

Sanjay Dutt returns to silver screen soon

NEW DELHI, Oct 17: Movie idol Sanjay Dutt walked out of prison today a day after India's Supreme Court granted him bail, ending a 14-month spell in custody in connection with terror attacks in Bombay two years ago, reports AFP.

"I'm a very happy man. I was waiting for this moment," Dutt said and vowed to jump back to work immediately.

Two of his friends offered a million rupees in surety to bail him out, in line with the court's ruling.

A beaming Dutt, dubbed the Sylvester Stallone of Hindi films, told reporters at a crowded court that he planned to start shooting a song sequence for a forthcoming film, entitled "Sanam" (darling).

The brawny Dutt, 36, described a Supreme Court order freeing him as "a Diwali gift" — alluding to a major Hindu festival of fireworks on

October 23. The movie heart-throb, who is India's highest-paid movie actor, commanding a 10-million-rupee fee (312,500-dollar) per film, did not specify when he would resume work but said it would be "soon."

The Supreme Court ordered a special Bombay court trying suspects in the March 1993 Bombay bombings to release Dutt, ending a prolonged legal battle.

It was hailed by the film industry, which had campaigned for his release.

Dutt's arrest caused losses worth several million rupees with about 15 films stalled in various stages of completion, industry sources said.

Dutt's parents, Sunil and Nargis, were India's leading film couple in the 1950s and 1960s. Dutt, whose wife and daughter live in New York, reportedly lost more than 17 kilograms in jail since his arrest in July 1994.

Bangladesh film festival opens in Calcutta

A week-long Bangladesh film festival began yesterday in Calcutta's "Nandan", a cultural complex, a message received in Dhaka said, reports BSS.

West Bengal's Education Minister Kanti Biswas formally inaugurated the festival amidst great enthusiasm and zeal and attendance of large number of people.

The festival being organised jointly by West Bengal government, the deputy high commissioner of Bangladesh in Calcutta, Bangladesh Film Development Corporation and Federation of Film Societies of India is to commemorate the centenary of world cinema, the message said.

This is for the first time that a total of six films are being shown in India in a particular festival, the message said.

Feature film 'Aguner Parashmani' was screened after the inaugural function to a packed hall as hundreds of people crowded outside. The festival will continue till October 22.

Bomb attack on French commuter train: 28 hurt

PARIS, Oct 17: Twenty-eight people were injured,

five of them seriously, in a bomb attack on a rush-hour commuter train in an underground tunnel here today, police said in a revised toll, reports AFP.

Among the five, all of them men, one had a leg blown off, another lost a foot and a third suffered severe head injuries. Police said they feared for the lives of two of the badly wounded.

The explosion tore apart the second carriage of the train between the Saint Michel and Orsay Museum stations on the left bank in the heart of the city.

Hasina: Repression

From Page 1

Quddus and Jasim were injured at Mohamadpur. In Sabujbagh thana, Juba League worker Shaiful, Sramik League workers Manik, Qamrul, Kashem, Shah Alam Shukur, Shahid, Awami League workers Babul and Ishaq in Ramna thana and many from different districts were arrested yesterday.

Vice-president of Dhaka City Chhatra League Abdur Razzak Pintu was allegedly kidnapped by JCD terrorists Monday midnight and he was still missing.

The Awami League President called on the people to make hartal for next two days a success.

Another report adds: Awami League leaders at a rally yesterday asked the BNP government to arrange general elections under a neutral caretaker government without buying time anymore.

The government is not accepting the demand only to prolong its 'illegal stay in power,' but the people will not tolerate it, said senior AL leader Abdus Samad Azad.

"There is no alternative to caretaker government for resolving the present political crisis," he told the rally organised by the Chhatra League at Bangabandhu Avenue to protest Monday's killing of Brahmanbaria BCL leader Shahnewaz.

Paying tributes to the

NAM summit

From Page 1

ism and a quest for autonomy as the West and the Soviet Union used poorer countries as a stage for their struggle.

The NAM favours a new world order which will be free from hegemony, arms race and unilateral practices, Colombian Foreign Minister Rodrigo Pardo Garcia-Pena said.

Rodrigo Pardo, whose country will assume NAM's chairmanship for the next three years, made the remarks at the opening session of a two-day ministerial preparatory meeting.

Commenting on world situation, he said that fundamental changes have taken place in East-West relations but the same changes have not happened in North-South relations. Wide gaps have

persisted and are getting even wider along the North-South axis of the international system, he continued.

He said that the situation in developing countries is further deteriorating, marked by worse poverty, stagnant social development, slow advance in science and technology, and heavier debt burden.

It is worrying to the developing world that some countries think the tendency of globalisation and inter-dependence in the world allow them to interfere in internal affairs of other countries, he noted.

If global affairs are handled unilaterally through the imposition of solutions or the interference of big powers in weaker nations, he said, these problems will never be solved.

The Non-Aligned Movement 'cannot allow the use of force above international law,' he said.

On world economic order, he said that while the old protectionist model has impaired the competitiveness of the world's economies, the new liberal model now impedes the actions in favour of the developing countries.

memory of Shahnewaz, the AL leader warned the ruling party against resorting to killing and repression.

He called upon the people to take revenge of the killing by forcing the government to accept the demand for his blood.

Calling the ongoing 96-hour hartal a complete success, he said people expressed their no-confidence in the government and verdict in favour of the demand for election under a caretaker government by observing the hartal.

AL General Secretary Zilur Rahman called upon the government to shun 'the politics of killing and repression.'

Referring to the killing of Ziaur Rahman, he said one killing leads to another killing.

"Save the country from possible confrontation by accepting the people's demand for a neutral caretaker government to oversee the next elections."

The rally was presided over by BCL president Enamul Huq Shamim and also addressed by Amir Hossain Amu, Rahmat Ali, Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Barrister Shawkat Ali, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Momtaz Hossain, Siddique Rouf Khan, Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin and Abdus Salam Khan.



Shopkeepers and local people chasing pickets for ransacking shops at Kalyanpur in the city during hartal yesterday. — Star photo

Pakistan expels 6 Afghan diplomats

ISLAMABAD, Oct 17: Pakistan ordered six Afghan diplomatic officials today to leave the country, state radio said, reports Reuter.

It said the six were declared as persona non grata and ordered out of Pakistan within 48 hours.

The radio said 11 other Afghan nationals had also been expelled.

There was no immediate explanation for the move, which followed similar expulsions last month of 13 Afghan diplomats, including the charge d'affaires in Islamabad.

BJP withdraws support to UP govt

NEW DELHI, Oct 17: India's main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) withdrew support to the minority government in the populous Uttar Pradesh state today, domestic news agencies said, reports Reuter.

The Press Trust of India quoted BJP leaders as saying they had decided to withdraw crucial support to the government of Chief Minister Mayawati over policy differences.

Mayawati took power when her Bahujan Samaj Party, representing low caste Hindus, pulled out of a coalition with a socialist group less than five months ago and entered into an alliance with the BJP.

It was not immediately clear whether she would resign or seek fresh partners.

Outcome of meet

From Page 1

sphere for such a dialogue. She also reiterated her view that the dialogue would be meaningless if the ruling party does not accept the concept of caretaker government for holding elections.

When contacted, a member of the group said that AL chief's comment cannot be interpreted as rejection of PM's offer for talks. He said that the group would continue its effort to bring about an end to political stalemate.

Meanwhile, Awami League Presidium member Amir Hossain Amu, Jatiya Party acting Chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid told UNB the Prime Minister should accept the concept of non-party neutral caretaker government first to hold any dialogue with the opposition.

Otherwise, they said, any attempt at holding dialogue would be futile and killing of time.

Commenting on the Prime Minister's latest offer, Amir Hossain Amu said, "it will be meaningless and a farce to hold talks without the government's acceptance of the concept of non-party neutral caretaker government."

Amu said the Prime Minister is yet to accept the spirit and essence of non-party caretaker government. Rather, she is proposing to appoint an interim Prime Minister from her own BNP which is completely contrary to the opposition demand.

Acting Chairman of Jatiya Party Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury said the government must create a congenial environment for dialogue by accepting in principle the opposition demand.

"Otherwise, such invitation for so-called talks will only create smoke-screen instead of solving the problem." Jamaat leader Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid said there is nothing new in the Prime Minister's proposal. It appears that Begum Zia is yet to realise the reality and gravity of the present situation, Mojahid said.

100 hurt on second day

From Page 1

them were arrested from Ramna area, four from Motijheel, eight from Demra and two from Sabujbagh, police said.

Supporters of the AL, JP and Jamaat-e-Islami brought out processions and held rallies in Uttara, Mahakhali, Farm Gate, Mirpur, Tejgaon, Jhigatola, Bangla Motor, Moghbazar, Tophkhana, Press Club and Gulistan areas as well as in other parts of the capital throughout the day.

At Shyamoli, rickshaws pulled up against pickets attacking them and damaging the three wheelers at around 10 am. Aided by slum dwellers, the rickshaws pulled at first chased the pickets away. But the pickets came back in larger number afterwards and beat up the slum dwellers. Some 30 people were injured in the incident.

At the Kalyanpur vegetable market at around noon, clashes between supporters of the AL and shopkeepers left at least six persons injured, including local ward commissioner S M Shahabuddin, who is also an AL activist. Other injured persons were identified as Shahid, Shawpan, Habibur, Liton and Ruhul Amin. Shahid (25) was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with bomb injuries.

Police said, a pro-hartal procession ransacked and looted some shops because those were kept open. The shopkeepers, with the aid of local people, counter-attacked the AL activists. As

the situation worsened, police intervened and lobbed tear gas shells and resorted to baton charge to stop the clash.

A shopkeeper, Md Shahid, filed a case with Mohammadpur thana alleging looting of Tk 14,000 from his cash-box during the clashes.

According to the AL, a "Terrorist group of BNP" had carrying firearms attacked a procession of the AL which left many injured. After this attack, a large number of AL workers assembled on the spot but police unnecessarily lobbed tear gas shells and baton-charged them, leaving 10 to 12 AL workers injured.

The AL leaders later held a rally at Assad Gate denouncing the attack by police and "BNP terrorists".

A rickshawpuller, Habibur Rahman (25), was seriously injured in a bomb explosion at Mahakhali crossing at around 11 am. Others injured in bomb explosions in different areas included Ramzan (22), injured at Jurain railgate at 9 am, Shihab Ali (22) at Nimitoli at 11.30 am, Rafiqul Islam (19) at Madhabdi at 6 pm, Habib (30) at Nakhhalpara at 10 am and Mizanur Rahman (25) injured at Golapbagh at last night. Two others were injured in other areas. All of them were admitted to the DMCH.

The AL held several *gayebara* janazas in the city for Chhatra League leader Shahnewaz. One janaza was held at Baitul Mukarram mosque which was attended

called in to tackle the situation.

"The congestion was due to several reasons. All traffic in Maoa, Sirajganj and Bhupur routes were diverted to Aricha due to flood, the authorities had cut down on fuel for the ferries and there was lack of law and order in the area," said an official of the BIWTA.

Shipping Minister M K Anwar meanwhile told The Daily Star that the relocation would hardly affect Aricha ghat as traffic was increasing at the rate of 20 per cent per year.

"Pabna and Sirajganj bound traffic would always use Aricha ghat. Then with the yearly increase in traffic volume, Aricha would remain the same," said the minister.

The minister said that the proposal for partial relocation was studied by four expert committees before the decision was taken.

"But I still remain open to suggestions. If anyone has a better way out, please come forward, I will consider it," Anwar said.

Dhaka may raise Farakka at UN

From Page 1

world economy. The current session of the UN General Assembly marks the 50th anniversary of founding of the Organisation and Special Commemorative Meetings (SCM) will be held from October 22 to 24 to highlight the occasion. About 150 heads of state and governments and heads of delegations from the UN's member-states will be in New York this time to participate in the festivities.

Bangladesh, it may be mentioned is taking the UN's 50th anniversary with "a note of seriousness" in view of what diplomatic observers feel its close ties with organization's activities and peace-keeping role. UNICEF, UNDP and several specialised agencies of the United Nations are running some of its largest operations in Bangladesh.

The official Bangladesh delegation including the Prime Minister will be lodged at the Grand Hyatt in central New York. During her 5-day stay in

Relocation of ghat

From Page 1

'floating traders' at the Aricha ghat.

The decision to relocate the ghat to Baruria is disputed also by some Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation officials. "When you want to cross the river from that point, you invariably have to make a detour to do so because of the character of the river, its current, shoal etc. This makes the distance much larger than what you can see on the map," said an official of the BIWTC requesting anonymity.

The resistance committee members claimed that congestion at the Aricha ghat could be solved through some simple modifications involving one fourth of the expenditure that would be needed for the relocation.

In the month of June and July this year Aricha ghat, the only gateway to the northern part of the country, witnessed an unprecedented traffic congestion. Hundreds of vehicles were stranded there for days and paramilitary personnel had to be

used to clear the area. The congestion was due to several reasons. All traffic in Maoa, Sirajganj and Bhupur routes were diverted to Aricha due to flood, the authorities had cut down on fuel for the ferries and there was lack of law and order in the area," said an official of the BIWTA.

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The Midnight File

Saddam takes oath as president

BAGHDAD, Oct 17: Saddam Hussein took the oath of office as President of Iraq today, two days after a referendum in which the government says more than 99 per cent of voters said 'yes' to giving him a seven-year term. State television said the ceremony took place in a joint session of parliament and the ruling revolutionary command council, reports Reuter.

Congress for maximum autonomy to Kashmir

NEW DELHI, Oct 17: India's main political parties were divided Tuesday over how much power to delegate troubled Kashmir so elections can be held, reports AFP.

A spokesman for Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao's Congress (I) Party said it was prepared to meet demands to give maximum autonomy to Kashmir, the country's only Muslim-majority state, plagued by a separatist conflict.

"Anything can be considered within the framework of the constitution," said party spokesman Ved Prakash.

Prakash's comments came ahead of an all-party meeting here due to open later in the day. It was called by the government to discuss organising elections to the Kashmir state assembly for the first time since 1987.

The 1987 state assembly polls were marred by allegations of vote fraud.

He stressed that the government was making "all efforts" to see that early polls are held in the troubled state.

"People are getting fed up with militancy," he said.

Three opposition parties said they supported former Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah's insistence that greater autonomy should

be a pre-condition for taking part in proposed elections.

The Communist Party of India said the government should seriously consider granting autonomy to a future elected government in Kashmir.

"If the government is serious about keeping Kashmir with India, they will have to do this," said the CPI Deputy Leader Muqumuddin Farooqi, following a 90-minute meeting with Abdullah on Monday.

Farooqi said his stand was backed by the separate Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the centrist Janata Dal (people's party).

But the main Hindu opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) opposed greater autonomy, saying Kashmir was not yet ready even for state elections.

The situation in Kashmir is not congenial for a free and fair election," said BJP spokesman K L Sharma, stressing that the government should "contain militancy" in the state.

"Otherwise it will be an election under the shadow of violence," he added.

The BJP warned that autonomy for Kashmir could lead to similar demands in other Indian states.

Twelve kids

From Page 1

pers was 25, of whom, 13 were earlier repatriated by the High Commission.

Of the 12 who are being repatriated now, eight will be accommodated in the SOS village at Shyamoli in Dhaka, while three will return to their parents. Although the identity of another, Murad, has been established, none of his relations could be traced so far. He will be housed in one of children's homes of the Directorate of Social Welfare.

Joynal Hajari

From Page 1

Earlier, witnesses said, the pickets of the Awami League hurled at least 10 crude bombs towards the car of Deputy Commissioner A H M Nurul Islam near Panchgachia road at about 2:30 pm. But the bombs missed the target.

Police chase the hartal campaigners and fired at least 15 rounds of tear-gas shells and 6 rubber bullets to disperse them. The Chhatra League claimed some 10 of their activists were injured in the police action.

In the evening, the activists of the Awami League, Chhatra League and Jubo League brought out militant procession in the town to protest Hajari's arrest.

Jaffna fighting

From Page 1

"After sustained artillery shelling of the population centres in the area, the government forces attempted to break out with the help of tanks and armoured vehicles (on Sunday).

"However, the LTTE forces prevented their advance and the ensuing battle lasted for several hours," the LTTE statement said. But the military spokesman Munasinghe denied there was any fighting on Sunday.

Even as the army offensive got underway Tuesday, two LTTE suicide bombers sank a navy cargo vessel anchored at the high security Trincomalee port in the island's northeast and killed nine sailors, including two officers.

Frogmen from the elite Black Sea Tiger suicide unit blasted the ship, the A-512. Munasinghe said, he said a third frogman was shot and killed before he could destroy another navy craft.

Tigers staged an identical attack at Trincomalee on April 19 and sank two gunboats to mark the end of a 100-day truce with the government.

The heaviest loss of life was reported in an overnight jungle battle in the island's eastern Batticaloa region where 32 soldiers and at least 15 Tiger guerrillas were killed, defence sources said.

The latest violence also ended a week-long lull in fighting in the embattled northern and eastern regions where the Tigers are struggling to establish an independent homeland for the two million Tamil minority.

Gunmen kill 3 in Karachi

KARACHI, Pakistan, Oct 17: Gunmen killed at least three people and burned vehicles in Karachi today on the eve of a protest general strike, police and ambulance workers said, reports Reuter.

Armoured personnel carriers manned by paramilitaries carrying sub-machine guns were deployed in several parts of the violence-plagued southern port city, witnesses said.

Supporters of the AL and the ruling BNP were locked in clashes that started at around noon yesterday as angry processionists carried the body of Shahnewaz, killed during hartal on Monday. Violence spread in the town and lasted about for hours. After the burial of Shahnewaz, the processionists went on the rampage.

In Kushtia town, tension was prevailing yesterday following the death of an opposition activist in a clash between Jatiya Party and BNP activists on Monday.

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