

Sarajevo formally reunified under Muslim-Croat federation

SARAJEVO, Mar 19: The Bosnian capital was formally reunified Tuesday after Muslim-Croat police entered the last city suburb that had been held by the Serbs, reports AFP.

At 06:16 am (05:16 GMT) police forces of the Muslim-Croat Federation crossed the bridge from government held Sarajevo into Grbavica, a front-line neighbourhood that had been in Serb hands since the outbreak of war in 1992.

Grbavica is the last of five areas of the city that have been relinquished by the Serbs to the federation in accordance with the Dayton peace accords.

Serb police left the area on Monday. The majority of the Serb population had already departed after being told by their headline leadership they would not survive Muslim-Croat rule.

The last stragglers departed Grbavica as fires and explosions lit up the area, which has been hit by a spate of arson and looting in the countdown into the handover.

AP adds: A few early risers waved as federation police drove over the Friendship and Unity Bridge, which spans the river and links the neighbourhood to downtown Sarajevo. On the Sarajevo side, several people held up Bosnian flags.

The chains have finally broken around Sarajevo, "absolutely and definitely," said Sarajevo police chief Enes Bezdrob, who entered Grbavica with federation officers.

He said police will control entry to Grbavica for several days to prevent a repetition of the looting, harassment and intimidation that followed the turnover of the other four suburbs, especially Ildiza. Only people who can prove they used to live in Grbavica or have relatives there will be able to cross the bridge, he said.

Federal police will guarantee full security for all people here. We don't expect any problems and incidents," Bezdrob said.

The mixed police force - 75 Muslims, 20 Serbs and 5

Croats - immediately broke into groups of threes and started patrolling the district. The ethnic makeup of the police force reflects the neighbourhood's prewar population.

Abdullah Alajbegovic, a 57-year-old Muslim, and his wife, Mileva, a 64-year-old Serb, were relieved as they watched the first group of police line up in front of an apartment building.

"For me, the last four years were hell," he said. "Today is my second birthday. Like I've been born again."

Most Serbs have left Grbavica, part of an exodus that has turned Sarajevo, once multi-ethnic, into a much more Muslim city.

As another deadline approached, Bosnia's Muslim-led government came under pressure from the NATO-led peace force to withdraw its troops and military equipment from most of Sarajevo.

A four-kilometer (2.5-mile) demilitarised zone reflecting boundaries agreed in the Dayton peace plan comes into ef-

fect at midnight along a line of more than 1,000 kilometers (625 miles). The main change is in Sarajevo, where the separation zone is being widened.

Lt. Gen. Sir Michael Walker, commander of NATO ground forces, met Bosnian army commander Gen. Rasim Delic on Monday, and Delic offered to move the soldiers, said NATO spokesman Maj. Peter Bullock.

Delic told Associated Press Television that army units would withdraw from barracks in the zone.

In Grbavica, flames from burning buildings lit the sky Monday night while the streets were eerily dark. Only a few terrorised residents remained overnight, barricaded in their homes amid the anarchy.

"This is hell," said an elderly woman, running out of her apartment when it was set ablaze Monday.

Bosnian Serb police pulled out earlier in the day, followed by the last residents who feared living under their enemies.



An IFOR soldier stands by and a vehicle of the peace forces drives past as an apartment in a house in the Serb-held Sarajevo neighbourhood of Grbavica burns on Sunday. Serb residents fleeing the last rebel-held areas of Sarajevo went on rampage, torching buildings, trapping some Serbs in their homes and casting a dark cloud over parts of the city, two days before the frontline neighbourhood will be transferred under the authority of the Muslim-Croat Federation. - AFP/UNB photo

Mandela does not want to dent Winnie's image

JOHANNESBURG, Mar 19: South African President Nelson Mandela appealed to his estranged wife Winnie's lawyers today not to dent her image by forcing him to give all the details of the breakdown of their marriage to a divorce court, reports Reuters.

"I appeal to you not to put any questions to me which may compel me to dent the image of the defendant and bring a great deal of pain to our children and grandchildren," Mandela told the Supreme Court in Johannesburg.

Mandela, questioned by Winnie's lawyers Ismail Semanya, said he did not want to go into detail on how far back the 38-year marriage had broken down.

"I am not keen to wash our dirty linen in public," he told the court, hearing his application to have the marriage dissolved.

Mandela had earlier told the court that Winnie, who is contesting the divorce, was severely persecuted by apartheid rule and South Africa's security police, but said many women had suffered more.

Mexico rules out war game with US

MEXICO CITY, Mar 19: Mexico has ruled out suggestions from Defence Secretary William Perry that the two countries conduct joint military exercises, reports AP.

Perry raised the proposal Saturday in talks with Mexican officials, suggesting joint ground and naval maneuvers as part of a broader effort to improve military relations, a Pentagon spokesman in Washington said.

The proposal has not been put to a US-Mexico commission created last year after a Perry visit to Mexico City, which would be the most likely forum for considering joint military exercises, Lt. Col. Anne Owens said at the Pentagon.

Debate on immigration reform bill opens in US House

WASHINGTON, Mar 19: Debate on a sweeping immigration reform bill opens in the House on Tuesday amid controversy over its proposed cutbacks and a plan to ensure that employers do not hire illegal aliens, reports Reuters.

Addressing a hot political issue, the bill would seek to clamp down on "illegal" aliens entering the United States, many across the border from Mexico.

It would add 1,000 border patrol agents a year for four years, fund building of new fences and increase penalties for illegal aliens and alien-smugglers.

But it also includes big cuts in the number of legal migrants, including family members and refugees, that have come under heavy attack.

Critics say it retreats from policies that paved the way for immigrants to build America's prosperity. They also blast a "big brotherism" provision in the bill designed to ensure

that job-seekers are entitled to work in the United States.

A Senate committee considering a similar bill voted last week to split its measure into two bills dealing with legal and illegal migration - a move widely believed will make it more difficult to pass changes in legal immigration.

Proponents of change cite a dramatic rise in legal immigration in recent years, with almost 12 million over the last 15 years, including an amnesty granted to 2.7 million aliens under a 1986 law.

The bill aims to cut back on the growth of family-related immigration by taking aim at "chain" migration in which brothers and sisters and other relatives of legal residents are brought into the country.

It would cut back family admissions to about 330,000 a year from 480,000 a year, and limit them to "nuclear" family members - mostly spouses and unmarried children under 21, as well as parents of US

citizens provided they have health insurance.

Under the bill, refugee admissions which have run at 100,000 a year or more for a decade would be cut to 75,000 next year and 50,000 a year after that, plus 10,000 other "humanitarian" immigrants.

The refugee number could be raised if Congress decides to do so or if the president declares an emergency situation.

The bill would give refugee protection to up to 1,000 aliens a year who are victims of "coercive" abortion or sterilisation policies, allegedly widespread in China.

Employment-based immigration of outstanding skilled workers - much sought after by industries such as computer chip makers - would be set at 135,000 a year, a slight cut from the current figure.

The bill would tighten protections for American workers against abuse in the programme, including requiring

an employer to pay an immigrant replacing a fired worker 110 per cent of what the American worker earned.

It also would make it easier to deny entry or to remove to aliens who might have to go on welfare.

The most vocal opposition to the bill has come from critics of provisions to ensure that new employees are entitled to work by proposing a national verification system.

Currently an employee can submit up to 29 different documents to be reviewed by an employer. The bill would reduce this number to six. Under pilot programmes in at least five states, employers would telephone a special government office to confirm that the job seeker can legally work.

The provision is anathema to civil libertarians and others who see it as the beginnings of national identity card system - a charge denied by the bill's supporters.

Clinton's lead over Dole narrows in latest poll

WASHINGTON, Mar 19: President Clinton's lead over his likely November election opponent, Sen. Bob Dole, has been cut in half in the past week, to 9 percentage points, the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll shows, reports AP.

Clinton led Dole by 52 per cent to 43 per cent among registered voters in the poll, taken after last week's Super Tuesday primaries and re-elected Monday, compared with his 56 per cent to 39 per cent lead a week earlier.

However, the two were tied at 48 per cent each when Clinton and Vice President Al Gore were pitted against Dole and retired Gen. Colin Powell, who has said he is not interested in running for vice president.

The poll of a random sample of 1,512 adults was conducted by telephone Thursday through Sunday and has a margin of error of 3 percentage points.

It found large majorities preferring Clinton's approach on social issues, such as protecting the environment, helping the poor, educating American children.

Cubans queue at US Interest Section for immigration

MEXICO CITY, Mar 19: Thousands of Cubans hoping to immigrate to the United States crowded outside the US Interest Section in Havana on Monday, hoping to apply for the second round of a programme that helped end the 1994 refugee boatlift, reports AP.

Reporters in Havana reached by telephone Monday afternoon said police stopped applicants from entering the Interest Section building, reminding them that the programme called for them to post their applications in the Cuban mail.

The programme began Friday, but the crowds of people from the capital and other parts of the country didn't show up until Monday, the reporters said. Some ultimately handed their applications over to postal workers while others said they didn't trust the officials to deliver their letters to the Interest Section.

The procedures for applying for immigration are similar to those during the first round of the Special Cuban Migration Programme, which approved 8,400 Cubans for legal immigration, the Immigration and Naturalisation Service has said.

Immigration authorities have not announced how many people will be chosen in the current round.

The special programme was negotiated in September 1994 between the United States and Cuba after the Clinton administration began intercepting refugee boats headed from Cuba to Florida.

Cuban President Fidel Castro acted to curb the exodus of boat people. In return, the United States agreed to bring Cuban immigration to 20,000 Cubans a year by all means - immigrant visas, refugee programmes and the special migration programme.

Other Cubans, especially dependent children, the sick and elderly, were given special permission to enter from refugee camps of boat people set up in 1994 at the US Navy base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Cubans aged 18 through 55 as of April 30 are eligible to apply. They must mail a sealed envelope to the US Interest Section in Havana enclosing complete name, date of birth, Cuban identification card number, address, legal marital status, name of spouse and number of unmarried children under 21.

Fierce clash in Sirajganj: 15 badly injured

From Our Correspondent SIRAJGANJ, Mar 19: At least 15 persons were injured 5 of them seriously and two motorcycles were set on fire today (Tuesday) at about 10 in the morning in village Tamal under Belkuchi thana during a fierce clash among the villagers of Subarna Sara and Tamal.

Clash ensued following a trifling matter which spread among the villagers of the villages seriously injuring five persons who were admitted to Sirajganj hospital.

Till writing of this report situation in the areas were said to be very tense.

10 persons injured in clash in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent JHENIDAH, Mar 19: At least 10 persons were injured in a clash at village Malithia in Saikupa thana of the district recently.

According to reports, two rival groups of the village faced each other with Dial, Falia, Bath, Ramak and other lethal weapons at about 9 am and 10 persons received injuries. They were rushed to Sreepur Thana Health Complex, police sources said. The clash started following damage of crops by some people of the village.

When contacted the OC Sreepur thana admitted the fact and told that the situation was under control.

Only ambulance in Jhalakathi lying inoperative

JHALAKATHI, Mar 19: Emergency patients in the town and urban areas here have been suffering much as the only ambulance of the Sadar hospital remained out of order for the last five months, reports UNB.

According to Sadar hospital sources, the ambulance is lying inoperative as its three damaged tyres could not be replaced after repeated reminders to the higher authorities.

The Civil Surgeon put up a file to the Health Directorate for sanctioning of the necessary fund on November 11 last year. But no steps has yet been taken, it is learnt.

Opposition's non-cooperation movement Prices of all essentials up

KUSTHIA, Mar 19: The tenth day of non-stop non-cooperation movement sponsored by three mainstream opposition political parties passed off peacefully in the district yesterday paralysing normal life and activities of the people and severely affecting economy. All modes of mechanised transports remained off the road except rickshaw and vans. Lawyers boycotted courts supporting the on going non-stop non-cooperation movement. Advocates belonging to opposition parties demonstrated in front of court shouting slogans demanding resignation of the government and brought out a procession which paraded around Judge Court and Assembled in front of Collectorate building and held a rally there.

The rally, presided over by Zillur Rahman, was addressed among others by Mohibul Alam, Dost Mohammad Bakul, Shamsuzzaman, Choton, Abu Zafar Siddique, Shamsuzzaman Moni, Golam, Molla, Faruq Azam Miridha, Shafuluddin Binol, Rawshan Ali Mia and Mizanur Rahman. Speakers demanded immediate resignation of the government and cancel February 15 election and holding of 6th parliament election under a neutral caretaker government.

Awami League also brought out separate procession on the 10th day of their non-cooperation movement. Jamaat also joined the procession which

paraded main streets of Kusthia town and demonstrated in front of Baro Bazar Rail Gate where they held a rally. Awami League leader Anwar Ali presided the rally.

On the 10th day government and non-government offices however, remained opened but no work was done. Train services in between Khulna and Rajbari remained off for 10th consecutive day. Post offices remained closed

but banks performed work as per direction of opposition. Both supply and sales fell sharply in the town and rural markets as a result prices of essential have gone up.

Supply of different items in different markets specially rice, vegetables and fish have been seriously affected in absence of long transport. Rice traders said that paddy could

Petrol, diesel crisis: Farmers unable to irrigate crops

not be brought from Dinajpur, Rangpur and other rice producing areas due to on going programme and as a result short supply has been persisting causing rise in prices by Taka at least 100 per maund. They also said that if the programme continues prices will further increase.

The prices of fish and vegetables have also gone high sharply due to poor supply. Prices of poultry have also in-

creases manifold. Open market also of rice have been stopped by government and consequently day labourers have been hard hit. As they have no work due to present situation their earning discontinued. The prices of potato and bean however remained unchanged. The prices of beef have also increased and mutton is almost not available. Prices of pulses specially Musur Dal have increased causing hardship to the poor. It is sold at Taka 40 per kg.

The prices of ginger garlic and dry chillies have also gone up. At the same time prices of onion have also increased and now being sold at Taka 13 per kg.

Meanwhile prices of petrol and diesel have gone up in rural markets consequently the farmers have been in great difficulty in providing irrigation in their field. Shallow and deep tubewells can not be operated for want of petrol or diesel. Tank lorry drivers are reluctant to drive their vehicles for want of security, it was learnt.

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No end to miseries

PABNA, Mar 19: Peoples miseries due to ongoing non-cooperation movement called by three opposition parties for indefinite period reached its peak. Specially due to complete disruption of road, rail and river communication. Supply of essential commodities were completely disrupted resulting in scarcity of essential commodities and its prices constantly rising. People belonging to lone and fixed income groups become worst sufferers.

For example, in town areas, prices of different varieties of rice already rose by about Taka two per kilogram, soybean oil by Taka ten, Kerosene oil by Taka five per liter, sugar by Taka two, firewood by Taka ten per maund, potato by Taka three, potal by Tk 10, green-chilli by Tk 10, fish by Tk 20 to 50 according to variety.

In rural areas, however, prices of different varieties of rice already rose by about Taka two per kilogram, soybean oil by Taka ten, Kerosene oil by Taka five per liter, sugar by Taka two, firewood by Taka ten per maund, potato by Tk three, potal by Tk 10, green-chilli by Tk 10, fish by Tk 20 to 50 according to variety.

Although all shops and business establishments, mills and factories were open and functioning quite normally all through in Pabna town since beginning of noncooperation movement, they were not getting adequate member of consumers due to firstly, transport dislocation resulting in non-arrival of traditional customers from rural areas, secondly because of abnormally high prices and thirdly, because of complete stoppage of arrival of different commodities from other parts of the country.

Prices of agricultural products in the rural areas went down abnormally due to transport dislocation. In the markets of the rural areas, prices

of all commodities produced by the farmers went down abnormally while prices of commodities which they purchase (like kerosene oil, diesel, match-boxes, soybean oil, sugar, fertilisers etc), have either disappeared from the village markets or their prices went completely beyond their purchasing capacity.

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Jamaat activist killed in blast

From Our Correspondent SIRAJGANJ, Mar 19: A Jamaat worker was killed in a bomb explosion at Chandrakona village under Sadar thana of the district recently.

The victim identified as Abu Taleb, 24, died on the spot when a powerful bomb was hurled at him at about 9 pm on Saturday, witnesses said. Taleb was going to his relative house at Chandrakona from Rahmatganj.

Jamaat-e-Islami blamed BNP for the killing, but later denied. When contacted, Sirajganj thana failed to give any details of the incident.

Opposition political parties held Namaz-e-Jumara for Abu Taleb at Collectorate Building premises here.

Attack on BNP activists: 5 injured

SIRAJGANJ, Mar 19: Five BNP workers were injured, one seriously, when some opponents attacked them in Belkuchi thana sadar on Sunday evening, reports UNB.

Witnesses and hospital sources said a group of youths armed with hockey sticks, ram daos and sharp knives swooped on them while they were listening BBC Bengali news at 7:30 pm.

Abdul Baten, 38, JASAS unit president and Cultural Affairs Secretary of BNP thana unit was rushed to the General Hospital in a critical condition while four others were admitted to the local thana health complex.

Local BNP blamed the opposition Awami League for the armed attack. A case was filed with the Belkuchi police in this connection.

Two JCD leaders beaten up in B'baria

From Our Correspondent BRAHMANBARIA, Mar 19: Two JCD leaders, Jahurul Islam Chowdhury Liton and Arman Uddin Polash, were beaten up and stabbed by unidentified groups of miscreants in the hospital compound of the district town on March 15.

Witnesses said that the miscreants armed with lethal weapons attacked the two JCD leaders when they were going to the party office. To escape from the attackers, they ran into the hospital compound but the group dragged them out of the hospital and beat them with iron rods and stabbed in various parts of the body.

The organic manure which is needed to the land to grow paddy and other crops, is hardly used by the farmers due to its scarcity and high prices. The Agriculture Extension officials said that a few years ago, the farmers, after harvesting the paddy, used the remaining parts of the plants in making green manure.

Construction of 50-bed hospital at Ullapara yet to be started

From Our Correspondent SIRAJGANJ, Mar 19: The 50-bed hospital at Ullapara have not yet been constructed even after 19 years of commitment.

It is learnt that in 1977, the then President Ziaur Rahman committed to construct a 50-bed hospital at Ullapara. Accordingly the Deputy Secretary (Dev.) of the Ministry of Health vide memo No. U-4/PC-1/7/35 dated 26.9.77 instructed the Civil Surgeon of Pabna to select the site for the project.

Deputy Commissioner, Pabna on 9.9.78 vide letter No. 667 requested the Executive Engineer of Public Works Directorate (PWD) to acquire 5.34 acres of land. The Executive Engineer of PWD completed the primary works including site selection and acquire of three acres of land at village Kawak by the side of the town. Local authority also submitted a scheme for sanctioning Tk 26,83,000 from the Ministry of Health vide memo No. Dev./4/P-6/7/445 dated

12.11.79 for acquisition and construction purposes. In 1980, final decision was taken up and tender was called. Afterwards, the Executive Engineer of Pabna PWD vide memo No. 40/2442 WE wrote a letter to the chief of planning cell, H. & FP Ministry about the feasibility of the project and since then all activities in this regard were suspended.

During the regime of deposed president Ershad, the commitment was reviewed but no step was taken to implement the project.

On December 9, 1993, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia visited the site of the proposed hospital. While addressing a huge public meeting at Ullapara Government College premises, the PM told that initially a 20-bed hospital will be constructed and afterwards it will be made 50-bed in phases. A big signboard was hung at the site. But no work has been started as yet.

Milk crisis in Magura hits sweetmeat traders

MAGURA, Mar 19: Crisis of milk is persisting in Magura district. Thousands of consumers and sweetmeat dealers are suffering, it was learnt.

According to the sweet meat dealers of Khamarpara bazar under Sripur thana in the district, scarcity of milk in the market is due to poor collection of cow's milk. They do not get required milk from the village markets.

According to reports, the supply of milk from dairy farms in the district is not adequate. The supply of milk in the markets come from the poor and marginal farmers who raise one or two milch cows in rural areas. The villagers who raise milch cows do not get much milk in this season due to lack of green grass and fodder.

Talking to a owner of a domestic cows it was learnt that he faces various problems to raise milch cows. He usually raises cows in traditional system. The does not get opportunities to give artificial insemination to the cows. As a result healthy calf is not born usually and they do not get much

Besides, the dairy farmers do not provide Khalil (oil cake), wheat granular, rice granular and Bichhal.

They have to depend on dry straw and green grass only. But now a days green grass is not available at all in the fields. Bichhal is also being used as roofing material of small cottages in the rural areas. In this season the milch cows do not get balanced food. Due to want of balanced food the production of cow's milk is decreasing day by day in the rural areas of the district.

It was learnt that one litre of milk is being sold between Taka 16 and Tk 20 in rural areas and Taka 22 and Tk 25 in urban areas. The sweet meat dealers of Sripur thana areas have to buy 'chhana' from Pangsha market due to lack of milk in their areas, a sweet meat dealer told this correspondent.

Talking to a owner of a domestic cow it was learnt that he got 10 litres of milk from 3 cows same time last year. But this year he got only 4 litres of milk due to acute want of fodder.

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