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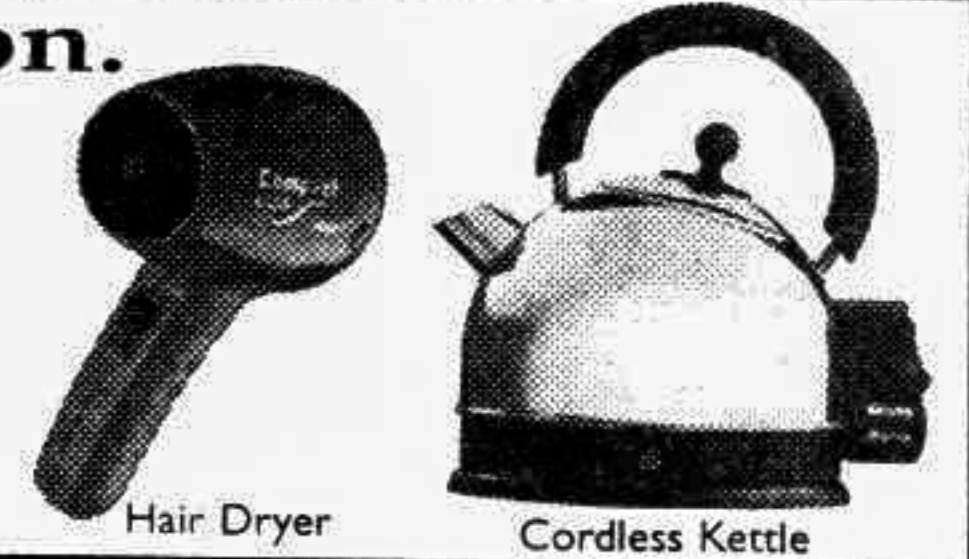
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Islamic law enforced in Pak tribal areas

PESHAWAR, Jan 16: Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's government imposed Islamic law in the traditional tribal areas of northwestern Pakistan today...

In these tribal regions all legal and criminal cases will be decided according to the Koran, in courts headed by Muslim clerics...

The Islamic judicial system has been enforced in these remote and religiously conservative regions through an ordinance signed by the governor of the Northwest Frontier province...

The regions affected lie roughly 50 kilometers to 200 from Peshawar, the provincial capital. They also border Afghanistan where a similar form of Islamic law has been imposed by the Taliban religious army...

The Islamic laws include public punishments of lashes, amputation of hands and feet and executions of the criminals...

The people of these areas wanted the Islamic law and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif government has fulfilled its promise...

In 1996, Muslim clerics in

the area led an armed revolt demanding Islamic laws in their areas.

"Pakistan was created for Islam and soon the same law will be enforced in rest of the country," Khan said.

Sharif introduced a controversial constitutional amendment in August to scrap any remaining British laws in Pakistan and replace them with laws based on the Koran.

The amendment would give the government sweeping powers including that of obliging people to pray five times a day as well as having the authority to 'prescribe what is right and to forbid what is wrong.'

The National Assembly, where Sharif enjoys absolute majority, passed the amendment in September. Now the amendment waits for an approval from the Senate before it can become law.

But Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League does not enjoy a two-third majority in the senate.

Opposition parties, human rights groups and non-Muslim minorities bitterly oppose Sharif's efforts to introduce Islamic laws saying that violated constitution and will wrack the institutions.

But Khan said only pro-West opposition parties are opposed to Islamic laws and trying to block it.

"The government has a firm resolve to enforce Islamic laws all over the country," he said.



THE EID IS NEAR: Home-bound people in their thousands crowding the terminals of all modes of transport in the city. This picture was taken from the Sadarghat launch terminal yesterday.

President hosts iftar, dinner for envoys of Muslim countries

President Shahabuddin Ahmed hosted an iftar and dinner for the diplomats of Muslim countries at Bangabhaban yesterday evening, reports UNB.

Ambassador of the State of Palestine Mohammad Shahta Zarab, High Commissioner of Pakistan Karam Elahi, Ambassador of Arab Republic of Egypt Oussama Mohamed Tawfik, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mohammad Sadegh Fayyaz, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait Mohammad Abdullah Al-Muhaiteb, High Commissioner for Malaysia Dato Zulkifly Bin Abdul Rahman, Ambassador of Indonesia Soetanto Soemardjo, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey Erdinc Ullumlu, The Charge d'Affaires of Afghanistan, Libya, UAE, Iraq, Qatar, Morocco and Representative of UNICEF Ms Shahida Azfar attended the iftar and the dinner.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Chief of Protocol Mohammad Ziauddin also attended the iftar and the dinner.

President Shahabuddin welcomed the guests and exchanged greetings with them.

The 63rd anniversary of birth of late president Ziaur Rahman, the founder chairman of BNP, will be observed on Tuesday, reports UNB.

BNP and its front organisations have drawn up elaborate programmes to mark the day, said a press release yesterday.

The programmes including holding of rallies, discussions, mita, mahfil and placing of wreaths at the mazar of Ziaur Rahman.

BNP central committee will place wreaths and offer fataha at the mazar of the late leader at noon on the day.

A discussion will be held at the Jatiya Press Club at 3:30 pm on January 24.

Party Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has called upon the leaders and workers of the party and its front organisations to observe the day in a befitting manner.

Police recovered the mutilated body of a youngman from Alamedaabad Jheel under Sabujhat thana in the city yesterday around noon.

The body, with the head, hands and legs severed, was found wrapped in a plastic sack. The identity of the victim could not be ascertained immediately. Police have sent the body to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy.

Afghan opposition frees 46 Taliban

KABUL, Jan 16: The northern-based opposition freed 46 Taliban prisoners today ahead of the Muslim festival of Eid-ul-Fitr, an opposition spokesman said, reports AP.

Eid, which marks the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan when devout Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset, is on Monday.

The prisoner release came a day after the opposition freed 20 Taliban soldiers. The Taliban, who rule roughly 90 per cent of Afghanistan, including Kabul, freed 274 opposition soldiers earlier this month.

Prisoner release was handled by the International Red Cross, said opposition spokesman who identifies himself only as Abdullah.

Vajpayee blasts Shiv Sena 'Hindu extremism can't stop bids to improve ties with Pakistan'

NEW DELHI, Jan 16: Recent example of Hindu extremism and intolerance won't stop attempts to improve India's relations with Pakistan, the prime minister says, reports AP.

On Friday, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee echoed the feelings of many Indians when he strongly criticized members of the fringe Shiv Sena party for vandalizing a stadium where a planned India-Pakistan cricket match is to take place and threatening Pakistani diplomats in India.

The Shiv Sena, allied with Vajpayee's Bharatiya Janata party in the western state of Maharashtra, also has threatened to stop planned bus service between the two countries.

There are civilized ways of registering your protest, if you have any. These misdeeds only lower the prestige of the country," Vajpayee said in a meeting with prominent athletes who urged him to ensure the Pakistan-India cricket match went ahead. The match and bus service are both parts of a campaign to normalise relations between the neighboring countries.

The Shiv Sena says India should have no sports and cultural ties with Pakistan until Islamabad stops training and arming Muslim guerrillas fighting a separatist war in Kashmir. Pakistan says it provides only moral support to the guerrillas.

Hartal called by jute mill workers ignored in Khulna

KHULNA, Jan 16: The half-day hartal called by Ajax Jute Mill workers and employees in the city was largely ignored today, reports APB.

Workers and employees of the mill called the hartal demanding payment of arrears and Eid bonus.

Traffic was normal and business and commercial houses remained open in the city today.

Police said the workers staged demonstrations in the morning. They also put up a road barricade at Phoolbaria gate disrupting traffic till noon.

Clinton on Iraq crisis Removal of Saddam best way out

BEIRUT, Jan 16: US President Bill Clinton said in an interview with an Arab newspaper published today that the best way out of the Iraq crisis would be a change of government in Baghdad, reports AFP.

"As long as Saddam Hussein remains in power, the Middle East will be preoccupied by this conflict... and the Iraqi people will remain under the yoke of a criminal police state with no hope of normalisation," the London-based Saudi newspaper Ashraq al-Awsat quoted Clinton as saying.

"In the long run, the best way of overcoming this destructive crisis is the formation of a new government in Baghdad which would better represent the Iraqi people and be ready to carry out its commitments towards the international community," he said.

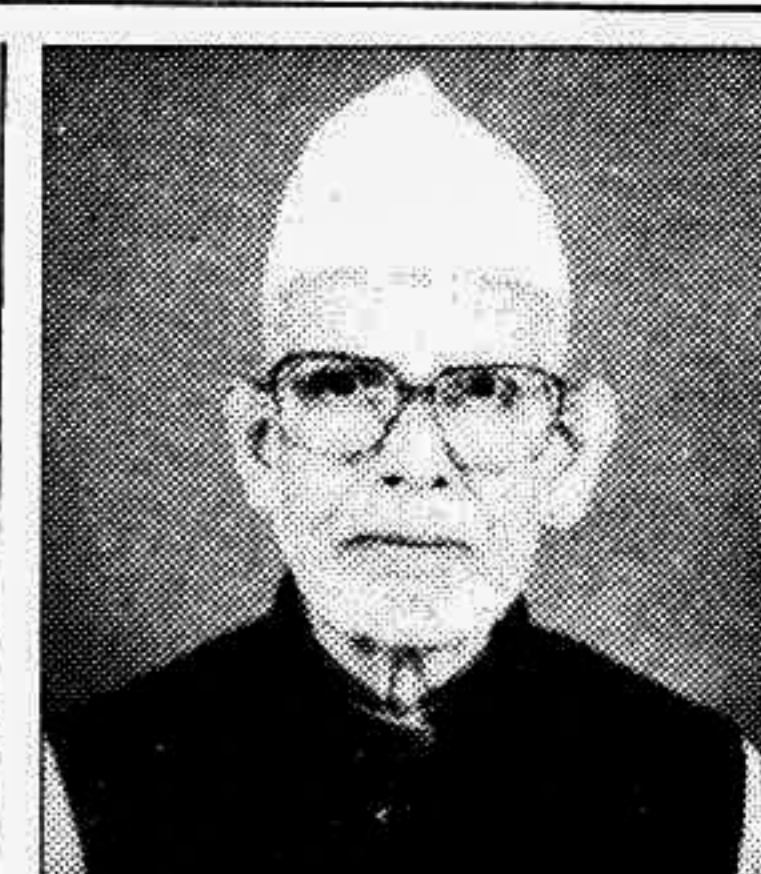
In the interview, conducted on Monday, Clinton said he was ready to help the new Iraq by working to ease the economic sanctions and the cancellation of debts incurred by Saddam. He stressed his willingness to support the Iraqi opposition, but warned that change would be neither quick nor easy.

He made it clear no US ground troops would become involved, but said the United States was drawing up a list of opposition groups deserving of aid, which would be submitted to Congress at the end of the month.

The list would be the basis for the distribution of 97 million dollars the United States decided in December to allocate for the liberation of Iraq.

Clinton also expressed support for a Saudi proposal to ease sanctions to ensure the Iraqi people have what they need for a decent life, while ensuring Saddam does not control oil revenues.

The fact that Iraq turned down this proposal reveals



AL leader Fazlul Huq B Sc dead

Awami League Leader and freedom fighter Syed Mohammad Fazlul Huq B.Sc died of old age ailments at his Wari residence in the city yesterday. He was 72, reports UNB.

He left behind his wife, three sons, four daughters and a host of relatives and admirers.

Born in 1928 at Mirerswarai in Chittagong Fazlul Huq was actively associated with Chhatra League in his student life. He later joined Awami League and held various important posts.

His body will be brought to the party office at noon. His Namaz janaza will be held at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque after Jibr prayers today. Later, he will be buried at the Martyred Intellectuals Graveyard at Mirpur.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and LGRD Minister Zillur Rahman have expressed their profound shock at the death of Fazlul Huq.

In separate condolence messages, they prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Traffic mess

From Page 1 ans be done away with and east-west road be completed to ease the traffic flow.

Shafiq Rehman, editor of Jai Jai Din, said on a hartal day roads remain free with a huge number of policemen. "Why isn't it that they are there on weekdays for smooth flow of traffic?" he asked. "It is difficult for citizens to walk on the streets. Dr Kamal Hossain had fallen into an open manhole. Anyone walking his dog has to wash it on return home as people spit on the streets."

He said the traffic problem is getting so noticeable that even the prime minister had to take the wrong side of the road although she had said traffic would not be halted during her movement, Rahman said.

If the prime minister and the leader of the opposition and General Ershad move without escorts, they would realise the extent of problems the citizens face and help resolve them, he said. For this political will and consensus are necessary, Rahman said.

Prof Nazrul Islam of Dhaka University suggested going underground.

Alun Nishat said there should be flyover from airport to Sadarghat down the old railway track. He also suggested a ring road and an efficient bus service to ease the traffic mess.

Gias Kamal Choudhury, a journalist, said political consideration has been responsible for the unaccounted growth of rickshaws in the city.

Sigma Huda, a human rights activist and lawyer, said much of the problem stemmed from non-compliance of traffic rules. Even the City Corporation has added to it by putting its garbage collection boxes on the streets.

Rizwana Hasan of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association said it is often difficult to prevent encroachment upon the open spaces in the city through legal action. The City Corporation grabbed a parking lot to raise a market at Bangabandhu Avenue, she said.

Mamata cancels today's talks with Vajpayee

NEW DELHI, Jan 16: Embattled Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee suffered a fresh setback today when a disgruntled ally said its links with his shaky minority government were weakening due to a spat over plum political posts, reports AFP.

A regional ally, the Trinamool Congress Party which is being wooed by Vajpayee to join the government but whose demand for the prestigious railway portfolio has been virtually turned down, said the snub had widened differences.

Trinamool leader Mamata Banerjee stuck to her decision to accept no portfolio other than the railway, saying the steering committee of her party has taken the decision.

"We have no purpose to join the central ministry if the railway ministry is not given to the party," she said.

She also claimed that Sonia Gandhi has deputised Madhavrao Scindia and P A Sangma to contact her in a bid to make her join the Congress during the next state assembly elections.

Trinamool spokesman Sudip Bandopadhyay told the Press Trust of India that Mamata had cancelled a scheduled meeting with Vajpayee tomorrow to iron out differences.

"I have already communicated her decision to the prime minister's office during the day. She is not going tomorrow," he said.

The railways ministry is currently held by Centrist grouping of defence minister George Fernandes.

Vajpayee had announced this week that he would bring new faces into the minority party government on Friday, two months after postponing an earlier cabinet expansion but was forced to defer his plans due

Fire at Ctg garments unit

CHITTAGONG, Jan 16: Raw materials and finished products of a garments factory were gutted in a fire here early today, reports BSS.

Fire brigade and police sources said the fire originated from a godown of the Asian Apparel Ltd located on the second floor of Jiban Bima Corporation shopping complex at Station Road.

Nine fire fighting units struggled for over two hours to extinguish the blaze. Huge quantities of fabrics and finished products of the export-oriented garments factory were destroyed by the fire.

Israeli jets raid Hezbollah stronghold

SIDON, Lebanon, Jan 16: Israeli warplanes raided southern Lebanon for the fourth straight day Saturday, security officials said, reports AP.

Two jets fired at least two air-to-surface missiles on the highlands of Iqlim al-Tuffah, a stronghold of the Hezbollah guerrilla group that faces an Israeli-occupied border enclave in south Lebanon, the Lebanese officials said. They spoke on customary condition of anonymity.

Black smoke billowed from the area around the deserted village of Milla in Iqlim al-Tuffah, but it was not immediately clear if the missiles hit the bases in the 9 am air strike, the fifth in south Lebanon this week.

The two jets returned about half an hour later and fired at least one missile on a valley below the Shiite Muslim villages of Yater and Jibal al-Boutoun near the southern port city of Tyre, the officials said.

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad on Friday also rejected the offer of US mediation in the Spratlys.

Impeachment trial

From Page 1 argued that the president, his friend Vernon Jordan, his secretary Betty Currie and at least two staff aides should testify because their testimony conflicts with that of Clinton.

"Time and again somebody is not telling the truth and time and again an analysis of... all the testimony together with common sense says it's the president who is not telling the truth," McCollum said. "But if you have serious doubts about the truthfulness" of key witnesses, he said, they should appear in person.

The White House already has said Clinton would not testify. Clinton's lawyers, who cannot interrupt the House presentation to object, sat quietly at the prosecution table during the arguments, waiting for their turn Tuesday.

But White House special counsel Gregory Craig launched a brief salvo outside the Senate chamber, saying prosecutors wanted to "expand and extend this proceeding for one reason: They do not have a case."

Clinton is charged under two articles of impeachment with perjury and obstruction of justice in the first presidential impeachment trial since 1868.

Two-thirds, or 67 of the 100 senators, most vote for conviction to remove the president from office, and there are no indications that any Democrats would vote against the presi-

dent. Twelve Democrats would have to join the 55 Republicans in order to remove Clinton from office if the Republicans stay united.

The opening argument phase of the trial is governed by a bipartisan agreement that postpones the question of witnesses for at least another week. But, as Democratic Sen. Edward M Kennedy acknowledged, "there may be very well" a party-line vote on the witness question.

During Friday's proceedings, Republican Rep. Bob Barr told the Senate that Clinton had violated perjury and obstruction of justice laws.

He urged the Senate to conclude "that William Jefferson Clinton in fact and under the law, violated his oath and violated the laws of this land, and convict him on both articles of impeachment."

Ghorasal plant

From Page 1 history. With occasional countrywide blackouts, load-shedding reached the level of 600 MW to 650 MW during peak hours against a maximum demand for 2300 MW.

Public criticism about the government's poor handling of the power supply situation had led to the removal of the then energy minister from the ministry.

700-year-old village to be rebuilt in Rajasthan

NEW DELHI, Jan 16: A 700-year-old village deep in the hinterland of the central Indian state of Rajasthan, mysteriously abandoned by its inhabitants centuries ago, is being rebuilt by the state government under a unique restoration project, reports IANS.

Stones from the ruins of Kuldhara village are being put together according to ancient design, without using cement and an 80-foot deep step-well buried under layers of sand is being excavated. The Statesman newspaper reported.

Kuldhara and 73 other neighbouring villages in Jaisalmer were established in 1291 AD by migrants from a neighbouring district. The villages soon rose to prominence because of the innovative agriculture techniques used by the villagers to till the dry desert lands which brought them prosperity. Kuldhara's wealth in those ancient times can be judged from the fact that each one of its 600 houses had a garage for its camel carts, evidence of which is available among the ruins today, pointed out a district official involved with the restoration project.

Besides, he noted, the villagers had evolved an interesting and effective system for constructing their homes based on wind direction and weather without using cement, because of which the walls constructed hundreds of years ago, still existed today.

There are varying versions of why the prosperous villagers abandoned Kuldhara and the other villages in 1825 AD.

Ctg: Crimes

From Page 1 feeling insecure and scared due to increase of crimes. Toll collection and mugging in industrial areas and business hubs have become a regular phenomenon, the chamber president said in his statement.

Twenty people were bullet-wounded when toll collectors fired on drivers at Kadamoti bus stand as they refused to pay toll on January 2.

On the same day, armed muggers took away Tk four lakh from garments factory staff at Agrabad when they were returning from bank with the money.

At the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan, armed muggers looted two shops at the busy Sirajuddinah Road in the city in the evening.

On January 9, armed muggers looted about Tk six lakh from a distribution depot of a business house at Agrabad, police said.

Many other incidents of crime remained unrecorded with police.

Meanwhile, most of the alleged terrorists and their ring leaders, arrested during a police crackdown from mid-April last year, got release on bail. They have reportedly resumed their criminal activities in the city, sources said.

The crackdown also slowed down here with the beginning of Ramadan.

Police officials however said that additional police force were deployed in an around the city markets and some check posts set up to control crime.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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