

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 Mujahadeen, 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-foot) 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.



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.

'93 was a year of progress for Bangladesh'

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," it added.

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 broad-casting 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 commerce had been activated.

"In short we can say that overall development activities have been going on in the country." The Prime Minister was quoted to have particularly mentioned her government's programme for women and children. Following implementation of these programmes, production had significantly increased and as a result, the nation had achieved self-sufficiency in food.

The VOA review mentioned Prime Minister's views on the attainment of food security with mentionable progress in the face of recurring natural calamities. "We can now claim that we have already solved the food problems though we could not provide total solution to other problems of the people," 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 hartals 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.

Praising 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.

Quoting Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman, the VOA said Bangladesh was ready to remain in any forum for the sake of world peace.

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

Hasina warns

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tration, including the police, to remain neutral during the polls. Hasina instructed her party candidates to go directly to the voters and seek their verdict. She asked the party workers to take precautionary steps against rigging, particularly at the female polling booths.

She also urged her workers to unite to work for winning the upcoming elections in the interest of the party, and devote themselves to the campaign so that democracy could be given an institutional shape.

Party leaders Abdul Mannan, Abdur Razzak, MP and Mayor candidate Mohammad Hanif also spoke on the occasion.

BCL founding day today

By DU Correspondent

The pro-Awami League Chhatra League (M-I) has drawn up programmes to observe its 46th founding anniversary today.

The BCL activists will lay wreaths before the portrait of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Bangabandhu Bhaban, Dharmad, at 7:30 am and will bring out procession from the Teachers-Students Centre (TSC) of the Dhaka University at 11 am. The procession will disperse at the Central Shaheed Minar after marching city roads.

Meanwhile, the BCL brought out a procession and held a rally on the Dhaka University campus yesterday afternoon.

The leaders at the rally demanded arrest of the terrorists reportedly staying at the residential halls of the Dhaka University.

Black flags fly at Bandertila

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 3: The people of suburban Bandertila and Halishahar in the port city here staged fresh protest today in memory of the tragedy that occurred on January 2-3 last year in which 11 persons died and some 200 others were injured.

The people in Bandertila hoisted black flags on the rooftops of residences and shops and wore black ribbons to mourn the incidents, dubbed as the nation's worst tragedy. All shops were shut there from dawn to dusk today and a rally under the auspices of the 'Nagorik Committee' was organised this afternoon demanding immediate publication of the enquiry report on the Bandertila-Halishahar incidents, submitted by the one-man Justice Sultan Hossain Khan Commission.

People in Bandertila also brought out procession calling for rehabilitation of the victims' dependents.

A large contingent of police was deployed in the areas today to prevent any untoward incident.

An angry mob, protesting the alleged rape of two girls, clashed with a section of Navy-men in the Bandertila-Halishahar areas on January 2 and 3 in 1993, leaving nearly a dozen killed, mostly through indiscriminate firing by the besieged sailors.

Indo-Pak talks end

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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.

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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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.

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

The incident delayed the London flight by four hours.

DB to investigate burglary

By Staff Correspondent

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, Abdullah Haroon Pasha.



Dr MA Hena, secretary general of Prokrichi-BCS Central Action Council, speaking at a press conference at the BMA office yesterday. Convenor of the Council Dr M A Majid (centre) and agriculturist Dr Gul Hossain (right) are also seen.

The Midnight File

Most Muscovites regret Soviet collapse

MOSCOW, Jan 3: Two years after its collapse, the Soviet Union is alive in the mind of Moscow residents — the majority of people in the ex-Soviet capital regret the breakdown and think a new union will be formed. A poll released Monday by independent pollster Grigory Pashkov found that 57 per cent of those Muscovites questioned regretted the 1991 Soviet collapse, with only 25 per cent viewing it positively. Seventeen percent of those polled said they thought all former Soviet republics would soon form a new union, while another 39 per cent thought it would be joined only by some of the newly independent states, reports AP.

US-DPRK nearing N-deal

WASHINGTON, Jan 3: The United States and North Korea are near to a deal on Pyongyang's nuclear programme that could be wrapped up this week, a senior US official said today, reports Reuter.

Croatia-Bosnia talks today

ZAGREB, Jan 3: The foreign ministers of Croatia and Bosnia plan to hold peace talks in Vienna tomorrow, a spokeswoman for the Croatian minister, Mate Granic, told Reuters. Granic will meet the Muslim-led government's Haris Silajdzic to discuss territorial disputes in the Bosnian conflict as well as humanitarian questions, Ivana Moric, spokeswoman for the Croatian foreign ministry said. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 1300 GMT. Moric said. All three warring factions are to hold peace negotiations in Geneva later this month.

GATT to benefit all, says US economist

An American economist said in Dhaka yesterday the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) will benefit all the member countries by accelerating international trade, reports UNB.

"Despite all criticism, I can assure you that the current agreement (GATT) will help everyone in international trade," said Dr John D Stempel, a Professor of Diplomacy and International Commerce at the University of Kentucky, USA.

The general agreement would activate the economic growth of the world by leveling the tariff barriers, he stated while delivering a talk on 'The Political Economy of Tomorrow' at the Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management.

"The present economic development and further growth in the economic trade pattern, which was laid by the recently signed GATT agreement, will help all the countries," said Stempel, who is in the city to deliver lectures under the US Speaker Programme of the USIS.

He observed that the economy of Bangladesh, which adopted the free market policy, was now struggling with privatisation and its social goals.

Stempel suggested that Bangladesh should invest its resources in the long-term projects. "Do not put up show-case projects, put money in long-term constructive projects."

Responding to a question on the rationale of adopting the free market policy by Third World countries like Bangladesh, he said, "There is economic benefit of opening up the markets, but I think it is very important to see at

16 killed, 57 hurt

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death message to Kulaura from Moulvibazar yesterday.

The accident occurred when a microbus they were travelling in collided head-on with a minibus at Mohal on the Moulvibazar Kulaura road in the afternoon.

Rajnagar police said the Moulvibazar-bound minibus

Chemists

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affected but the government had still remained silent.

"The Samity was compelled to take such a drastic measure due to the government's negligence," he said and added, "The Samity begs pardon of the people of the country, in this regard."

Talking to The Daily Star last night, the deputy-secretary of the Samity said that negotiations between the Samity and the government might take place today.

"We have formally lodged our protests and placed our charter of demands three times before the authorities since July last year," he said. "Interestingly, the Health Ministry was not even conscious about the increase of fees till last November."

According to a Health Ministry letter which recommended the demands of the Samity to the Finance Ministry on November 20 last year, the ministry expressed its ignorance about the increase of the licence renewal fees and requested the Finance Ministry to implement their demands.

Annually, medicines worth Tk 900 crore are sold, of which the government supplies medicines worth between Tk 30 and 35 crore. The rest is provided by the private sector.

There are about 22,000 licensed drug stores in the country, while another 40,000 are operating without any licence.

Eleven persons, including three minor boys, were admitted to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital with serious head injuries. Their conditions were critical, hospital sources said.