

EU summit ends with call for truce in Bosnia

ESSEN, Germany, Dec 10: European Union leaders demanded a cease-fire in Bosnia on Saturday and declared their support for UN peacekeeping troops who may have to be withdrawn if conditions worsen, reports AP.

The war in Bosnia is "a large and real danger for Europe," German Chancellor Helmut Kohl said in summing up the EU summit's deliberations. Six of the EU's 12 members have blue-helmet soldiers in Bosnia, and the leaders made a plea "particularly to the Bosnian Serbs," to stop harassing and capturing UN troops. All the warring parties were urged to accept a diplomatic solution.

The EU "insists on an immediate cease-fire in and around the safe area of Bihac and on the withdrawal of Bosnian Serb and the Krajina Serb forces from this area, to be followed by a cessation of hostilities throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina," a declaration said.

Washington moved the issue along when President Clinton said on Thursday a massive US force — up to 25,000 soldiers — would help protect the withdrawal of the UN units from Bosnia.

That caused alarm in some European countries that have soldiers in Bosnia. Talk of withdrawal could make the fighting worse, and civilians would surely suffer if the UN soldiers leave, they argued.

The EU declaration said if the peacekeepers withdraw, "the implications for Bosnia and its civilian population would be severe."

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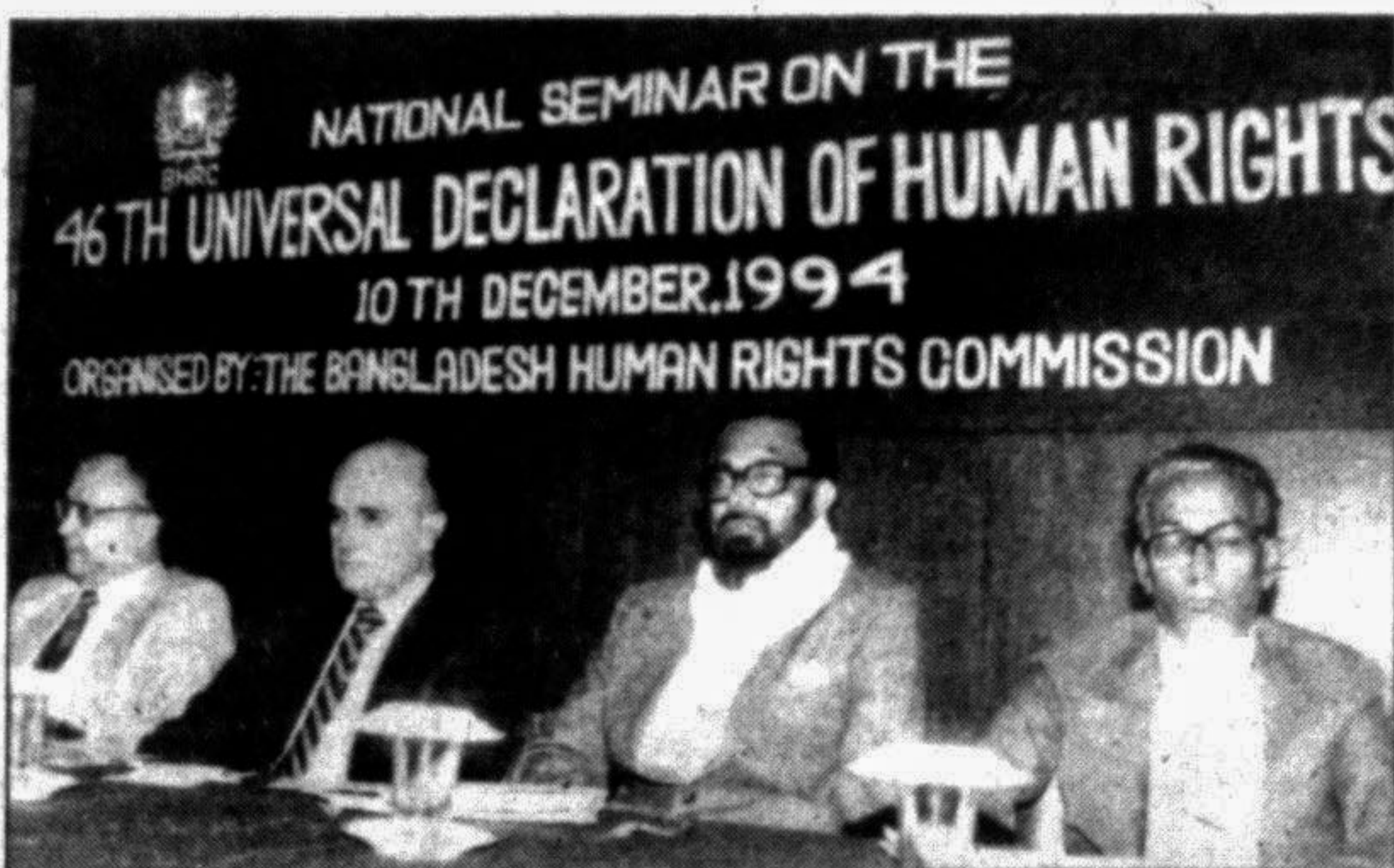
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Chief Election Commissioner Justice M A Rouf (2nd R) attending a seminar on the 46th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Neutrality: Rouf

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Law Secretary Mirza Asaduzzaman Al Farooq, UNB Chairman Amanullah Khan, Brother Jarlat D Suja and Prof Subimal Chakma also addressed the function.

Executive Director of the BHRC Khandakar Majharul Haq presented the keynote paper in the seminar presided over by its Chairman Qazi Adur Rezaq.

Turning on human rights, Justice Rouf said, "Duty is the first criterion to establish rights in society. Duty and rights go together to give a complete shape to establishing human rights."

If it is possible to practise the duties in a society, then the rights will follow it, he maintained and said Islamic philosophy is very much clear because it believes in duty, not in rights only.

He suggested that United Nations adopt fresh convention, saying mere declaration might not help. Practice is more important than that.

ILO Director Werner K Blenk said human right is well protected there where the rule of law was established.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) tried to promote social justice, based on human rights, he said.

He also stressed ensuring equal rights for women and children to establish human rights. "Victory of democracy is also the victory of human rights," he said.

UNB Chairman Amanullah Khan said the human rights declaration was placed to free the people from all kinds of exploitation and oppression and ensure equal rights of men and women before law.

He termed the inequitable share of the Ganges water determined by India as a violation of human rights. Food should be kept above all politics and it should not be used as a political weapon, he said.

Khan suggested the UN role should be reinforced with sufficient powers to deal with the violation of human rights in the member states.

They were received at the Zia International Airport by senior military officers.

The remaining members of the contingent are expected to be back during this month and in February next.

Bangladesh sent the contingent two years ago to take part in the ONUMOZ. The contingent included an infantry battalion, an engineer company, a logistic company, a medical team along with a field hospital, a movement control detachment and an aviation section consisting of representatives from the three services.

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Cong routed in polls

From Page 1 Col 4

With all but two of 224 seats decided in Karnataka, the opposition Janata Dal had clinched 115.

Congress, which had held a 178-seat majority in the state, was running third with only 34 seats behind the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which emerged from the political fringe to take 40 seats.

Rao's Congress Party also lost control of the small north-eastern state of Sikkim, and held only a slim edge in the southern state of Goa.

The southern debacle is expected to weaken the prime minister, making new initiatives or controversial decisions much more difficult in the coming months," the Indian Express said.

"This could have a bearing on the pace of economic reforms. But there does not seem to be any immediate threat to Rao's leadership."

"Rao may be safe for the time being, but a major question mark now looms against his ability to win the 1996 general election," the Economic Times said in an editorial. Elections in five other states are set for February.

Some of Rao's critics within Congress have pointed the finger of blame at Finance Minister Manmohan Singh, who has spearheaded the liberalisation drive.

In a front-page article, the Asian Age said the general consensus within Congress was that Singh was the 'villain'.

Meanwhile, main opposition group said today that snap

hearing to allow time for preferring a revision petition before the higher court against the framing of the charge (arraignment).

Barrister Sara Hossain moved the request on behalf of the writer on the ground that the defence needs a month's time to prepare the revisional application.

Public Prosecutor Abdur Rezaque Khan opposed the defence request for a lengthy postponement but agreed minimum time could be allowed.

After hearing both sides, Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate AKM Kamaluddin adjourned the hearing until January 3 and asked the defence to produce the order of the High Court on the revision petition.

Another unidentified man was killed when he was hit by a minibus at around 12:30 pm near the Mauchak Intersection in Malibagh.

A housewife, Aleya, 30, reportedly committed suicide by taking poison at her home in Kamrangirchar Friday night. She was declared dead at the DMCH.

Four people were admitted to the hospital with severe injuries reportedly sustained from a cracker explosion at Shahidnagar in Lalbagh. They said they were injured when a group of local musclemen exploded hand bombs. Lalbagh police however, said, they were unaware of the incident.

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AL's JS body on polls affairs meets CEC

By Staff Correspondent

The election affairs sub-committee of the Awami League met the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice Mohammad Abdur Rouf at his office yesterday, said a press release of the commission.

During the meeting, the committee members discussed with the CEC issues relating to fresh delimitation of the Jatiya Sangsad constituencies, preparation of fresh voters' list, introduction of identity cards for the voters and electoral rules.

Led by its convener Mofizur Rahman, the AL sub-committee was represented by Barrister K S Nabi, A K M Fazlul Haq Mia and Mahbubur Rahman.

DG of Ansars

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No information on appointment of a new DDG was, however, available.

Sources concerned said that the new DG went to the Ansars headquarters at Khilgaon in the city yesterday morning and held a meeting with the senior officials.

PM's flight

From Page 1 Col 5

Biman has no regular flights to Morocco.

Biman sources said one aircraft is required as standby for any VIP handling. As such it was difficult to make one available on Sunday.

"The Prime Minister's office accepted the request to delay the flight without hampering the summit schedule," the Biman source said, requesting anonymity.

The national carrier currently has only five wide-bodied DC-10-30 aircraft in its fleet for 29 international and regional destinations.

Another Biman source said three flights will be delayed because of the special flight to Casablanca.

Biman's Dhaka-Bombay-Dubai-Athens flight, scheduled on December 17, will be delayed by a day while the December 15 Dhaka-Jeddah flight has been rescheduled for December 16. The Dhaka-Riyadh-Muscat flight on December 18 will also be several hours late.

Major changes

From Page 1 Col 7

Ahmed Tariq Karim, who has been serving in Tehran since December, 1994 is learnt to be under order of transfer to headquarters.

Dr M Afsarul Gader, DG, UN desk at the ministry, is to become high commissioner to an African country.

Li Col (rtd) Shariful Haq, accredited to Kenya since June, 1988 is likely to be appointed ambassador to Brazil.

The contract of Major General (rtd) Abdus Salam, serving in Brasilia since May, 1992, has expired.

M Khairuzzaman, DG, Africa desk, is likely to be made charges d'affaires in Manila.

Meanwhile, efforts are on to set up a full-fledged embassy in South Africa.

An officer of the rank of Counsellor is expected to go to Pretoria shortly to make arrangements for opening a permanent mission.

According to sources, the government is still undecided on picking the country's first ambassador to Pretoria.

The appointments and transfers are subject to approval of the agreement by the receiving country.

The Midnight File

Rabin welcomes Syria's agreement to hold talks

OSLO, Dec 10: Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin today cautiously welcomed Syria's agreement to hold talks with the Jewish state in Washington. Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al-Sihara, speaking on Friday in Lebanon, reiterated that Syria would not hold secret talks with Israel. He said of the proposed Washington discussions: "these are not negotiations but an exchange of ideas and they are not secret," reports Reuter.

Gunmen kill 4 in Karachi

KARACHI, Dec 10: Gunmen killed at least four people in Karachi today bringing the death count to at least 75 in the 10 days since troops withdrew from the southern port city, police and emergency services said. Two young people were shot dead outside a Sunni Muslim mosque in the north Nazimabad area by attackers who escaped in a car, reports Reuter.

Disabled freedom fighters on hunger strike

Disabled freedom fighters and martyrs' families began a hunger strike in Dhaka yesterday to protest the reported plan for selling the Swadhinata Bhaban, the head office of the MuktiJoddha Kalyan Trust, reports UNB.

The protesters gave the government six days to reverse the decision. Otherwise, they threatened self-immolation on the 7th day of the strike.

About 200 freedom fighters, including crippled ones and some members of the families of those killed in the Liberation War, joined the hunger strike outside the Swadhinata Bhaban in Motijheel at about 10 am.

Speaking on the occasion at the Swadhinata Bhaban yesterday morning, they urged the government to meet the just demand of the freedom fighters.

They also criticised the government for its plan to sell the Bhaban and some units of the MuktiJoddha Kalyan Trust, now facing financial problems.

B Chowdhury returns home

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AIDS in Bangladesh

From Page 1 Col 5

Taanbazar brothel in Narayanganj. "I know that he is infected... yet I have to bow to his desire, because he is paying for it," she said.

This may be one answer to the high rate of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) among the people in the high risk zone, VHSS workers said. HIV or AIDS is one form of STD.

No national average on the STD could be found as yet. Limited studies however, showed it was high among the high risk people like prostitutes, their clients, beggars, homeless people and vagrants.

According to a recent survey conducted by the Institute of Epidemiological Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), 3.8 per cent of all female patients seeking any kind of treatment at the country's MCH clinics suffered from gonorrhoea.

Another survey by the IEDCR on seven vagrant homes in the country showed that 17.08 per cent of the 2359 people tested had syphilis while 18.35 per cent had gonorrhoea.

The survey was conducted during the period January to October 1993.

But other social practices could also cause AIDS — for example, use of unclean razors at the barbers' shop. The possibility of spread of HIV

germ is quite high if infected razors are used for shaving healthy people.

Use of non-sterilised surgical instruments and used hypodermic needles and absence of screening before blood transfusion could also spread HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases, doctors say.

There is an estimated eight lakh drug addicts in the country. A good number of them are addicted to different injectable drugs like heroin, morphine and pethidine, according to officials of the Department of Narcotic Control.

"HIV transmission through infected blood is a serious threat," commented Samirul Islam Babu, General Secretary of Sandhani, an organisation of medical students campaigning for voluntary blood donation in the country.

He said the annual requirement of blood is 2,00,000 bags, out of which 65 per cent come from the professional donors.

Most of the blood received in the blood banks cannot be screened due to lack of facilities. Of late, the PG hospital has started screening blood while other hospitals are yet to follow.

According to Sandhani, there are roughly one thousand professional blood donors who regularly donate their blood to the major hospitals in the country.

Bangladesh troops end Mozambique mission

From Page 1 Col 6

Members of the Bangladesh military contingent in the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) started returning home after successful completion of their mission, reports BSS.

The first batch of the contingent arrived in the city yesterday.</