



Ties with Dhaka to benefit Calcutta: Basu

CALCUTTA, Jan 27: The West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu has sought friendship of all countries in the region, reports UNB.

"We have no problem with Bangladesh. We also don't think people of Pakistan are our enemy," he said adding India wants friendship with Bangladesh and all its neighbours.

Basu was speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the Calcutta Book Fair '99 today.

"I don't want to mention the problems of Pakistan government here. But people of a country are not responsible for activities of a government," he said without elaborating.

The West Bengal chief minister, who played a key role in the signing of historic Indo-Bangla water sharing treaty, said his province would benefit from growing friendly relations with Bangladesh.

Apart from book fair, Bangladesh is taking part in trade fairs, he said adding even Pakistani entrepreneurs are coming to participate in the trade fairs. "It is a very good sign."

Basu, who is also popular among the people of Bangladesh, regretted that thousands

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Bus services agreed

CALCUTTA, Jan 27: India and Bangladesh today agreed in principle to run bus services between the two countries, and cooperate in areas of common concern, including energy, trade and transport, reports BSS.

The Foreign Ministers level meeting would be held some time in March to further discuss these issues, Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh who had a 45-minute meeting with visiting Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her hotel suite, told newsmen.

Sheikh Hasina had suggested that their discussion must be followed up by prompt action and the foreign ministers of the two countries should meet, Singh said.

Singh who arrived here by a special Indian airforce flight from Delhi to welcome the Bangladeshi Prime Minister on behalf of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, said that the issues of common concern, es-

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Fair opens

Books bring souls together, says Hasina

CALCUTTA, Jan 27: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said Bangladesh, being the only language-based country in South Asia, is the natural centre for Bengali language to flourish, reports UNB.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Calcutta Book Fair '99 as chief guest, Hasina said: "Bangla is our mother tongue. We Bangalis sacrificed a lot to protect our mother tongue. Many had to lay down their lives to save the language in the past."

We are the only people who played a rare role of sacrificing lives to protect the prestige of the language."

Expressing gratitude for selecting Bangladesh as the 'local theme' of the book fair, the prime minister said books establish a cultural bridge between the past and the present.

Books establish bonds of

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Prayer Timings

January 28

Azan Jamaat

Fajr 5:22 5:26

Zohr 12:45 1:15

Asr 4:00 4:15

Maghrib 5:42 5:45

Esha 7:10 7:20

Source: Islamic Foundation

The Daily Star



TV
FRIDGE

RANGS GROUP

Hasina tells civic reception in Calcutta

Stronger ties a must to fight common problems

CALCUTTA, Jan 27: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina sought greater bilateral cooperation with India by removing all obstacles, distrust and doubts between the two next-door neighbours for the common good, reports UNB.

"We'll have to expand our cooperation on the basis of cordiality, brotherhood and harmony. I'm optimistic about the future of our two countries and I also foresee a very bright prospect for improving our bilateral relations," she told her Calcutta audience today.

The Prime Minister, who flew in here this afternoon on a three-day visit, was speaking at a civic reception hosted by Calcutta Mayor Prashanta Chatterjee at Town Hall. Later she attended a banquet hosted by West Bengal Governor Dr AR Kidwai at Raj Bhavan.

Hasina said both Bangladesh and India have common problems like hunger, poverty and illiteracy with

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses as chief guest the opening ceremony of the Calcutta Book Fair '99 in the West Bengal capital yesterday.

—PID photo

2 foreign nationals are 'key organisers'

25000 trained at Lalkhan 'camp' alone in 14 years

By Staff Correspondent

Harkut-Uz-Jihad trained at least 25 thousand young men in the last 14 years at its Lalkhan Bazar "training camp" in Chittagong, officials of the Joint Investigating Cell (JIC) told this correspondent yesterday.

The training was given in three stages. In the first stage, the trainees learnt how to use 'big lathis'. In the second stage they learnt "commando warfare" and in the final stage they learnt "use of firearms", police claimed. One training batch comprised 75 young men.

Most recently, 37 teachers were engaged to train 260 students, police claimed.

Besides, investigators have also revealed that Ahmed Sadik Ahmed, an Indian-born South African, confessed to the JIC that he was a close associate and a personal friend of Osama Bin Laden, a Saudi multimillionaire, now living in Afghanistan, who is known to finance "terrorist" organisations globally.

JIC officials claimed that Ahmed Sadik Ahmed was a diamond trader and used to "donate" Tk. one crore annually to the Harkut-Uz-Jihad.

Investigators also claimed that they have "found the key

Now Islami Liberation Tiger of Bangladesh?

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Jan 27: Patuakhali police unearthed a den of an armed Islamic terrorist group — 'Islami Liberation Tiger of Bangladesh' — in village Kalaraj under Galachipa thana of Patuakhali district.

Police were visiting the area to investigate a rape case.

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BARISAL, Jan 27: Patuakhali police unearthed a den of an armed Islamic terrorist group — 'Islami Liberation Tiger of Bangladesh' — in village Kalaraj under Galachipa thana of Patuakhali district.

Police officials claimed that their investigation revealed existence of only one "training camp" of Harkut-Uz-Jihad in Bangladesh, which is located at Lalkhan Bazar on about 21

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dia. Saeed was engaged to ensure providing funds to the organisations in the countries he was in charge of, police said.

Maulana Nazrul Islam, acted as the "Ameer" of Harkut-Uz-Jihad in Bangladesh'. A "certificate" recovered from Nazrul's possession was issued by Taheri Jihad's a "parent organisation" of Harkut-Uz-Jihad, based in Pakistan. The certificate proves his appointment as Ameer in Bangladesh', police officials further claimed.

Nazrul was the organiser in Bangladesh while Bakhtiar, who was arrested from a madrasah in the city's Uttara area, "distributed funds to the 421 units of Harkut-Uz-Jihad in Bangladesh", they claimed.

Under the leadership of Bakhtiar, Harkut-Uz-Jihad was divided into 421 units for conducting their activities. The chief of a unit is called Principal or Imam. "Every unit chief was given Tk. 2000 monthly for their activities," JIC claimed.

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COXS BAZAR, Jan 27: Police arrested an alleged Arakanese Taliban member from Garjania Bazar in Ramu thana this morning, reports APB.

He was identified as Abdul Amin, 28, of village Bolibazar under Mongdu thana in Arakan of Myanmar. Police arrested him from a barber's shop in the bazar.

Amin told police that he had trespassed into Bangladesh about a decade ago and became a member of Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO), an Arakanese revolutionary group.

He was living at Kholachi under Dochari in Naikhangch.

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Boat capsizes: 11 drown in Banskhali

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 27: At least 11 people drowned and 15 others were missing when a passenger boat capsized in Jalkader canal under Banskhali thana in the southern Chittagong, this evening, police and other sources said.

Police said bodies of 11 persons were recovered from the canal at Godanara near the Bay of Bengal.

Rescuers were looking for the missing persons, sources said.

Unconfirmed sources said that the death toll in the boat capsizing might go up.

The accident took place at around 8 pm when an engine boat with more than 30 people aboard entered the Jalkader canal from the sea, police said.

The passengers were going to Kutubuddin from Banskhali.

However, the other passengers

Hundreds of villagers rushed to the spot and joined the rescue operation, police sources said.

Hartal passes off peacefully in Chittagong

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 27: The hartal, extended in the port city till 2 pm today by the opposition alliance here, passed off almost peacefully.

The alliance comprising BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and Jatiya Party had extended the hartal yesterday protesting what it called police action on its activists while they tried to enter the court premises during countrywide hartal. At least 25 people were injured in the clash between police and opposition activists.

However, during today's hartal here, no untoward incident was reported, police said.

Opposition activists also held rallies and processions in the city during the hartal.

Most of vehicles excepting a

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Opposition effort to talk partymen out of polls race

By Rezaul Karim

Opposition parties are taking a number of steps to persuade their own men, who have submitted nomination papers for ensuring municipal polls, to withdraw before the last date for it.

According to sources, some 80 leaders of opposition BNP, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh submitted nomination papers for municipal chairman. A total of 40 of them are from BNP, 36 from JP and four from Jamaat.

BNP sources, however, claimed that 11 bona fide leaders had submitted nominations for chairman while dozens others for ward commissioner. They also claimed the chairman candidate at Netrokona had already written to the authorities to withdraw while the one at Munshiganj had been missing.

Another competent source claimed that 11 BNP men were claiming themselves as BNP candidates but "we only found 11 partymen."

The BNP leader said steps have been taken to persuade the party leaders to withdraw immediately. "We are still inquiring into how many BNP men submitted nominations. Our district committees have been instructed to inform the party secretary general about party candidates," he said.

Another competent source said the BNP secretary general would send letters to district committees today asking them to talk to the party leaders and activists who have submitted nominations.

If the party candidates fail to respond, the district committees will be instructed to serve show-cause notices on them.

"There will be no alternative but to expel the candidates from the party if they refuse to withdraw," he said.

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Corruption in medical purchases

Another Tk 20 cr swallowed