

Tk 15.75cr Canadian aid for Rohingya refugees

Canada will provide 5.25 million dollars equivalent to Taka 15.75 crore in assistance for refugees from Myanmar who are living in Bangladesh, reports BSS.

The grant by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was announced yesterday by Foreign Affairs Minister Andre Ouellet which coincides with the visit of Raymond Chan, Canada's Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific) to Bangladesh.

The aid package includes 3.0 million dollars to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to assist some 200,000 Muslim refugees who have fled to Bangladesh since 1991. Half of these funds will be used for refugee support and half for a voluntary repatriation programme.

Another 2.0 million dollars will be paid for food aid to returning refugees within Myanmar under a programme administered by the World Food Programme. This matches the amount provided last year by Canada to buy rice for refugees in Bangladesh.

Finally, 25,000 dollars goes to Medecins Sans Frontieres, Canada which has joined MSF-France to provide medical assistance in the refugee camps.

Another report says Raym-

ond Chan called on Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman at his office yesterday.

UNB adds: Chan met State Minister for Planning Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan at his Planning Commission office.

Canada-Bangladesh cooperation in economic field dominated the talks.

Chan also met Grameen Bank Managing Director Prof Mohammad Yunus and exchanged views with him.

Prof Yunus apprised the visiting Canadian Minister about the ongoing activities of his bank.

Women's Day

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establishing women's rights and improving their socio-economic status. "Women would have real dignity in the country and society if they are made educated and self-reliant."

In another message, Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina stressed the need for taking realistic and integrated programme for ensuring social rights, education and overall development of women.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs has chalked out an elaborate programme which includes a discussion on 'Building a World Where Women are Respected.'

Sangsad prorogued

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ments had failed to satisfy the Opposition, Salam Talukder said, although they themselves had never sought apology for the insults hurled against the Speaker or for brandishing shoes at the ruling party MPs in the House in the past.

Salam Talukder, who spoke on behalf of the Deputy Leader of the House Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury who was suffering from a throat infection, also observed that the Opposition members never expressed their sorrow for hurling their files like saucers in the House and rushing towards the Speaker's podium in aggressive shows of protest against the chair in the past.

Referring to discussion in the House earlier yesterday on the February 25 Hebron massacre and adoption of a JS resolution condemning the incident, the LGRD minister said the Opposition, which had shown much eagerness for the discussion, on March 1 had kept themselves away from the deliberations on the issue.

Talukder warned that the Opposition would have to be accountable to their respective constituents for abstaining from the discussions on the subject.

The Opposition, however, at a press briefing outside the House yesterday afternoon, observed that the ruling party had failed to take 'effective measures' to pave the way for the Opposition to return to the assembly.

Meanwhile, the House witnessed discussion on the vote of thanks to the President for his speech in the House on the opening day of the just-concluded session.

The treasury bench members, deliberating on the presidential speech, accused the entire Opposition of trying to jeopardise parliamentary democracy.

Expressing the apprehen-

sion that the Opposition was determined to paralyse Parliament, Abdul Rab Chowdhury of the BNP said, 'The Opposition has the right to stage a walkout as a mark of protest against certain steps of the government, but they have no right to boycott Parliament proceedings.' The people had not voted the Opposition members to the Jatiya Sangsad for deserting Parliament, Chowdhury observed.

Major (ret'd) Aktaruzzaman felt that the Opposition was blackmailing the nation through its boycott of the JS proceedings.

The motion for a vote of thanks to the President, moved earlier by treasury bench member L K Siddiki, was adopted by voice vote.

Six government-sponsored bills and one private member's bill moved by an Opposition member were introduced in the House during the session, spread over 19 sittings.

Out of the seven bills introduced, two government-sponsored bills — The Institute of Post-graduate Studies in Agriculture Bill, 1994 and The Finance Court Bill, 1994 were passed.

The other noteworthy events during the session included the placing of the Parliament Secretariat Bill seeking to set up a separate secretariat for the Jatiya Sangsad and submitting the special parliamentary committee's report on a Constitution amendment bill seeking to ensure the independence of the judiciary.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali read out the prorogation order at 3:15 pm yesterday.

The announcement came shortly after the Opposition parties at 2:45 pm reaffirmed that they would not return to the House unless the Information Minister formally apologised.

JS condemns massacre

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noted with concern the killing of 63 and injuring 270 in the Hazrat Ibrahim mosque at Hebron by Jewish settlers when the Muslims were in Fajr prayers. Stunned by the barbaric act the people of Bangladesh condemn the killing and pray for peace of the departed souls.

The opposition which had taken initiative for Parliament to condemn the Hebron massacre was, however, absent from the House.

Supporting the resolution Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman described the Hebron killing as barbaric and dastardly act of Jewish settlers.

He said the incident evoked sharp condemnation from all the countries of the world. The government has also communicated the sentiment of the people of Bangladesh to the Palestinians and the Muslim countries as well.

The Foreign Minister re-

Palestinians. Mostafizur Rahman expressed the hope that the opposition would refrain from doing politics on killing and criticising the government on wrong counts.

Maulana Ataur Rahman Khan said killing at the time of namaz (prayer) as happened in the Ibrahim Mosque was unprecedented in the annals of history. Quoting from the Quran he said the holy book also identified the Jews as the greatest enemy of the Muslims. He apprehended that the Hebron incident might obstruct the peace process on the West Bank.

Abdur Rab Chowdhury, in a flashback, said the settlement of the Jews, unwanted and hated everywhere, was forced in Palestine after the Second World War. He demanded all Jews' settlements be dismantled, and Bangladesh extend financial, material and diplomatic support to the Palestinians.

Major (ret'd) Akhtaruzzaman said Jews were the permanent source of trouble in the Middle East since their settlement was forced there. Akhtaruzzaman expressed his readiness to fight with the Palestinians for establishing their genuine right.



BNP chairperson Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a public meeting at the Arpara Ideal High School ground in Shalikhathana under Magura district yesterday. — PID photo

Life's ironies

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to grasp the fact of his father's tragic death in line of duty, was allowed by the relatives to fondle his brother for a moment with his tender hands. He must have been getting impatient for sharing his experience with his father who was taking too long to return from his duties.

For Farhad's mother who was at her daughter-in-law's bedside yesterday, it called for a great strength of character to maintain her equanimity. But then she had become hardened over the years, having lost as many as 17 near and dear ones including her husband, during the country's Liberation War in 1971. Yet, despite her stoicism, she couldn't avoid dabbling the corners of her eyes, wondering how delighted her son would have been at the latest arrival in the family. Alas, that was not to be!

Police raids

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suspects. But he declined to elaborate for the sake of investigation.

"We raided several places along with some of the suspects in our custody," said a DB police officer.

In another development the senior police officers at a condolence meeting held at the police Headquarters at Rajarbagh in the city yesterday expressed their profound shock at the tragic death of police officer Hasanul Farhad at the hands of miscreants on Saturday.

Munajat was offered at the meeting for the peace of the departed soul. The meeting also conveyed its heartfelt sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

Paying tributes to the deceased the Inspector General of Police, ASM Shajahan said late Farhad was a brave police officer.

Elect right man : PM

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She sought cooperation of all in implementing her government's development programmes aimed at improving people's lot. "The development process initiated by the government can be accelerated with the help of all," Begum Zia told the meeting.

The Jatiya Sangsad seat fell vacant with the death of Awami League MP Asaduzzaman who died on December 25.

Presided over by thana BNP president Raquibuddin Mollah, the meeting was also addressed by Communications Minister Col (Ret'd) Oli Ahmed, Energy Minister Dr Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain, Khulna City Corporation Mayor-elect Tayeb Rahman, Mosharraf Hossain MP and BNP candidate Kazi Salim-ul-Huq Kamal.

The Prime Minister during her day-long tour of Magura also addressed wayside meetings at Sutarajitpur, Gopalgram, Berucl, Kurulia and Amuria, seeking support for her party nominee.

"Opportunity for development doesn't come all the time. The opportunity is, now at your doorstep. Take the advantage and vote for the person of your choice," she told the people.

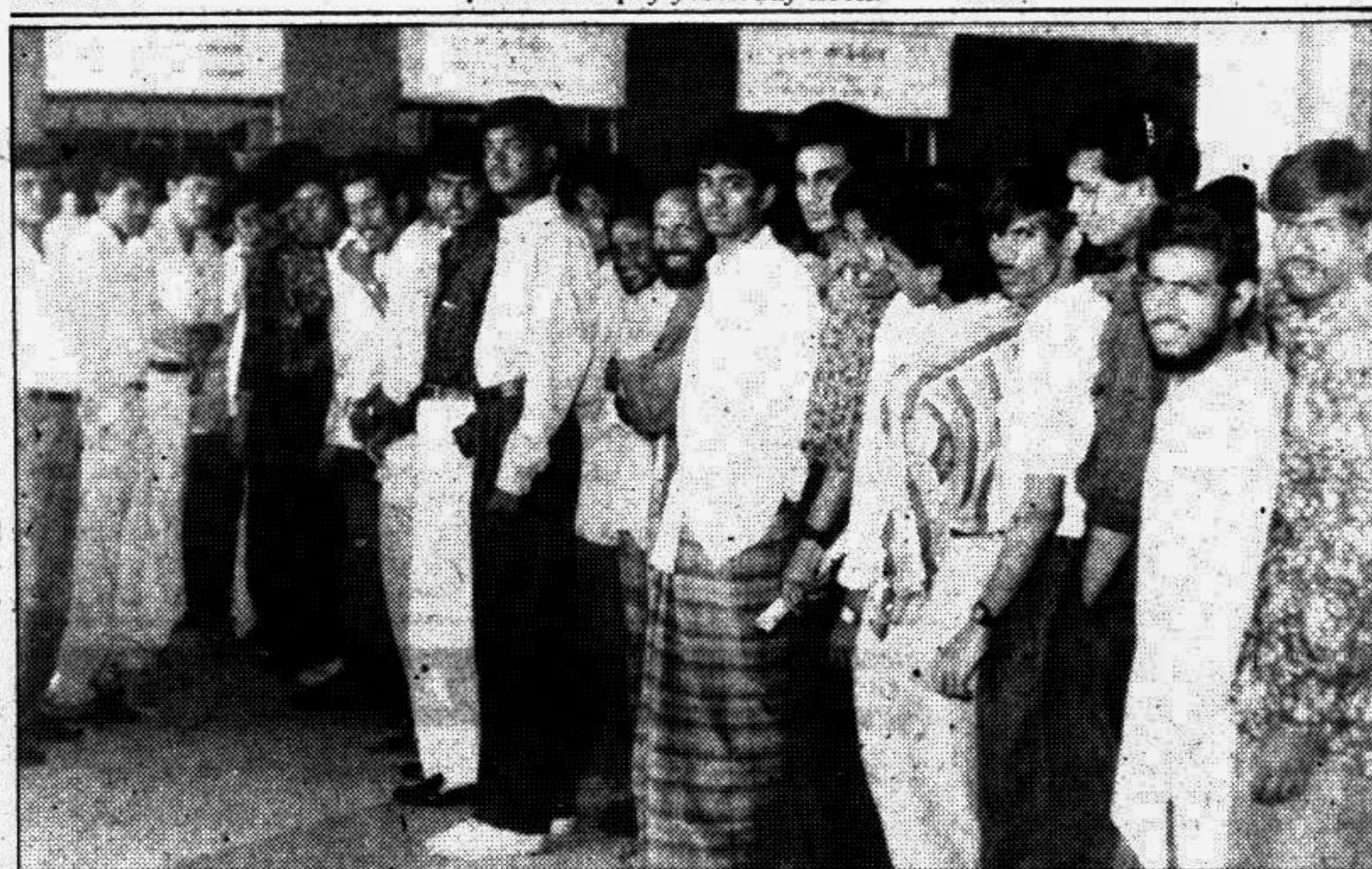
The Prime Minister listed the senior police officers at a condolence meeting held at the police Headquarters at Rajarbagh in the city yesterday expressed their profound shock at the tragic death of police officer Hasanul Farhad at the hands of miscreants on Saturday.

By DMCH Correspondent

A four-year-old boy died after falling from the roof of a three-story building at Urdu Road in the city on Sunday evening.

The boy, Mahbubur Rahman, was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries about three hours after the incident.

The hospital authorities handed over the body of the boy to his family members after autopsy yesterday noon.



HOMEWARD BOUND: With Eid-ul-Fitr still a week away people were seen yesterday queuing up before the Kamalapur railway station ticket counters to book seats to their respective destinations for the Eid vacation. — Star photo

Labour leader dead

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Sirajul Islam Siraj, general secretary of the Bangladesh Patkal Dabi Aday Committee and president of the Latif-Bawany unit of the Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Samik Dal, died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital here yesterday, reports BSS.

He was attacked by some miscreants on February 23 near the Latif-Bawany Jute Mills at Demra.

The deceased is survived by his wife, two daughters, mother, three brothers and two sisters.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held today after Zohr prayers at his residence at Demra.

Jute Minister A S M Hannan Shah and chairman, Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) Moniruddin Ahmed, in separate statements, condoled the death of Siraj and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

They conveyed their heartfelt sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

BNP created crisis

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The entire opposition had started boycotting the session last Tuesday following Information Minister Nazmul Huda's comments hurting the religious feelings of the opposition MPs. Huda, however, regretted the comments.

As there was no move from the BNP to defuse the crisis, we believe, the ruling party deliberately created the crisis at the instance of the Prime Minister, Azad said.

The Leader of the House could have telephoned the Leader of the Opposition if Begum Khaleda Zia sincerely wanted any solution to the problem. The Speaker also did not take any initiative to break the impasse in Parliament, Azad alleged.

Moudud Ahmed of the Jatiya Party, Rashed Khan Menon of the Workers Party, Sheikh Ansar Ali of Jamaat, CPB's Shamsuddin, Moulana Obaidul Huq of IOJ, Tofael Ahmed, Mohammad Nasim and Salauddin Yousuf of the Awami League and Suranjit

Sengupta of the Ganatantri Party also spoke at the news briefing.

Moudud Ahmed said the opposition members were compelled to boycott the session.

Sheikh Ansar Ali said Nazmul Huda had a misconception that anything could be said in the House and this wrong idea had caused the problem.

Rashed Khan Menon said "We were about to reach a consensus but after the killing of a police officer, the ruling party negotiators deliberately avoided us."

Tofael Ahmed said lack of leadership in the House had worsened the situation. The Leader of the House came to parliament only once on the opening day.

"How can a House function if the Leader of the House remains absent for such a long time," Tofael questioned. Moudud Ahmed, supporting Tofael's comment, said "She should not be the Leader of the House if she has no confidence in parliament."

Menon ignores party decision

By Staff Correspondent

Rashed Khan Menon MP yesterday sat closely with Jamaat-e-Islami leader Sheikh Anwar Ali only a few hours after Menon's party had asked him not to attend any meeting where any Jamaat representative would be present.

Menon was sitting beside the Jamaat leader at the Parliament chamber of Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Abdus Samad Azad yesterday afternoon while the opposition leaders were briefing newsmen on their latest stand on the issue of boycott of Parliament proceedings.

When asked by a reporter whether he had decided to violate his party — Workers' Party — decision relating to his association with the Jamaat, Menon replied in the negative.

In a bid to justify his position, Menon said that there was no concept of the 'combined opposition' in Parliament. According to the country's Constitution and the rules of procedure of the Jatiya Sangsad, all the parties and groups, barring the treasury bench, in Parliament constitute a single parliamentary opposition, Menon said.

"We discussed the point at the meeting of the opposition parties earlier," Menon added. Moudud Ahmed of the Jatiya Party and Tofael Ahmed of the Awami League came forward to rescue Menon on this issue. They said that the 'single opposition', comprising various parties and groups in Parliament, was now asserting a common stand on certain issues. Jamaat leader Anwar Ali was seen wryly smiling at that time.

Abdullah Abu Sayeed sued

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Mar 7: The Sadar Thana Magistrate here framed charges against a well-known BTV presenter Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed yesterday in a case filed by one Mizanur Rahman.

Prof Abu Sayeed and two others were accused of taking Tk 23 thousand from Mizan on the plea of appointing him in the Bishwa Shahitika Kendra.

M A Hasan and another accused are absconding. Earlier, Prof Sayeed was granted bail by the same court.

The magistrate heard both the sides yesterday and set April 9 as the next date for hearing.

Advocate Matlur Rahman appeared on behalf of the defendant while advocate Sirajul Islam and others appeared for the plaintiff.

Ahbab Ahmed new Biman MD

By Staff Correspondent

The Director General of NGO Affairs Bureau Ahbab Ahmed has been appointed on deputation the Managing Director of Bangladesh Biman, according to a government handout yesterday.

He succeeds Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury.

S M Afazuddin, Additional Secretary of the Commerce Ministry, has been made an OSD in the same ministry for being appointed Member of the Tariff Commission.

Nuruddin M Kamal, a Joint Secretary in the Planning Ministry, has been appointed, on deputation, Project Coordinator of General Education Programme.

Sarbaharamen kill businessman

MAGURA, Mar 7: Police today recovered the body of a local businessman, allegedly killed by the members of the outlawed Sarbahara Party, from Gajaria beel in Sreepur thana, reports UNB.

Police said a gang of the outlawed members (Huq group) kidnapped Abdur Rashid, 36, from his house at Nohata village at about 10 pm and stabbed him to death near the beel when he refused to pay them toll.

The body was sent to the Sadar hospital for autopsy.

A freedom fighter, Fazlur Rahman, was also killed by the Sarbaharamen in the thana last month.

India

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Indian government flew ambassadors from 11 countries to Kashmir Monday as part of a diplomatic blitz against claims of human rights abuses in the disputed state.

The New Delhi-based ambassadors were driven in a convoy of bulletproof cars to a heavily fortified area to be briefed by state government officials.

As the ambassadors arrived in Srinagar, police rained blows with batons and rifle bullets on a group of lawyers who sought to meet the diplomats. Witnesses said about 15 people, including some news photographers, were injured.

The Midnight File

Rao starts UK visit Mar 13

NEW DELHI, Mar 7: Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao will pay a five-day official visit to the United Kingdom from March 13. The visit is expected to further consolidate the new phase in bilateral relations between India and Britain, according to an Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesman. Rao will hold talks with British Prime Minister John Major on March 14 and call on Queen Elizabeth the following day, reports Xinhua.

Tuzla Airport under UN control

TUZLA, Mar 7: Swedish and Danish UN troops backed by tanks took control of Tuzla's military airport today and readied to reopen the airfield for aid flights for the first time in 23 months of war. Some 100 Swedish soldiers, accompanied by machine gun-mounted armoured troop carriers and six Danish-crewed Leopard tanks, entered the base at 1:30 pm (1230 GMT) to replace the last elements of the mainly-Muslim Bosnian army, which is to officially hand over control of the airport at noon Tuesday, reports AFP.

Audit of ADP projects

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locations, of Tk 1708.89 crore, by Tk 382.14 crore while Tk 2.12 crore was spent for four projects without any budget allocations.

Excess spending in the 76 projects ranged from 0.31 per cent to 333.54 per cent of the final budget allocations. Expenditure for the Water Supply Project for seven towns shot up to Tk 12.44 crore against an allocation of only Tk 2.9 crore. Procurement Project for Four ro-ro Ferries increased by 222.74 per cent of the Tk 10.55 crore allocation; Tk 77.98 crore was spent in the Second Natural Gas Development Project with an actual allocation of Tk 37.25 crore; and Tk 77.58 crore was spent against an allocation of Tk 29.14 crore, for the Northwest Rural Development Project.

On the other hand, 267 projects failed to utilise the

budget allocations by 0.09 per cent to 100 per cent. The third Population Control Project failed to use 56.86 per cent of the Tk 17.05 crore allocation; the fourth phase of the Family Planning Project did not utilise Tk 40.8 crore out of Tk 103 crore; the Vocational Training Project used only Tk 10.54 crore out of Tk 38.21 crore; and the Population Control Project for setting up of union health centres failed to use Tk 22.52 crore out of a Tk 41.32 crore allocation.

Of the 50 foreign aided project not included in the budget, the expenditure was Tk 820.22 crore out of a Tk 1047.36 crore fund received.

The audit report also painted a bleak picture of the actual implementation of the aided projects included in the ADP of 1988-89.

For example, only 8.02 per cent of the work on the Tk 22.52 crore second Gas Development Project, scheduled for completion by 1990, was completed; 5.25 per cent of the Tk 140.5 crore Third Population and Family Health Project was implemented, with 1991 being the approved date for completion; six per cent of the work on the Tk 483.74 crore Road Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project, with a cut off date in 1996; only 30 per cent of the work on the Tk 173.48 crore Third Drainage and Flood Control Project scheduled to end in 1991, was completed; while 1.45 per cent of the work was implemented on the Tk 135.55 crore Secondary Conversion Project, due to end in 1991.

Instances of such low rates of implementation of different development projects goes on and on in the report.

Koirala survives no-confidence

KATHMANDU, Mar 7: The government of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala survived today a no-confidence motion brought by Communists, parliamentary sources said, reports AFP.

The Communists only managed to obtain 81 votes against the prime minister, while he received 113 votes in his favour.

Historic Mar 7

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grammes to commemorate the day.

The Awami League organised a meeting at the party central office with Abdul Mannan, acting president, in the chair.

The AL leaders underlined the need for proper evaluation of the March 7 speech, particularly at a time when, they alleged, the history of Bangladesh was being distorted.

Party leaders Syeda Zohra Tajuddin, Abdul Momin, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, Zillur Rahman, Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzak, MP, Tofael Ahmed MP, Mohammad Nasim MP, Shudhangshu Shekhar Halder MP, Dhaka mayor-elect Mohammad Hanif, Mozaffar Hossain Palto and others spoke on the occasion.

In his presidential address Abdul Mannan urged the people to strengthen the hands of Sheikh Hasina for establishing a corruption and terrorism free society and help her materialise the unfinished tasks of Bangladesh.

Referring to the alleged misuse of the BNP government, Mannan said the government had lost its right to stay in power.

"The country has now plunged into terrorism, corruption, and violence, Mannan remarked pointing out that the recent killing of a police officer and the Lalbagh carnage reflected such misuse.

Mannan demanded parliamentary elections under a caretaker government, saying, "The nation cannot expect a free and fair election under the BNP government."

Sajeda Chowdhury criticised the government for not nullifying the Special Powers Act and for introducing the Anti Terrorism Act.

"The BNP government is using the two black laws to harass innocent people," she alleged.

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