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DOWN TO EARTH

New Horizon For Disabled In City

By A S M Nurunnabi

Disability in a person may have various aspects. Some may be blind, others may be deaf or dumb. There may be also others who are physically handicapped. In our current thinking, we find a new concept of the potentialities of such disabled persons which is designated as ability in a different way. In the light of the new definition, those disabled persons are no longer regarded as a burden on society; they are rather regarded as equal partners who can make not only significant contribution to socio-economic development, but also lead a respectable, decent life. The new generation of the disabled of our country are proving this in various ways.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), at least 10 per cent of our people are suffering from some sort of disability. In the light of this estimate, the total number of disabled children is about 30 lakh, out of which the blind account for 10 lakh. There are reportedly more than 50 NGOs working for the welfare of the disabled. The more important among them are noted below.

The Centre for Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP) has been doing laudable work. Initially started in the compound of the Shaheed Suhrawardy hospital in October, 1979, the Centre later shifted with expanded programme to Chapain, Savar. The Centre runs its activities in the following areas: specialised medical and nursing care, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, social welfare and follow-up. It has been the policy of the centre to recycle items and to create income generating activities (IGA) wherever possible. Through a variety of IGA, such as manufacture of wheel mobility aids, sale of handicrafts, milk, eggs, chickens, etc., the staff of the centre are able to cover part of their yearly expenditure. The centre has built up a network for itself among both government hospitals and non-government organisations. Many of these links are concerned with voluntary consultants/professors taking part in the training courses at CRP and

students having practical placements in the government and private hospitals across the country.

A large centre for training and rehabilitation known as Employment Rehabilitation for the Physically Handicapped is located at Tongi. The centre was set up in 1987 and it functions with the financial assistance of the Swedish Development Agency. It imparts training to its inmates in seven trades, such as mechanical trade, livestock care, tailoring, carpentry, masonry, bamboo and cane handicrafts, and mobility course for the blind. The duration of the training course is six months to one year.

Boarding and lodging are free for the inmates. At the end of the training, each inmate is given a grant of Taka 4000. Besides, there is a placement officer at the centre who helps the trained inmates in securing employment in various organisations.

During the last seven years, more than 900 disabled persons were given training at this centre. While a good number of them work in various organisations, the majority are engaged in self-employment projects. The only Braille press of the country is located at this centre. The centre also runs a modern plastic manufacturing unit which is entirely manned by the disabled. There are other industrial units outside, such as the Aromatic industry and the Jamuna Group of Industries at Joydevpur, where there is a good number of disabled workers. The performance of the disabled employees in such industries is reportedly very satisfactory.

A laudable role for the welfare of the disabled is also played by another organisation known as Social Assistance and Rehabilitation of the Physically Vulnerable located at Lalmatia. Operating since 1991, its Executive Director is said to have been a disabled person. About 90 per cent people of this organisation are physically handicapped.

There is still another private institution known as Bangladesh Protibondhi Foundation situated at Maghbar. Set up in 1977, the Foundation offers a number of core programmes and some supportive services to help disabled children in the functioning and development of their limited faculties. The more important aims and objectives of the Foundation include, among others, the promotion, coordination and sponsoring of activities for the well-being of the mentally and developmentally disabled of our country. The foundation runs a diagnostic clinic for screening of all types of childhood disabilities.

The evident discrimination in social reality as reflected in limited scope for education, employment and dignified social life gave rise to a movement named Social Assistance and Rehabilitation for the Physically Vulnerable (SARPV) aiming at equality for disabled persons in 1988. As a social product, SARPV came into being with their involvement in community level activities in 1991. Its goals and objectives include creation of awareness about disability issues, promotion of social rehabilitation of the people with disabilities, provision of skill training to disabled people and exploration of opportunities for betterment of socially disadvantaged and vulnerable people.

It is a matter of pride for Bangladesh that even disabled persons, when properly trained and groomed in the field of sports, can achieve laurels for the country in international competitions. In the special Olympic for disabled persons held last year at Connecticut in New Haven, USA at which 7100 athletes from 140 countries participated, the Bangladesh contingent comprising 15 disabled athletes won 5 gold, 6 silver and 6 bronze medals.

In the light of the present socio-political and economic conditions, special steps are called for to cope with the typical problems of the physically handicapped. In this context, a national policy for the disabled needs to be framed which will cover all relevant aspects of care, education and rehabilitation in the light of their special needs.

4 opposition leaders held for taking bribes from Rao

NEW DELHI, Sept 6: Four Indian opposition politicians have been arrested on charges of taking bribes to help prop up former Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao three years ago, their lawyer said today, reports AFP.

Advocate A K Aggarwal said Shibu Soren and Shailendra Mahato, both MPs, and Suraj Mandal and Simon Mirandi, who lost their seats earlier this year, were arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The CBI has accused them of taking bribes from Rao in 1993 to back his Congress (I) Party government in New Delhi, following an opposition bid to unseat him. Rao, the current Congress president has denied the charges.

All four, arrested on Thursday and today, belong to the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, a regional party. They have denied the charges.

Aggarwal said the arrests were "coercive and unwarranted" because the four had been cooperating with the CBI. He said he would seek bail.

Rao has been implicated in a series of recent corruption scandals including a 21-million-dollar bribe-for-favour scam involving a New Delhi businessman, Surendra Jain.

That controversy resurfaced today when Hindu nationalist Lal Kishna Advani, president of India's main opposition the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party), was accused of taking bribes from Jain.

Special judge V B Gupta ordered the CBI to charge Advani with corruption and criminal conspiracy.

The judge said there was prima facie evidence that Advani took six million rupees (170,000 dollars) from Jain. Jain allegedly bribed around 115 top politicians and bureaucrats between 1988 and 1991.

The scandal erupted ahead of national elections this year. Advani quit parliament and refused to contest the polls, saying he wanted to clear his name.

"Corruption has eaten into the nation's material fibre," Gupta said.

AP adds: Advani will be formally charged in court later this month, a judge said Friday.

L K Advani is among 24 politicians and 18 bureaucrats accused of accepting bribes.

Gujral

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Asked how optimistic he was about finding an acceptable settlement that would meet Bangladesh's water requirements, the Indian minister replied, "I understand Bangladesh's position and need and hope to accommodate."

Continuing he said, "India looks at Bangladesh with affection and closeness."

Gujral said India believes that relations with its neighbours should be asymmetrical. Explaining this he said, "India as a larger country with a larger economy and larger resources has more responsibilities towards its neighbours. It has more to give to its neighbours than expect from them."

He added, "In that spirit, India wants to discuss all issues with its neighbours, including Bangladesh."

Responding to a question if the issue transit was linked with the water-sharing problem, Gujral replied, "I am not expecting anything in exchange."

The Indian minister said he is carrying a letter from Prime Minister Deve Gowda for his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina. He is expected to hand over the letter when he calls on her tomorrow.

Gujral will also meet with Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak, Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed and Finance Minister SAMS Kibria.

The Indian minister, who is accompanied by his wife Sheila Gujral was received at the airport by Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and Begum Azad and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury.

Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Feroze Sobhan and Indian External Affairs Secretary Salman Haider, who arrived earlier in the day, were also present.

Gujral's entourage includes CPM leader, Somnath Chatterjee, MP, Chitta Bose MP, of forward block and Geta Mukherjee, MP from CPI.

The other members of his entourage are columnist Bhabani Sen Gupta, Editor of the magazine, Nihil Chatterjee and former irrigation secretary R Iyer and high officials.

CPA incurs loss

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The warranty period that ends in November.

The CPA has already asked the manufacturer to send its expert to check the line items. An expert is expected to arrive here by this month, a source said.

Meanwhile, another source added that the CPA is going to procure ten more forklifts of various capacities very soon, and that the same Italian company has been given the highest points in tender bidding although the CPA's purchase procedures specify that "adverse performance report" from any customer will make the bid liable for rejection.

The source said that the truck had developed a major fault within eight months of commissioning. He added that some of the trucks had been facing problems in hydraulic systems a few months after commissioning.

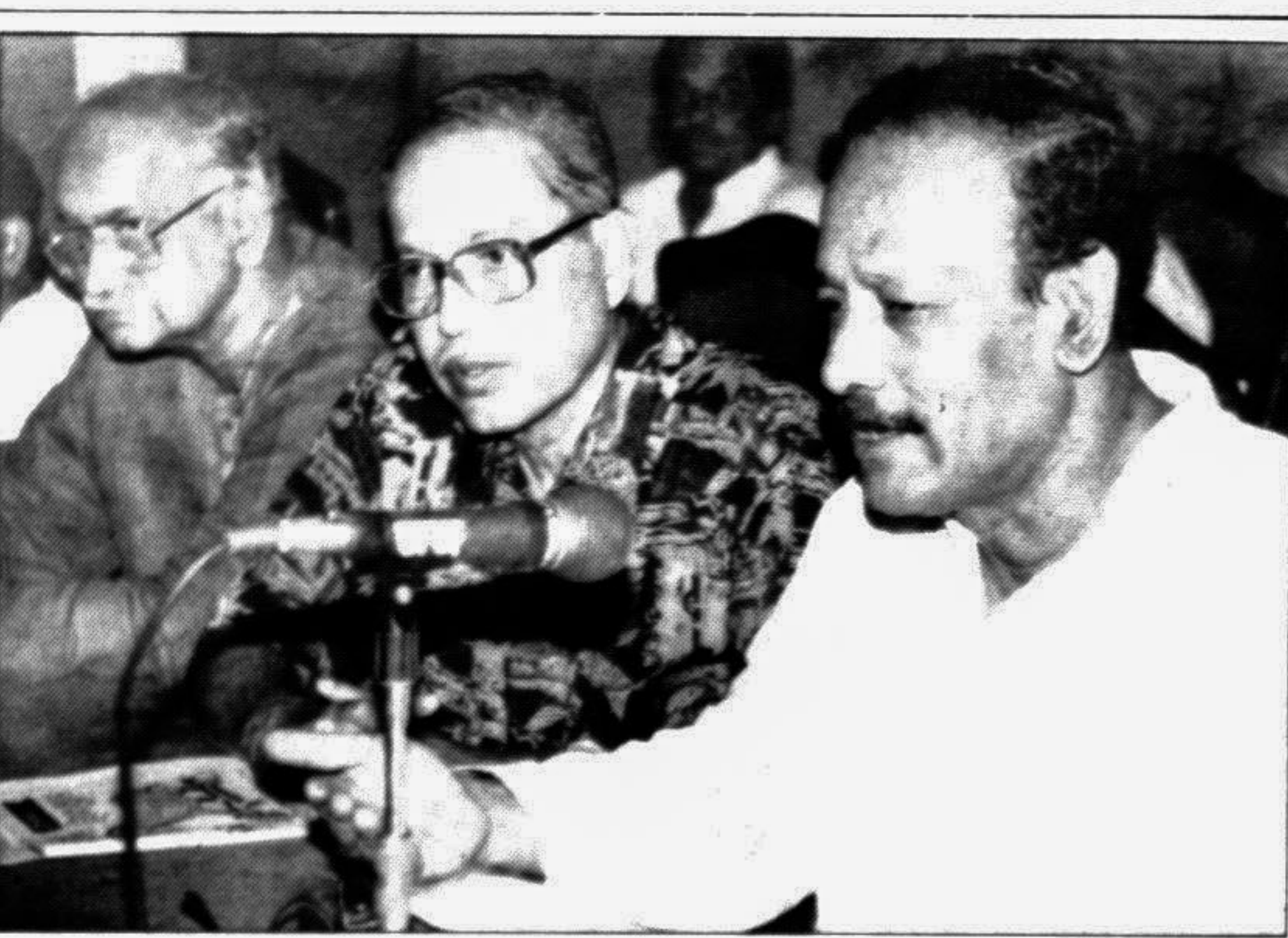
When pointed out that CPA itself is a customer, an official said, "It cannot yet be said firmly that the trucks have performed badly."



Mother Teresa in a wheelchair being escorted out of the Woodland Nursing Home in Calcutta yesterday from where she was discharged after 17 days. The 86-year-old Nobel Peace laureate was allowed home following a recovery from heart problems. —AFP/UNB photo

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BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan addressing a press conference at the residence of Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia at Minto Road in the city yesterday. —Star photo

Salman Shah dead

From Page 1

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in a message condoled the death of the popular film actor Salman Shah.

Besides, the Jatiya Party and Bangladesh Film Audience Forum also condoled the death of the film star.

Another UNB report said: Some film producers will be facing a huge loss due to the death of top ranking film star Salman Shah.

Leaders of the associations of producers, directors and performers said about Tk 50 crore was invested in a number of under-production films with Salman in the main role.

They said the popular hero was working in 26 films. Of those, 70 per cent work of 14 films was already completed.

Salman acted in a total of 30 films. He started his film career in 1992 through "Keyamat Theke Keyamat", a remake of Hindi box-office hit "Keyamat Se Keyamat Tak".

Salman also performed in radio and television before his film career. He started his performing life as a child artist.

Meanwhile, Salman's father found Salman lying on the floor and Samira and others crying. They took Salman to the Holy Family Hospital immediately. Police added saying that he was then taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). The doctors on duty at the DMCH declared Salman dead.

Later, Kamarruddin informed Rannia police about the incident and filed an unnatural death case with Rannia thana in this connection, police sources said.

The sources added that Salman had an hot altercation with his wife Samira Thursday night centering over a film actress. He, at a stage, broke a mobile phone set and a table fan. At the time, Samira forced Salman to send her to one of her aunt's house in the city.

Meanwhile, Salman's body was handed over to his parents after autopsy at the DMCH. The body was sent to his village home in Sylhet after namaj-e-janaza at the Film Development Corporation (FDC) premises.

Besides, police sources said that the female house-keepers and the wife of Salman were staying at another flat in the Eskater Plaza after the incident. Police forces were deployed in the apartment building premises following the incident.

Sources at the DMCH said that hundreds of people from the film industry as well as admirers of Salman rushed to the DMCH as the news spread in the city fast.

In another development, about a dozen photo journalists who went to cover the janaza were beaten up by some FDC employees. During the attack on journalists, the employees blamed them for the death, saying Salman killed himself as newsmen published what they called scandalous stories involving him with a film actress, according to a report of UNB received last night.

In a condolence message, President Abdur Rahman Biswas expressed his profound grief at the death of film artist Salman Shah, UNB said.

"He could have flourished his potentialities in the cultural field, had he been alive" the President said appreciating the merit and performance of Salman in the film.

The President conveyed his sympathy with the bereaved family members of Prof Noman and Salman and prayed to the Almighty for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

Forensic experts open mass grave in Croatia

VUKOVAR, Croatia, Sept 6: Forensic experts have opened a mass grave thought to contain bodies of up to 260 Croats missing in eastern Croatia since 1991, when the republic fought for its independence against the Yugoslav army, reports AP.

"Some corpses were found under only a foot (30 centimeters) of earth, a likely indication of how quickly they were buried by Serbs," William Haglund, a forensic expert working for the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague, told reporters.

The Ovcara mass grave is some 13 kilometers (8 miles) from Vukovar, the town where the Serbian-led Yugoslav army and Croat forces fought for months, reducing the once-picturesque town to rubble.

Contracts (PSCs) with these companies are awaiting clearance from the Finance Ministry and the Law Ministry.

Rexwood has initiated an agreement for hydrocarbon exploration in Block-17 and 18 covering the deeper part of the Bay near Cox's Bazar-Teknaf-Martins Island region.

UMIC has initiated an agreement for exploration in Block-21 covering part of the Bay off the Sunderbans.

Oil companies

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BNP insiders said "we will announce programmes to force the government to fulfil the 28-point demand as the city Mayor Mohiuddin made these being a local Awami League leader."

Later at a press conference this evening at the Chittagong Press Club, chief election agent of AL for Mirersharai Ataur Rahman Kaisar said that the allegations raised by BNP were "false and baseless."

He said that election at Mirersharai was held peacefully.

Compensation from US demanded

Ankara will respect territorial integrity of Iraq, says Ciller

LONDON, Sept 6: Turkish Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller said today she wanted compensation from the United States for losses incurred by her country's backing for the allied effort against Iraq, reports Reuter.

"It's about time the United States proved they also stand by Turkey — these losses have to be compensated," Ciller told BBR world television. "We only want a certain portion of our losses to be compensated economically."

Ciller said Turkey was working with US officials on "the economic losses.... and how that can be compensated."

Turning to the security zone Turkey plans to create in northern Iraq, Ciller said it was a "must" for Turkey following the recent upheaval in northern Iraq. Turkey would "definitely" observe the territorial integrity of Iraq, she said.

"It (the buffer zone) is not taking advantage of anything and if it is seen as such it will be the worst mistake that anyone can make," Ciller said.

"It (the zone) means a fence strip right next to our borders has to be looked at as a security area which will deter penetration. It is going to be temporary kind of activity."

Earlier, Turkey spelled out limited military goals inside northern Iraq.

United Nations officials and Kurdish guerrilla forces said today the border with Turkey was quiet, with no evidence that Turkish troops or aircraft had struck at Kurdish separatist camps inside northern Iraq.

All we have heard are rumours and news reports. We have not sighted any Turkish troops on the ground and we have seen no airplanes," said a UN official in this border town.

Iraq summoned a senior Turkish diplomat in Baghdad to complain about Ankara's military build-up along the border with Kurdish-held northern Iraq.

Baghdad newspapers said today Foreign Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf summoned Turkish acting Charge

d'Affaires at midnight on Thursday over "Turkey's attitude vis-a-vis recent developments in northern Iraq."

AP adds: More defiant in words than in actions, Iraq stayed out of fighting in Kurdish areas and has avoided challenging US planes patrolling "no fly zones" within its borders.

For the first time since Saturday, no fighting was reported anywhere in Iraq today.

However, the situation remained volatile. The United States and its allies plan to continue their flight over the no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq, and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has vowed to target the aircraft.

On Thursday, Saddam's troops stood by but didn't intervene as rival Kurdish factions fought outside Arbil, the largest Kurdish city in northern Iraq. In Arbil, UN official Paul Dahl said today that fighting had stopped.

"But who knows what will happen in an hour's time," he said. "The area is still very tense."

Saddam's restraint Thursday followed two days of American attacks on Iraqi radar and command sites.

Still, Iraq's leadership remained defiant, with the ruling Revolution Command Council chaired by Saddam saying late Thursday it would fight allied warplanes "violation" of Iraqi airspace. "We will continue resisting it according to the legitimate right of self-defense and in defense of national sovereignty," the council said.

The divided UN Security Council was to try again today to forge a common stand against Iraq's incursion into Kurdistan, Chinese, Russian, French and Egyptian diplomats have opposed measures that may threaten Iraq's sovereignty.

US intelligence reports Thursday indicated Saddam's troops and tanks were withdrawing from northern Iraq. "We are seeing the withdrawal of the mechanized and

Editor : Mahfuz Anam

Printed & Published by A. S. Mahmud, Managing Director, on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd, 52, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, from City Publishing House Ltd, 90, Kakrai, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmandi RA, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4, Commercial: 500091 (Direct), Fax: 88-02-863035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA. Email: dstar@bangla.net

Ward commissioner

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Witnesses said a group of people, numbering about 15, equipped with bombs and firearms swooped on the commissioner while he was talking with local people at about 7:30 pm.

The hoodlums exploded bombs to disperse the people and opened fire on Shahadat. He tried to flee the scene but collapsed on the spot after three bullets hit him.

He was rushed to Sadar hospital, where he died at about 8 pm.

A tense situation was prevailing in the town.

Hurricane

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Wilmington resident Christine Huynh, 32, said she left her mobile home to check into a hotel. "I just didn't want to be in a mobile home during a Hurricane. We were in the trailer park during Hurricane Bertha," she said.

Bertha swirled over Wilmington in July, kicking up heavy surf and destroying crops. Wilmington has charming Victorian homes that are the basis of its tourist industry.

South Carolina officials said at least 175,000 residents and tourists were evacuated from Georgetown and Beaufort counties near Myrtle beach.

Health policy

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government's plan for setting up one health centre at every union of the country.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Salauddin Yusuf, State Minister for Social Welfare, Women and Children Affairs Dr Moazzam Hossain, Attorney General Osman, Diabetic Association general secretary Dr Fasiuddin Mahtab and Dr Jobaida Hannan also spoke at the meeting chaired by association president Dr Wahid Uddin Ahmed.