



# India rejects Pak offer for talks

NEW DELHI, Feb 5: India today rejected an offer by Pakistan's military ruler for a dialogue and said peace talks could begin only after Islamabad halted its support for Muslim separatists in disputed Kashmir, reports AFP.

"Our position remains unchanged," Indian Foreign Ministry spokesman R. Jassal said in response to General Pervez Musharraf's offer Friday to talk to diffuse tensions between his country and India and resolve their dispute over Kashmir.

The spokesman in New Delhi said it was Islamabad's responsibility to halt "cross-border terrorism" in the Indian zone of divided Kashmir, where Muslim secessionist violence has left more than 25,000 dead since 1989.

"We are not surprised by these kind of comments. We have always been the initiators of the dialogue," the spokesman told reporters.

"We have maintained the

position that Pakistan has to create the right atmosphere which includes cessation of cross-border terrorism and cessation of hostile propaganda against India," he added.

Musharraf in an interview with state-run Pakistani television said the dispute over Kashmir, the subject of two of the three wars between India and Pakistan since 1947, continued to be the chief cause of regional tensions.

"I don't want tension. I want peace. I am ready for dialogue with India but the talks must focus on Kashmir," said the Pakistani ruler, who described other bilateral disputes as only "irritants."

Kashmir is divided between the two countries and is claimed by both.

Pakistan denies India's charges of supporting "cross-border terrorism" in Kashmir, but has vowed diplomatic and political support for what it argues is a just struggle by Kashmiris for self-determination in

the Himalayan territory. The process of dialogue started during ousted premier Nawaz Sharif's government last year was derailed after a bitter military conflict in the Kargil region of Indian Kashmir last summer.

Tensions further escalated when Musharraf wrested power in an anti-Sharif coup in October in Islamabad.

Meanwhile, another report from Islamabad said, the leader of a major Pakistani militant group fighting to oust India from Kashmir vowed today to step up its holy war, or jihad, in the embattled Himalayan region.

"We shall continue our jihad with greater zeal to end Indian usurpation of Kashmir," Hafiz Mohammad Saeed, the head of Lashkar-e-Taiba, told thousands of supporters at a rally in the Pakistani capital.

Lashkar-e-Taiba is one of more than a dozen militant Pakistani and Kashmiri groups

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Angry demonstrators shout protests at Vienna riot police early yesterday after violence flared up outside the rightist Freedom Party headquarters in Vienna following the swearing-in ceremony of the new Austrian centre-right government.

— AFP photo

**BCL to resist demonstrations on DU campus today**

By DU Correspondent

Tension mounted on the Dhaka University campus yesterday as the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) decided to resist demonstrations during the presence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the campus.

Hasina is scheduled to come to the campus this afternoon to inaugurate the month-long Ekushey Book Fair at the Bangla Academy.

BNP-backed Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and left-leaning Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya have earlier announced they would demonstrate when Hasina comes to inaugurate the fair. The student organisations will also wear black clothes protesting Hasina's presence.

But BCL threatened to resist the opposition student fronts warning that "no demonstration or black flag showing would be allowed on the campus during Hasina's presence."

The BCL also brought out a procession and held a rally on the campus yesterday welcoming Hasina. Addressing the rally, the leaders warned that

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**Dengue fear looms large**

By DU Correspondent

Dengue Hemorrhagic fever may break out in an epidemic form in four major cities of the country if immediate measures are not taken to eradicate or control mosquitoes that carry dengue.

These vulnerable cities are as Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi.

Experts on vector-borne diseases expressed this fear at a symposium on "Disease Vector in Bangladesh and their Management" in the city yesterday.

Bangladesh Zoological Society organised the symposium at the Auditorium of Zoology Department of Dhaka University on the occasion of the 12th biennial national conference.

Principal Scientific Officer of IEDCR Touhid Uddin Ahmed (Reh) submitted a keynote paper on the topic, while Prof. Md. Mahmudul Ameen and Prof. M. Ismail Hossain took part at the discussion.

Experts feared that a large number of citizens of these four cities could be attacked by the Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever because the number of Aedes mosquito, responsible for the dangerous fever, has been increasing very fast in these places.

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## Alliance readies for tomorrow's jt rally

Hartal or barricade on Nov 9, 10

By Staff Correspondent

Components of the BNP-led four-party opposition alliance have started massive preparations for their "grand joint public meeting and procession" in the city tomorrow to protest the passage of the "black and repressive" Public Safety Act.

Sources in the four parties — BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote — said they have already instructed all their units and front organisations to ensure maximum attendance at the public meeting at Paltan Maidan at 3 pm.

Addressing the concluding session of the day-long annual conference of UNB district correspondents, he called upon the journalists to help tide over the actual situation now prevailing in the country.

Refuting the government's claim that the PSA will be used against criminals, Bhuiyan said, "It has been enacted to suppress the oust-government movement."

He said the existing laws are enough to deal with snatchers, hijackers and tempering of tenders.

The BNP leader said, the terrorists backed by the ruling party are engaged in such activities but the government remained silent to take action against these hoodlums.

The public meeting will be the first joint programme of the alliance since its formation on January 6 last year. The four parties have carried out simultaneous programmes so far.

As per the decision of the alliance, BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia, JP chief HM Ershad, Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Golam Azam and IOJ chief Azizul Haq will address the meeting from the same dais and lead the joint procession.

Khaleda Zia will announce a fresh agitation programme from the meeting. She is likely to announce a countrywide 36-hour hartal or road and rail barricade programme on February 9 and 10, alliance sources said.

Senior leaders of the alliance said passage of the "black and repressive" Public Safety Act and "bomb attack" at BNP offices in Dhaka and Chittagong have forced the four parties to come to a single platform and carry out movement jointly.

"All major programmes in future are likely to be carried out from a single platform and we are planning to go for agitation programmes jointly across the country," said a source.

The public meeting will be the first joint programme of the alliance since its formation on January 6 last year. The four parties have carried out simultaneous programmes so far.

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**APAC Dhaka city unit finalised**

The Dhaka City unit of All Party Action Council of the opposition alliance has almost been formed with Sadek Hosain Khoka MP of BNP as its convenor, reports BSS.

The council is likely to be announced in a couple of days. Khoka is also convenor of the city unit of BNP.

In forming the action council, the city unit of APAC has omitted some of the conditions set by the central liaison committee and jointly signed by four secretaries-general of BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote on January 18.

The city committee will have 151 members instead of 101 and three joint convenors though there was no option for joint convenor in the guidelines, party sources told the news agency yesterday. JP, Jamaat and IOJ were given joint convenors.

Jatiya Party has been given 37 members, Jamaat 20, IOJ 15, other smaller parties 10 while the rest went to BNP in the city APAC.

## WB happy over progress in 4 projects

The World Bank (WB) has ratified the performance of four projects being implemented on its own funds involving US dollar 602.4 million as satisfactory and a US dollar 59.10 million project as unsatisfactory, reports BSS.

The Bank's project status report, evaluating the performance of 24 ongoing projects, was dispatched to different government offices recently.

Reports of five of the projects were available at government offices. The report said the dollar 252.20 million Second Road Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project, 218.00 million dollar Second Rural Roads and Market Project, 44.40 million dollar Bangladesh Integrated Nutrition Project and 87.80 million dollar Coastal Embankment Rehabilitation Project are up to the mark while 59.10 million dollar Agricultural Research Management is not satisfactory.

The Project Development

Objectives (PDO) of the Second Road Rehabilitation Project are to reduce total travel cost of transport on the national and regional roads in the north-western and southwest parts of the country, support the implementation of the National Road Master Plan and increase private sector involvement in road rehabilitation and maintenance.

The Bank termed highly satisfactory the achievement of project Development Objectives (PDO) of the Second Road Rehabilitation Project and its implementation.

March 31 of the current year has been fixed as the closing date of the project.

The PDO of the Second Rural Roads and Market project is to help increase rural employment.

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It was dark, dank and cold yesterday as a thick canopy of clouds blanketed the city, with a total of 34 millimetres of rain until 9 p.m. last night. As usual, the city's poor bore the brunt of the late winter storm. Most rickshaws abandoned the streets, allowing autorickshaw drivers and other rickshaw-pullers to rake in the cash. Rain is also expected today all over the country. Temperature may drop by one or two degrees, and heavy fog will cover the river basins.

— Star photo by Sk Enamul Haq

## Let democracy work

Mahmud urges PM, Leader of Opposition

By Staff Reporter

The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition should let democracy function instead of promoting self-destruction of national politics, says the president of Bangladesh Economic Association.

Dr. Wahiduddin Mahmud, an advisor on the 1996 caretaker government, said failure to do so would prove Bangladesh is not ready for multi-party democracy.

"The political situation is becoming unstable . . . Whether the nation will bypass the crisis and progress along the path to democratic and economic prosperity depends on your wisdom and foresight," wrote Mahmud.

"However, the two parties must reach an understanding on the practical framework for

democratic practices . . . If you fail to do so this would, in a way, indicate Bangladesh's policies is not fit for multi-party democracy."

Mahmud said parliamentary democracy in the country has almost stopped functioning. Terrorists and their mentors are hiding behind politics because the democratic institutions are weak and confrontational.

The rule of law is deteriorating and the credibility and neutrality of administrative steps taken to curb terrorism have become a contentious political issue. People are losing confidence in democracy and the economic environment is deteriorating.

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## Garments trader shot dead in city

By Staff Correspondent

A trader in garments cut piece was shot dead at Banani Bazaar in the city yesterday.

The dead was identified as Raju Ahmed, a resident of Sheora Bazaar under Gulshan thana. The killing was sequel to a previous enmity, sources at Dhaka Medical College Hospital said quoting victim's family members.

Police recovered the body from Banani Bazaar and took it to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy.

Police however said that the killing followed an altercation between Raju and some youngsters when he went for a telephone call at Banani Bazaar.

One person identifying himself as Mintoo and a friend of

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## We have Moved

Offices of The Daily Star have moved to its new premises at **Karwan Bazar**. Please send in your mails and contact us at the following address and telephone numbers:

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## The Daily Star Anniversary Supplement

The Daily Star will bring out a 40-page Special Supplement on February 9, 2000 to mark its entry into the Tenth Year of publication. The Supplement which is designed to focus on the first quarter of the new millennium will carry scholarly writings about the directions we need to take as well as reports of our own correspondents highlighting some positive trends in specific areas of national life.

The price of the 56-page Daily Star anniversary issue, inclusive of the normal 16-page spread-out, remains unchanged at Tk 6.00.