

Accord in jeopardy : Akashi Bosnian forces kill 20 Serb soldiers

SARAJEVO, Oct 6 Sixteen Serb soldiers and four nurses were killed today in an attack by Bosnian government forces in which the United Nations said the victims' throats had been slit and some of the bodies burned, reports AP.

The top UN official in Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi, said the 20 bodies "were in many cases mutilated". He called it a "tragic incident" and said he feared the agreement with Serbs that reopened the Sarajevo airport today was in jeopardy.

Details were sketchy, but Akashi said the bodies were found by UN peacekeepers this afternoon on Mount Igman, just outside a demilitarized zone, southwest of Sarajevo.

He said the victims' throats had been slit, and some of the bodies had been burned.

Akashi disclosed the grisly details after issuing a personal protest to Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic.

Despite the attack, a UN plane landed late in the afternoon at the airport, ending a two-week shutdown imposed by Serbs in retaliation for a NATO assault on one of their tanks.

Bosnian Serbs grudgingly agreed to let the airport reopen after tough talks Wednesday with Akashi at their stronghold in Pale east of Sarajevo.

Akashi appealed for calm and said he hoped the killings on Mount Igman, where there was heavy fighting Thursday morning, would not undermine the airport accord.

A UN military spokesman, Maj Koos Sol, earlier confirmed a government attack on Serb positions in the area.

The airport has been closed because of veiled Serb threats to shoot at planes after a NATO airstrike on a Serb tank September 22. UN commanders requested the strike after Serb attacks on French peacekeepers.

The Bosnian capital has relied on the UN airlift for about 80 per cent of its food and other needs during most of a 29-month-old siege by Serb forces.

Serbs also have cut off the only remaining land route into the city, and UN aid officials say supplies are running low.

Aid officials said flights carrying food and other supplies as part of the humanitarian airlift would not resume before Friday at the earliest.

Spokesman Kris Janowski of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees agency said officials of countries participating in the airlift were meeting to decide whether conditions were safe enough to resume flights.



Leaders of the Bangladesh Muslim League discussed the current political situation and different national issues with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia when they called on her at her office yesterday. — PID photo

Minister assures BSP to solve newsprint crisis

A delegation of the Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Parishad (BSP) had a meeting with Industries Minister Zahiruddin Khan at the latter's office, reports BSS.

They discussed the current situation of newsprint in the country.

Prof Majidul Islam, president of the BSP led the delegation.

The minister assured the BSP delegation of solving the problem immediately and sought the cooperation of newspaper authorities to overcome the temporary problems, caused due to repair works undertaken in the mills.

The Industries minister asked the Parishad leader to furnish on an urgent basis a list of newspapers published regularly.

PM asks cooperatives

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Fourteen cooperative societies and 12 individuals received the National Cooperatives Award-1992 for their outstanding achievements in cooperatives.

The role of cooperatives is not less important in creating employment opportunity and increasing the income of the poor through agriculture, small and cottage industry, pisciculture, dairy and poultry farms, she said.

The Prime Minister asked the societies to be vigilant against any attempt to deviate the organisations from their objectives.

She also urged all concerned to continue their efforts in achieving more success in the days ahead.

She said her government has been providing necessary assistance to the cooperative societies in implementing various projects for improving the lot of the poor.

Begum Zia said her government has exempted hundred per cent outstanding general and penalty interests on agricultural loans of cooperative farmers. They can also repay the capital loan on easy instalments.

Later, the Prime Minister distributed the awards. Each of the 14 cooperative societies was given a gold medal of 12 gram while every individual recipient a gold medal of 12 gram and prize bond of Tk 2,000.

Morocco offers to host OIC meet

Morocco has proposed to host the next summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) from December 12 to 18, reports UNB.

OIC Secretary General Hamid Al-Gabid has said this is the annual coordination meeting of the OIC Foreign Ministers at the UN headquarters on Monday, according to a message received in Dhaka yesterday.

Body of young man found in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Oct 6: The body of an unidentified young man was recovered from the backyard of Balaganj Thana Health Complex this afternoon.

Police said, the body of the victim aged about 25 years, bore marks of injury. Further details were not available immediately.

Police sent the body to the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College morgue for autopsy. An unnatural death (UD) case has been filed.

Court bans film on Rajiv

MADRAS, Oct 6: A court in a southern state Thursday banned a movie based on the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi since it could incite terrorism, reports AP.

The Madras High Court's judgment was seen as a setback for Ravi Yadav, whose Tamil movie, Chagesheet, was cleared in August by the censors after two years of legal wrangling.

Judges TS Arunachalam and Jayaram Souda, who saw the movie before giving their opinion, said the film is not fit for public screening as it could incite people against the state.

Yadav said he will appeal to the Supreme Court, India's apex court. He compared his film to some Hollywood movies that have portrayed the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

"This is also a portrayal of an assassination. I have only said what the press has reported," he said in an interview.

Gandhi was assassinated on 21 May, 1991.

Swiss mass suicide Search on for two people

GRANGES-SUR-SALVAN, Oct 6: Investigators searched Thursday for two people in connection with the mass suicide-murder of at least 48 members of a doomsday cult, reports AP.

Firemen in rubber boots and gloves, meanwhile, combed through charred bricks and wood from a burned-out chalet in this quiet Alpine village. Despite earlier fears the death toll would rise, police said no more victims were found Thursday.

Twenty-five bodies — many of them burned beyond recognition — were found Wednesday in two other chalets in the village, about 70 kilometres southeast of Geneva.

Valais police chief Werner Geiger said the dead included 17 females and seven males. The gender of the final victim could not be determined. It was unclear how many of them were children.

Gas cylinder in DU lab leaks

At least 40 students of the Applied Chemistry Department of the Dhaka University fell sick following leakage of a chlorine gas cylinder in the laboratory of the department, reports UNB.

Of the sick students, 24 were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital while the rest were released after first aid, campus sources said. The condition of the students, however, was not very serious, doctors said.

Acting VC of the university Wakil Ahmed directed the Chairman of the department to submit a report after investigating the accident immediately.

The teachers of the department informed the fire brigade of the gas cylinder leakage at about 10 am.

A fire brigade team rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Benazir asks Sharif to represent at UN

ISLAMABAD, Oct 6: Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, in an apparent gesture of conciliation, today asked opposition leader Nawaz Sharif to represent the country when the UN General Assembly debates Kashmir, reports Reuters.

State television said she had made the offer in a letter to her chief political rival, who earlier today demanded that Benazir and President Farooq Leghari resign immediately.

Benazir said her move was designed to show the world that "the whole nation is united" on the Kashmir issue, which has long bedevilled relations with neighbouring India.

She said that if Sharif agreed to lead the delegation, it would promote efforts to secure self-determination for the Indian-administered part of Kashmir, scene of a four-year-old revolt by Muslim militants against New Delhi's rule.

There was no immediate response from Sharif, who is leading a campaign of public agitation designed to oust Benazir.

3 hurt in clash in New Market

By Staff Correspondent

At least three persons, including a minor girl, were injured when two groups of armed men clashed in the city's New Market area yesterday evening.

All the injured — a 10-year-old school student Shetu, a factory worker Ripon, 15, and an unidentified rickshawpuller aged nearly 30 — were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with blast injuries.

Witnesses said, two group of local bullies chased each other firing gunshots and exploding crackers for half an hour beginning at 6 in the evening. They reportedly clashed over the possession of a shop in the New Super Market.

Dhanmondi police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control immediately. No arrest was, however, reported.

Shapan seeks help for drought victims

By Staff Correspondent

A former minister from Greater Rangpur Shawfikul Ghaani Shapan has expressed deep concern about the drought situation in the country's northern region and urged the government and all political parties to come forward for ameliorating the suffering of the affected people.

In a statement yesterday, the well-known politician who recently visited the northern districts, narrated the situation created due to a prolonged drought and termed it alarming. Farmers were forced to keep half of the aman lands fallow because of the drought, rendering the marginal farmers and landless farm labourers unemployed, he said.

"The drought-affected poor peasants and the day-labourers are either starving or remain half-fed due to shortage of food and lack of employment. Many are striving to survive on sub-standard food or on crumbs and morsels, often resulting in outbreak of diseases like diarrhoea," he said. He mentioned that diarrhoeal deaths rose to 150 in Gaibandha district alone.

Stressing the need for immediate measures to save the drought victims, Shapan said, that allocation of government wheat and other relief materials has been too inadequate. He appealed for sanctioning of more wheat for test relief and starting adequate relief activities in all the 16 districts of the northern region.

Shapan also called for united efforts to tackle the aftermath of the drought and maintained that proper handling of the present crisis is essential to prevent recurrence of a catastrophe like that of 1974.

The Midnight File

Pakistan hails lifting of US arms sanctions against China

ISLAMABAD, Oct 6: Pakistan today welcomed the lifting of US arms sanctions against China, which were imposed last year following the suspected transfer of Chinese M-11 missiles to Islamabad. "We, of course, welcome that the US sanction on China have been waived," a foreign office spokesman said at a press briefing here, reports AFP.

Lanka extends emergency

COLOMBO, Oct 6: The Sri Lanka parliament today extended a state of emergency in the country's war-torn northern and eastern provinces. The New People's Alliance (PA) government, which came into power in August, withdrew a five-year emergency from the rest of the country last month, confining it to the north and east. The opposition United National Party, which lost power after 17 years, supported the extension of the emergency in the two districts, reports Reuters.

OIC sets up contact group on Kashmir

ISLAMABAD, Oct 6: The Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has set up a five-member contact group on Kashmir, a foreign ministry spokesman said here today, reports AFP.

Turkey, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Niger and the OIC Secretary General make up the group, which will mobilise international support for respect of Human Rights in Kashmir and the right of its people to decide their future.

The setting up of the group was decided by an OIC extraordinary conference of foreign ministers held here last month.

The OIC, comprising 51 nations, supports a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute between Pakistan and India, which has been a catalyst for two of three wars between the two countries since their independence from Britain in 1947.

A five-year-old separatist campaign in the Indian-controlled southern two-thirds of Kashmir has claimed more than 10,000 lives.

Nazrul museum to be set up in Trishal

Government has decided to set up a museum at the Bichutia Bepari Bari of Trishal in Mymensingh district, a memorial place of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, reports UNB.

Necessary initiatives would also be taken to set up a library and seminar room at Darrampur and Kazir Simla to preserve the memories of Nazrul.

This was disclosed at the 32nd meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Cultural Affairs held yesterday at the Sangsad Bhavan.

The meeting was informed that a photographic album on Nazrul's life will be published in this month. Rare photographs of Nazrul will be included in the album.

WB-IMF meet

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monetary policies to price stability, emphasised by the governors of the Bank and the Fund, was also featured in his statement.

"Today... the Fund and the Bank are better placed than ever before to help members achieve these objectives," said the chairman of WB and IMF which celebrate their 50 years of founding this year.

Saifur referred to the governors' suggestions for considering the establishment of a fast-disbursing, very short-term financing facility and said further work was needed on issues to the allocation of SDRs, the proposed extension of the systemic transformation facilities and further strengthening the provision of technical assistance.

"I know that there is a very broad-based wish by governors that the remaining issues be resolved soon in a spirit of compromise," the Bangladesh Finance Minister said.

WB: Garments

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would need to be flexible and internationally competitive.

If this can be done, the WB said, they might be able to export woven fabric directly, enabling scale economies to be achieved while meeting relatively small readymade garments requirements of particular types of cloths.

The bank suggested the government replace its present approach of forcing domestic value added by a systematic programme to remove obstacles to exit, restructuring, and new investment in spinning, weaving and finishing industries.

Rule Nisi

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strike by government doctors, following a writ petition filed by the Secretary General of the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA).

The BMA petition was filed yesterday and in view of the urgency of the matter, the court heard it the same day.

At the hearing, the court enquired whether the BMA has already complied with the earlier mandatory injunction.

Counsel for the petitioner, Barrister Amirul Islam, submitted that the petitioner is fully respectful to the court order and in compliance, the BMA has given up their on-going strike programme by this time. The hearing was held at around 1:30 pm.

He then appealed for legal shelter so that the government would comply with the terms of agreement signed on January 20, 1994 between Health Minister Choudhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf and the BMA president.

The counsel for the petitioner also pointed out that a seven-member inter-ministerial committee was subsequently formed in February to implement the agreement within one month and that 25 more meetings were held between the government and the BMA, but all efforts have failed to bear any results.

The January accord was signed following a similar BMA-sponsored strike by government doctors. The authorities had agreed to implement most of the BMA's 21-point demand while the association agreed to abstain from going for further strikes for three months.

Doctors

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on indefinite strike at the call of the BMA, an agreement was reached between it and the authorities.

After observing a two-day token strike last month, the BMA began the indefinite strike from September 21. After eight days, the health minister asked the doctors to withdraw the strike and assured them that four major demands would be implemented.

But the BMA rejected the minister's offer and continued its programme.

Meanwhile, the BMA will hold its annual general meeting (AGM) today at the Institution of the Engineers in the city.

Opposition to work out

From Page 1 Col 5

and her cabinet colleagues are disrupting the pre-dialogue atmosphere time and again.

"We don't know what would be the outcome of any dialogue with this type of a government. But we want to join the dialogue to let the people know that the Opposition always believes in democratic norms and tradition.

In reply to a question, Nasim indicated that other opposition parties in Parliament now engaged in agitation for a caretaker government would be included in the Opposition delegation during the proposed talks with the government.

"It's my personal opinion that the emissary will not have a major role during the dialogue since it will take place between the government and the Opposition," Nasim told a questioner.

The meeting was attended by Abdus Samad Azad, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, S S Halder, Harun-ur-Rashid, Abul Hasan Chowdhury and Abul Hasanat Abdullah of Awami League, Barrister Maudud Ahmed, Anwar Hossain Manju and Munirul Haq Chowdhury of the Jatiya Party, Sheikh Ansar Ali of the Jamaat, Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury of the NDP and Suranjit Sengupta of the Ganatantri Party.

UNB adds: Nasim said, "We are ready to join the dialogue alongside our current agitation to realise the demand for a neutral, non-partisan caretaker government for holding national elections."

He, however, said: "We want to say in unequivocal terms that the main agenda of the dialogue must be aimed at ensuring a constitutional guarantee of a neutral, caretaker government to conduct national polls. The Opposition will under no circumstances back out from this position."

Nasim said recent statements by the Prime Minister

Kidnapped girl rescued in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Oct 6: The Detective police here rescued a 14-year old girl today, ten days after being kidnapped from the city.

The victim, Marium Begum, was kidnapped on September 25 from Katalgonj area while she was taking her younger brother, Abdus Salam to his school. The kidnapers gagged and forcibly took her away.

Police raided a house today at Jiri village under Lohagara thana and rescued her.

Earlier, two persons were arrested by police in this connection.

660 Bangladesh troops leave for US to join MNF

Six hundred and sixty Bangladesh troops flew in US planes yesterday for joining the Multinational Force (MNF) for restoration of democracy in Haiti, reports UNB.

Six C-141 aircraft of the United States Air Force (USAF) carried the troops, an ISPR press release said.

The dispatch of Bangladesh Contingent committed for the UN-endorsed mission concluded last night with departure of the last flight carrying 110 troops, including 100 police personnel.

Senior Armed Forces officers saw them off at the Zia International Airport.

All flights were enroute to the MNF staging area in Puerto Rico with a brief stopover in Hawaii, the release said.

The Bangladesh Contingent to the MNF comprises 1,000 army, 25 navy, 25 air force and 100 police personnel, including officers.

Four hundred and ninety of them left here Wednesday and have already reached Hawaii in America.

Two more C-141 aircraft are scheduled to fly from Dhaka today carrying back the US Army and Air Force personnel who came here to assist with the loading operation and maintenance of the aircraft.

Asiad guest from Bangladesh dies in Japan

HIROSHIMA, Oct 6: Bangladesh businessman Mohammad Sharif Hossain, who was at the Asian Games as a guest of the Olympic Council of Asia, died of a heart attack Thursday, reports AFP.

Hossain, 46, was taken ill at the main VIP hotel and died at Hiroshima City Hospital, the Asian Games organising committee said.

The trading and real estate company president was the second member of the Asian Games family to die in five days. Naresh Kumar Adhikari, head of the Nepalese delegation, died after suffering a heart attack at the athletes village on Sunday.

Japanese engineers to visit Padma bridge site today

KUSHTIA, Oct 6: A Japanese delegation of engineers will visit a site near the Hardinge Bridge point tomorrow to finalise construction of a bridge over the river Padma, reports UNB.

Earlier another team visited the spot for preliminary inspection. The Meghna bridge at Daudkandi in Comilla district is being constructed by the Japanese team which will be completed soon.

Meanwhile, ferry services between Bheramara and Paksey ferry ghats are being hampered due to emergence of several shoals following rapid fall of water level in the mid river of Meghna.

Every day a good number of vehicles remain stranded for transportation on both sides of the ghats. The authority has already started dredging work from Tuesday to continue ferry service.

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A sequence from Kazi Nazrul Islam's dance drama 'Meher Nigar' presented at the Shilpakala Academy in the city on the occasion of the poet's 18th death anniversary yesterday. — Star photo