

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 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. Stoitchev 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 Hannan lodged with Mohammadpur police 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 provoked the budget session with ulterior motive. "As part of the conspiracy," he said, "Maulana Obaidul Haq of Islami Oikya 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 Menon 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 investigate 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

Printed & Published by A. S. Mahmud, Managing Director, on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, from City Publishing House Ltd., 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No. 11, Road No. 3, Dhanmandi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4, Commercial: 500091 (Direct), Fax No: 88-02-863035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA.

The main combatants are militant members of Pakistan's majority Sunni Muslims and their rivals from among the country's minority Shiite Muslims.

The battlefield has been the country's mosques. Tuesday's attack targeted a mosque used by Sunnis. Police throughout the country fear Sunni militants will retaliate with a strike against a Shiite mosque.

"This conflict is not new and the attacks on mosques are not a new phenomena. It has been going on for several years," said Azam Tariq, an outspoken opponent of Ms Bhutto and one of the few people from the religious right to get elected to Parliament in last year's general elections.

Tariq also heads the militant Sunni group known as the Guardians of the Prophets' Followers, whose members have been accused of attacking mosques attended by Shites.

Tariq accused Iran of financing and organizing Pakistan's Shites.

174 Indian troops punished for excesses in Kashmir

NEW DELHI, July 13: India has punished 174 soldiers and officers for human rights violations in the northern state of Kashmir, where they are fighting Muslim separatist guerrillas, an official report said Wednesday, 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-Dakhla, 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 by an Emirates flight around 10 in the morning.



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 Osmani and Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Kemal exchanged the documents at a ceremony in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday morning.

Visiting adviser to Pakistan Prime Minister on finance and economic affairs V A Jafarey, Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman, Bangladesh High Commissioner to Pakistan Q A M A Rahim and Director General (South Asia) at the Foreign Ministry Anwarul Masud were present on the occasion.

The agreement, initiated by the foreign ministers of the two countries, aims at promoting bilateral cooperation in the fields of science and technology, according to a press release of the Foreign Office.

It will particularly cover the fields including scientific and technical information, science and technology policies and plans, electronics technology, food processing technology, silicon technology and industrial research.

The agreement will also cover any other subject area of science and technology by mutual agreement, the press release said.

Transport strike in N-Bengal called off

RAJSHAH, 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.

The Jalalabad Association itself has been making the demand since 1988, he said and added the people of Sylhet were surprised that the government created another division in January last year but ignored their demand.

E A Chowdhury said the 250-mile distance between Sylhet district and its divisional headquarters in Chittagong makes it difficult for the people of Sylhet to go to Chittagong when needed.

The association chief pointed out that although the Sylhet region is rich in natural resources, development work in the region has not been satisfactory. The creation of Sylhet division would result in proper development of the region, he said.

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.

Six killed, two hurt in separate incidents

By DMCH Correspondent

At least six persons, including two minor boys were killed and another two injured in separate incidents in the city during the last two days. Two brothers were killed in a tragic incident at Mohakhali at about 10:30 am yesterday.

Babu, 6 and Mira, 4 drowned when they went to take bath at a nearby pond.

The victims were immediately sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the doctors declared them dead.

An employee of The Bangladesh Observer was killed when a speeding minibus knocked his bi-cycle at Purana Pallon at about 7 am yesterday. The victim, Mohammed Abdul Gafur, 70 was seriously injured and rushed to the DMCH where he died at about 1:40 pm.

Police seized the minibus (No Dhaka Ch-3139) but its driver managed to escape.

A case was filed with the Motijheel police station in this connection.

In another accident, a pedestrian was killed when he was crushed under the wheels of a speeding minibus in front of the Foreign Ministry at about 6:45 pm yesterday.

The victim, Mohammad Tozazzul Hossain, 45, was seriously injured and sent to the DMCH.

Demonstrations in Nepal

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The King made the decision on the advice of Koirala who resigned Sunday after he lost a crucial, parliamentary debate on his government's annual socio-economic and political programme.

Another report says, Koira 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 Koira 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 Koira government's programmes on Sunday, while 43 other members were absent during the vote, a parliamentary source said.

Only 74 MPs had supported Koira'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.

One of the main reasons for Star Quiz Bumper 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.

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

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 titled "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."

Biswas, Khaleda greet Mitterrand, Balladur

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.

Kim Jong-Il takes over power

SEOUL, July 13: North Korean radio said today that Kim Il-Sung's eldest son, Kim Jong-Il, had taken power, while in South Korea the government struggled to contain public confusion over direct broadcasts from the North, reports AFP.

The Pyongyang radio broadcast said Kim Jong-Il, 52, had been raised to the "highest position of the party, the state and the revolutionary armed forces" in North Korea.

"We have raised the dear leader, the only successor to the Great Leader, to the highest position of the party, the state and the revolutionary armed forces," the radio, monitored here, said.

In Beijing, Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng left little doubt over the import of the announcement, calling Kim Jong-Il — 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.

Jafarey

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Responding to the Prime Minister's call, Jafarey said his country would rationalise and reduce duty structure for some Bangladeshi commodities to harmonise the trade imbalance.

Steps will be taken, he said, to make Bangladeshi tea available at comparatively cheaper price in Pakistan.

The adviser to the Pakistan Prime Minister said fruitful discussions were held at the three-day fifth meeting of the Bangladesh-Pakistan Joint Economic Commission (JEC) which will be concluded today.

Jafarey appreciated the economic reform measures taken up by Bangladesh government and said the new economic policies had been leading the country towards progress.

Pakistan, he said, is also contemplating the introduction of new economic reforms. Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Commerce Secretary, Pakistan High Commissioner in Bangladesh were among others present on the occasion.

The Midnight File

Demonstrators occupy French mission in Geneva

GENEVA, July 13: Several dozen demonstrators occupied the French mission in Geneva today to protest against France's decision to reopen a controversial nuclear reactor near the Swiss border, witnesses said. France authorised on Tuesday the reopening of the Super Phoenix Fast Breeder reactor at Creys Malville, 70 km from Geneva. It will research the elimination of nuclear waste, reports Reuters.

Uzbekistan signs NATO partnership accord

BRUSSELS, Belgium, July 13: Uzbekistan signed a Partnership for Peace accord with NATO today, the 22nd country to opt for a military and political cooperation agreement with the Western alliance. The agreement enables the Central Asian nation to develop closer relations that may include exchanges of military information and pooling of forces in joint exercises or humanitarian operations, reports AP.

Diploma engs announce action programme

The Institute of Diploma Engineers (IDE) yesterday announced a two-week action programme to press home their three-point demand, reports UNB.

The demands include publication of the report of the committee constituted as per directives by the Prime Minister, implementation of 6-point demand and 13-point recommendation of the IDE and fulfilment of the demands of Polytechnic Teachers' Association.

Addressing a press conference at the IDE conference room, General Secretary of the Institute A K M A Hamid said the Diploma Engineers of the country held a rally on April 25 to protest the government's inaction and daily-daily attitude to solve the professional problems of the Diploma Engineers.

According to the Action Programme, the IDE leaders will hold a joint meeting of the Diploma Engineer Services Associations today. From July 19 to 25 the diploma engineers of various services will hold demonstrations and submit memorandum to the Prime Minister through their Departmental heads.

The Diploma Engineers throughout the country will work extra half an hour beyond the office time as positive plan of their Action Programme on July 25 and they will observe the demand day on July 26 all over the country.

Shahjalal Varsity teachers call off strike

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, July 13: The teachers of the Shahjalal University of Science and Technology called off their strike today.

They took the decision at an emergency meeting held with Professor Miraj Uddin Mandal, president of the teachers association in the chair.

All the 91 teachers went on a strike for an indefinite period following some untoward incidents on the campus on July 4 and 5. A group of students stormed the VC's office and manhandled some teachers while pressing their demand for shifting the examination dates.

Meanwhile, the university syndicate at an emergency meeting has formed a 5-member committee to investigate the incidents. The committee headed by Professor Jaimal Abedin, has been asked to submit its report by July 21.

Shrimp export

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the foreign buyers may also cancel the purchase if timely shipment cannot be made soon.

The last vessel touched Mongla Port on June 26 and of the two Bangladesh Shipping Corporation feeder vessels scheduled per month, none has arrived at the port so far, pointed out Major (Retd) Manzoor Ahmed, the secretary general of the association.

"We urgently seek government intervention so that some vessels are made available to discharge the shrimps from the Mongla Port within the next 72 hours, he appealed. "Failing which there is a strong possibility of a setback in the export of frozen shrimp from Bangladesh."

The feeder vessels were supposed to take the shrimp containers to Singapore and Colombo for trans-shipment to the United States, Japan and Europe.

"There is a great risk that all the frozen shrimp in containers awaiting at the port may be affected due to the erratic power supply in the area," Ahmed noted. "The foreign buyers are also liable to cancel the letters of credit unless the shipments could be made on time."

The association approached the Commerce Ministry and the BSC to help solve the problem. The BSC officials, he said, informed that of the two feeder vessels of the corporation one is stranded at Singapore due to technical faults while it could not provide any firm date for the arrival of the second one.

It has been noted that for the past few years, he said, the non-availability of feeder vessels becomes acute during the end of the financial year. "This is prompting most foreign buyers to avoid making any purchase through the Mongla Port, hampering the interest of the shrimp packaging industries located in the Khulna region."

The association is seeking that a 25 per cent cargo slot should be reserved for goods at Mongla Port on all export vessels going out of Bangladesh.

Hardrock

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while Petrobangla will bear the rest of the cost. A contract for the project was signed in March by the two sides.

According to official sources, the land leased for mining is in 31 mouzas of Parbatipur and Nawabganj thanas in Dinajpur district. The lease, initially for three years, is renewable from year to year.

The hardrock mine was discovered at Madhyapara in 1974 at a depth of 135 metres. The extraction may continue at least for 30 years with an annual production of 16.5 lakh tonnes.

The project will need six-and-a-half years to go for full production, but, partial production will be possible within four years.

The hardrock of Madhyapara will be used for the construction of dams, embankments, bridges, highways, railway tracks and buildings. The Madhyapara stones can also be used for the Jamuna multipurpose bridge. Granite is also expected to be available in the mine.

Feni-2 gas field

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KAFCO sources said that the company was yet to receive assurance of timely supply of the huge quantity of gas.

A government official, however, asserted that gas would be supplied to KAFCO according to the schedule of the agreement signed between the two parties in September 1992.

"The KAFCO project is the highest priority concern of the Energy Ministry. The progress of implementation of the project is being monitored everyday. A meeting on KAFCO is being held every 15 days and the minister is being kept informed regularly," the official said.

The Feni-2 Gas Field is located within one kilometre of the Feni-1 Field. Authorities have already started mobilising necessary equipment for the drilling.

It has been given so much of importance that some of the smaller equipment for the drilling is being imported by air," the official said.

Petrobangla sources said the drilling will be carried out by Petrobangla's experts who drilled the Feni-1 well earlier. The drilling is scheduled to be completed by November 15.

While the present gas consumption of KAFCO is around five to seven mcf per day, it will rise to 32 mcf by September.

"As per our schedule, KAFCO will require 62 mcf per day from October 1 when it will begin its full trial production," KAFCO sources said.

The Bakhrabad Lines and the Feni Gas Field will be able to supply the KAFCO a total of around 50 to 55 mcf of gas per day. The rest would be supplied from other gas fields, official sources said.