

Unusual progress in unofficial Indo-Pak disarmament talks

NEW DELHI, Feb 27: Nuclear experts from India and Pakistan met in the western Indian state of Goa for rare regional disarmament talks where representatives of both sides claimed important progress, official sources said today.

They said the four-nation 'unofficial conference' last month which also involved Chinese and US defence experts had the backing of New Delhi and Islamabad.

It was decided not to go public about the conference but I assure you that there was unusual progress, particularly between India and Pakistan," a representative at the talks told Reuters.

The two arch-foes have not held official talks since January 1994 after hitting a deadlock over Islamabad's demand for a discussion on a plebiscite in India's Jammu and Kashmir state which Delhi rejects.

For the past five years, Muslim rebels have been fighting a separatist war against Indian rule in the Himalayan region in which some 17,000 people have died.

"The fact that the Indian side has agreed to sit at regional talks with Pakistan is itself a matter of great satisfaction," a Pakistan representative at the talks said.

India officially says nuclear disarmament is a global issue. It had rejected Pakistan's offer of a regional peace pact with New Delhi to be endorsed by China, Russia and the United States.

An India-Pakistan citizen's conference in New Delhi last week said both governments were forced to take headline positions because of pressure from rightwing nationalists in their countries.

The Goa talks stemmed from a similar meeting in Shanghai last February between representatives of the four countries. The Pakistan delegation was represented by Islamabad's ambassador in New Delhi Riaz Khokhar.

Indian defence experts said despite its official opposition to regional talks, New Delhi had decided to encourage a dialogue with Pakistan informally.

"There was a shift, albeit a subtle one," one Indian defence analyst told Reuters.

He said China's involvement in the talks was equally significant. Beijing officially refuses to hold nuclear talks with India, saying it could not discuss

the issue with a country which was not a member of the official nuclear club.

"They maintained that old argument in Goa," one conference source said. "But China's presence there showed a small concession."

The next round of talks has been scheduled for Islamabad, western diplomats say the unofficial meetings were significant for the two countries as both were capable of building nuclear weapons quickly.

India says it cannot give up its nuclear option even if Pakistan agrees to a pact because of China's atomic arsenal.

India and China fought a brief border war in 1962. India and Pakistan have fought three wars since independence from Britain in 1947, two of them over Kashmir.

Western diplomats say Kashmir is a potential flash-point for a nuclear war between the two populous countries.

Pakistan says it has acquired a nuclear capability but a political decision has been taken to use it only for peaceful purposes.

India exploded a nuclear device in 1974 but says it is not 'making the bomb.'



Two US soldiers carry a crate as they walk past a Pakistani soldier of the UN peace-keeping force manning a heavy machine-gun on the beach in Mogadishu, Somalia yesterday. The US contingent is part of the Operation United Shield that will help the troops to pull out of Somalia in the next few days. — AFP photo

The Midnight File

Cong won't contest local polls in Andhra

HYDERABAD, India, Feb 27: India's ruling Congress party will not contest local polls in Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's home state Andhra Pradesh where it was defeated in assembly elections in December, the party said today. State Congress general secretary PV Rajeshwar Rao, the Prime Minister's son, said the party would not put forth and candidates for the polls next month because of lack of time, reports Reuters.

10 injured in fire at garment factory

At least 10 people were injured, one of them seriously, in a fire at a garment factory at Pallabi in the city yesterday. However, no major casualty was reported. The fire originated from the store room of the garment factory — People's Products Limited. However, it was brought under control by local people and workers of the factory. The Kuliarchar Sweater Factory at Malibagh Chowdhurypara was also caught by a fire at 6:30 pm. Nobody was injured in the incident, reports UNB.

Imports, exports up

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cellaneous industries increased from 155 million to 214 million dollars.

The actual settlement of foodgrain imports over the same period stood at 68.1 million dollars compared to 15.8 million dollars in July-December of 1993 while sugar imports increased from 32 million to 69 million dollars during the period.

21 per cent and jute goods exports increasing by 30 per cent.

Exports of raw jute, however, declined while that of tea was lower than the previous years.

Remittances and transfers upto December last stood at 667 million dollars, up from the 567 million dollars during the first six month of 1993-94. Remittances alone increased from 520 million to 584 million dollars during the period.

The monetary growth during the six-month period stood at 7.9 per cent compared to 4.12 per cent over the same period of the previous fiscal. Alam said, while attributing the growth to factors relating mainly to the external sector.

Domestic credit also grew by two per cent during the period with private sector lending showing a healthy 7.6 per cent growth. He said that during the period Tk 1,481 crore was sanctioned as industrial loans compared to only Tk 541 crore during the same period of the previous fiscal.

Total capital inflow also showed a sharp increase during the July-December of 1994-95 and stood at 50 million dollars, five million in foreign direct investment and 45 million in portfolio investment, compared to only 12 million dollars during the same period of 1993-94. Alam pointed out.

Diabetic Awareness Day today

The Bangladesh Diabetic Society will observe the 'Diabetic Awareness Day' today to create consciousness among the people about the killer disease, reports UNB.

In Bangladesh, nearly 25 lakh people are suffering from diabetes, rated the third among killer diseases worldwide after heart ailment and cancer. Of them, only two lakh are getting any treatment.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas will be the chief guest at the day's main function at the Society's auditorium at 4 pm.

Newspapers will carry supplements while radio and television will air special programmes. A commemorative stamps will also be issued and leaflets distributed at the thana level through the LGRD and Cooperatives Ministry.

To mark the occasion, the Society will bring out a book on 'Complications of diabetes and how to get rid of them.'

Addressing a press conference at the BIRDEM auditorium yesterday, President of the Society Alamgir MA Kabir said only two lakh diabetic patients are getting treatment from the BIRDEM and its 31 satellite clinics across the country.

About 1.40 lakh patients were registered with the BIRDEM since it was set up on February 28, 1956. Some 70 new and nearly 1,000 old patients are getting treatment from the BIRDEM free of cost everyday.

Medicine Consultant of the BIRDEM Dr Zafar A Latif said people in the 35-50 age group are vulnerable to diabetes. If it is not controlled, this disease can seriously damage eyesight, the kidneys and the nervous system within five years.

Heart disease, cancer, diabetes and road accidents are considered the major killers around the world. Urbanisation, stress and changed food habits are some of the causes of diabetes, Dr Latif said.

Three killed in city incidents

By DMCH Correspondent

At least three persons were killed in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

One Enamul Haque, aged about 18, was seriously injured when he fell from the first floor of a building at Fakirerpu in the morning.

The victim died soon after admission in the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

A pedestrian was injured when knocked down by a speeding autorickshaw at Nimtoli, Anandabazar at about 10:30 am.

The victim, Mohammad Badsha Miah, 35, was sent to the DMCH where he succumbed to his injuries.

An 18-year-old Kajal was killed when a speeding bus ran over him at Mirpur bus stand in the morning.

Police sent all bodies to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

Council of editors' polls Mar 30

The election of Bangladesh Council of Editors will be held on March 30 next, a press release of the council said yesterday, reports BSS.

The nomination papers of the interested candidates will be received from 9 am to 4 pm on March 16 at the office of the chairman of the election commission M Haider Chowdhury at National Life Insurance Col Ltd, 79 Motijheel Commercial Area (second floor), Dhaka, the press release added.

The Chairman of the election commission will announce the names of the candidates at 4 pm on March 20 at the same office after scrutiny.

Meanwhile, March 22 has been fixed as the day for withdrawal of nomination papers by 3 pm while there will be hearing at 3 pm on March 21 on nomination papers if any cancelled.

Great escape!

ISLAMABAD, Feb 27: A dozen prisoners escaped after temporarily blinding their police escort with chilli powder while being taken back to jail from trial court, news reports said today, says AFP.

Police have launched a hunt for the escapees, who were facing trial on charges of murder, kidnapping, robbery and theft.

According to the reports, the prisoners overpowered the policemen in nearby Rawalpindi, unlocked their handcuffs and seized two vehicles to flee from the scene.

Campaign against a mosque in Varanasi

NEW DELHI, Feb 27: Thousands of soldiers and police surrounded an ancient mosque in northern India today as a banned group of Hindu radicals launched a campaign to destroy it, reports AP.

The extremists believe Muslim invaders built the 16th-century mosque in Varanasi city after destroying a Hindu temple there.

Today is a major Hindu holiday, and the outlawed World Hindu Council has urged the tens of thousands of Hindus who travelled to Varanasi to worship there to support their anti-mosque campaign.

The radicals told the worshippers to do that while entering a Hindu temple 25 yards (meters) away from the mosque and pouring water from the sacred Ganges river on an idol of their god Shiva.

The soldiers and police will not intervene unless activists attack the mosque or members of the banned group protest nearby.

The Press Trust of India news agency said that 50,000 Hindus travelled to Varanasi, including 25,000 radicals.

In 1992, the World Hindu Council helped organise a rally of Hindu extremists that destroyed an ancient mosque in the nearby holy city of Ayodhya.

Rembrandt a copycat?

WASHINGTON, Feb 27: Even Rembrandt stole some of his best ideas from other artists, according to a new exhibit at the National Gallery of Art. Only in his day, people thought it was a good idea, reports AP.

The show is called 'Imitation and Invention: Old Master Prints and Their Sources.'

Greg Jecmen, the gallery's assistant curator of prints, explains that in the days before photography the making of prints was the way artists put their ideas before a wide audience. The important thing was the idea, and the twist that each artist put on it.

What we would call plagiarism was considered a form of education and public relations.

Jecmen quotes the Dutch critic Karel van Mander, who died in the same year — 1606 — that Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn was born.

Stealing artistic ideas was perfectly all right, like a bee sucking nectar from a flower to turn into honey, van Mander advised young artists. He put it into a poem:

"Steal atoms, legs, bodies, hands, feet, 'tis here not forbidden...Well cooked pickings make good stew."

Rembrandt took the advice. The show includes a Rembrandt etching of the Virgin and Child, done when the great Dutch artist was no longer young. He had looked hard at an engraving by the Italian painter Andrea Mantegna, created more than 150 years before.

Rembrandt did an etching of his own, using exactly the same touching pose as Mantegna did: the Virgin's cheek pressed against the Child's, her hands clasped in just the same way around him. Her knees under their heavy drapery are in just the same

JCD on rampage in Khulna

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Feb 27: Activists of the JCD went on the rampage in various parts of the city today.

They ransacked and set fire to several rooms of the Shaheed Titumir Hall of the Govt B L College, Faruk Academy, an orphanage, the Sramik Kalyan Federation of the Khatipur Jamaat office, Aralat Manzil belonging to Moulana Delwar Hossain Saidee Nazirghat Mess and damaged window panes of the house of Moulana Yusuf, a central leader of the Jamaat.

Many of the BNP-backed JCD activists, brandishing firearms, created a reign of terror in different areas of the city, reportedly in the presence of police.

Normal city life remained paralysed during the violence.

Meanwhile, the pro-Jamaat Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) has threatened to paralyse city life if cases filed against its activists were not withdrawn and the arrested leaders set free immediately, an ICS press release said today.

UNB reports: A half-day hartal from 6 am to 2 pm was observed here today protesting violence that left at least two people killed in the city in last two days.

The Awami League the BNP and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal separately called for the hartal to protest the killing of Ward Commissioner and Awami League leader Moslemuddin Khan and JCD city unit general secretary Abul Kalam Azad.

During the hartal hours, all modes of transport remained off the streets and shops and businesses establishments closed.

Heavy contingent of armed police and para-military BDR were deployed at vulnerable points of the city during the hartal hours.

Meanwhile, namaj-e-janaja of JCD leader Abul Kalam Azad was held at Khilishpur, Daulatpur and Shaheed Haidis Park and his body was sent to his village home in Comilla.

Stampede kills five

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ing, he never went for milking to invite poor people for taking Zakat. "I am not rich enough distributing Zakat among a crowd. I have a list of people whom I offered Zakat and I have done this today also," he said.

"It is our family tradition that every year we distribute Zakat among some distressed people," he said. He regretted that some people died in a stampede.

He further said that he did not send anybody to open the gate of the school. Somebody trying to come out of the school might have opened the gate, he said.

When this correspondent visited the area at about 12:30 pm, some people were still hanging around in the hope that they would be offered Zakat.

A police official, who was on-duty in front of the school, also said that Mirza Abbas was scheduled to distribute Zakat. Abbas said people were misinformed and he had no such programme at the school.

At the DMCH morgue, mothers of Shukur Ali and Hazrat Ali were seen weeping for their sons. Mother of Hazrat rushed to the hospital from a garment factory where she works.

Both the mothers did not know that their sons had gone to Motijheel School to have Zakat.

When contacted last night, Headmaster of the school Rashiduddin Zahid said that no permission was given to anyone for the use of the school premises yesterday. The office was open on the day although the school is currently closed for the Eid vacation, he added.

He said that he was unaware of the incidents that led to the deaths as he was out on official work.

The headmaster, however, noted that while being office at around 9 am he saw a large number of people standing in front of the school and near the house of Mirza Abbas, which is located opposite to the school premises.

UNB adds: Awami League President Sheikh Hasina expressed deep shock at the tragic death of people in the stampede.

In a message, the Awami League chief blamed the Zakat distributors for tragedy for their mismanagement and carelessness.

Hasina urged all concerned to check recurrence of such incidents.

She prayed for salvation of the departed souls and early recovery of the injured.

JCD factions clash over Zakat: 15 hurt

SIRAJGANJ, Feb 27: Fifteen activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) were injured, one seriously, in an intra-party clash over distribution of Zakat cloths at Ullapara Bazar today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the clash between the rival groups of the JCD, one led by its thana unit organising secretary Selim and another by former JCD leader Fazlu, erupted following a quarrel to distribute sarees and lungis sanctioned by the government for destitutes.

'Chiching Fak' banned

The government yesterday banned a book entitled 'Chiching Fak' jointly edited by Lila Mazumder and Sushanta Pal and published by Swapnan Bashak, from 7, Shayamacharan Dey Street, Calcutta-73. A government handout said the book (first published in 1974) contained an imaginary picture of Hazrat Mohammad (SM) which has hurt the religious sentiment of the Muslims in Bangladesh. The government has also banned selling and distribution of the book, reports BSS.

One stabbed to death in Comilla

COMILLA, Feb 27: A young man was stabbed to death on broad daylight in front of a crowded shopping centre in the town today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said Shahid, 22, was critically injured when two miscreants repeatedly stabbed him in front of the Bhuayan Market at Kandirpar at about 1 pm.

Govt, Opposition deny knowledge

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to be worked out now since the BNP had no intention to hold an election boycotted by the major opposition parties.

Meanwhile, the JP seems to be unhappy with the AL chief's readiness to accept a caretaker government under the President insisting instead that only a 'neutral, caretaker government' is acceptable to them.

Many opposition leaders, however, said they would entertain any offer of fresh dialogue if the ruling party agrees in principle to form a caretaker government to conduct the next elections and placed such an offer to them in writing.

Some of them also observed that the opposition parties should either resolve the crisis through a dialogue or should start an all-out agitation to force the government to accept their demand.

"Dialogue and agitation cannot go side by side," one AL leader said, adding that the Opposition would suffer political losses because of such a game of dialogue and street agitation.

It is because of this that the main opposition AL has decided to start an all-out agitation following the Eid holidays. The three major opposition parties have already called a 48-hour hartal on March 12-13.

In the backdrop of the Speaker's ruling and the PM's renewed offer for talks last

Quetta blast

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to survive the poisonous gas emitted from the burning coal, he said.

Efforts to find the bodies were hampered by heavy snow and rain that made it difficult to travel to the mine, about 40 kilometers east of Quetta.

The Sunday night blast took place more than 2,500 feet (750 meters) underground and was one of the worst coal mine disasters in recent years in Pakistan, officials said.

Car bomb blast

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day in the town in Dahuk province bordering Turkey. Rassoul said, condemning it as an 'odious crime.' Zakho is under the control of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) control.

The PUK has been locked in a bitter power struggle with its main rivals the KDP for several months in which Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has offered to mediate.

The area has been controlled by the Kurds in defiance of Baghdad since the end of the January-February 1991 Gulf war with the help of a US-led coalition.

New DSE rules

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recognise the contribution of foreign investors for current buoyancy of the market, but the contribution of local investors should in no way be underestimated," he added.

Excess allotment of IPOs in favour of foreign funds extremely limited the availability of securities for local investors, throwing them into frustration.

Squeezing availability for domestic investors saw frequent oversubscription of IPOs, even by 20 times in one case, in recent months.

Arguing in favour of the lock-in, the SEC chief said the market requires a cushion against any collapse in case of foreign funds suddenly withdrawing on a large scale — a Mexico syndrome.

"Lock-in is nothing now, it is a common measure in markets across the world. It's a safety measure," he said. Khan pointed out that Sri Lanka has a two-year lock-in while India has a five-year one.

The SEC officials refuted allegations from different quarters that the new guidelines would scare away foreign investment from the nascent

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাইতেছে যে, আসন্ন "ঈদ-উল-ফিতর" উপলক্ষে যাত্রী সাধারণের সুবিধার্থে ঢাকা-খুলনা মহাসড়কের ১ম ও ২য় ধলেশ্বরী ফেরী ঘাটে, জিজিরা-কেরানীগঞ্জ-দোহার সড়কের তুলসীখালি এবং মরিচা ফেরী ঘাটে এবং ফতুল্লা-মুঙ্গিগঞ্জ-গৌহাজং সড়কের মুক্তারপুর ফেরী ঘাটে ফেরী চলাচলের বিশেষ বন্দোবস্ত করা হইয়াছে। শুধুমাত্র ঈদের নামাজের জন্য ঈদের দিন ২ (দুই) ঘণ্টা ফেরী চলাচল বন্ধ থাকিবে। যানবাহন ফেরীতে উঠানামার সময়ে যাত্রীদিককে যানবাহন হইতে নামিয়া যাওয়ার জন্য বিশেষভাবে অনুরোধ করা যাইতেছে।

ইহা ছাড়া জনসাধারণকে ফেরীতে কর্মরত কর্মচারীদের সহিত সহযোগিতা এবং সুশৃংখলভাবে ফেরীতে উঠানামা করার জন্য বিশেষভাবে অনুরোধ করা যাইতেছে।

শাহাবুদ্দিন
নির্বাহী পকৌশলী (সেওজ)
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মুঙ্গিগঞ্জ সড়ক বিভাগ, মুঙ্গিগঞ্জ।