

Weather

Night temp may fall

Weather will remain mainly dry over the country with partly cloudy sky over Chittagong region in next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Thick fog may occur over Rajshahi division and the river basin of the country and moderate fog elsewhere over the country during the first half of the day.

Prevailing moderate to severe cold wave over Khulna division and mild to moderate cold wave over Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions and the region of Sri Mongol and Barisal will continue.

Slight fall in night temperature is expected over the country during the period.

The country's highest temperature 25.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and the lowest 5.6 degrees at Sathkira.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5.27 pm and rises on Sunday at 6.43 am.

Maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	19.6	10.2	88	88
Chittagong	24.0	13.5	89	67
Rajshahi	19.8	07.0	96	96
Khulna	22.6	08.2	88	89
Barisal	23.6	09.8	88	81
Sylhet	21.3	13.2	98	79
Cox's Bazar	25.0	17.4	96	71

Right approaches for dev of northern region being taken

DHUPCAGHIA, Bogra, Jan 7: Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil said here yesterday that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was taking right approaches for the development of the long neglected northern region and reinstating it as the 'granary of food' of the country, reports BSS.

The government has already established direct link between the eastern and western parts of the country which has offered peasants of the northern region a chance to get fair prices of their products.

Entrepreneurs are now looking for suitable places to set up their industries in this region," he said while speaking at a public meeting organised by local Awami League.

He said Bogra would once again come to the focal point of the region as this industry-dominated district will get natural gas supply through pipeline soon.

Industrialists, who have been gradually pulling out due to non-availability of cheap raw materials and fuel, would now get opportunity to offer quality products in a real competitive market at home and abroad.

Jalil said the prime minister has always a sympathetic view for the northern part of the

country. As part of her commitment to the region, he said, Sheikh Hasina appointed six out of nine new ministers from the northern region recently.

Jalil, a presidium member of Awami League, was critical of the politics of the opposition parties and said when the image of the nation was being brightened and development activities are on full-swing, the unholy alliance of the parties was trying to destroy all the achievements.

"The economy is now on a sound footing," he said and added the image of the country was also revived during the tenure of the present government. A number of international awards have been conferred to Bangladesh and the Prime Minister as well during the last three-and-half years period, he pointed out.

He called upon all the peace-loving people of the region to join hands with Sheikh Hasina and help implement the unfinished and untouched development projects being taken for this part.

President and general secretaries of the district Awami League Momotaj Uddin Ahmed and Ferdous Zaman Mukul respectively, among others, spoke on the occasion.

33 journalists killed in '99

NEW YORK, Jan 7: From Sierra Leone to Yugoslavia, journalism was an often dangerous profession to practice in 1999, with 33 journalists in 10 countries losing their lives because of their work, a press freedom group said Thursday, reports AP.

The number of deaths increased from the year before, when 24 journalists were killed in 17 countries, the Committee to Protect Journalists said.

In 1999, the African nation of Sierra Leone was the most dangerous place for journalists, with 10 killed there, including Associated Press Television News producer Myles Tierney.

Tierney and Ian Stewart, AP's bureau chief from Abidjan, Ivory Coast, were shot last January were among a group of journalists traveling — with military escort — through downtown Freetown when they came under attack. A rebel opened fire on the AP car; Tierney died instantly, and Stewart suffered a serious head wound.

Yugoslavia had the second-highest number of deaths, with six. Other countries where journalists were killed included Colombia, East Timor, Argentina, Legano, Nigeria, Russia, Sri Lanka, and Turkey.

All 33 journalists were killed either while on assignment or as a direct result of their work,



Algerian women gather in Bou Ismaïel's cemetery, around the grave of one of the member of their family killed during an attack which left 15 people dead last December. Algerians celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr yesterday. — AFP photo



Congratulations

Linkoping University of Sweden has conferred a PhD on Dr Mahfuzur Rahman for his work on Nonmalignant Health Effects of Arsenic Exposure, reports UNB.

At a time when the country is best with the public health hazard from the chemical poisoning of drinking water, his thesis deals with arsenic poisoning in Bangladesh and Sweden.

He is the first Doctorate from Bangladesh and India who has conducted the research on nonmalignant effects of the arsenic poisoning with special emphasis on health issues.

The results of his studies on arsenic in Bangladesh provide evidence that occupational and environmental arsenic exposures may develop diabetes and hypertension.

The crude overall prevalence was 29 per cent in the studied villages, and there was a distinct dose-response relationship between arsenic concentrations in drinking water and skin lesions.

Dr Rahman, who is from Rangpur district, completed his MBBBS from Rajshahi Medical College in 1991.



From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Jan 7: Mohammad Obaidullah obtained first class first in masters examination in MTIS in Al-Hadith and Islamic studies from Islamic University (IU) this year.

Obaidullah's father Dr Moktar Hossain and mother Anwara Begum hail from village Suzapur in Roygan thana of Sirajganj district.

Obaidullah wants to be an educationist in future.



From CU Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 7: Rebekha Sultana stood First Class First at the BSS honours examination of 1997 (held in 1999) under National University from department of Economics of Chittagong College.

She is the first student from the department to obtain first class in Economics under National University, said a press release signed by the principal of the Chittagong College.

Daughter of Mohammad Hafez Ahmed, Rebekha is interested in teaching in future.

Appointment

Group Captain M Iqbal Hossain, Chairman of Bangladesh Civil Aviation Authority has recently been promoted to the rank of Air Commodore in the NDI. PSC Air Force, says a press release.

Pakistani Islamists warn govt not to sign CTBT

KARACHI, Jan 7: Around 200 activists from Pakistan's main fundamentalist Jamaat-i-Islami party today demonstrated and warned the government against signing the global nuclear test ban treaty, reports AFP.

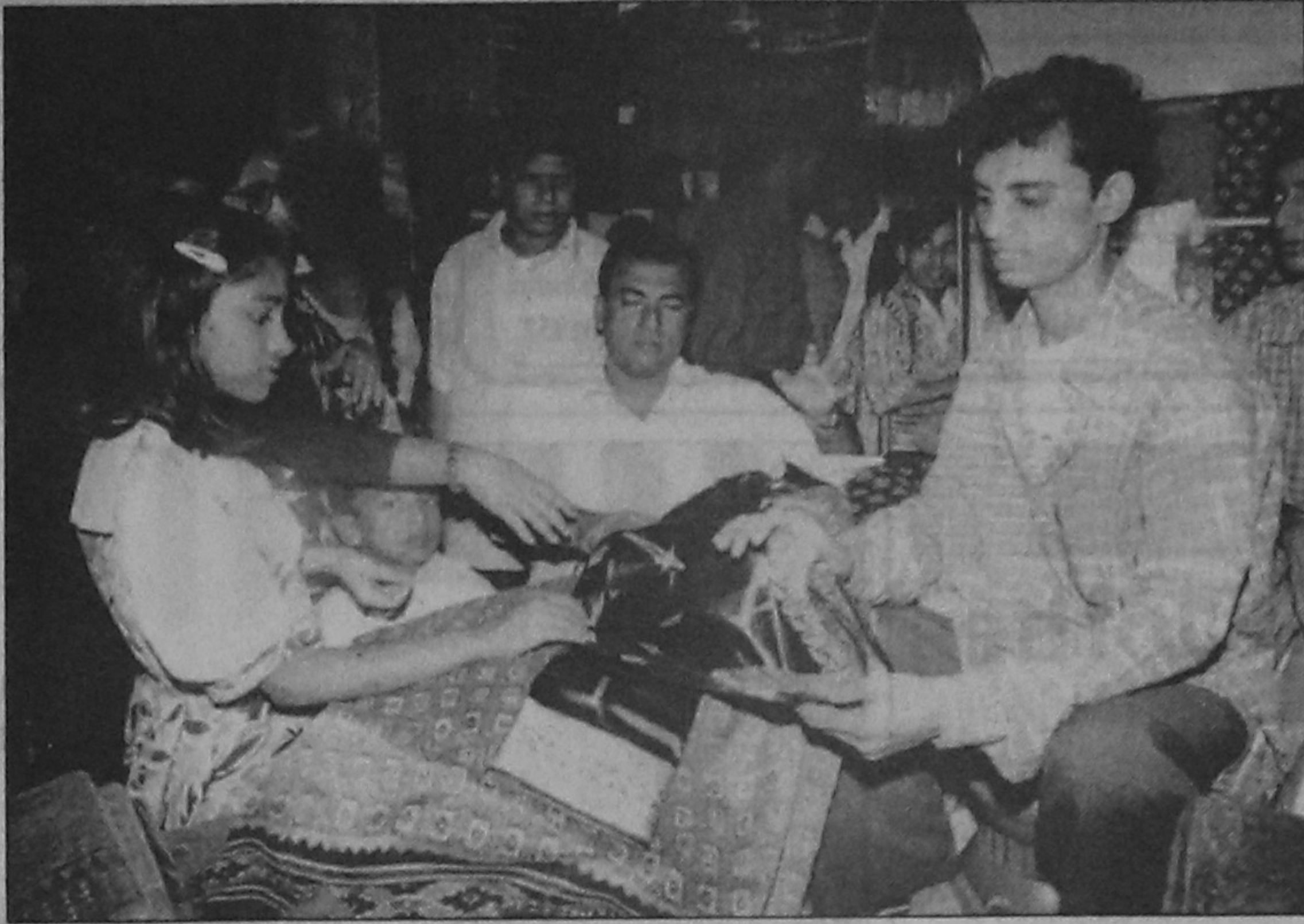
The protest followed a statement by foreign minister Abdus Sattar earlier this week in favour of joining the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Bearded protestors shouted slogans against the United States for pressuring Pakistan to join the treaty, which the Islamic party says, would undermine the country's nuclear programme.

"We prefer to be poor but will save our atom bomb," read a poster carried by the demonstrators.

"We warn the government that it should not even think of signing CTBT," the party's central leader Nazimullah Khan told the gathering.

"We will resist any pressure from the US," he said. Sattar has said the nation should consider signing the CTBT to seize the high moral ground, as India was likely to do so soon. "Not signing the treaty has identifiable costs but no benefits," he said.



Cheaper Indian saris which have flooded Banga Bazar, are a major attraction of the lower middle class customers at Eid time. — Star photo

Preparation to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Jan 7: Preparations are afoot here to celebrate the holy Eid-ul-Fitr, the biggest religious festival of the Muslims, with due religious festivity and traditional enthusiasm on Sunday, reports BSS.

The district administration, Chittagong City Corporation and Chittagong Central Eid Jamaat Committee have completed all necessary arrangements to hold Eid congregations.

Eid congregations under the auspices of Chittagong Central Eid Jamaat will be held at M A Aziz Stadium at 8:30 am where Khatib of Anderkilla Shah-e-Jam-e-Masjid Anwar Hossain Al Taher Al Jaberi Al Madani will lead the congregation.

The other main Eid congregation under the auspices of Chittagong City Corporation will be held at Jamiatul Falah Complex at 8:30 am while second Jamaat will also be held at the same venue at 9:30 am.

Khatib of the complex principal Jalaluddin al-Quaderi will conduct two Eid Jamaats. Besides, Eid Jamaats will be held at 41 wards of the city under direct supervision of the respective ward commissioners.

The other Eid congregations will also be held at Anderkilla Shah-e-Jam-e-Masjid, Laidighi Maidan, Parade Corner, Agrabad Jamboori Field, Port Stadium Maidan, Railway Pologround Maidan, Dampara Metropolitan Police Line Masjid Maidan, Nasirabad Housing Society Maidan, Sugandha Jam-e-Masjid, Sheer-Shah Colony Maidan, Chittagong University Eidgah Maidan, Bahadderhat WAPDA Colony Maidan, Dewanbazar C and B Colony Maidan, Baizeed Bostami Darga Masjid Maidan, Chittagong Medical College Masjid Maidan and Baitus Sharaf Jam-e-Masjid Maidan.

Minister for Labour and Employment M A Mannan, Minister for Civil Aviation, Tourism, Housing and Public Works Engineer Mosharrat

Robbers reign: not even a dead body is spared

LAXMIPUR, Jan 7: Robbers didn't even falter in looting a coffin coming from abroad during mass robberies on transport carrying homebound people ahead of Eid, reports UNB.

The precious coffin fell in the thugs' hands near a bridge on the Alexander-Sonapur road in Ramgati thana on Thursday night police and locals said.

A gang of bandits swooped on passing vehicles one after another near Kolaichipa Bridge.

The gangsters attacked the pickup van carrying the body of Mohiuddin of Chamehar village, working in Oman since 1984, was driving past the spot at 9:30 pm and took away the coffin along with the body, the sources said.

They also looted Tk 38,000, seven tolas of gold and clothes worth Tk 1.55 lakh belonging to the deceased.

The coffin was brought to Bangladesh through the Bangladesh Embassy in Oman. Documents sent by the embassy along with the body show the list of belongings to the dead.

Mohiuddin's friend, Mintu, informed that he was carrying the body to his family after receiving it from Zia International Airport in Dhaka in the morning.

The expatriate was killed in a road accident on December 24. Meanwhile, passengers alleged, the same gang also committed robberies on most vehicles passing the same road, looting belongings worth Tk 9 lakh.

These flights will now depart Dhaka at 6:00 pm instead of 9:10 pm. Passengers departing on these flights have been advised to report at the airport at 4:00 pm.

For further details customers may contact British Airways airport office on 8914410 or 8912467 on January 9, 2000 after 4:00 pm the release added. The office will remain closed on January 8, 2000 due to Eid-ul-Fitr.

Clash leaves 10 injured in village in Kushtia

KUSHTIA, Jan 7: A clash between two groups of people at village Ghoramara in Daulatpur thana over irrigation water left 10 people injured on Wednesday, reports UNB.

Three of the injured were admitted to the thana health complex in critical condition. Separate cases were filed.

Several hundred Iranian hardline students held up pictures of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as they demonstrate yesterday in central Tehran to demand that Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi cancel a trip to Great Britain, following an alleged insult to the Islamic Republic in a London Times article. — AFP photo

At least 14 people were arrested in connection with the fighting, police said Thursday.

A resurgence of ethnic fighting in Nigeria has killed hundreds since President Olusegun Obasanjo was sworn in May 29, ending 15 years of military rule.

In Ibadan's Ojoo neighborhood, angry Yoruba residents beat to death a Hausa truck driver. Witnesses said the man tried to drive away from the scene of a collision with a bus in which several passengers were killed and injured.

Mobs then spread through the neighbourhood, burning and looting at least 30 homes. At least 10 people died in the mayhem, the Lagos Punch and Guardian newspapers reported Thursday.

In the Lagos neighborhood of Mushin, Yoruba nationalists wearing white bandannas launched vigilante attacks Wednesday against suspected thieves and drug dealers, witnesses said. Many of those lynched Wednesday were said to be Hausas.

Police said they could only confirm six killings, but witnesses and reporters counted at least 25 died. Corpses littered otherwise deserted streets on Thursday as police threw a heavy security cordon around the area, cruising in armored vehicles. More than 40 homes were destroyed.

The lynchings were carried out by members of the Oduua People's Congress, a collection of activists, Yoruba tribal leaders and militants advocating a

separate Yoruba homeland in southeastern Nigeria. A spokesman for the Oduua activists, who identified himself as Alhaji Lawal, declared an end to the attacks Thursday but warned the group would strike criminals again.

The word Oduua — sometimes spelled Odua — comes from the creator of humanity in Yoruba folklore and has been a rallying cry in recent clashes in Lagos suburbs, where Yorubas predominate.

Obasanjo, a former military leader and a Yoruba from the south, has been accused by many of his tribesmen of siding with Hausa northerners who have long dominated Nigeria's army.

Last November, Obasanjo ordered the arrests of anyone associated with Oduua after two days of fighting between Yoruba and Hausa traders left at least 27 people killed in a Lagos market.

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BA flights to London Jan 9, 10 rescheduled

British Airways flight BA144 departing Dhaka to London via Delhi on Sunday, January 9 and Monday, January 10 have been rescheduled due to ongoing bad weather in Delhi, says a press release.

These flights will now depart Dhaka at 6:00 pm instead of 9:10 pm. Passengers departing on these flights have been advised to report at the airport at 4:00 pm.

For further details customers may contact British Airways airport office on 8914410 or 8912467 on January 9, 2000 after 4:00 pm the release added. The office will remain closed on January 8, 2000 due to Eid-ul-Fitr.

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Russia suspends military activities in Grozny

MOSCOW, Jan 7: Russia has ordered a suspension of military operations in Grozny to protect civilians from the risks of chemical weapons deployed by Chechen guerrillas, a top general said Friday, reports AFP.

The suspension was ordered because of the risk of an ecological catastrophe and the need to protect defenceless civilians from the guerrillas' tactics, said General Gennady Troshev in comments broadcast on NTV television.

"We have been forced to suspend military operation throughout the Grozny areas for a single reason: there are still civilians held by force by the Chechen fighters, who are using them as human shields," Troshev said.

Unlike civilians, the military were able to don special gear to combat the menace, said Troshev, adding that Chechen guerrillas defending the rebel

capital had twice exploded chemical weapons in recent months.

Meanwhile two top generals leading the Russian crackdown in Chechnya have been replaced by their deputies, General Gennady Troshev said Friday in comments broadcast on NTV television.

Troshev said he would be replaced as commander of the eastern front by his deputy General Sergei Makarov, while western commander General Vladimir Shamanov would be replaced by his number two General Alexei Verbitsky.

"It is time to work with someone else," Troshev said. "General Sergei Makarov was my deputy and works well, and I am convinced that he will complete the tasks given him."

The time has come too for Shamanov. He has a deputy who doesn't work any worse than him, Troshev added.

Clinton, Barak, Shara begin trilateral meeting

SHEPHERDSTOWN, West Virginia, Jan 7: US President Bill Clinton on Friday brought Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shara together in an effort to break a deadlock surrounding the peace talks, reports AFP.

The meeting, which began at 11:00 a.m. (2000 BST) followed an impasse of more than 24 hours, White House officials said.

Before leaving Washington for this remote West Virginia resort, Clinton told reporters that Syrian and Israeli negotiators were "trying to find ways to resolve their differences."

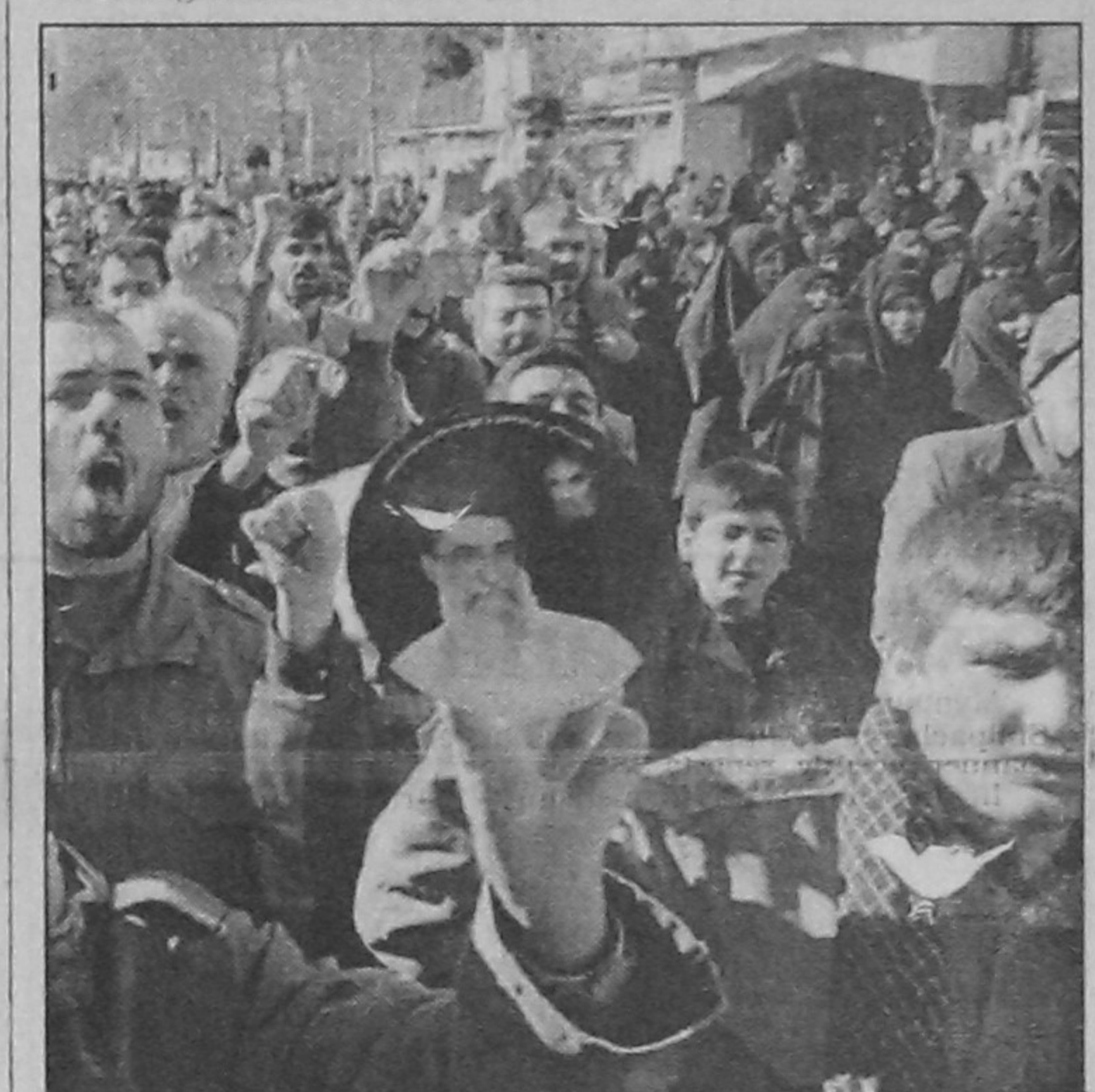
"This is a difficult, difficult set of negotiations, but we are

working in a steady way and I am satisfied that everybody is working in good faith," he said.

"I am trying to get people to keep in mind the big picture at the end. What we want in this case, what we hoped the Middle East will look like in five years, 10 years from now," he said.

The president was also in Shepherdstown on Thursday where he met separately with Barak and Shara, spending a total of seven hours here.

A Syrian official told AFP that Shara had told Clinton of "Syria's determination to exert all possible efforts to make these negotiations a success and to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region."



Several hundred Iranian hardline students held up pictures of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as they demonstrate yesterday in central Tehran to demand that Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi cancel a trip to Great Britain, following an alleged insult to the Islamic Republic in a London Times article. — AFP photo

35 killed as youths clash in two Nigerian cities

LAGOS, Jan 7: Armed youths fought pitched street battles in two Nigerian cities amid rising ethnic tensions in Africa's most populous nation, killing an estimated 35 people, witnesses said Thursday, reports AP.

The clashes between two of Nigeria's largest ethnic groups — Hausa and Yoruba — occurred Wednesday in Lagos, the commercial capital, and Ibadan, about 100 kilometers (60 miles) to the north. It was not immediately clear whether the incidents were linked.

At least 14 people were arrested in connection with the fighting, police said Thursday.

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