

Kashmiri leaders tell US Congressman Delhi's proposed polls to fuel bloodshed

SRINAGAR, India, Jan 14: Muslim leaders in strife-torn Kashmir today told visiting US Congressman Gary Ackerman that state elections proposed by New Delhi would only fuel unrest in both India and Pakistan, reports AFP.

"Elections can never solve the complex Kashmir problem," Umar Farooq, the head cleric of the state and chairman of the powerful all parties Freedom Conference, told Ackerman in this state summer capital.

"The polls will increase violence and bloodshed for which India will be solely responsible," Farooq warned.

"When there is unrest in Kashmir, you will not have peace in the sub-continent (India and Pakistan)."

Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority province, has been torn by a bloody

separatist drive since 1989 which has claimed more than 12,000 lives. It has been under direct federal rule since 1990.

Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao wanted to hold elections in Kashmir by December but was overruled by the independent election commission which said the prevailing situation would not guarantee "free and fair polls."

Ackerman, who arrived here Saturday on a two-day visit, met with other top Muslim leaders. He said Washington was not trying to impose any plans to solve the Kashmir tangle, the cause of two bitter wars between India and Pakistan.

"We are trying to talk about some issues with our Indian and Pakistani friends," he said. "The United States does not have a design of peace it can enforce on

Kashmir."

"The people and the parties to the conflict must come with their peace initiatives and then American and he added."

US ambassador in India Frank Wisner visited Kashmir in June on a fact-finding mission and met with several Muslim leaders.

Leaders of the Freedom Conference, grouping some 30 Muslim rebel and political groups, also told Ackerman that they condemned the July kidnapping of four western tourists, including an American, by a Muslim separatist group.

They said they were trying hard to establish contact with the captors, identified as members of the Harkat-ul-Ansar guerilla outfit, comprising mainly Afghan mercenaries.



Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina with Hosne Ara Kabir, signing a deed, at a registration ceremony for the expansion of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday. — AL photo

Industrial zone for Japanese offered

The Prime Minister yesterday expressed her government's readiness to offer Japan an exclusive industrial zone and invited the Japanese investors to come forward in a bigger way to invest here, reports UNB.

"Bangladesh is the best place for investment in South Asia as its liberal policies made all types of investment attractive and profitable," Begum Khaleda Zia said talking to the new Japanese ambassador.

The government has adopted far-sighted industrial and economic policies which ensured full security of foreign investment, she told the envoy of Japan, an economic superpower, when he made his maiden call on the Prime Minister at her office.

The newly appointed Japanese Ambassador in Dhaka, Yoshikazu Kaneko, said he was surprised to witness the changed socio-economic scenario of Bangladesh.

Yoshikazu Kaneko, who had done his diplomatic assignment as first secretary of Japanese Embassy here immediately after Bangladesh's independence, said this country achieved a tremendous development due to its policies and programmes initiated by the government of Begum Zia.

The ambassador told the Prime Minister that Bangladesh achieved steady

progress in economic field and effected infrastructural development. The country is marching towards rapid development under your (Begum Zia) strong leadership," he added.

Appreciating Bangladesh's current liberal economic policy, Yoshikazu Kaneko said the Japanese investors were keen to invest in Bangladesh.

"They (investors) are now very hopeful and interested about Bangladesh."

The Prime Minister briefed the envoy about her government's liberal economic policies and foreign investment climate in her country.

She said her government offered a package of incentives to the foreign investors. Japanese entrepreneurs could seize this opportunity.

She said the government provided an exclusive industrial zone for South Korea as their investors had come forward and invested a lot.

"We are also ready to give similar zone to Japan. We have planned to provide exclusive zone to Japanese on the other side of river Karnaphuli in the port city of Chittagong," Begum Zia told the ambassador.

Ambassador Yoshikazu Kaneko assured the Prime Minister that he would work for further strengthening Japan-Bangladesh relationship and ensuring Japanese investment in Bangladesh.

Bangabazar resumes business today

Bangabazar, the capital's largest hawkers' market that was incinerated late last year, has been rebuilt to resume business from today, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is expected to reopen the market at a function at 4 pm. Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Mohammad Hanif will be present as special guest.

Nearly 3,000 shops of Bangabazar and its adjacent areas at Fulbaria in the city were gutted on November 27 in a devastating fire in recent years.

The Bangabazar shopping mall is regarded as the market of low-income group as it provides them with their wears at cheaper prices.

The shopowners have already rebuilt their shops at Bangabazar. The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief provided them with 1,100 bundles of CI sheets.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia gave Tk 1 crore to the affected traders.

"The market is ready for reopening," said a hawkers' leader. He said the hawkers were hopeful of a pucca market to be constructed by the City Corporation.

The Prime Minister had instructed the city corporation to construct a pucca market at Bangabazar at the request of the hawkers' union.

The Midnight File

Socialist wins Portuguese presidential election

LISBON, Jan 14: Jorge Sampaio, a socialist, won presidential elections in Portugal today, defeating his rightist rival, former Prime Minister Anibal Cavaco Silva, radio and television said quoting exit polls. Sampaio, a lawyer and two-term Lisbon mayor, had started the campaign well ahead in opinion polls, although his lead later slipped from 14 points to four, reports AFP.

One shot on DU campus

By DU Correspondent

A young man sustained bullet wound in his left leg when some armed youth attacked him on the Dhaka University campus yesterday.

The victim identified as Mithu, 25, son of Hanif Khan of village Nirza of Sadar thana under Gopalganj district, was admitted to the orthopaedic hospital. He is reportedly an activist of the Awami League-backed Chhatra League.

Witnesses said Mithu was taking snacks with another young man at the Dhaka University Snacks (DUS) at around 12:30 pm while an armed youth shot at his left leg at point blank.

He was taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) immediately and was later shifted to the Orthopaedic Hospital.

He was residing in the Jagannath Hall, but ousted from the hall with the Gopalganj faction on December 28.

DU student hurt

Meanwhile, a student of the Dhaka University was injured when some unruly youth attacked him in front of the Registrar Building yesterday morning.

The victim identified as Mahub, 26, received injuries in his face and was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Mahub, son of one Anisur Rahman of 37, Gandaria, is a third year student of the Islamic Studies. The attack was a sequel to previous enmity.

Mithu's quikhwani today

By Staff Correspondent

Quikhwani of Mahmudul Haq Mithu, son-in-law of the Prime Minister's Special Envoy Morshed Khan, will be held today after Asr prayers at the deceased's residence at 105 Kakkrai (Khulna House) in the city.

Mithu died in a road accident at Kwaola on New Airport Road in the city on Thursday.

11 feared drowned as trawler sinks

By Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Jan 14: At least 11 persons were feared drowned when a trawler with a picnic party of 80 people on board sank in the Tetulia river near Balia Santirhat under Dighaldi union of Bhola district this noon.

The trawler, which started from Bhola in the morning, capsized and sank in the river due to overloading, witnesses said. Other people on board managed to swim ashore.

Gulshan murder

Faruq Thakur's driver confesses involvement

By Staff Correspondent

The arrested driver of film producer Faruq Thakur confessed to police yesterday that he had helped his master in arranging the murder of businessman Shamsul Islam in the city recently.

With the arrest of the driver on Saturday, the number of arrests in this connection stood at nine.

Shamsul Islam, owner of a hotel at Baridhara, was killed on January 8 during a shootout between two groups of people over possession of the ground floor of a house there.

The arrested included Faruq Thakur, who was released on bail. The case was transferred to the Detective Branch and following its report the bail petitions of the eight other accused were cancelled.

Statements of some police officials and witnesses numbering over 30 have been recorded so far, police sources said.

UNB adds, the Detective Branch submitted the enquiry report on the Shamsul Islam murder case to the Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner yesterday.

Deputy Commissioner of the Detective Branch Farooq Ahmed submitted the investigation report on the murder as well as the allegation against Gulshan thana OC Abdur Razaque to the DMP Commissioner.

The OC was transferred on Saturday following public protest.

Camel race

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illegally to some Gulf countries, particularly to the United Arab Emirates. These unfortunate and ill-fated children are used as jockeys for camel races, the notice said.

The notice further added that although the UAE government had banned camel races earlier but in recent reports it has been stated that a week-long camel race using Bangladeshi children were held in UAE in December last.

BNP

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efforts to reach a consensus with the Opposition.

UNB adds: The ruling party plans to send its formal proposal to the opposition through US Ambassador David N. Merrill in a bid to resolve the current political crisis.

The proposal for a Advisory Council headed by the President will be communicated verbally, a senior government party leader told UNB lastnight.

Under the proposal, the President will enjoy the power of the Prime Minister for the interim period after the resignation of Begum Zia and head a 10-member Council of Advisors to supervise the parliamentary polls.

Ctg fire

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The ward commissioner of the area on behalf of the City Corporation is carrying out the relief work.

UNB adds: Three dwelling houses and a poultry farm in Panchlaish thana in the port city were burnt to ashes when a fire broke out in the area at about 5:45 pm.

Local people extinguished the fire before the firefighters reached the spot. None was reported injured in the fire.

Hasina at padajatra

'People will resist '88-style polls'

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the people will resist any one-party '88-style election if held without the participation of all political parties, reports UNB.

The present government is following the footprints of the fallen autocrat to consolidate its power through rigging," she told a rally at the Mugdipara community centre in the city before leading a Padajatra (street march).

Several thousand Awami League workers and supporters joined the march which ended at the Khilgaon intersection after parading through Basabo, Madartek and Goran.

Central Awami League leaders also took part in the march on the second day of the opposition's three-day mass contact.

Addressing the rally, Hasina said this government has surpassed the past autocratic regime by all counts.

"Bridged regime had resigned in the face of mass movement, whereas the BNP government does not want to step down showing respect to the people's demand for caretaker government."

Asking the Begum Zia's government to quit, the Awami League chief alleged that this government wants to hold 'blueprint' election by remaining in power only to rig the polls.

Charging the government with making a faulty voter list, she said the government had made a 'party-voter list' in a planned way to win the

18 killed in Gujarat accident

NEW DELHI, Jan 14: At least 18 people were killed today in two separate highway accidents in the western Indian state of Gujarat, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said, reports AFP.

Fourteen people died after a state-run bus rammed into a truck and then rolled off a bridge in Panchmahal district, officials said in Ahmedabad, the erstwhile capital of Gujarat.

Interne docs call off strike

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Jan 14: The Interne Doctors' Association has called off their strike which began nine days ago. The decision was taken today at a joint meeting with Dr Sheikh Anisuzzaman, Director, SBMCH, in the chair.

Capital adequacy

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purposes, will be considered in two tiers. The first tier or core capital comprises the highest quality capital elements — paid up capital, non-repayable share premium account, statutory reserve, general reserve, retained earnings, minority interests in subsidiaries and non-cumulative irredeemable preference shares.

The second tier or supplementary capital represents other elements which lack some characteristics of core capital, but which contribute to overall strength of a bank. The elements are general provision or one per cent of unclassified loans, assets revaluation reserves, all other preference shares and perpetual subordinated debt.

Core capital must be equal or exceed four per cent of risk-weighted assets.

To determine risk weighted assets, both balance sheet and off-balance sheet items will be weighted according to broad categories of relative risk, the central bank said.

To assess the risk of off-balance sheet items like LCs and guarantees, they will be converted into balance sheet equivalents like treasury bills, prize bonds and loans.

During the last week of December '95, the Finance Ministry approved this internationally held standard practice to remove the current structural weakness in the banking sector due to the continued slide in the quality of banks assets.

Meanwhile, to give legality to the new system, the central bank, with prior approval of the government, has arranged legal coverage under Article 6 (13) Ka of Bangladesh Bank Company (amendment) Law, 1995.

Earlier, on March, 1994, the Finance Minister assured the International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief about the introduction of the new system. Different international financial organisations, including the World Bank, and IMF, had also repeatedly recommended introduction of the risk-based capital adequacy system.

JUTA executive body formed unanimously

By JU Correspondent

An 11-member executive committee of the Jahangirnagar University (JU) Teachers' Association (JUTA) for the year 1996 has been formed unanimously, without any voting.

Two rival groups of the JU teachers had earlier unanimously decided to form an executive committee mutually, without going for the election scheduled for January 20.

The two groups — one jointly led by prof. Enamul Haq Khan and prof. Abdul Awal and the other jointly led by prof. Abdul Bayes and Asfar Ahmed — mutually agreed to have six and five posts respectively.

The JUTA office bearers are: Prof. Jasimuddin Ahmed of Chemistry Department (President), Prof. Amin Muhammad Ali (Vice President), Dr M Farhad Hossain of Statistics Department (General Secretary), Dr M Siddiqur Rahman (Joint Secretary) and Prof M Anwarul Islam (Treasurer).

The executive body members are: Prof. Abdul Awal, prof. Mirza Mafizuddin, prof. Enamul Haq Khan, Dr Syed Sabir Haider, Farid Ahmed and Nazrul Islam.

Waheedul Haq honoured

By Staff Correspondent

Waheedul Haq, an exponent of Rabindra Sangeet, has been awarded Poet Jashim Uddin Award '96.

The Faridpur Shahittya Sangskriti Unnayan Sangstha announced this award on Friday, says a press release.

Waheedul Haq, also Joint Editor of The Daily Star, was honoured for his contribution in the field of music and culture, the press release added.

Earlier, late Abu Jafar Shamsuddin, Begum Sufia Kamal, Poet Shamsur Rahman and Asaf-Ud-Dowla received this award introduced in 1990.

The award will be formally handed over during the forthcoming literary conference of the organisation.

Five killed in road accidents

COMILLA, Jan 14: Five people were killed and five others injured in two separate accidents on Dhaka-Comilla highway today, reports UNB.

Police said a Chittagong-bound rice-laden truck skidded off the road at Sonalkhan in Choddogram thana at about 2:45 pm killing four people on the spot.

Of the killed, three were identified as Mohammad Babul of village Petkora in Choddogram, and Abdur Rahim and Khadu Mia of north Laksam.

The five others, sustained injuries in the accident, were admitted to local hospital.

In another accident, an oldman was crushed under the wheels of a Chandpur-bound passenger bus at Batabaria in Kotwali thana at about 2:30 pm.

The deceased was identified as Ansar Ali, 80, hailed from Subarnapur in Sadar thana.

Separate cases were filed with the police. Police seized both the vehicles, but the drivers managed to flee.

Wedding

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the important part: taking pictures.

The bathroom, temporarily partitioned into eight compartments, was decorated with 9,999 flowers.

Encore Garden, a privately owned park that is open to the public, explained the ceremony this way: "Bathrooms are an indispensable part in people's lives."

One attendee, Charles Wu, deputy director general of the Government Information Office, praised the couples as "courageous and creative."



Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien meets his Pakistani counterpart Benazir Bhutto in Islamabad at the latter's house yesterday. Chretien, who is leading a delegation of 150 businessmen and investors named as "Team Canada", is expected to sign nine agreements in energy, transport and communication sectors. — AFP/UNB photo

BADC official claims Irrigation target under 4th plan has failed

By Govinda Shil

The target to bring 118 lakh acres under irrigation in place of 70 lakh acres during the Fourth Five Year Plan period has failed, claimed a high official of the BADC.

Even, 70 lakh acres of land might not be provided with irrigation facility this year, the official feared.

Transfer of irrigation equipment to the private sector, abolition of the system of lending the equipment to farmers during dry season and lack of repair and maintenance facilities are mainly responsible for the failure in achieving the target, the official said.

"Irr and Boro cultivation might be affected this year due to lack of repair and maintenance facilities, which were earlier provided by the BADC," added the official.

Dwelling on the government's irrigation policy, the BADC official said the National Minor Irrigation Development Project (NMIDP) should be expanded under the supervision of the BADC.

"Transfer of the deep tube-wells (DTW) to the private sector was a wrong decision," the official said. Average performance of DTWs and shallow tubewells (STWs) has declined over the years due to lack of proper maintenance, the official claimed.

Talking about subsidy provided earlier, the official said privatisation of input service has increased the input costs

Benazir, Chretien open talks on bilateral issues

ISLAMABAD, Jan 14: Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien met with his Pakistani counterpart Benazir Bhutto late today as a top official here raised the question of India's alleged nuclear threat to South Asia, reports AFP.

Officials said the two prime ministers held a half an hour session in which they discussed matters of bilateral interest. Further talks are scheduled for tomorrow.

Officials gave no details of the talks which took place soon after Chretien flew into Islamabad from New Delhi with a 150-member delegation of investors and business people, nicknamed "Team Canada."

Fire in 4-storied bldg in N' ganj

NARAYANGANJ, Jan 14: A devastating fire today broke out in a four-storied building at Shaheed Suhrawardi Sarak here causing damage to goods and property of unspecified amounts, reports BSS.

Fire-fighting units from Hajiganj and Narayanganj took one and a half hours to extinguish the fire.

Fire brigade source apprehended that the fire originated from electric short circuit at the Bata godown situated on the first floor of the building.

Fire brigade personnel, with the help of the local people, rescued members of three families who were living in the building by breaking open the doors and the window panes.

JCD-BCL clashes leave 25 hurt in Rajshahi

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Jan 14: Clashes between the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) at Sonadighi crossing left more than 25 people injured during a half-day hartal today.

The clashes started when a group of JCD activists attacked a BCL procession as some BCL activists damaged a motor cycle belonging to a Chhatra Dal activist.

Both the groups exploded 15 to 20 cocktails during the clashes. Police fired five rounds of blank shot and lobbed tear gas shells to bring the situation under control.

The injured were admitted to the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital and different local clinics.

The clashing groups also hurled brickbats and stones at the police.