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Pakistan test fires short range ballistic missile

ISLAMABAD, Feb 7: Pakistan today successfully test fired a short-range Hafi 1 surface-to-surface ballistic missile, the official news agency said, reports AFP.

The new design allows greater payload, improved accuracy and can successfully destroy targets at up to 100 kilometers (60 miles) using a variety of warheads, the Associated Press of Pakistan said.

The test was a sequel to several related tests conducted in previous years, the announcement said.

All Pakistan's neighbours were informed in advance about the missile test, the agency said.

The missile is an 'indigenous effort and contributes significantly to Pakistan's national security and deterrence strategy,' it said.

Night guard beaten to death in city

A night guard of Siddiq Bazar Market was beaten to death by a crowd for his alleged link with a robbery at a shop yesterday, reports UNB.

Alamgir, a 35-year-old resident of Siddiq Bazar in the old city, was working as night guard at the market. The owners of the Bazar suspected Alamgir's involvement in a robbery. The crowd beat him to death at 4 am.

BGMEA

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and a fresh initiative by the government will be more effective in this regard.

There is a great opportunity for Bangladesh to get some 'extra facilities' from the US during President Clinton's visit, Sinha observed.

As child labour has been eliminated from the readymade garments sector in the country, the government can seek a 'reward' for this from the US authorities, he observed during the meeting.

More than 53 per cent of Bangladesh's readymade garments exports go to US. During the first six months of the current financial year, readymade garments worth 795.84 million dollars and knitwear worth 170.75 million dollars were exported to the US.

There is also a sought immediate solution of some domestic issues, which 'tarnish the image of the country abroad and create problems in getting facilities from the US government'.

Another major issue is US government's pressure for withdrawal of restriction on trade union activities in the two Export Processing Zones (EPZs) in the country.

Following a petition from AFL-CIO, the US government has been pressurising the government to withdraw the restriction or lose the GSP (Generalised System of Preference) facilities, now enjoyed by Bangladesh's exports to US. AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labour and Congress for Industrial Organisation) is the largest trade union organisation in the US.

The BGMEA delegation observed that this issue should be resolved.

Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce M N Nabi, other high officials of the ministry, BGMEA Vice-president Anisul Haq and Chief Executive Officer Uzair Afzal were present during the meeting.

Hunger strike

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However, three Jamaat-e-Islami MPs will not take part in the hunger strike because of their 'religious point of view', but they are going to join the sit-in. Islami Oikya Jote which has no MP in the parliament will join the sit-in at Paltan Maidan.

Prior to the hunger strike, Khaleda Zia had a meeting with her party MPs at 29 Minto Road yesterday.

Eighty-three out of 110 BNP MPs attended the meeting that discussed preparation of today's hunger strike and next course of movement. Some 15 lawmakers spoke at the meeting.

A senior BNP leader who attended the meeting said the discussion mainly focused on today's hunger strike and the current movement. The MPs were in favour of launching a massive movement as soon as possible to topple the government, he added.

He said a good number of MPs elected outside Dhaka told the meeting that the enactment of the Public Safety Act has created negative reaction among the common people. They suggested a militant movement by making the PSA main issue of agitation.

The BNP chairperson asked the party MPs to go for a massive campaign against the Act and explain to the people why the BNP and other opposition parties are agitating against it. She also urged party MPs to join today's hunger strike and the combined mass public rally and procession in the capital on February 13.



Resilient rickshaws
Despite a recent crackdown on unauthorised rickshaws, their overwhelming numbers still clog city roads. Pictured here is Purana Paltan road yesterday.

Launch campaign to protect bio-diversity: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has asked for launching a campaign for protecting bio-diversity to fulfil the basic needs of human life, reports UNB.

To protect the bio-diversity and maintain natural equilibrium, safe coexistence of plant and animal is a precondition maintaining natural equilibrium, she said inaugurating the newly constructed National Herbarium Bhaban at Mirpur yesterday.

Hasina observed that the growing population and unplanned management are ruining bio-diversity.

Observing that floods, droughts and epidemics and cyclones are the result of ecological imbalance and adversity, she said, 'We have to create public awareness about protecting the natural balance for the sake of our existence.'

She said officials and employees of Bangladesh National Herbarium could play a positive role in protecting plant diversity. She called upon the Herbarium authority to make people aware about protecting various kinds of plants through a massive campaign.

She reiterated her government's commitment to protecting and developing and bio-diversity and environment and said Bangladesh is committed to the convention on bio-diversity (CBD) held in Brazil in 1992.

The main task of the herbarium is surveying, monitoring and preserving flora of Bangladesh and properly exploring natural plant wealth and its sustainable utilisation towards overall socioeconomic development and the strategic planning of national policy.

The herbarium holds a key position in development of natural wealth and its sustainable use. Environment and Forest Minister Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury told the function.

State Minister for Environment and Forest H N Ashiqur Rahman, environment and forest secretary Syed Margub Morshed, British High Commissioner in Dhaka Dr David Carter and Director of the Herbarium Dr M Motiur Rahman also addressed the function.

The herbarium is identifying and collecting species of trees and herbs that are under threat of extinction. The collection

of the herbarium has now over one lakh species.

The Bangladesh National Herbarium was established by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on July 1, 1975.

The National Herbarium Bhaban, furnished with modern equipment, has the capacity to preserve more than five lakh species. The construction of the building has been completed with Tk 10.40 crore financial assistance of the Department for International Development (DFID) of the British government.

A herbarium is a storehouse of information about plants preserved in form of dried specimens known as herbarium specimens. The herbarium botanists collect and collate knowledge of plants, organise it and make it ready available to others.

The new herbarium is modern and well-equipped, it is as good as any in the region, officials said.

Police camp looted in Rajbari

RAJBARI, Feb 7: A police camp on the bank of the Padma River in Sadar thana was looted by armed terrorists today, reports UNB.

Six rifles, one SMG, one SLR and ammunition were stolen from the Jovkura camp, 8 kilometres from the Rajbari district headquarters. Two constables were shot in the attack.

Locals said about 15 gunmen arrived in a motor boat and attacked the camp from all sides at about 5 pm.

More than 100 shots were heard during the attack, said a resident, who requested anonymity. It was not clear if police in the camp fired to repulse the attack.

Constables Faruq Khalasi was shot in the chest and Ansar Chand Ali in the waist. They were rushed to Rajbari Sadar Hospital and shifted later to Faridpur Medical College Hospital in serious condition.

The camp was manned by 8 police. It was not clear how many of them were in the camp at the time of the attack.

BNP: Body

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The explosion, he did not see the four BNP activists — Shahid, Pichchi, Falash and Mohsin — who were staying at the Jatiyabadi Krishak Dal office, which is housed in the party headquarters. There was only bloodstain on the floor and the doors and windows were damaged.

Rizvi is the third person to have made judicial statement regarding the blast at the BNP headquarters. Two others — Dailuddin, a computer operator at the BNP office, and Forkan Howlader Ripon, another attendant — earlier made judicial statement.

Twelve people were picked up from the party headquarters and adjacent areas soon after the blast.

Rizvi and eight others were sent to the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday after being produced before the CMM's Court the same day.

EC to prepare fresh voters' list from Mar

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission has decided to prepare a fresh voters' list by October this year. The Commission will begin the job early next month.

"We will start preparing a fresh electoral roll from early March and try to finish it by October," said the acting Chief Election Commissioner, Moshataque Ahmed Chowdhury. "Our people will go from door-to-door for preparing the fresh roll."

Meanwhile, the EC has started consulting political parties as to how to prepare a precise voters' list. The Commission has already discussed the issue with the Left Democratic Front, Gano Forum on Sunday and with Ganatantri Party yesterday. Although invited, the Islami Oikya Jote did not show up yesterday.

"We would also have discussions with other parties including the Awami League and BNP," the acting CEO said. The Commission had issued separate invitation letters to the AL, BNP, Jatiya Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday.

APSA on strike

General students' memo to DC for reopening CU

From CU Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Feb 7: Shibir-led All Party Student Alliance (APSA) made a human chain in front of the Chittagong Press Club this afternoon to press home its demand for removal of VC, Pro-VC, Proctor and Provosts of the Chittagong University (CU).

Meanwhile, APSA continued strike at the CU for seventh day today. Classes and scheduled examinations were not held but offices at the administrative building remained open during the strike. No shuttle train or bus carrying students and teachers plied between campus and the city.

APSA began strike for an indefinite period on February 1 after a 17-day siege programme on the campus two press home its demands for release of 54 Shibir activists and arrest of the killers of two Shibir activists.

Earlier today general students of the university under the banner of General Student Council submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Chittagong demanding immediate reopening of the University.

The Council will also submit a memorandum to the Vice-Chancellor of the university tomorrow.

Remove confusion

From page 1

repressive law. To counter the move, you have to go to the people and project the positive aspects of the law," the PM told her colleagues.

"We shall launch a massive campaign to refute BNP's arguments that the law has curtailed human rights of the citizens," a Cabinet member said after the PM's instruction. "We would hold rallies across the country and go to the press to counter the opposition propaganda."

Hijack drama: 5 more freed, negotiations open

STANSTED (England), Feb 7: Police launched urgent negotiations today with hijackers who seized an Afghan passenger airliner and forced it across Central Asia and Europe. Authorities said five of the remaining 165 hostages were freed at Stansted Airport outside London, reports AP.

"We are at a very critical stage in our negotiations," said John Broughton, assistant chief constable of the Essex Police.

No reason was disclosed for releasing the two men, one woman and two children.

Earlier, the hijackers had released a total of 22 hostages in return for supplies during stops in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Russia before arriving at Stansted shortly after 2 am local time.

The hijackers' political demands, if any, were not disclosed. But police said negotiations had been discussing the delivery of food, toiletries and unspecified medical equipment.

Authorities said they could not confirm the nationalities of the remaining 160 hostages aboard the Boeing 727. They had disclosed earlier that one passenger has a kidney illness that requires special treatment, but police spokeswoman Tin Starling said she did not know

if that passenger was among those released.

The number of hijackers was not immediately clear.

The state-run Ariana Airlines plane was seized shortly after takeoff early Sunday on a domestic flight from the Afghan capital, Kabul, to the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif.

The airliner remained parked about 1 kilometre from Stansted's main terminal.

When planes have been hijacked and crews have been ordered to land in Britain, it has become routine to route them to Stansted, about 40 kms north of London. Planes can be kept well away from the terminal building and other aircraft during negotiations.

Broughton said Britain's Foreign Office was working in "close collaboration" today with several other governments, but would not be more specific.

"It is not the UK's policy to allow aircraft to take off again once landed," he noted.

An emergency official in Kazakhstan said there were 20 hijackers aboard, but three passengers released there said eight to 10 hijackers were aboard.

The hijackers released nine passengers in Moscow, but made no political demands,

A diplomat familiar with the negotiations in Moscow, however, said the hijackers sought to free a prisoner held in the Afghan city of Kandahar.

Afghan media speculated the hijackers were dissidents who wanted the release of Ismail Khan, a former regional governor who has been held since 1997 by Afghanistan's ruling Taliban movement. Khan is a member of Afghanistan's opposition alliance, which still rules roughly 10 per cent of the war shattered country.

Yet Taliban officials have said repeatedly that they have not received a demand for Khan's release, and the Afghan opposition has denied any involvement in the hijacking. It faxed a formal statement to The Associated Press saying that it "adamantly condemns the hijacking."

The hijacking comes six weeks after an eight-day hijacking of an Indian Airlines plane ended peacefully in southern Afghanistan. The hijackers in that case freed their hostages after India released three pro-Kashmiri militants from jail.

Russian security service spokesman Alexander Zdanovich told reporters at Sheremetyevo-1 airport.

HC: Ban tobacco

From page 1

tobacco and cigarette producing companies have been printing this statutory warning in so small letters that it fails to draw attention of any one. This is similar to deceiving, Sadat argued.

At a hearing both the sides, the bench said uncontrolled consumption of tobacco products not only harms the consumers but also seriously damages the health of people around them. The Bench also quoted from research papers on effects of tobacco consumption.

It is also anti-constitutional on the part of the government to remain silent on this issue, the Bench said. People's fundamental

rights to lead a happy and healthy life and live in a pollution-free environment have been ensured in Section 31 and 32 of the Constitution, the Bench said.

The Bench further ordered the government that prior to enactment of those laws, the government will ensure that the statutory warning - 'Tobacco is injurious to health' - shall be clearly visible on packets. Besides, the statutory warning shall be audible in advertisement of tobacco products in the electronic media like television, radio and cinema.

The HC also ordered the government to take steps against smoking at public places.

Gunfight with police

Four alleged muggers held in Chittagong

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Feb 7: Police arrested four alleged muggers after an exchange of fire from Nasirabad area last night.

Two of the arrested muggers were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital with bullet injuries.

The gunfight began at 10 pm at Nasirabad near GEC crossing when patrol police challenged the muggers who allegedly snatched money from a pedestrian earlier.

The muggers opened fire and threw cocktails at police to escape arrest.

Police returned fire at the muggers and at one stage caught all of them.

Police also seized the auto-rickshaw carrying the muggers.

SKOP strike at Patenga from February 13

From Our Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Feb 7: Sramik Karmachary Oikya Parishad (SKOP), Chittagong, has called an indefinite strike by truck, tank-lorry and oil tanker workers at Patenga Industrial Area from February 13 to realise its eight-point demand.

It was announced at a press conference at local press club here today demanding reappointment of Jamuna CSA leader Fazlur Rahman, withdrawal of 'false cases' filed against leaders and activists of transport workers unions, cancellation of the decision of setting up pipeline for carrying oil, announcement and implementation of Wage Commission report as per agreement with SKOP and introduction of trade union at Export Processing Zones.

Women not the weaker sex

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Feb 7: A girl student of Government BM College stabbed a male student when he allegedly tried to rape her at the Aswini Kumar Degree hostel of the college at about 10:30 am today.

The girl, an Honours student of the Bengali department went to Champak Mondal, a B.Ed student of Barisal B.Ed College at the Room No 319 of the hostel at 10:30 am reportedly to collect some notes.

Champak attempted to rape her, she alleged. She fought back, stabbing Champak with a knife she had, before fleeing the scene.

She also sought help of police on the campus as a group of students chased her. Police took her to the principal of the college. Later police arrested her and sent to the court. The knife was also seized. She is now in jail hayat.

Champak, was residing in the hostel illegally, police said. Seriously injured Champak was admitted to Barisal Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) under police custody.

Two cases, one by the girl and the other by Champak, were filed with Kotwali thana in this connection today.

8 killed

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condition, said a doctor. Most of the injured were found lying on the floor of KMCH with no emergency medical treatment due to scarcity of life saving drugs, relatives of the victims alleged.



Naripakkho activists carrying the South East Asian Anti-Tobacco (SEAAT) Flame at a rally near Jatiya Press Club yesterday. They also distributed leaflets among the people warning them against the hazards of smoking. —Star photo

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The Branch has been shifted on Monday, the 30th January, '2000

Attentions are drawn to our valued clients and patrons.

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