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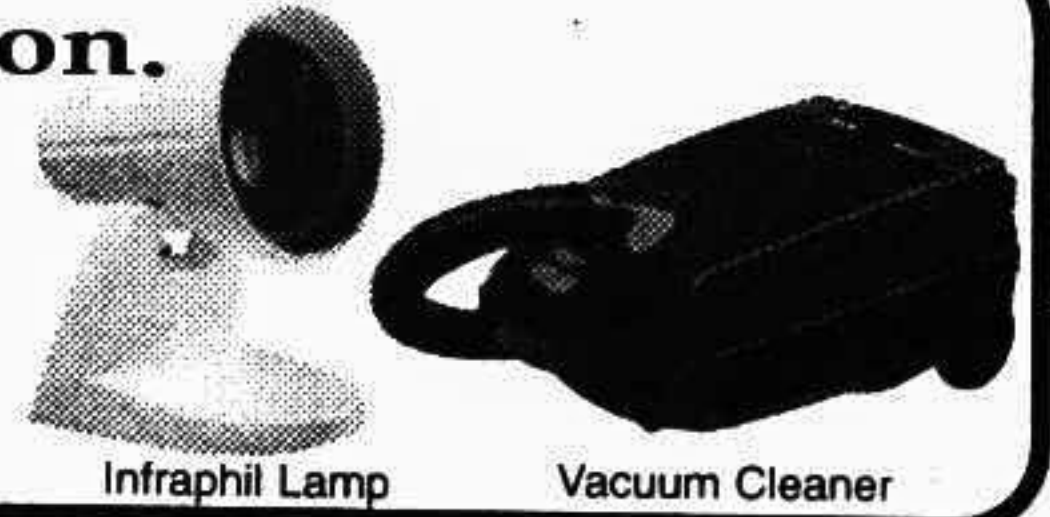


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Indo-Pak lawmakers in quest of peace

ISLAMABAD, Feb 12: With the threat of nuclear war hanging over their heads, lawmakers from Pakistan and India sat across the table today to try to chip away at 51 years of hostility and lay the foundations of a friendship, reports AP.

The meeting of legislators from the two uneasy neighbours is a first in their stormy relationship that has been characterised by war and relentless bickering.

Neither side is expecting to achieve a major breakthrough at the two-day conference, but rather Pakistan's former Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub said "it will break the ice... we have a shared history, culture (but) we are like oil and water in a barrel."

Meetings between Pakistan and India have taken on increased significance since last May when the two countries conducted underground nuclear devices.

World leaders have strongly lobbied for confidence-building measures between the two countries to ease tensions and avert a possible confrontation.

In his speech to the delegates Pakistan's Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz said the road to good neighbourliness is a difficult one that requires Pakista-

nis to overcome 50 years of "mistrust and suspicion."

For that to happen, Aziz said India needs to "demonstrate a clear vision and the requisite political will to resolve all outstanding issues between the two countries."

More than 35 lawmakers from India and 60 from Pakistan are attending the conference.

Japan: SMEs

From Page 1 Japanese investment in Bangladesh.

These included inadequate supply of electricity, gas, water and poor infrastructure and transport facilities.

The Japanese delegation had also mentioned that these 'negative' factors could be removed through close cooperation between the two countries. The Bangladesh side had invited Japanese technical and economic assistance to build infrastructure.

"This time the Bangladesh side will again seek help from the Japanese investors to resolve those negative issues through investment and technical cooperation," a source said.

US energy team

From Page 1 I hope our energy partnership will help provide the information Bangladesh needs to build a consensus for the option that best suits the needs of the citizens of Bangladesh," Humphrey pointed out.

Focussing on the visit of the 14-member delegation, he said, we have left no stone unturned in our efforts to learn more about the Bangladesh energy sector and to discuss possibilities for cooperation with the Bangladesh government, representatives of the American and Bangladeshi business communities, multilateral organisations and NGOs.

The outcome of the US delegation is visit includes signing of three agreements related to US Trade and Development Agency programmes, involving over 880,000 US dollars in assistance to Bangladesh.

The first of these is the Energy Data Exchange Agreement between the US and Bangladesh that will facilitate exchange of energy information and development of a training programme designed to improve collection of energy data for Bangladesh.

The second agreement is for a gas utilisation study, signed between the Energy Ministry and James Chemical Engineering. This study will examine a wide range of priority projects

and investment options for development of the country's natural gas reserves.

The third one is a grant agreement to provide technical, legal and financial support to Bangladesh to implement the strategically important Western Region Integrated Project (WRIP).

The WRIP proposes integrated development of gas resources in the south-western part of Bangladesh centering the Shabazpur gas field. It includes gas development, construction of a gas transmission pipeline and construction of four power plants to generate 400 MW of power.

Besides these agreements, the USDA will provide a 250,000 dollar support for a fifty city pilot test and feasibility study of a technology designed by a US company in order to provide Bangladesh with an appropriately engineered arsenic treatment system for its tubewell water supply.

The team also promoted an Ultra Violet Waterworks System for surface water purification to benefit the people of Bangladesh.

In conclusion, let me emphasise that this US government funding support of nearly 1 million dollars should not be seen as the end, but only a beginning," Calvin Humphrey said.

Bihar govt sacked

NEW DELHI, Feb 12: The Indian cabinet today sacked the state government of Bihar, following the latest in a series of massacres of landless farmers, a minister said, reports AFP.

Ctg: Hartal

From Page 1 Iqbal Dada, a businessman of the city's main commercial hub Khatunganj and director of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that business transactions drastically slumped here due to the hartal. Wholesale of essential commodities was badly affected as buyers from distant parts of the country could not come to Khatunganj from where most of the imported goods are supplied, he said.

Dada said that he had also lost the export order for tea to Russia after its expiry due to non-shipment by February 10. "Now I am writing to the clients to extend the L/C time".

Some other tea exporters also faced shipment difficulties due to the hartal, he added. Meanwhile, weekly tea auction was organised one day in advance of the scheduled day.

Tuesday, the auction drew less foreign buyers due to hartal, sources said.

Ekushey

From Page 1 gaugue Movement veterans and others.

From 10 to 11 am, members of different diplomatic missions will pay their tributes to the martyrs of the Language Movement in 1952.

Students, teachers, employees and Senate and Syndicate members of DU will bring out a procession from Aparajeya Bangla at 6:30 am and place wreaths at the Sheheed Minar after offering *fateha* for the martyrs at Azimpur graveyard.

Special prayers for peace of the martyrs will be offered in all places of worship on the campus, including DU Central Mosque.

Meanwhile, thousands of people flocked to the Ekushey Book Fair on the Bangla Academy premises yesterday, after the three-day hartal.

Yesterday was the eighth day of the fair. A total of 22 new books were introduced at the fair yesterday.

The digital screen in front of the Information Centre displaying a documentary titled, "Abar Asibo Feere (I Will Return Again)" enchanted the visitors.

A discussion on "Poet Jibanananda Das: Life and Works" was held at the academy premises in the evening. Chaired by Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, it was attended by Prof Abdul Mannan Syed, Prof Hayat Mamud, Dr Mahub Sadique, Dr Syed Azizul Haq and Manzurur Rahman.



Clean-up drive goes on in full swing at the Central Shaheed Minar ahead of the Amar Ekushey February. — Star photo

Khaleda to address rally at Rajshahi tomorrow

From Our Correspondent RAJSHAHI, Feb 12: BNP chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Begum Khaleda Zia arrives here Sunday.

She will address a public meeting at the Shaheb Bazar square at 2 pm on the day.

AL: Remain alert

From Page 1 Awami League, BNP, Jatiya Party and 11-party alliance, who are taking part in the municipal election despite conspiracies hatched by some opposition parties.

The meeting urged the countymen to remain alert against "BNP's conspiracy" to foil the election, snatch voting rights of people and reintroduce politics of violence and killings that people rejected through ballots.

It condoled the death of a policeman in Dhaka, a Jubo League activist in Khulna and Chhatra League leader in Feni in the hands of "armed terrorists of BNP" during nationwide 60-hour hartal.

BNP, allies

From Page 1 Sylhet, Jamaat Ameer Gohar Azam at Chittagong and IOJ chief Moulana Azizul Haq at Khulna tomorrow.

Another source hinted that the if the chiefs of the four parties do not announce the hartal programme from the divisional headquarters, the programme may be announced from separate public meetings in Dhaka on February 16-17.

The liaison body meeting observed that the government had already taken an extremely hard line and was making all-out efforts to foil the opposition agitation before it turns into an one-point movement for dislodging the government.

The meeting expressed the determination that the opposition parties would continue their movement at any cost despite government's "repressive measures and evil-efforts" to foil it.

It stressed the need for presence of top level leaders of the parties on the streets during hartals in future. Besides, it emphasised presence of more leaders and workers for picketing during hartals and other anti-government agitation programmes.

Two shot as BCL factions clash in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Feb 12: Two persons received bullet wounds in a clash between two factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) at Chittagong Polytechnic Institute here this morning, police said.

The injured were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Police said the clash took place at 7 am over control of the hostel and campus of the institute.

Both the groups used firearms during the clash, police added.

Police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

EU to support

From Page 1 mark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the European Commission visited different parts of the CHT, including Rangamati and Khagrachari.

The aim of the visit was to reconfirm the strong support of the EU, its member countries and the European Commission for the CHT peace accord and get better acquainted with the current situation in the Hill Tracts.

The delegation met the representatives of local government, CHT Development Board, representatives of the PCJSS, local NGOs, leaders of both the Bangladeshi and indigenous communities, Chakma refugees and Chakma King Dewashis Roy.

The Heads of Mission welcomed the combined efforts of all concerned in the Hill Tracts and urged them to proceed expeditiously with the complete implementation of the peace accord.

Gasfield

From Page 1 15 years.

The company is also preparing for drilling a new well at a nearby location in the same structure. The site selected for Well - 5 is about three kilometres off Well - 2, the official informed adding, setting of the drilling rig and other equipment which started on February 1 would be completed soon. Drilling would start sometime later this month, he added.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to formally inaugurate the Gas Processing Plant installed at a nearby location on February 27, official sources said. She will also visit the wells. After processing raw gas in the plant, dry gas is sent to the Kailashitla point of Gopaganj thana. A 15-kilometre long pipeline stretching from the processing plant to Kailashitla has been installed with a view to linking the supply line with national grid.

Clinton acquitted

From Page 1 planned to vote against both articles.

House prosecutors had hoped to attract support from most or all the Senate's 55 Republicans, a prospect that faded this week.

Eager to get beyond an impeachment crisis that paralysed the capital for a year, the president was prepared to make a statement about an hour after the verdict, though he wasn't saying whether it would be on paper or in person. Clinton leaves Sunday for a trip to Mexico.

Even with an inevitable acquittal, senators wanted the public to know they abhorred the president's conduct in concealing his affair with Monica Lewinsky.

Today's votes complete a drama that has riveted official Washington, roiled a midterm congressional election and worn out the patience of the American public.

After acquittal, Clinton would not remain without troubles: He could face indictment, while in office or after his term, by Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr, and must finish his remaining months in office facing a Republican-controlled Congress that wanted him evicted from the White House.

Throughout the impeachment proceedings, opinion polls showed that most of Americans gave Clinton low marks for personal trust and

morality — and were repulsed when Clinton's now-famous televised, finger-wagging assertion: "I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky" proved less than truthful. But they approved of the job he was doing in a time of peace and a booming economy and did not think the sex and cover-up scandal was serious enough to warrant his removal from office.

Still, a Republican-controlled House in December voted virtually along party lines to send to the Senate for trial an impeachment case based almost entirely upon a voluminous report by Starr.

The report detailed Linda Tripp's secret tape recordings; furtive sex acts between the president and Lewinsky near the Oval Office; late night phone calls between the president and the intern and, most damning for Clinton, a stained dress.

Son kills father

From Page 1 Mozammel was sent to Narayanganj Hospital in critical condition. He was, later, declared dead by the on duty doctors.

Relatives and neighbours handed Noor Islam to the police. His mother Rang Bala lodged a murder case accusing her son with the Fatullah police.

Remorse or revenge?

From Page 1 Republican strategist Eddie Mahe, however, believes that Clinton's "natural hubris, his arrogance, will be the driving force in how he behaves in the coming days, weeks and months. He will believe and act accordingly, that whatever he presents to Congress he is automatically entitled to get his way."

There was a swirl of talk Thursday about whether Clinton would seek post-impeachment revenge against Republicans, particularly the House managers who prosecuted the case. Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott said it was "deeply troubling that the president views closure of this constitutional process as an opportunity for revenge."

But White House press secretary Joe Lockhart pointed out that most of the 13 House managers are in politically safe districts and were handily re-elected in November. "I can't think of a worse, more dumb strategy than going after people based on whether they were a House manager or not," he said.

After today's impeachment acquittal, Clinton intends to try to clear the air with a statement urging the country to leave behind divisions about impeachment and move on to other matters. At the same time, many Democrats are hop-

ing to use the impeachment battle against Republicans in 2000.

Clinton is likely to leave the impeachment theme to others as he tries to build a legacy on the strength of Social Security and education reforms. But he won't be shy about campaigning or building a big war chest for Democrats.

For starters, Clinton will fly to New Hampshire next Thursday, less than a week after the Senate's final vote, to campaign for Vice President Al Gore, his loyal defender.

It is no secret Clinton has seethed about Ken Starr's investigation and believes the impeachment battle was driven by partisan passions. However, he was able to keep his job approval ratings high by reminding Americans about the booming economy and insisting he was doing the people's business.

"You're going to see very little change, stylistically or substantively," presidential counselor Doug Sosnik said.

Why change a successful strategy?

Republicans also have a political interest in moving on. "They have to be concerned about their own preservation and political future," Mann said. "It's time to go back to work. All signs are that the Republicans in Congress are ready to do just that."

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