

# Rockets hit Kabul: 13 killed King Fahd, Leghari call for ceasefire

ISLAMABAD, Jan 17: Pakistan President Farooq Ahmad Leghari and Saudi Arabia's King Fahd called for an immediate ceasefire in Afghanistan, in a joint communique issued today simultaneously from Jeddah and Islamabad, reports AFP.

The communique followed talks between Fahd and Leghari, who is currently on a visit to Saudi Arabia.

They urged the Afghan factional leaders to "fear Allah in what they are doing to their own people and homeland" and enforce an "unconditional ceasefire" throughout the country.

The communique called for "faithful" implementation of power-sharing accords which were signed by the Afghan factions in March last year in Islamabad and later in the Afghan city of Jalalabad.

The two heads of state asked the Afghan leaders to facilitate a role by the Jeddah-based 51-nation organisation of Islamic conference in securing and monitoring a permanent ceasefire.

Meanwhile, at least 13 people were killed and 25 wounded when a barrage of rockets hit parts of Kabul today, radio Kabul said.

The broadcast monitored here, said the attack had also caused considerable property damage, but did not mention the number of rockets and the areas hit.

Afghan ministers loyal to President Burhanuddin Rabbani fled a meeting in the Prime Minister's office in central Kabul today when rebel forces attacked the building with rockets, rebel sources in Peshawar said.

The attack came as snow fell on the ruined city, bringing a lull in fierce factional fighting which has raged since new year's day.

The rebels, allied forces of Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and northern warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum, fired 25 rockets at the Prime Minister's office.

## Evicted hawkers to get khas land: Hanif

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League-backed mayor candidate in the capital Mohammad Hanif yesterday said if elected, he would rehabilitate the evicted hawkers by giving them khas lands at a nominal price. Shopping centres would also be built for them on the abandoned lands, he said.

Hanif made the commitments while exchanging views on the upcoming Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) polls with the leaders of the Hawkers' League and the Rickshaw Sramik League at the Awami League central office at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city.

Addressing the hawkers, Hanif criticised the authorities for evicting the hawkers without making arrangements for their rehabilitation. "The unplanned eviction is inhuman and it will aggravate the country's unemployment problem", he said.

Meanwhile, the AL central leaders continued campaigning for the party nominees.

At a campaign rally at Mohammadpur, the AL Presidium member, Tofael Ahmed, MP said the coming polls could not be free and fair unless the election code of conduct and the decisions taken at the meeting between the Chief Election Commissioner and the political parties were implemented.

## Accountability undefined

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positions and the higher echelons include 56 Secretaries, 57 Additional Secretaries and 220 Joint Secretaries. It is divided into 29 cadres and the major ones are: BCS (Health) with 8312 officials; BCS (General Education) 7768; BCS (Administration) 4634 and BCS (Agriculture) with 2049 officials.

The report points out that the traditional or colonial civil service was based on a 'culture of secrecy', which may be abused behind a veil of secrecy. "Thus, in order to check arbitrariness and manipulation, transparency needs to be practised in the offices of the civil servants. When the government is transparent, the press has access to information on administrative and political malpractices."

However, it adds that the primary factors hindering transparency in administration are the existence of "cumbersome and imprecise" laws and rules that restrict flow of information and speedy decision-making. "The existing rules and laws with which the civil servants are performing their mandated responsibilities still bear the colonial essence."

The report strongly advocates the role of the press as that of a watch-dog. "The press or the mass media plays a crucial role in promoting accountability of both politicians and bureaucrats," it says.

Among the built-in mechanisms for enforcing accountability, the report cites the budgetary process, as mandated by Article 87 of the Constitution, auditing by the Auditor General's office, legislative mechanisms and legislative control through the public accounts committee of Parliament.

"But this built-in mechanism does not work when the enforcers themselves violate the rules and procedures to achieve mutual or self-interest. In recent times such a tendency has become endemic in Bangladesh," the report charges.

It calls for a 'symbiosis' between the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and the Comptroller and Auditor General's office, saying that the PAC can only function if the report of the Auditor General is made available to it. "Both need each other for the success of their operations."

It also advocates the appointment of an ombudsman,

as per Article 77 of the Constitution, as a means to ensuring the proper responsibility and accountability of the civil servants to Parliament and to the public.

Special courts to adjudicate administrative wrongs done to citizens, the report says, may give more benefits to the aggrieved individuals as the procedures in the present system are time-consuming. "What is needed in Bangladesh is strengthening the system of judicial review of administrative action by supporting it with additional legal and political means."

It also notes that there is an absence of a uniform definition of 'corruption' in the Government Servants Conduct Rules of 1976 and the Anti-Corruption Act of 1974.

Identifying the dominant forms of corruption subverting accountability, the report cites the answers of 97 senior civil service officials who listed 31 forms of corruption.

Misuse of official facilities were cited by 75 of the respondents, use of official manpower for personal work by 42, receiving bribe from the public by 41, abuse of power by 47 and nepotism was cited by 42 of the respondents.

It notes that although Article 76 of the Constitution provides for setting up parliamentary committees to inquire into the activities of the ministries, yet their function remained nominal during the past decade. "Their function remained confined to superficial routine discussions and entertainment."

However, since March 1992 the monthly mandatory meetings of all 43 parliamentary committees are being held. But the report adds that the committees "have not taken an institutional shape because of the political incapacity and immaturity and one of the causes for the malfunction of the committee is that the Constitution does not clearly spell out the authority and jurisdiction of each committee."

The civil service respondents believe that unless members of the committees are provided through orientation with the governmental system, the report says, they will not be able to operate efficiently and their role in the promotion of public accountability will continue to remain weak.

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia visiting stalls after inaugurating a three-day Zia mela in observance of the 58th birth anniversary of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman at the Zia College ground under Gabtali thana in Bogra yesterday. — PID photo

## Cement bags crush 4 to death in N'ganj

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Jan 17: Four persons died on the spot when a large number of stacked up cement bags collapsed on them at around 7 pm yesterday at the Munshikholra cement ghat on the Dhaka-Narayanganj highway.

The victims were identified as Sardar Halim 50, Emdad, 25, Mohammad Ali Bhuiyan, 54 and Shahid, 40. They were labourers at the cement ghat where barges unload cement at a dock by the river Buriganga.

The incident took place at a wholesaler's godown reportedly owned by Madina Trading. The victims were sleeping in a thatched hut adjacent to the tin-built godown. Police said, all of a sudden a wall along with cement bags collapsed on the sleeping labourers, killing them instantaneously.

Police recovered the bodies from under a heap of at least 500 bags filled with cement.

The Buriganga Ghat Sramik Union has lodged a case with the Fatullah thana.



DCC polls diary

By Staff Correspondent

The 'horse' owner has stopped eating.

Bangladesh People's League's bet in the electoral race — M A Khaleq — began a fast unto death yesterday demanding immediate removal of banners, posters, makeshift campaign stalls, and stopping the use of loudspeakers in the DCC polls!

He also demands a clear-cut statement from the Chief Election Commissioner on those violating the election code.

Khaleq, who has been awarded the symbol of a horse for the mayoral polls, in a statement said he would not eat until the demands were met.

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Gangs of professional 'town-criers' have emerged in the city amid the hubbub of the DCC polls.

The groups, mainly comprising 10 to 12 youngsters, have been engaged by different ward commissioner candidates to chant slogans and bring out processions in their favour in return for money or food.

The problem is that the 'criers' change their sides but not their clothes so frequently that it often becomes difficult for the candidates to guess if the slogans were in his favour or for his rival!

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A similar gang of 'town-criers' at Shantinagar area in the capital is unique in its own way.

Their mode of contract in the campaign is not money — but cigarettes! The group Monday marched to a makeshift roadside campaign stall chanting slogans in favour of a word commissioner candidate.

However, they were shut up by the camp managers. "Get lost for now, you'll get your biscuits later," one of the camp managers was heard yelling at the group.

"We won't eat biscuits," retorted the leader of the gang. "We want cigarettes. . . Gold Leaf of the red packets."

## Khaleda inaugurates 'Zia Mela' at Baghbari

BAGHBARI (Bogra), Jan 17: Baghbari, the birthplace of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman, started humming with festivities as Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia inaugurated a three-day exhibition of traditional village items today, reports UNB.

The Jatiyatabadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangstha (JASAS) has organised the 'Zia Mela' on the occasion of the 58th anniversary of the birth of Zia, in cooperation with the Zia family and local administration.

Begum Zia released pigeons to mark the inauguration of the fair, being held at the sleepy village, 15 kilometres from the Bogra district headquarters, for the second consecutive year.

A photo-exhibition, documentary film shows, musical and cultural programmes and display of traditional handicraft have been arranged on the occasion.

Stalls have been set up by the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation, the Livestock and Fisheries Department and the Agricultural Department to inspire the rural people in increasing production in the fields and factories.

On arrival at her in-laws' homestead, an event which created immense enthusiasm among the people of the district at large, Begum Zia was greeted by thousands of people and schoolchildren chanting welcome slogans.

Villagers — men, women and children — from far-flung areas of the district thronged Baghbari to have a glimpse of the Prime Minister and enjoy the mela.

Begum Zia distributed prizes among the literary competition winners of the Zia Shishu Kishore Sangathan.

The inaugural function was followed by a colourful musical soiree. Noted artists of the country and local vocalists rendered regional and 'baul' songs. The Bogra Youth Choir also presented several patriotic songs and dances. Begum Zia enjoyed the function.

Earlier, the Prime Minister distributed sarees and lungis among the poor people on the courtyard of Zia's ancestral home.

On her way to Baghbari from Bogra, she talked to villagers at different places and exchanged greetings.

In her opening remarks, Begum Zia said though Shaheed Zia is no more in this world today, he is still alive among the people for his development and production-oriented programmes.

She called upon the people to take a vow on the birth anniversary of the great leader to build the country as a prosperous one.

Presided over by JASAS leader Zahid Hossain Chunnui, the inaugural function was also addressed by Post and Telecommunications Minister Tariqul Islam, BNP MPs Helaluzzaman Talukder, Dr Habibur Rahman, Azizul Huq and Khurshid Jahan Huq, National University Pro-VC Dr Mahbubullah, BFUJ secretary general Amanullah Kabir and JASAS leaders.

## Extended tele exchange

Meanwhile, Begum Khaleda Zia inaugurated a telephone exchange extended with 1,500 new lines here today, saying her government will continue to expand and modernise telecommunication in the country.

The Prime Minister rang Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali in the capital to open the extended exchange.

Following the extension of the exchange, the number of telephone lines rose to 3,500 in the district from the earlier 2,000.

Post and Telecommunication Minister Tariqul Islam, Azizul Huq MP, Khurshid Jahan Huq MP and senior officials were present.

## Biswa Ijtema ends

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At least 11 persons died due to diarrhoea, accidents and other illnesses during the three-day Ijtema. Of the four, including a woman, were crushed under the wheels of a running train yesterday near the Zia Airport Station at Khilkhet.

About 20 thousand people received treatment in different field hospitals and temporary medical centres at the Ijtema venue. Tongi thana police arrested 40 pick-pockets from the area. They were sent to the Gazipur jail.

A serious traffic jam clogged the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway from Azampur to the Tongi Cherag Ali Market from 1pm to 6 pm.

Ten special ticket counters were opened at the Tongi Railway Stations for home-bound devotees.

The mammoth congregation, organised by the World Tabligh Jamaat or the 'preachers' Group', a non-political organisation headquartered in New Delhi, is being held here annually for the last 29 years.

The Biswa Ijtema began in 1945 at the Kakrail Mosque in the city. The bank of the Turag has been the venue since 1965.

## Another minister quits Yeltsin's cabinet

MOSCOW, Jan 17: Russian Social Security Minister Ella Pamielova, the only woman in the cabinet, announced her resignation on Sunday with a blistering attack on the government, reports Reuter.

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, Abdus Samad: Aazad, AL Presidium members Abdul Mannan and Rahmat Ali, MP and almost all the DCC mayor candidates offered the *munajat*. High civil and military officers, political leaders from a number of parties were also present.

Pamielova is a supporter of Economics Minister Yegor Gaidar, architect of Russia's reforms, who stepped down saying he lacked the levers of power he needed to pursue his free-market line.

## PM asks armed forces to work for prosperous Bangladesh

BUSHIRBANDAR (Dinajpur), Jan 17: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today urged the members of the armed forces to work shoulder to shoulder with the people for a self-sufficient and prosperous Bangladesh, reports UNB.

"We are implementing development programmes aimed at achieving self-reliance and building up a happy and prosperous country," she said, seeking cooperation from all in materialising the programmes.

Begum Zia was addressing members of the 66th Infantry Division after witnessing a collective winter exercise of the Bangladesh Army and the Air Force here this morning. Two jet fighters and a fleet of tanks participated in the exercise.

The Prime Minister called upon the members of the armed forces to integrate themselves in the development activities. "The country belongs to us all. I believe you can create mass awareness about family planning, mass education, tree plantation and environment," she added.

Commenting on their exercise, she said there is no alternative to training for maintaining discipline and acquiring skills. "We have to work hard to attain skills and maintain discipline. We have to establish ourselves as a self-respecting nation. We have to strengthen our defence."

Recalling the role of the members of the armed forces in the war of independence, Begum Zia said, "Our armed forces are our pride and we want to build up a modern army with adequate facilities."

She mentioned the facilities of their training at home and abroad and said efforts will be continued to expand the armed forces.

The Prime Minister lauded the role of the army at times of natural calamities and its service to the distressed humanity.

## Private docs

From Page 1 Col 8

support of their 21-point charter of demands. At the Health Directorate premises, a rally with Dr Z A Matin in the chair was addressed by Kamrul Islam, Nurul Amin and Shubhash Roy.

At the Shishu Hospital, another rally, presided over by Dr Rafiq Chowdhury, was held. At the PG Hospital premises, the General Secretary of the BMA Dr Gazi Abdul Haq, addressed another rally.

According to the BMA headquarters in the city, the strike was successfully observed in all districts of the country yesterday.

Our DMCH Correspondent says, 32 patients left the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday while 8 patients died.

While the scheduled operations were suspended during the last seven days of the strike, the voluntary doctors of the BMA continued their emergency services. The number of patients coming to the DMCH for treatment yesterday dropped to 1100 as against about 1400 in normal times.

Our SSMCH Correspondent says, the number of patients seeking treatment at the Sir Sallimullah Medical College Hospital continued to decline due to the strike. The number of patients at the hospital dropped to 431 yesterday from 454 the day before.

At least four patients left the hospital voluntarily while 47 others were officially discharged.

However, the voluntary doctors operated on 22 patients at the emergency ward.

The demands, which the government had reportedly accepted verbally but had not issued any order in respect of the demands include: increased budget allocation for the health sector, building up an infrastructure for primary health care, setting up new hospitals and recruitment of more manpower in the health sector.

## Chakmas

From Page 1 Col 8

The delegation had arrived at Ramgarh on Sunday morning for talks on the repatriation of Chakma refugees now sheltered in six camps in the Tripura state of India.

Earlier, the repatriation of Chakmas, scheduled to begin on June 8 last year, was stalled when the refugees refused to return to their homes in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) until the fulfillment of their 13-point demands.

The main demands are guarantees of their full security after return, involvement of the United Nations, Amnesty International and other world bodies in the repatriation process, withdrawal of all security forces from the CHT, expulsion of Bengali settlers and proper rehabilitation of the returnees.

# The Midnight File

## Serbs threaten all-out war

BIJELJINA, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Jan 17: Bosnian Serb leaders threatened Monday to unleash "all-out" war against the Muslim-led government in Sarajevo, if coming peace talks in Geneva end without agreement. "This round of negotiations will mark a definite turning point," Radovan Karadzic, leader of the self-proclaimed Serb state in Bosnia-Herzegovina, said in an address to the regional assembly. "If it becomes clear there will be no peace, we shall have to prepare for all-out war," reports AP.

## Ghali orders release of Somali fighters

GENEVA, Jan 17: UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on Monday ordered the release of eight Somali fighters detained for attacks on UN troops. He also ordered all restrictions to be lifted on the movement of Omar Jess and Gen Hersi Morgan, two top aides to warlord Gen Mohamed Farrah Aidid. The move seemed designed to improve relations between the United Nations and Aidid, reports AP.

## Israel to hold referendum before pullout from Golan

JERUSALEM, Jan 17: Israel will hold a referendum before any significant withdrawal from the Golan Heights, Deputy Defence Minister Mordechai Gur announced today. Israel captured the Heights from Syria in 1967 and annexed them in 1981, reports AFP.

## JU classes resume today

By JU Correspondent

Classes of Jahangirnagar University resume today after a 10-day winter vacation.

The original 20-day vacation, according to the academic calendar, was earlier reduced in view of the existing session jam.

Meanwhile, the reopening of the university is likely to put the acting Vice Chancellor under fresh pressure as both students and teachers are contemplating action programmes to press home their demands.

The JU teachers are demanding the holding of the Senate session by January 31 to decide the VC panel and the student bodies are asking for the announcement of dates of the JU Central Students Union (JUCSU) polls by January 25.

## Govt prevented me from contesting DCC polls: Hasnat

Former Mayor Barrister Abul Hasnat yesterday accused the government of preventing him from contesting the forthcoming Dhaka City Corporation elections for fear of his popularity.

"The ruling party created all sorts of obstacles to keep me away from the elections. . . I was not allowed to sign nomination papers from the Jessore Jail," he told UNB over telephone last night.

The first Mayor of Dhaka, Hasnat joined the Ershad cabinet at the fag end of his regime and left the country for London on January 4, 1991. He was arrested from Benapole after he entered the country in December last.

He was released from the Jessore Jail on Sunday following a High Court order.

In reply to a question, Hasnat said, "The government knew it full well that I was going to win the elections because of my past performance as the first Mayor of Dhaka from 1977 to 1982." Hasnat was appointed Mayor by President Ziaur Rahman, founder of the BNP. He joined the Jatiya Party of ousted President Ershad in late 1990, only months before the fall of the regime in the face of a popular uprising.

"I belong to the city of Dhaka and the people of Dhaka. This is my city. So, they prevented me," from joining the January 30 electoral race.

He straightway refuted speculations that he had returned home to work for the BNP in the city corporation election.

## Coldwave

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Meantime, according to the latest Met office reading, Jessore felt the brunt of country's lowest temperature 10.9 degree Celsius early yesterday.

The capital had the minimum 12.2 degree Celsius, Tangail 11.8, Rangpur 11, Dinajpur 11.5, Rajshahi 11.2 and Ishwardi 11.6 degrees.

Another reports says, three aged people and five babies succumbed to the chill in villages of three thanas as cold-wave swept Pabna district in the last 48 hours.

The dead were identified by villagers as 15-day-old Masum, Tufan (2 days) and Kashem Bepari, 72, of Shantkidiarchar in the sadar thana, Chimu (1 month), Laboni (12 days), Jaura Bibi, 60, and Samad Sheikh, 60, of Ishwardi thana and one-day-old Habul of Chatmohor thana. The deaths were however not officially confirmed.

The mercury fell to the lowest 7 and 9 degree Celsius in the district according to the weathermen.

## Deregulation

From Page 1 Col 7

Revision of such regulations are being considered with a view to ensuring competitive prices of foreign exchange for the importers and also to encourage more imports into the country.

In the meantime, through a Statutory Regulatory Order (SRO) issued by the National Board of Revenue (NBR) on January 13, customs duty on a number of luxury items have been reduced with the same objective — to encourage more imports.

The items benefiting include air coolers, refrigerators and deep-freezers, VCRs, VCPs, televisions, different types of lamps, three-wheeled vehicles, motor cars and station wagons not exceeding 1000 cc, jeeps not exceeding 2000 cc and pickups. The duty on import of the spare parts of the items have also been reduced.

The SRO also covered MS billet, slab ingots and photo voltaic cells.

The ad value for air coolers has been fixed at 60 per cent, refrigerators, deep freezers — 45 per cent, VCR and VCP — 60 per cent, television sets — 60 per cent, lamps — between 7.5 and 60 per cent, three-wheeled vehicles — 15 to 45 per cent, motor cars and station wagons — 15 to 75 per cent and pickups — 30 to 45 per cent.

## Aman

From Page 1 Col 7

the requirement of about 16 months.

Elaborating the stock position, the minister said the reserves of rice at government godowns now stands at 1.6 lakh tonnes while another 20,000 tonnes are in movement.

"The monthly off-take from the stock presently is 10,000 tonnes of rice, we also have adequate stock of wheat, 4.5 lakh tonnes," he added.

Soon after completion of the Aman procurement, the government will start buying IRR1-boro from mid-April, which will also help to keep market prices steady.

Meanwhile, the Food Minister has decided to buy another 20,000 tonnes of Aman rice locally through tenders from areas outside the Rajshahi Division to increase the government's food stock further.

## Chakmas

From Page 1 Col 8

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