

Benazir urges int'l community Influence India to stop atrocities in Kashmir

HANGU, Pakistan, Dec 1: Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto Wednesday urged international community to influence India to stop atrocities in Kashmir in order to make the upcoming Pak-India talks fruitful, reports AFP.

"We have made it known to the world that the talks (between India and Pakistan) will be of no use unless India ends atrocities on innocent Kashmiris," she said while addressing a tribal Jirga from Orakzai agency.

Giving a detailed account of her government's achievements in the area of foreign policy particularly on Kashmir issue, she said "all justice loving countries are siding with Pakistan on the issue of Kashmir," she said.

Sec 144 clamped on Sunamganj

From Our Correspondent
SYLHET, Dec 1: Section 144 was clamped in Sunamganj town this morning following tension over convening of meeting by rival parties at the same time and venue.

The Freedom Party the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and the Bangladesh Chhatra League, BCL (M-I) convened meetings at Sunamganj Court Point at 3 pm today.

Khaleda tells Zia Parishad to guide BNP on right path

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday underlined the role of the Zia Parishad in guiding the BNP, on the right path in furthering the politics of development and progress, reports BSS.

Begum Zia said the parishad had a non-political image and distinguished personalities of the country, as its members, could work for giving proper guideline and directing the nationalistic forces towards the prosperity of the nation.

The Prime Minister was addressing the representatives conference of the Zia Parishad at the Engineers' Institution auditorium here.

Victory Day drama festival

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Recalling the days of the war, the poet said the anti-Bangladesh forces had killed the intellectuals to cripple the country but expressed her hope that Bangladesh would be giving birth to more intellectuals and resist the fundamentalist forces.

"Let the spirit of the great independence war be spread through the street drama festival," she added.

Shamsur Rahman spoke of a conspiracy against the pro-liberation forces. The anti-liberation forces have gained power again and today they are trying to teach patriotism to the freedom fighters.

About the general amnesty of 1973, Fayed Ahmed said, the amnesty clearly indicated that the persons responsible for arson, rape or murder would not get any amnesty.

The persons responsible for arson, rape and murder during the war have become powerful after independence and now they have started killing again. The government is totally silent about them, he said and called for an unity among the pro-liberation forces to resist the anti-liberation elements.

Thirty drama groups from various parts of the country will

Kashmiris who are struggling for their right to self-determination could not be left alone and India would have to give their duly pledged right. They (Kashmiris) could not be bogged down as they are not afraid of death," she added.

Prime Minister said Pakistan is no more isolated in the world and the negotiations have been started with countries with whom it did not have good relations.

NDP activist nabbed

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Dec 1: Police this morning on a tip raided a hide-out of the NDP activists at the jungle-packed hilly area of Kachupara under Raizan thana and arrested one of them.

The arrested was identified as Musa Meah while the rest managed to escape sensing the raid by police.

They fled into the deep forest shooting volleys of gun fire at the police. However none was injured, police said.

BJP aura

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pitting the Hindu revivalist BJP against the rest of the political establishment.

The BJP went to the polls glorifying the mosque razing, hoping to reap millions of Hindu votes to return to power in elections widely seen as a national referendum.

The BJP has been desperately trying to emerge as a national alternative to the Congress in recent years, and its campaign slogan was "march with the BJP. Today five states, tomorrow the nation."

BJP leaders acknowledged their national ambitions had suffered a blow.

This is a very big setback, said a party leader on condition of anonymity. We knew we would have tough fights on our hands.

But we never ever thought we would lose like this.

Our dreams of ruling the country have been rolled back by at least five years, said another.

participate in the festival. The festival organisers will press for demands which include setting up of professional drama stages, repeal of the drama control order, autonomy for Radio and Television, trial of Golam Azam as a war criminal under the 1973 International War Criminal Act, banning the fundamentalist parties including the Jamaat-Shibir and the Freedom Party and withdrawal of cases against 24 Gano Adalat personalities including Jahanara Imam.

Earlier, Shegufta Farah Majid, a daughter of a martyr of the liberation war, read out a fax message from Jahanara Imam now undergoing treatment at a hospital in the USA.

Jahanara, who was supposed to inaugurate the festival in her message said, "Although I am physically absent from this programme - I am spiritually present among you".

She expressed the hope the street drama festival would be able to create new sense of awareness about the Liberation War.

The Samoy, the Meghdut and the Dhaka Theatre afterwards staged three plays - "Ekhaner Ekhaner", "Tamasa" and "Ekatorer Pala" respectively.

SAPTA : Dhaka must produce

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external market of the country's exportable goods, if the country gets the chance to export even a few items under the agreement, that is the benefit, he said.

Moreover, the country would get the privilege of being a least developed country under Clause 10 of the agreement, he said, adding the country can even withdraw from any bilateral trade arrangement under the safety clause if that is considered harmful for the economy.

He was, however, critical of the 'chambers of the country saying they did not come up with new ideas and suggestions for making the agreement beneficial for the country.

The Commerce Ministry official also stressed the need for producing new exportables in competitive prices for getting the real benefits out of the trade agreement.

Except Pakistan, all the South Asian countries have in the meantime started exchanging the lists of commodities which they are interested to export to particular states.

The SAARC Council of

Ministers at its December 4-5 meeting in Dhaka is likely to discuss tariff concessions and the lists of items to be traded among the member countries under the SAPTA.

The meeting of the Inter-Governmental Group (IGG) in Colombo and the consequent meeting of the Commission for Economic Cooperation (CEC) in Dhaka last month discussed the probable schedule of concessions that the member states may be asked to offer to their counterparts. The delegates of the member countries also exchanged ideas and information among themselves in the meetings.

Their findings will be placed before the SAARC Standing Committee comprising the Foreign Secretaries of the member states before it is placed to the Council of Ministers' meeting.

Another meeting of the IGG will be held at the end of this month to review the latest developments and take measures to implement the recommendations of the meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers.



Ilias Kanchan, a leading film actor, addressing a rally under the banner 'We Want Safe Roads' to develop social awareness to check road accident. A procession was brought out from the FDC in the city which dispersed at the National Press Club yesterday.

JS debates retrospective effect

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Haque told the House, 'the law of the land forbids giving retrospective effect only to the legislations relating to penal provisions.' Quoting from many books, the minister said there was no observation of the Supreme Court that an ordinance could not be given retrospective effect.

At this point Education Minister Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar took the floor to add that retrospective effect was illegal only in the cases of 'penal law and taxation law of penal nature.' Referring to the present ordinance, the Education Minister further said 'if the proposed law had sought to take away the facilities enjoyed by the workers during the time of promulgation of the ordinance and the date it wanted for retrospective effect, then it would have been considered an illegal one'.

Sircar argued that the proposed law would not curtail any facilities enjoyed by the public sector workers. This argument of the Education Minister gave an additional dimension to the legal debate. Rashed Khan Menon of the Workers' Party took the floor to point out that Section 4 of the proposed law had clearly curtailed the facilities enjoyed by the workers during the time span mentioned by the Education Minister himself. At this stage the Speaker looked convinced by Menon's argument.

The State Minister for Establishment once again took the floor apparently to contradict the Education Minister's last point. He maintained that whether the law curtailed the workers' facilities was an item of separate debate of academic nature. It had no relevance to the present context, the Minister argued.

At this stage, Speaker

False statement on PM's tour expenses alleged

By Staff Correspondent
The Opposition in Parliament yesterday alleged that a 'false statement' about the expenditure of the Prime Minister's tours has been given in the House.

Awami League MP A K M Jahangir moved a notice in the House saying his rights as a Member of Parliament have been breached because incorrect information was given on Monday to one of his questions regarding the PM's tours.

The AL MP tried to draw Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni's attention to the fate of the notice. The Deputy Speaker said the matter should not be discussed today as it was under consideration of the Speaker.

The Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim took the floor and said, "It is unfortunate that incorrect information has been provided from the PM's office."

The notice of K M Jahangir should be given priority and the House should be rightly informed, the Opposition Chief Whip added.

The Deputy Speaker reiterated that the Speaker will explain the matter later.

Credit schemes for small investors

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Bangladesh Bank would charge a premium of two per cent annually on the guaranteed amount, which would be off-set by the lending banks charging an interest rate of two per cent less than the usual chargeable rate of interest, the Minister noted.

Only 'newcomers' would be eligible for loans under the credit insurance scheme and banks would supervise, monitor and render necessary technical and management support to the investors.

The scheme for credit support for developing small-scale self-help projects and activities for public sector employees opting for voluntary retirement would have a Tk 50 crore government fund, Rahman said.

The participating banks, the Bangladesh Krishi Bank, the Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank, the Eastern Bank and BASIC, would also contribute a matching fund of 25 per cent of the government fund or Tk 12.5 crore from their own resources.

Loans under the scheme would be made for small-scale businesses and industries, he added, and eligibility criteria would include voluntarily retired persons from the public sector, with at least a 10-year service tenure and willing to provide at least 33 per cent of the total investment outlay in the form of equity. Preference would be given to

those who have knowledge and training in their respective fields of trade and industry, the Minister noted.

With a maximum loan ceiling of Tk 20 lakh, the loan utilisation period would be three years. Under the scheme, short-term loan would be available for trade finance while mid and long-term loans would be given for asset acquisition.

The rate of interest for the loan from the government fund under the scheme would be simple interest at the rate of one per cent above the bank rate charged by the Central Bank. While the rate of interest would be fixed at 10 per cent per annum on the individual bank's portion of the loan.

No interest would be charged for the first year of the loan, Rahman said, and repayment of interest, including interest due and principal, would start from the third year. A two per cent interest rebate would be given for repayment before maturity.

The necessary security for the loan would include a demand promissory note, personal guarantee of an adult member of the family and hypothecation over business assets while the investor would also have to furnish a satisfactory release order from previous employer and a letter of recommendation from the employer of a socially respectable person.

The press briefing was also attended by Finance Secretary

Nasimuddin Ahmed, Bangladesh Bank Governor Kurshid Alam and top officials of the scheduled banks, the Central Bank and the Finance Ministry.

It was stated at the briefing that out of the target of disbursing Tk 400 crore as investment loan during 1993-94, Sonali Bank disbursed Tk 113 crore up to November while Janata Bank Tk 100 crore out of a target of Tk 350 crore, Agrani Bank Tk 98 crore out of Tk 350 crore, Bangladesh Shilpa Bank Tk 23 crore out of Tk 125 crore and BKB disbursed Tk 8.9 crore out of a target of Tk 35 crore.

Foreign exchange reserve \$2340.54m

Bangladesh has a foreign exchange reserve of US dollars 2,340.54 million equivalent to Tk 9,303.66 crore as of September 22 last, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman told the Jatiya Sangsad in replying to a question from Awami League member Shahjahan Khan yesterday, reports BSS.

Of the reserve, over 1.7 billion US dollars had been invested in different forms of savings like investment with commercial banks, in gold and with the IMF, he said.

To another question from M Abdur Rahman (AL-Dinajpur), the Finance Minister said that the government had no plan to stop Deposit Pension Scheme (DPS).

Land management JS body decides to form task force to check corruption

The Parliamentary standing committee on Land at a meeting yesterday decided to constitute a task force to check corruption, irregularities and anomalies regarding land management and settlement system, reports BSS.

The meeting held a detailed discussion on the land management system and decided that the task force will inspect the settlement operation areas and take drastic actions on spot against the corrupt officials.

State Minister for Land Kabir Hossain chaired the meeting held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban here.

The State Minister said the government is firmly committed to bring about a revolutionary change in the field of land management system to end the suffering of the people.

Senior and efficient officials will be posted in the every stages of the field level to bring about the desired changes in the 'settlement system,' he said.

Members of the committee Amiruddin Ahmed, Mazibur Rahman Talukdar, and Mohammad Shahjahan of BNP, Mohammad Shahiduzzaman and Enamul Haq of Awami League, Nabab Ali and Abbas Khan of Jatiya Party and Mohammad Abd Bakar of Jamaat-e-Islami attended the meeting.

Australians want

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92, the imports from Australia was 51.80 million US dollars as against the exports of 18.97 million dollars, he pointed out.

"In this context, we may mutually take appropriate steps to bring about a change in the trading pattern and economic cooperation so that a desired result can be obtained," he said, adding Australian investment in Bangladesh on a buy-back arrangement may augur well in this case.

Mahbub said, the exploration of petroleum and mineral resources as well as investment in dairy and telecommunications sectors are among the most prospective sectors for foreign entrepreneurs.

The Australian delegation includes Stewart McAurthur, Member of the House of Representatives (MHR), Deverley McAurthur MHR, Collins Hollis MHR, Silver Smith, John Dradford, Philip Cleary, Jack Smith and John Carter.

The meeting was attended, among others, by Vice President of FBCCI K M Shaful Islam, DCCI President A T M Wazullah, President of the Foreign Investors' Chamber Mahbub Jamil, former FBCCI President Alhaj Akram Hossain, A K M Shamsuddoha, President, Bangladesh Indenting Agents Association and Chairman of Dhaka Stock Exchange Khurshid Alam and Jamal Haider.

Australian High Commissioner in Dhaka Kenneth Aspinall was also present on the occasion.

Rally in Sylhet

From Our Correspondent
SYLHET, Dec 1: A big rally was held in Sylhet town this afternoon at the call of the Sylhet Division Implementation and Greater Sylhet Development Unity Council to press for immediate formation of a new administrative division comprising the four districts of greater Sylhet region.

The speakers called upon the government to declare the division by December 20 otherwise, a greater course of action would be announced on that day.

The Midnight File

Georgian govt, rebels sign peace accord

GENEVA, Dec 1: The Georgian government and Abkhaz separatists signed an accord Wednesday meant to pave the way toward peace in the war-torn former Soviet republic. After two days of talks, both sides signed a memorandum of understanding at a Wednesday ceremony presided by UN mediator Eduard Brunner, reports AP.

Indian minister resigns

NEW DELHI, Dec 1: A senior minister in India's minority government who criticised the results of last month's state elections resigned today, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said. The agency, quoting unnamed sources, said Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Rangarajan Kumaramangalam resigned after Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao asked him to quit. There was no immediate official confirmation of the resignation, PTI said. It did not say why Rao asked him to resign, reports Reuters.

SAARC body discusses issues

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of setting up a SAARC Documentation Centre mooted earlier may be decided in the coming Foreign Ministers' meet. The documentation centre is supposed to be set up in New Delhi.

The Standing Committee will also discuss other items of regional cooperation. The review of the progress on the theme of the current year, which was the Year of the Disabled, will come up before the Standing Committee. The SAARC Standing Committee will also draw up the broad plans for the theme of next year, which will be 'the Year of Youth.'

The Standing Committee also considered establishing some links with other regional and international agencies like the ESCAP and the UNDP.

Aman drive

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They said, the newly-harvested paddy with higher than allowable percentage of moisture is being sold in the northern region at Taka 185 to 195 per maund, while the market price is well above Taka 200 in other areas of the country. The government's procurement policy permits moisture in paddy upto 14 per cent.

The authorities believe the price will fall in mid-December when more paddy will arrive at the market with the completion of the aman harvest. The government's procurement drive will gain momentum then as the farmers will sell their produce for a better price at the procurement centres, they hope.

However, the experts maintain that besides lower price offered by the government, the farmers are also reluctant to go to purchase centres as they face a lot of problems to fulfil the government specification of the paddy. The specification includes minimum level of moisture and dust contents. So they prefer to sell at the open market or to the middlemen.


The experts added that another reason for poor response to the procurement drive is perhaps higher production costs compared to the price fixed by the government.

The Prime Minister said under the democratic system there would be opposition and government. But it was not democracy that opposition would create hindrances in every effort for development only because they could not go to power, she said.

The Prime Minister while welcoming the new members said they had to work sincerely for making the party strong at grassroots level to reach the fruits of development initiated by her government to every door step.

The Prime Minister said her government had taken a number of programmes in education, self-employment and other human resource development sectors.

আমাদের কম্পিউটার ভবনে স্বাগতম



বাংলাদেশে ব্যাংকিং এর ক্ষেত্রে কম্পিউটারের
বহুবিধ ব্যবহারে আমরাই অগ্রণী
শাখা পর্যায়ে উন্নততর কম্পিউটার প্রযুক্তিকে
আমরা কার্যকর ভাবে প্রসারিত করেছি।



অগ্রণী ব্যাংক

দেশ ও জাতির সেবায় প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ একটি ব্যাংক