that the Zila Parishad chairman should be elected directly by the people.

A few MPs, including Whip Abdul Karim and Mir Shaukat Ali, pleaded for a revival of the Gram Sarkar with a view to ensuring people's participation in the rural development.

The LGRD Minister, while explaining the proposed bills, told the meeting that both the documents were approved by the cabinet and the Law Ministry before introduction in the House. Thirteen MPs addressed the meeting, some of them quite vocal in their criticisms. Prime Minister and BNP chief Khaleda Zia chaired the meeting. Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain gave the introductory speech. While talking to newsmen later, the Chief Whip denied any discussion in the meeting relating to the proposed parliamentary probe committee for investigation into the opposition allegation of corruption in the Agriculture Ministry.

The Midnight File

Temple, mosque to be built at Ayodhya, says Rao

KANPUR, July 5: The Prime Minister, PV Narasimha Rao, today said the temple and mosque will be built at Ayodhya by 'dharmacharyas' saying that religion cannot be mixed with politics. Addressing a public rally this evening, Rao said a new legislation will be brought in the next session of Parliament to delink politics from religion. "Nobody will be allowed to create division in the society and weaken the fabric of the country," Rao said amidst thunderous applause, reports PTI.

Explosion rocks Seoul hotel

SEOUL, July 5: Three people were hurt when a boiler-room explosion today rocked the luxury Seoul hotel where US President Bill Clinton was due to stay during a visit to South Korea this weekend, the hotel said, reports Reuters.

Vacant police posts to be filled up on dist quota basis

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury yesterday informed the Jatiya Sangsad that there were 2906 posts vacant in the police force and those posts would be filled up in 1993-94 fiscal year, reports BSS.

Replying to a question from treasury bench member Begum Rowshan Ara Hena, the Home Minister sought cooperation of all to improve further the law and order in the country. Responding to a supplementary from Begum Hena, he said the government had already improved the law and order in the country and hoped that it would be improved further soon.

Replying to another supplementary from CPB member Shamsuddoha, the Home Minister said the vacant posts would be filled up on the basis of district quotas.

Responding to another question from Awami League member Professor M Walullah, the Home Minister informed the House that the formation of the 'coast guard' had been under the consideration of the present government as part of an overall plan to ensure safety and security of the people of the coastal areas of the country.

Hijacked car recovered: Three arrested

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police recovered a hijacked private car Dhaka Kha: 2046 and arrested three persons in this connection in the early hours yesterday.

The police also recovered four daggers and an iron pipe from their possession.

A special squad of patrol police of the Ramna Police Station arrested Injhar Ali, 23, Sultan, 26 and Bacchu, 25, from the Eskaton area at about 3 am Monday.

Police sources said that the arrested muggers used the car in some hijacking acts in different parts of the city. A case was filed with the Ramna Police Station.

Press Club incident

Departmental cases against 7 police officers

Departmental cases have been filed against seven police officers for their involvement in the Jatiya Press Club incident on June 21, 1992, parliament was informed yesterday, reports UNB.

The cases were filed against the police officers on recommendation by the judicial enquiry committee, Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury said replying to a question from M Abdur Rahim (AL).

The name of the police officers will be published after disposal of the cases, he added.

PGR Day

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service rendered by the regiment would continue in future.

The Prime Minister lauded the supreme sacrifice made by the members of PGR in carrying out their respective duties.

She recalled the sacrifice of the PGR members during the assassination of President Ziaur Rahman and said they had set an example of sacrifice and responsibility.

Begum Zia distributed emblems of PGR among family members of the six shaheeds (martyrs) killed with President Zia in 1981.

Commanding Officer of the regiment Col Zillur Rahman also presented Begum Zia with a crest carrying the images of the six martyrs.

Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan and senior army officers were present on the occasion. During the visit, the Prime Minister inspected the quarter guards and planted a sapling at the PGR unit premises.

237 officials, 861 staff in missions abroad, JS told

There are 237 officials and 861 staff in Bangladesh missions abroad, reports UNB.

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman informed this, in Parliament yesterday replying to a question from Khalilur Rahman of the Jatiya Party.

Of the officials, 159 are working in diplomatic wing, 20 in defence wing, 14 labour wing, 28 economic and commercial wing, 7 commercial wing, 7 councillor wing, 9 press wing, 2 educational and cultural wing, 2 finance and audit, 1 customs wing, 1 postal wing, 1 hajj wing and 1 in library.

Replying to another question, the Foreign Minister said that post of first secretaries in different missions had been abolished due to financial constraints. The counsellors perform functions of the first secretaries in these missions, he added.

Ciller wins vote of confidence

ANKARA, July 5: Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller's new government won the backing of parliament today in a vote of confidence, the semi-official Anatolian news agency reported, says Reuters.

Ciller announced a coalition cabinet of her True Path Party (DYP) in Parliament today in a vote of confidence, the semi-official Anatolian news agency reported, says Reuters. Ciller announced a coalition cabinet of her True Path Party (DYP) on June 25 after the approval of president Suleyman Demirel.

Poetic protest

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replying in Parliament to a question from Begum Rasheda Khatun (Jamaat) denied there was any 'sick' industry in the country but admitted there were some 'problem-ridden' and 'non-profitable' industries.

According to official sources, owners of more than 1,500 industries enlisted themselves with the Sick Industries Rehabilitation Cell.

Indian ministers

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The proposed trips of the Indian Ministers are being looked forward to 'with eagerness' in concerned circles. A Foreign Office spokesman said in Dhaka yesterday: "We hope some positive progress will be made regarding a number of long-standing bilateral issues."

UN experts

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mandated by a special UN commission, was "a bad sign."

The cameras would monitor Iraqi tests of missiles with a range less than 150 km, the maximum permitted under the terms of the ceasefire which ended the Gulf War in 1991.

A Baghdad newspaper said today that the UN arms experts were UN lackeys carrying out American orders. "Today we witness another ring in the chain (of conspiracy) through the departure of the team of international experts," the newspaper Babel said.

"The team is mined with American elements, often waiting to accomplish with precision an order from Washington," added Babel, published by President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday.

The departure of the arms experts "prepares the ground for acts of piracy and military aggression against the Iraqi people," it said.

The newspaper said Iraq would not be cowed by threats. "It has stressed on more than one occasion that there is no way to blackmail or threaten it or impose on it what it does not want," it said.

Smdovich said he met his Iraqi counterparts this morning but they only reiterated to him their position. "The Iraqi government informed us they will not allow the installation of cameras while we are here," he said. "They (the cameras) are important because we will be able to effectively monitor that no prohibited activity is taking place," he added.