

Benazir warns against sectarian violence

ISLAMABAD, July 13: Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto on Wednesday condemned religious fanaticism and warned that the sectarian violence that killed two young boys a day earlier could destroy Pakistan, reports AP.

"If left unchecked the demon of sectarianism could threaten the very existence of this country," Ms Bhutto told lawyers and judges at a meeting in the eastern Punjab capital of Lahore. Her statements were carried by the state-run news agency, Associated Press of Pakistan.

On Tuesday morning two young boys died when a grenade exploded at their feet as they completed their morning prayers in a mosque in Lahore.

No one claimed responsibility for the attack, but officials said they feared it was more of the same sectarian violence that has troubled both Punjab and Ms Bhutto's home province of Sindh in recent months.

Italy in final

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off the woodwork. Midfielder Donadoni's shot whistled just past the Bulgarian post.

The Bulgarians, playing with nothing to lose after having disposed of more fancied opponents like Argentina and defending champions Germany whom they beat 2-1 in the quarter-finals Sunday, never gave up and continued to strive for the equaliser until the final whistle.

Bulgaria's goal came when a charging Nasko Sirakov was fouled inside the Italian box and French referee Joel Quiniou awarded a penalty kick. Stoicov used the opportunity to equal Russian striker Oleg Salenko's total of six goals, the highest by any player so far in the current meet.

The Italian game, brilliant in the first half, tended to wither somewhat in the second half mainly because their hero of the day Roberto Baggio had to cry off with an injury. Earlier, coach Arrigo Sacchi had taken off the other Baggio, Dino who seemed to be still smarting from an earlier injury.

The Italians, who last won the Cup in 1982 but failed to make the final on home ground in 1990, losing a penalty shootout to runners-up Argentina in the semifinal, will meet the winners of the other semifinal Wednesday (Thursday morning, Bangladesh time) between another three-times champion Brazil and Sweden at the Rose Bowl, Pasadena on Sunday.

Motor mechanic found dead

By DMCH Correspondent

A young motor mechanic was found dead near his house at Mohammadpur yesterday morning after a row with his neighbours over water sharing the previous night.

It is believed, Ali Ahmed, 22, was murdered by a neighbour, Hafiz or his men with whom he and his uncle had a quarrel.

Ahmed's uncle, Abdul Hafiz, had lodged with Mohammadpur police in a case against Hafiz charging him with the murder. But Hafiz was at large, said police.

Hannan had a quarrel with Hafiz over the sharing of water in the evening.

Opposition

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Nasim alleged that the government prorogued the budget session with ulterior motive. "As part of the conspiracy," he said, "Maulana Obaidul Haq of Islami Okiya Jote was brought to Parliament and allowed to speak in the House in utter violation of all rules of procedure."

But this will not help the government as the opposition is committed to realising its demand, he said.

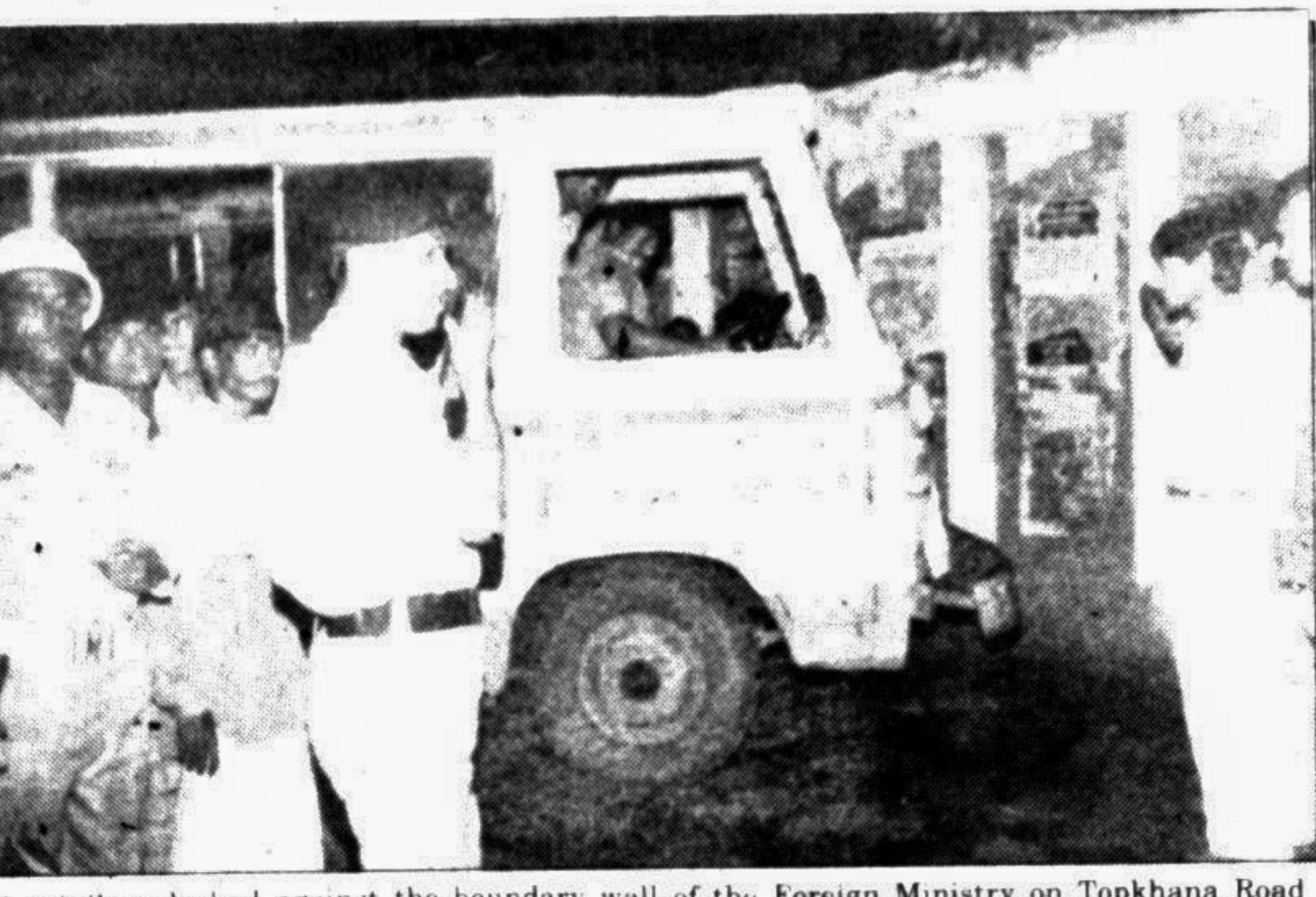
Nasim told the reporters that he had talks with Rashed Khan Member of Workers Party and urged him to join the opposition move.

Manirul Haq Chowdhury of Jatiya Party said the demand for caretaker government would be realised on the street if the government does not concede to it.

Suranjit Sengupta alleged that the government was involved in new conspiracy to instigate fundamentalist forces for diverting movement for caretaker government. "As part of the blueprint, Maulana Obaidul Haq was brought to the House and fundamentalist groups are patronised to march to foreign missions in Dhaka."

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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A minibus dashed against the boundary wall of the Foreign Ministry on Topkhana Road killing one person yesterday. — Star photo

Science accord

Documents exchanged with Pakistan

Bangladesh and Pakistan yesterday formally exchanged Instrument of Ratification of an agreement on scientific and technological cooperation between the two countries, reports UNB.

The agreement was signed in Islamabad on August 10, 1992 during Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's visit to Pakistan.

Foreign Secretary M R Osmany and Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Kamal exchanged the documents at a ceremony in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday, reports AP.

The statistics were released in response to charges by the London-based Amnesty International that India has failed to curb illegal arrests and the death of suspects in custody.

The report, quoted by Press Trust of India news agency, said three officers and about 70 other servicemen were imprisoned for up to 10 years, and 20 people were discharged.

Other violators faced shorter jail terms, suspension, or were reduced in rank, it said. Soldiers from the Border Security Force were the worst offenders.

Amnesty International's latest report July 7 said "torture by security forces was reported almost daily" in Kashmir. More than 9,400 people have been killed in the four-year guerrilla campaign.

In the last year, India has tried to improve its human rights image by creating its own Human Rights Commission and allowing the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit Kashmir.

Kuwait opens door for women to join police

KUWAIT, July 13: Two years after admitting the first women into the armed forces, Kuwait is promising to open the door for them to join the police, reports AP.

The move is likely to stir criticism in Parliament, dominated by Islamic fundamentalist deputies. However, the government does not require parliamentary approval.

Interior Ministry spokesman Col Adel al-Ibrahim said the decision to allow female officers was not a response to pressure from women's rights groups, who hold little sway in this conservative emirate, where only men have the right to vote.

"It is a matter of satisfying needs and a result of our society's development," he said.

A government study is underway to determine which police duties women will be allowed to fulfil, Ibrahim said. He refused to say when it would be completed or give other details.

A recent issue of an in-house Interior Ministry periodical, Al-Dakhila, quoted Minister Ali al-Sabah as saying the women will be eligible for officers' ranks, possibly after being sent abroad for training.

He said the concept of women officers does not contradict the country's Islamic traditions.

Alleged kidnapper held at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent

The Special Branch (SB) of police arrested a woman alleged for trying to kidnap a minor boy at Zia International Airport (ZIA) yesterday.

The woman, Rashida, was detained by the Dhaka Cantonment Police for further interrogation and the ten-year-old boy Manik was sent to safe custody, according to police.

Police arrested Rashida when she along with the boy was due to fly for Dubai at an Emirates flight around 10 in the morning.

Transport strike in N-Bengal called off

RAJSHAHI, July 13: The North Bengal regional committee of the Bangladesh Road Transport Workers' Federation today called off its strike, an official handout said here tonight, reports BSS.

The decision was taken after the committee leaders and divisional commissioner reached a consensus following a fruitful discussion, the handout added.

The handout said the North Bengal committee of the federation has already directed to operate all its transports on the specific routes.

Declare Sylhet a division

By Staff Correspondent

The Jalalabad Association, Dhaka has called upon the authorities to declare the greater Sylhet region a division.

Addressing a press conference in the city on Tuesday president of the association E A Chowdhury said the people of Sylhet have been demanding since 1947 that Sylhet be made a division but the successive governments have always ignored the demand.

He said the concept of women officers does not contradict the country's Islamic traditions.

One of the main reasons for

Star Quiz Bumper

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Airlines, prize seats at the

Final and one of the semifinals

and 1000 dollars in cash as

living expenses.

All prizes were courtesy Transcom Electronics Limited, the licensed manufacturers of Philips light bulbs and electronic goods in Bangladesh. Philips is also one of the official sponsors of this year's World Cup.

An interview with the lucky

winner appears on Page 7.

Chakma families

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Chakma, president of Jumma

Refugees Welfare Association,

had led the refugee delegation

in the meeting.

Palpa Ranjan and Shahjahan came to Agartala last night to meet Pankajit Larma, widow of Manabendra Narayan Larma, former chief of the CHT Jana Sanghati Samity, political wing of the people of CHT. Pankajit was given political asylum by the Indian government after Manabendra was killed in a group clash a couple of years ago.

"One should not mix up our demand with regionalism. A backward and weak Sylhet is no strength for Bangladesh but a strong one is," he said.

Suranjit Sengupta alleged that the government was involved in new conspiracy to instigate fundamentalist forces for diverting movement for caretaker government. "As part of the blueprint, Maulana Obaidul Haq was brought to the House and fundamentalist groups are patronised to march to foreign missions in Dhaka."

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Taslima speaks to Australian daily

I am not prepared to die at the hands of fundamentalists either on my way to court or in jail," said controversial writer Taslima Nasreen, who is wanted on charges of blasphemy, reports Probe.

Her statement was quoted in a report "Hunted feminist seeks safety, not escape route" by Christopher Thomas of The London Times, published in the July 12 issue of the widely circulated Australian newspaper "The Australian."

According to the report, Nasreen told Christopher in Dhaka on July 11 that she wanted safety, but denied she wanted to leave the country.

The interview with the 32-year-old doctor-turned-writer is the only one appearing in any newspaper since she went into hiding five weeks ago after a warrant of arrest was issued against her.

Her statement was in line with a recent editorial of The Times of London, copies of which were circulated by USIS Director Donald M. Bishop among the local newsmen.

The editorial said "Censorship by Death" said "If she (Taslima Nasreen) does show up, she risks being killed."

Nasreen was said to have told Christopher that she had "moved from hideout to hideout during the past five weeks."

"We are afraid for her. She is in great danger," added her brother Rezaul Karim Kamal. "Everywhere we go we are followed. My father's house has been attacked. We are abused. When will we be allowed to live normally again?"

The report also said "It seems inconceivable that a woman of such prominence, whose friends and family are well known, cannot be traced by police whose powers are practically limitless."

One Mohammad Anu Miah, 25 was injured when a miscreant stabbed him at Shemoli at about 5 pm yesterday.

Anu Miah alleged that the miscreant stabbed him and snatched his necklace, while he was sleeping.

The victim was admitted to DMCH.

One Mohammad Selim Bhuyan, 30, was injured at Khilgaon Taltola at about 7:30 pm yesterday.

The victim alleged that he was attacked by some miscreants.

Selim was admitted to the DMCH.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas felicitated Francois Mitterrand, President of the Republic of France on the occasion of the National Day of France, reports UNB.

"It gives me great pleasure to convey to your excellency our sincere greetings and felicitations on the happy occasion of the National Day of the Republic of France," Biswas said in his message.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in a message felicitated Edouard Balladur, Prime Minister of the Republic of France on the same occasion.

Under the current constitution, an elected government cannot sign agreements with other countries involving Nepal's natural resources without a two-thirds majority in parliament.

Another report says, Koirala is confident of winning mid-term polls with a two-thirds majority, a party source said.

Koirala had told members of his Nepali Congress (NC) party and other political supporters to return to their respective constituencies in order to prepare for an electoral victory in November, the party source added.

The King earlier asked Koirala to continue in office until elections were held, which he has asked the Prime Minister to oversee, according to radio reports.

Eighty-six Members of Parliament, including leftist groups, voted against the Koirala government's programme on Sunday, while 43 other members were absent during the vote, a parliamentary source said.

Only 74 MPs had supported Koirala's programme on Sunday. The NC had 112 seats in the dissolved lower house while the main opposition Nepal Communist Party-United Marxist and Leninist (NCP-UML) had 68 members.

The King earlier asked Koirala to continue in office until elections were held, which he has asked the Prime Minister to oversee, according to radio reports.

"Our first and foremost demand is that the King must dismiss Koirala outright and constitute an all-party government to hold the elections in a free, fair and impartial manner," he said.

In Beijing, Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng left little doubt over the import of the announcement, calling Kim Jong-II for the first time — "the DPRK's new leader." DPRK refers to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as North Korea is formally known.

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Meanwhile, the chairman of the main opposition NCP-UML Party, Manmohan Adhikari, rejected outright an invitation by Koirala for a meeting today to discuss how to ensure free and fair polls in November.

Adhikari said the question of the NCP-UML's participation at the all-party meeting was out of the question.

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Ernest Alexander Adams, an official at the Indian Consulate in the southern port city of Karachi, was ordered out of Pakistan within seven days, according to a Foreign Office statement released in the capital of Islamabad.

Adams was accused of spying. An official of the Indian High Commission was not immediately available for comment.

On Monday, Indian police arrested Mohammed Afjal Bawa, an official of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi, for allegedly obtaining a 117 pages of documents from an unnamed Indian contact. He was ordered to leave the country.

Palpa Ranjan and Shahjahan came to Agartala last night to meet Pankajit Larma, widow of Manabendra Narayan Larma, former chief of the CHT Jana Sanghati Samity, political wing of the people of CHT. Pankajit was given political asylum by the Indian government after Manabendra was killed in a group clash a couple of years ago.