

NEWS DIGEST

Karimov in India

NEW DELHI, Jan 3 (AFP): Uzbekistan President Islam Karimov arrived here today on a three-day visit aimed at building closer ties with India. Karimov, whose trip is the latest in a series of visits to India by leaders from republics of the former Soviet Union, was given a ceremonial welcome at the presidential palace.

Castro's call

HAVANA, Jan 3 (AFP): President Fidel Castro urged beleaguered Cubans to renew their commitment to communism, promising a gradual improvement in living standards after "the most difficult year of the revolution." "There has never been a more noble and more humanitarian revolution than the Cuban revolution," Castro said Saturday in a speech marking the 35th anniversary of the uprising that brought him to power.

Diplomatic row

NAIROBI, Jan 3 (AP): Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, whose cancellation of a visit to Khartoum sparked a diplomatic row between Sudan and Britain, on Monday criticized Sudan's order to expel a British diplomat. The archbishop said he cancelled the Khartoum leg of his trip because he was not assured freedom of movement, and that his decision in no way was influenced by the British government.

Savage

ALGIERS, Jan 3 (AFP): Two civilians had their throats cut and their heads cut off by an armed Algerian gang, while two car park attendants were shot dead at the weekend, press reports said here today. A teacher and a former Mujahedeen, or fighter in the war of independence, had their throats slit and "were horribly decapitated" at Touila village near El-Tarif in eastern Algeria overnight Saturday.

Rules tightened

NEW DELHI, Jan 3 (AP): The sale of underage girls by their families to Arabs or other non-Indians has prompted a southern Indian state to tighten the regulation of Muslim marriages, newspapers reported Monday. The government of Andhra Pradesh on Sunday ordered Muslim clerics solemnizing weddings with foreigners to first seek clearance from the state-run Wakf Board, which controls mosques and Islamic educational institutions. The order came after police arrested three people from Saudi Arabia last month on charges of kidnapping and raping a teenage girl.

New sea mountain

NEW DELHI, Jan 3 (AFP): Indian oceanographers have discovered a mountain on the Arabian Sea bed off Bombay, a news report said today. The mountain was found on the sea floor 455 kilometres (285 miles) off the Bombay coast by scientists of the Goa-based National Institute of Oceanography, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported. The 1,505-metre (4,965-feet) mountain, which they named Ram Sea Mount after Indian physicist C. V. Raman, was the latest in a series of sea mounts discovered by scientists exploring ocean depths.

2 students killed

MAE SOT, THAILAND, Jan 3 (AP): Two guerrillas belonging to a Myanmar student rebel group have been killed in recent attacks by the Myanmar army, a rebel source said Monday. One of those killed was a battalion commander in the All Burma Students' Democratic Front, said a member of the Karen National Union, an allied opposition group.

25 miners die

BEIJING, Jan 3 (Reuters): A gas explosion killed 25 miners at a coalmine in the southwest province of Guizhou, a local newspaper received in Beijing today said. The accident happened on December 11 at the victory mine in Weining county when an underground explosion ignited excess gas in the tunnels, the Guizhou daily said.

Mass suicide

NEW DELHI, Jan 3 (AFP): Extreme poverty drove four members of a family in western India to commit mass suicide, the Press Trust of India said today. The 47-year-old mother, her two sons aged 23 and 20 and a daughter of 27 died after setting themselves ablaze Sunday at their home in the city of Rajkot, Gujarat state, the news agency said.

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Garbage disposal in certain city areas to be privatised

By Staff Correspondent

The government is to privatise the garbage disposal system in three posh areas of the city.

Minister for Local Government and Rural Development Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder said this at a meeting of the Gulshan, Baridhara and Banani Welfare Society, held at the Gulshan Club yesterday evening.

The minister was apprised of the problems of Gulshan, Banani and Baridhara, caused mainly due to the use of these areas for non-residential purposes.

The minister, however, said the government would not discriminate among city areas describing the problems raised as common for all city dwellers.

The association leaders expressed their resentment at the mushroom growth of garments industries in the residential areas.

The presence of the business centres and offices has turned these areas into something like Bashabo, Rampura and Jatrabari," the president of the welfare society, in his report said.

"What was the benefit of spending a fortune to have our houses here?" asked former Deputy Premier Jamaluddin Ahmed, president of the society, echoing the feelings of his neighbours.

The society's president also urged the government to stop issuing trade licences for clinics, guest houses, office, restaurants and shop in these areas. He also demanded gradual relocation of the garment factories from these areas.

Taking part in the discussion, the president of the Gulshan Ladies Club,

Khurshida Anwar, said the cleaning drive that has been launched, although late, should also focus on the civic amenities.

S Kalimullah, retired army officer and a resident of Gulshan, demanded suspension of the plying of buses, in the Route No 6 in particular, to avoid accidents. He mentioned the accident that occurred yesterday morning killing a young maid in Sector 2 of Gulshan.

Another resident, Farida Monem, urged the government to restrict the beggars from entering the posh areas. The LGRD minister did not agree with her suggestion.

It is the duty of the elected government to provide civic amenities to all," Barrister Talukder said, underlining the need for concerted efforts of both the government and the citizens.

The minister also said, the government has a plan to install three lakh new telephones in the city in the next three years. The number of telephones installed in the last 40 years stands at 2.40 lakh, he said.

The government is also trying to synchronise the works of the DESA, the WASA and the T&T authorities to avert repeated construction and digging up of the roads.

The minister, who is also the Secretary General of the BNP, asked the residents to extend their cooperation towards Mirza Abbas who, he said had proved his efficiency as an appointed Mayor earlier.

Also present on the occasion were Members of Parliament, Qamrul Islam and Abdur Rab Chowdhury, MP.

Grameen trust seeks fund

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replication programmes.

Of the total amount, 25 million dollars would be earmarked for providing seed capital, 62 million for scaling-up funds, four million for training, three million for research and development, one million for administrative expenses and 2.5 million dollars each for monitoring and evaluation and publishing training materials.

Under the project, 360 replication programmes would receive seed money not exceeding 70,000 dollars as loans with a two per cent annual interest.

During the project period, 100 scaling-up schemes would be funded with a maximum loan of about 620,000 dollars.

Overall, funds received under the seed grant and scaling-up programmes would finance 820,000 borrowers per loan cycle. During the five years, each dollar would be re-lent to poor borrowers an average of 2.5 times, yielding a total of two million loans over the entire period.

The ultimate goal of this five-year project is to play a catalytic role in reaching seven million extremely poor families — impacting on the lives of nearly 35 million people — with credit by the year 2003 by supporting a growing number of intermediary organisations throughout the developing world," according to the project proposal.

Additional programmes being funded by the trust are in the Philippines, Nigeria, India, Vietnam, Lesotho, Nepal and in Tanzania.

The Grameen Trust has provided seed funds to 11 replication programmes in 1992 and to about another 15 in 1993.

Set up in 1976, the Grameen Bank now has more than 1.4 million borrowers throughout Bangladesh and extends over 14 million dollars in loans averaging 75 dollars every month while enjoying a repayment rate of 97 per cent.

Bank officials told The Daily Star that the USAID has pledged to provide 20 million dollars over the next five years. Decision was announced during a recent visit by Prof Yunus to Washington.

The World Bank also

pledged to provide two million dollars towards the fund late last year at a conference on "Overcoming Global Hunger" in the US capital.

During the pilot phase of the project the Grameen Trust received 500,000 dollars from the Rockefeller Foundation and 200,000 dollars from the MacArthur Foundation in 1991-92 and 1.2 million dollars from the UN Capital Development Fund and a million Deutsche Marks from GTZ for several replication projects.

Presently, there are four fully operational replication projects in the Philippines, which have received funding from the Grameen Trust, two in Malaysia and single programmes each in Sri Lanka, Malawi, Burkina Faso and Indonesia.

The oldest of these programmes, Amanah Iktiar Malaysia, currently has more than 19,000 borrowers and is adding 1,000 additional borrowers every month. All the replication projects have a loan repayment rate of over 90 per cent.

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Aviation would replace the chief security-in-charge. Captain (Retd) Ekramullah, who would be posted in the administrative section.

A Biman security guard, Sheikh Salam, who was guarding the aircraft, and a Civil Aviation security officer, Abu Sayed Bhuiyan, who was in charge of the Civil Aviation's security, were suspended.

Dr Belal E Baaque, a physicist, presented the keynote paper in the meeting. He said, the only force capable of attracting direct foreign investments is the political leadership of the country.

"Bangladesh must improve its image abroad, maintain law and order, develop human resources and provide tax incentives to attract FDI," Doha said.

Salman Rahman of Beximco Ltd said, the growth of the economy by eight to ten per cent was possible by setting up labour-intensive export-oriented industries and by attracting FDI.

"FDI will come only when there is more than adequate return on investment," Rahman observed and spoke of the role of political leaders in attracting FDI.

"If Bangladesh can successfully attract one flagship company, this could serve as a trigger to initiate the massive inflow of industrial capital in the country," he maintained.

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the government press note had attempted to portray the agitation of the professionals as a "campaign for pay hike."

"Instead, the objective of our 17-point charter of demands aims at reformation of the present bureaucracy," said M A Hena, secretary general of the Prokrichi-BCS Central Action Council.

The professionals have finally signed their mass resignation letters and they would take "any risk" to realise their demands if the government remained "indifferent and negligent". Prokrichi leaders said.

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Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina addressing the commissioner candidates of her party for the Dhaka City Corporation polls at the party central office in the city yesterday.

— Star photo

'93 was a year of progress for Bangladesh'

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The Voice of America (VOA) has commented that the 1993 was a year of progress in political and economic fields of Bangladesh with the emergence of a stable democratic government, reports BSS.

Reviewing the past one year in a special report broadcast on the new year day over its Bangla service, the VOA said being a poor and developing country, Bangladesh with its twelve crore people had to face many difficulties during the last year.

The special report by Syed Ziaur Rahman, Washington-based editor of Bangla service of the VOA said that economic progress was hopeful during the past one year. "Reserve of foreign exchange had increased to a record volume while the inflation rate is less than 3 per cent, the lowest in that region of the world," VOA said. "The country has reached almost close to self-sufficiency in food production and per capita income has increased," the VOA said quoting the Prime Minister.

The VOA referred to views of international experts who said that Bangladesh would have to shun the path of strikes and harts if it wanted to achieve economic success like those of South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan. They said because of these strikes Bangladesh was deprived of needed investments.

Funding activities of Bangladesh in the international arena in 1993, the VOA said the country had played an active role in the peace keeping efforts in various parts of the world including Cambodia, Somalia and the Gulf.

Making evaluation of the performance during the last year, the VOA said, possibilities of prosperity are awaiting Bangladesh.

The VOA report monitored here quoted Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia as saying in an interview with the broadcasting services that, foreign exchange reserve had increased, new industries were set up, more job opportunities were created and both export and import trade had enhanced.

"Though not to our expectation, but we can say we have attained considerable progress," she told VOA. She said the financial institutions were rejuvenated and trade and industry had been active.

The VOA concluded its report quoting experts who said that the economic progress of Bangladesh was dependent on the powerful institutionalisation of democracy.

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fought two of their three wars over control of Kashmir where the four-year-old secessionist strife has claimed thousands of lives. Pakistan calls the current round of talks here a last chance to peacefully resolve the dispute.

India were expected to propose demilitarization of the 18,000 feet (5,400 metres) high Siachen Glacier where rival troops have been stationed in below freezing temperature for years.

During his two day stay, Dixit called on President Farooq Ahmed Leghari and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

"Pakistan has outlined certain measures that we feel need to be taken," he said, adding

2 security men

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Sunday's daring burglary at the office of the Ministry of Environment and Forests at the secretariat is still shrouded in mystery.

The Detective Branch (DB) of Police yesterday was assigned to investigate into the incident.

A DB source said it had taken up the investigation, but no headway was made on the first day yesterday.

Six rooms of the Ministry, located on the 13th floor of the 20-storeyed building inside the Secretariat, were broken into. The burglars ransacked official files and papers by breaking open the file cabinets and almirahs, including those of the Secretary, Abdurrahman Pasha.

The incident delayed the London flight by four hours.

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A Biman security guard, Sheikh Salam, who was guarding the aircraft, and a Civil Aviation security officer, Abu Sayed Bhuiyan, who was in charge of the Civil Aviation's security, were suspended.

Ujjal, who was arrested by the Cantonment police, was taken on a three-day police remand for interrogation yesterday.

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