

Grenades tossed at army camps Bomb blasts rock Sindh: One killed

KARACHI, July 18: A series of bomb blasts and grenade attacks rocked southern Pakistan's Sindh province today, killing a civilian, injuring nine others and damaging several army camps, police and army sources said, reports AFP.

At least four bombs went off in the countryside including one in Shikarpur, killing a villager, police said. Eight others were injured.

Another low intensity device exploded in Ubaro in northern Sukkur city, but no casualties were reported, they said.

Two more bombs rocked Kotri, some 125 kilometres north of here late, Saturday, police said.

One of the bombs exploded under an army jeep but caused no casualties, while the second went off at Kotri railway station, completely gutting one portion of goods train.

Earlier in the day, unidentified people launched grenade attacks on at least four army camps in Karachi, injuring one 40-year-old woman, an army spokesman said.

The spokesman said hand grenades were tossed at an army camp office in the Malir garrison area, another lobbed at the nearby rangers' camp office in Quaidabad early today, and

the third near an army check-post in the centre of the city.

The attacks on army camps in troubled Sindh came in the wake of a strike call by the Sindh People's Youth Organisation (SPYO), which owes its allegiance to Muraza Bhutto, brother of Opposition leader Benazir Bhutto and leader of a shadowy organisation called Al-Zulfikar.

Today marks the eight death anniversary of another brother, Shahanawaz Bhutto, who died under mysterious circumstances in south of France. Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party has disowned any links with the SPYO.

This southern port city has been the scene of a week of arson and rioting, and hundreds of supporters of the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) an ethnic based party, have been arrested.

Incidents of arson in government installations continued today with an attack on a municipality workshop, four state-owned vehicles were gutted and 24 damaged.

Police sources said seven SPYO members had been arrested in Hyderabad near Kotri. The SPYO claimed 35 of their men had been taken into custody throughout Sindh.



Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan (facing microphone), flanked by Jute Minister Hannan Shah on his right and State Minister for Textiles Major (ret'd) Abdul Mannan on his left, during last night's successful talks with the SKOP leaders which averted a threatened 48-hour country-wide labour shutdown beginning today. —PID photo

Proceedings of case against Ershad stayed

The proceedings of the special case No 5 of 1993 against former president Hussain Muhammad Ershad in a corruption case, better known as the 'income-tax case', have been temporarily suspended following an order from the superior court, reports BSS.

The High Court last week issued a rule and stay order upon the authorities following a revision prayer moved on behalf of Ershad against the framing of charge.

The special Judge's Court headed by Mohammad Ali Khan on June 17 indicted Ershad for withdrawing nearly Taka 3 lakh, earlier paid as income tax, by misusing his powers and without furnishing valid documents.

As the court was preparing to go into session yesterday, Sudhir Kumar Hazra, one of Ershad's defence lawyers, intimated the judge verbally in his chamber about the High Court's stay order. Special PP, Abdul Tawheed, after confirming the matter with the High Court sources, submitted the necessary petition for the postponement of the proceedings.

The court will take up the case only after the stay order is vacated.

The FIR in this case was filed with Ramna thana on July 27 last year and the charge-sheet submitted on December 19. Although four persons were named in the FIR, the charge-sheet relieved all except Ershad.

Attack on Rahmat Ali MP

A group of youngsters armed with lethal weapons attacked the Kaliakotr thana health complex where the thana health committee was holding a meeting yesterday with Rahmat Ali MP in the chair.

Awami League MP Rahmat Ali telephoned UNB Sunday night and told that the youngsters believed supporters of BNP student wing JCD had threatened him of his life.

Rahmat Ali identified the leaders of the armedmen as Hazrat Ali, Swapan and Parvez.

Ishaq, Sharif both quit

From page 1 col 7

He said the real issue causing the tussle was the necessity for constitutional reforms. "Everything was perfectly placed but the system was rendered inactive by conspiracies," he said.

"Since they failed to weaken Nawaz Sharif they decided to weaken the country," he added.

"I have discharged my national responsibilities. It is now upto you to decide about the future of the country," he said, adding that Pakistan was faced with a host of problems.

The flow of foreign investment had stopped and the con-

confidence of local investors had been eroded, Sharif said, adding the economy needed reforms.

Sharif said he had also accepted the opposition's election demand.

"I have decided to face my opponents at the election arena. They wanted elections in October. I have accepted the demand," he said.

Sharif said those who had failed to win even a single seat had been challenging him. "I have accepted their challenge. I hope they will not run away."

He appealed to the people to return him with an even greater majority. "I have accepted the election demand not under any pressure," he said.

Earlier in the day Moeen Qureshi was specially flown in from Singapore where the well known economist had gone for medical treatment.

Erosion in Jamuna: 8 more villages devoured

SIRAJGANJ, July 18: The mighty river Jamuna devoured eight more village in two thanas of the district in last 24 hours rendering about 800 people homeless, reports UNB.

The villages are Bawarigachha, Pirgachha, Shanbandha, Juktigacha and Geol in Kazipur and Gajuria, Hijulia and Shakpal in Chowhali.

No Bangladeshi among 13 BCCI men indicted

The 13 former Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) officials indicted by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on charges of forgery, breach of trust and dissipation of the funds do not include any Bangladeshi national, according to sources here.

The bank's founder Agha Hassan Abedi, a Pakistani, former chief executive Mohammad Saleh Naqvi and 11 other top BCCI officials were recently indicted after two years of investigations.

The BCCI was shut down worldwide in July 1991 following charges of fraud, malpractice and drugs money laundering.

N-proliferation in South Asia

From Page 1 Col 4

Sober, a retired US Foreign Service officer who served in the sub-continent for a number of years, said that Washington could play a role to resolve the Ganges water sharing dispute between Bangladesh and India if both countries wanted it, but acknowledged it was quite unlikely that India would seek such outside mediation.

"I think it is scandalous that there's been no resolution of the (Ganges water sharing) problem as yet. I think it is very much possible to resolve the problem," he added.

On American policy towards South Asia during the Cold War, he noted that the region "had not figured in any significant way in US foreign policy at that time."

However, he pointed out that during the 1950s the US entered into a series of defence and security arrangements with Pakistan, to what he said, "build up strength against the Red Menace."

But Pakistan's intention in entering into the accord with the US was to contain the threat from India. "Pakistan never understood that our concern was not India but the Soviet Union, so Pakistan was disappointed by the US help to India against China in 1962," he added.

Referring to the US role during the 1971 Liberation War, Sober, who at the time served at the US embassy in Islamabad, said: "I have always felt disturbed when Bangladeshi friends give me the impression that the US tilted against them (in 1971), because I think that is incorrect." He did not elaborate.

Back on the nuclear proliferation issue, he warned, while quoting the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency as having said in February last, that the "greatest possibility" of a nuclear exchange anywhere in the world at the moment is between India and Pakistan.

age confidence building measures between the two countries, he said. "But I am not confident that the nuclear question can be satisfactorily dealt with unless fundamental unresolved political problems (between India and Pakistan) are tackled."

Noting that the two countries have a "history of bad relations", he singled out the Kashmir issue as "one of the unresolved political issues that have poisoned relations" between the two South Asian nations.

"They are not even able to sit down together and talk about Kashmir," he said while pointing out that even 21 years after signing of the Simla Accord, in which both nations agreed to resolve disputes through bilateral talks, the two sides have failed to meet at a high level to resolve the outstanding problems.

Quoting a secret US foreign policy statement on Kashmir prepared in 1952, which was recently declassified, he said that the US stand on Kashmir is to maintain the "strictest" neutrality and encourage early solution of the problem based on present realities and which is acceptable to both sides. He added that the "wishes and desires" of the Kashmiri people also should be taken into account.

On a possible American role in the Kashmir issue, he said both sides must be willing to resolve the problem and then seek US help, similar to the resolve shown by Israel and the Arabs in starting the Middle East peace talks.

Responding to a comment by an Indian diplomat that Kashmir is a domestic problem and Pakistan is destabilising the state through supplying arms, Sober said Kashmir is a unique case and should not be assimilated with other Indian provinces and thereby merits international concern.

United Nations for resolution of the issue and agreed to UN Security Council resolution for holding a plebiscite in Kashmir to decide its fate," he added.

In this context he also observed that Japan which has considerable economic investments and which gives assistance to the South Asian countries should come forward to promote peaceful atmosphere in the region.

He added that the nuclear question between India and China also cannot be resolved unless the border issues are tackled first.

M Shahiduzzaman of the Department of International Relations of Dhaka University, participating in the question-answer session, differed with the US official on American nuclear concern in South Asia.

He said nuclear options of both Pakistan and India have a positive impact on their relations, deterring adventures and wars and forcing them to look for alternatives to maintain peace.

S M Ali, Editor of The Daily Star, said the United States should play the pioneering role in removing protectionism and bringing the Uruguay Round of GATT talks to an early and successful conclusion so that commodities of SAARC countries could have access to the markets of the developed countries.

Barrister Morshed said South Asia can figure prominently in US foreign policy calculations in terms of having market access of its goods.

"The United States can find vast markets in the countries of South Asia because there are huge populations living in this region."

SKOP

From Page 1 Col 4

be disinvested without the consent of all concerned and there would not be any wholesale denationalisation, the minister also assured.

All three ministers asked for lists of those who had been retrenched during the Ershad regime for their possible reinstatement. The authorities would also look into cases of harassment, if any, and take necessary action, Mannan Bhuiyan added.

Both sides, according to the deal struck last night, decided to continue dialogue with a view to settling other outstanding labour issues.

Hartal today

From Page 1 Col 4

nounced a 48-hour country-wide strike and rail-road barricade beginning this morning. The SKOP and the four federations, however, postponed their programme at 11:05 last night following fruitful negotiations with the government.

The opposition political parties, however, have stuck to their half-day hartal programme.

When contacted around midnight last night, acting AL chief Abdus Samad Azad told The Daily Star that there was no reason for withdrawing the hartal.

Samad Azad said: "We called the hartal not just to support the cause of the workers. We also demanded investigations into allegations of corruption against different ministries and a stop to government repression against the opposition activists."

The opposition parties who called the hartal include the Awami League (AL), components of the Five-party alliance, the Five-party Patriotic Democratic Front (PDF), the Ganatantri Party (GP), the Ganotantrik Biplobi Jote, and the Jatiya Janata Party.

Later, the Jatiya Party (JP) also supported the hartal.

Meanwhile, the Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Samannay Committee and the Ganatantrik Chhatra Otkkya, comprising eight student organisations, yesterday separately announced their support to today's hartal and demanded trial of Jamaat chief Golam Azam in a special tribunal for his alleged "war crimes".

Meanwhile, the 14-party leaders, in a meeting yesterday evening at the central office of the Awami League, decided to observe a protest day on July 25 demanding a special tribunal to try Golam Azam as a "war criminal".

They also decided to hold a post-hartal public rally at four this afternoon at the Bangabandhu Avenue.

The Jatiya Party will also hold a rally at noon today at Motijheel.

Italian trade team due tomorrow

A high level Italian trade delegation arrives in Dhaka Tuesday to explore and finalise counter-trade arrangements between the two countries, reports BSS.

The delegation is likely to explore the possibility of buying rice and jute products from Bangladesh in exchange of Italian products like Iveco trucks, Fiat cars, New Holland agricultural tractors and earth moving equipment, gas turbines and spare parts.

Jamuna Bridge

From Page 1 Col 8

The implementation cost of the project has been estimated at 625 million US dollars, equivalent to Tk 2500 crore.

The co-financiers would decide on their share of contribution and responsibility for specific components of the project, the sources said.

The project has four components — the main bridge, the river training, and the approach roads on the east and west.

The Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority (JMBA) has, in the meantime, received tenders separately for the four works from various multinational companies. It is now scrutinising the financial and technical offers received.

The Midnight File

300 killed in Russian attack on Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD, July 18: At least 300 people were killed as Russian troops continued attacks on Afghanistan's northern Takhar province from the bordering Tajikistan state today, state-run Radio Kabul said. Hundreds of houses were destroyed in the shelling which also rendered some 6,000 Afghans homeless, the radio said without giving details, reports AFP.

Militants' bid to storm Kashmir telecom centre

NEW DELHI, July 18: Muslim rebels tried storming a telecommunications station in the north Indian state of Kashmir as police arrested five guerrillas across the valley over the weekend, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said today. The news agency said the attempt by suspected militants to blow up the telecommunications station near Jammu late Saturday was foiled by security guards who shot at the attackers, forcing them to flee. Officials told PTI no guards had been injured in the one-hour shoot-out and said the telephone and telex station, linking Kashmir to the rest of India, was undamaged, reports AFP.

LDP monopoly ends

From Page 1 Col 2

whom at least half are expected to support the LDP, were assured of 30 seats, NHK said.

The Japan Communist Party, with which none of the leading parties wants to form a coalition, was assured of winning 15 seats.

The result was an emphatic defeat for the LDP, which has enjoyed a stranglehold on political power here since its formation in 1955, and fuelled prospects of Prime Minister Kijichi Miyazawa's imminent resignation.

However, LDP Secretary General Seiroku Kajiyama was quick to claim victory, pointing out that ruling party remained the single most powerful political force.

"I believe people expect us to remain in power," Kajiyama said, adding, "The voters gave us the largest number of seats. That means they expect stability not temporary change."

But Kajiyama said he also felt a "heavy responsibility for the break-up of our party," following the detection of dozens of LDP members who formed two new parties last month.

The "top four LDP officials"—Miyazawa, Kajiyama, executive council chairman Koko Sato and policy affairs research council chairman Hiroshi Mitsuzaka—should take the same responsibility, he said, hinting at the possibility of a major leadership shakeup.

Voting in Japan's most important general election in four decades ended today with barely half the country's 95 million-strong electorate having voted two hours before the polls closed.

The low turnout, announced shortly before polling closed at 6 pm (0900 GMT), coincided with steady rain across most of Japan and compared with a voter turnout of 73.3 per cent in the last general election in 1990.

As of 4:00 pm (0700 GMT), 55.28 per cent of the electorate had voted compared with the comparative figure of 60.27 per cent in 1990.

In addition to the dreary weather and general voter apathy towards Japan's corrupt political system, observers

noted that many voters may have preferred to stay at home to watch the last day of the Nagoya sumo tournament today.

"It was a really tough election campaign," Prime Minister Kijichi Miyazawa said as he cast his ballot in Tokyo's Shibuya ward Sunday.

At one polling station in Tokyo's upmarket shopping district in Ginza, voters appeared divided between those hoping for change and those cynical about the ability of political parties to achieve political reform.

"I changed the party I usually support. I want Japanese politics to change," said a 44-year-old housewife.

But another woman said, "It's too early to be optimistic about the future."

"I don't expect a very dramatic change. I just want them to do what they promise," said a 23-year-old man.

"Everybody's talking about political reform. It's easy to say. I'm not so interested but I came here out of duty. Politicians are all dirty anyway," a young woman said.

Bank fraud: UAE deports Indian businessman

NEW DELHI, July 17: Indian businessman Niranjan Shah, a suspect in a 1.3 billion dollar bank swindle, has been deported home from Abu Dhabi where he fled after the scam surfaced last year, investigators said, reports AFP.

Shah was escorted to Bombay on Saturday night by detectives of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), whose spokesman here described the deportation as a significant "breakthrough" for the probe into the fraud.

United Arab Emirates authorities accepted an Indian request to deport the businessman despite the absence of an extradition treaty.

He is an associate of stockbroker Harshad (Big Bull) Mehta, chief suspect in the bank fraud in which a group of bankers and brokers colluded to steal public funds

Foreign banks discourage

From Page 1 Col 3

clients. This has helped the bank's profile among local business and industry.

However, in sharp contrasts, the Standard Chartered, has recently undertaken a massive expansion programme as a part of its global expansion and consolidation programme, according to banking sources.

The Chartered Bank has already expanded the premises of its headquarters in Motijheel and plans to recruit more staff to meet their target market service.

These FBs hold about seven per cent of the country's total deposits and six per cent of advance they make.

American Express holds the number one position in terms of both deposits and advances while Grindlays trails in second spot.

Deposits at high rates are being discouraged because of the banks' low lending rates, according to sources.

However, the genuine entrepreneurs are now reaping the benefits of this situation. They now get short term loans at an 11 per cent rate of interest, long term loans at 14 per cent and for trading between 15 and 16 per cent.

However, most FBs do not prefer long-term financing (LTF) because they still do not see a long term viability of the economy, according to insiders at the FBs.

American Express, the biggest of the FBs, does not go for LTF as a matter of policy and engages mainly in trade financing.

The ANZ Grindlays, after the recent changes in the market, has opted for limited LTF. One recent noticeable change in its present operation is that it is providing more and more loans to local corporates instead of its previous bias for multinational

Suicide

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, July 18: A security guard at the DC's bungalow allegedly committed suicide at about 5 this morning.

Abdus Sabur, 28, while on duty used his own 303-rifle to kill himself, police and hospital sources said.

Reason for his suicide could not be ascertained.

A case has been filed with Natore thana in this regard.

Irony of fate

FENI, July 18: A police officer who went to investigate a road accident was crushed under the wheels of a speeding truck on the Feni bypass at Muhuriganj in sadar thana early today, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Moazzammel Haque, 40, Assistant Sub-Inspector of the thana, who hailed from Waidpur village in Mirsaral thana of Chittagong district.

He was hit suddenly by a Dhaka-bound truck coming from Chittagong while coming out of his car for investigating an accident which occurred hours before on the same spot.

Trade ties with Riyadh reviewed IDB to give \$ 9.8m for rural electrification

RIYADH, July 18: Bangladesh Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, who is currently visiting Saudi Arabia, today had a meeting with President of Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Dr Ahmed Mohammed Ali in Jeddah, reports BSS.

They reviewed on-going project loan and prospect of new project assistance in the priority sectors like physical infrastructure and education in Bangladesh. They also agreed to identify IDB technical assistance to promote intra-Islamic country trade.

Bangladesh Finance Minister and IDB President signed a 9.8 million US dollars loan agreement for rural electrification project in Faridpur.

Later the Finance Minister made a courtesy call on Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz, second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence and Aviation in Jeddah. Bangladesh Ambassador Abdul Momen Choudhury and Defence Attache Brig S A Siraj were present.

Saifur Rahman performed Umrah at the holy Kaaba Sharif in Makkah al-Mokarramah.

He will leave Jeddah tomorrow for Madinah al-Monawarah to perform ziarat at the Prophet's (SM) mosque.

Saifur Rahman held official talks here yesterday with his Saudi counterpart Aba Al-Khaffi during which they reviewed the Saudi-Bangla economic and

trade cooperation.

He also apprised his Saudi counterpart of various policy measures adopted over last two years and their positive impact on the over-all improvement in the macro-economic scenario.

Rahman mentioned that rate of annual inflation had come down to less than 3 per cent from more than 9 per cent in 1989. Likewise, local resource financing of development budget registered a significant positive improvement during last two years, he said adding, 1993-94 domestic financing was likely to be around 33 per cent as against 12 per cent in 1988-89.

Both sides recapitulated the deliberations held during the 7th session of the Saudi-Bangladesh Joint Commission for Economic and Technical Cooperation. Railway, bridge construction and rural electrification sectors were identified for further Saudi economic assistance. Possibility of holding the 8th session of the joint commission in October-November this year in Riyadh was also discussed.

The Finance Minister also called on the Saudi Agriculture Minister, Dr Abdul Rahman al-Sheikh, today. They agreed to examine ways and means of increasing Saudi-Bangladesh bilateral cooperation in agriculture sector, particularly increased level of technical cooperation.

Lightning kills 5 in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, July 18: Lightning killed five people and wounded three others at the sadar thana during heavy rain today, reports UNB.

Hospital and family sources said Shahinur Rahman (35) of Multibari village died on the spot as thunderbolt struck him while he was entering his house at about 4:30 pm.

An unidentified youngman, aged about 25, was killed and three others were injured at the Sirajganj ferry ghat where they were struck by thunderbolt.

A housewife, Anjumana (31) of village Moulvipara died when struck by lightning while she was going to the bedroom from the kitchen.

Two others — an elderly woman and a minor girl — were killed by lightning in the railway colony of the town at around 4:30 pm. Nurmahal (60) and Sufia Khatun (7) jumped into a pond when they saw the flash of a lightning but died in the water.

Govt college teachers begin work stoppage

Teachers of the country's 233 government colleges yesterday staged a two-hour work stoppage and held demonstrations across the country, reports UNB.

The associations of lecturers and professors of government colleges embarked on their action programme to press for realising their 12-point demands

696 more Rohingya refugees go home

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, July 18: Six hundred and ninety six more Rohingya refugees of 146 families have been repatriated to Myanmar this morning.

They left for Myanmar from Rongikhali, Jumnapara and Nayapara transit camps.

They were received by the Myanmar immigration officials at the Kanninghong reception centre of Mongdow.

With this, the total number of returnees is 30,293.

AL: Mirza Azam

From Page 1 Col 5

lowing the LORD Minister's statement in the House proved that the case against the Awami League MP is an outcome of direct patronisation of government.

Abdus Samad Azad and Zillur Rahman yesterday also condemned the ruling party for using the state-owned radio and television as 'propaganda machine to serve its dirty political design'.

In another joint statement, they criticized telecasting of a drama on July 15 in a bid to suppress what they said the ruling BNP's rampant corruption and utter failure in running the affairs of the country.

The misuse of radio and television by the BNP government had not only destroyed the neutrality of the state-run media but also betrayed with the commitment of the three alliances to make radio and television autonomous, the Awami League leaders said.

Editor: S. M. Ali

</