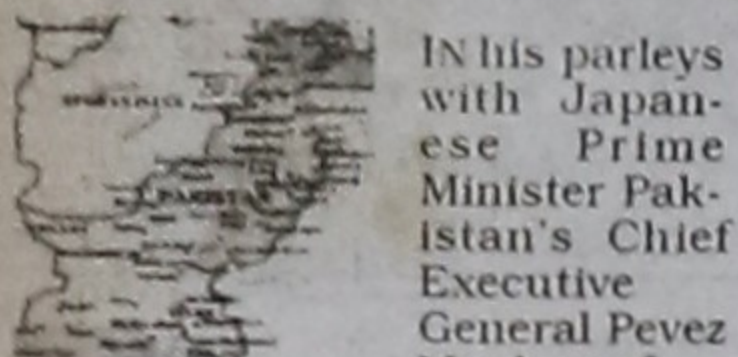


Pakistan

Doctrine of Controlled Democracy

By Mansoor Mamoon



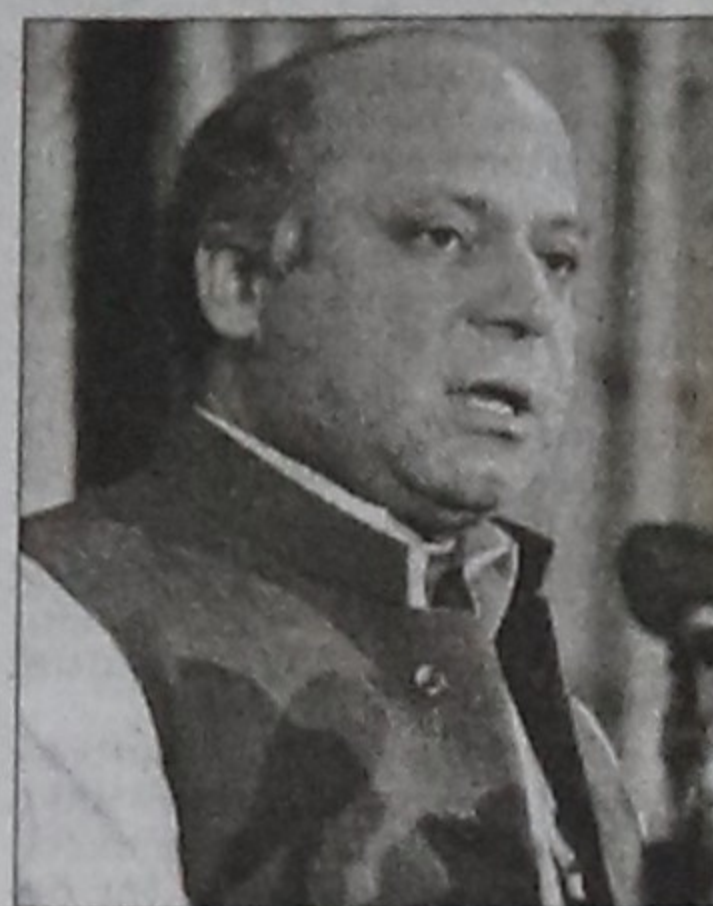
In his parleys with Japanese Prime Minister Pak-istan's Chief Executive General Pervez Musharraf said that his aim was to 'introduce a new trend of politics in his country' and that he hoped to succeed in his effort. In a nationwide broadcast on August 14 the military ruler, who in a bloodless coup toppled the elected government of Nawaz Sharif on October 12 last year, pledged that he would lead his nation to what he termed as 'genuine democracy' from the grassroots upwards, in which the people would have direct participatory role. According to his plan there would be local bodies' polls starting from December this year. The devolution plan would revive community assemblies and transfer power from the federated provinces to the village level. The army strongman said he would abide by a Supreme Court ruling which validated his coup and gave him until October 12, 2002 to hold general elections. But he refused to give a roadmap to Pakistan's return to civilian rule and transfer of power.

He took the occasion for blasting the army's traditional enemy - the politicians - saying, "It is the elite that has exploited and abused the immense potential of the country for their petty personal gains in total disregard of greater national interest." Earlier, in an interview with BBC's Talking Points Gene, Musharraf made it clear that in the new political set-up there would be no place for such politicians as Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto, both of whom he said were tested and both had failed to deliver. Under a decree they have been barred from leading their respective parties - the Pakistan

Muslim League and the Pakistan People's party. Nawaz is now languishing in Attock Fort with long prison sentences, while his wife Kulsum Nawaz is trying to drum up support for her jailed husband. But her attempts are rather feeble compared to the strength of the formidable army.

Benazir Bhutto, on the other hand, has preferred self-exile rather than returning to the country to serve the prison sentence awarded during the tenure of Nawaz for corruption. The taking over of power in Pakistan by General Musharraf has been described as due to the doctrine of necessity and its reinstitution of Ayub Khan's assumption of presidency on October 27, 1958 which was at that also described as the offshoot of the doctrine of state necessity. The tone and tenor of Musharraf are the same as those of Ayub Khan. When Ayub staged his coup, his plea had also been no different. He was also equally disdainful against the politicians describing them as corrupt, inept and absolutely incapable of leading the country. He also banned the politicians from participating in elections under various restrictive decrees. Ayub introduced a new brand of democracy called the basic democracy or guided democracy which he called the grassroots in character and formed an electoral college with the Union Council Chairmen and members.

The history of Pakistan is replete with intrigues, palace conspiracies and coups. It started right from the assassination of Pakistan's first Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan. When Ghulam Muhammad, a technocrat suffering from partial paralysis, was made the Governor General, plotting against democratic rule in Pakistan started. In his autobiography Friends, Not Masters, Ayub claimed that he was asked to take over power back



in 1953 but he refrained from doing so for what he described as the sake of democracy. But the very same Ayub did not hesitate to usurp power when elections were at the corner. Possibly, he was waiting for the armed forces to gain sufficient strength both in respect of man and materials raising the bogey of 'liberating Kashmir' from Indian occupation. The status of Kashmir remained as it was in 1948 but the victim had been Pakistan's fledgling democracy. Seventy percent of Pakistan's budget was being spent for the armed forces. In 1956 Ayub was supposed to retire from active services as the C-in-C. But he was given extension not once but twice, the last one came in July 1958, some three months before he staged the ominous coup.

Democracy in Pakistan was never given a fair chance and the short-lived 1956 constitution also did not equally meet the aspirations of the five provinces which were then turned into two provinces ostensibly as a subtle ploy to subdue the eastern wing. Governments fell like nine pins. Instability stalked the land. There were inter-caste fights and squabbles among politicians. When Ayub stepped in he had

an easy walk-over and held the sway for long one decade. When under mounting public discontent Ayub was forced to resign he handed over power to another General, Yahya Khan. Ayub thus again acted against the constitutional provisions. According to the constitution he himself had enforced power was to be handed over to the Speaker.

As the junta refused to honour the verdict of the 1970 general elections - the first and last in united Pakistan - in which Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Awami League had emerged as the single majority party - there was spontaneous mass uprising in the erstwhile East Pakistan. In the face of brutal army crackdown the Bengalis took up arms and fought the marauding Pakistani troops finally with the help of allied Indian forces curved out an independent homeland of their own. It was an ignominious defeat for Pakistan whose army were so long boastful of their invincibility. The country was turmented and dismembered - the direct result of the negation of inalienable democratic rights to the people.

From 1972 to 77 the army in Pakistan had to maintain a low profile under duress in view of their defeat in Bangladesh. But

after the post-election rioting general Zia ul Haque July 5, 1977 removed Bhutto, who was a product of Ayub and captured power. In his vengeance he sent Bhutto to the gallows, introduced Islamisation and ruled the country for long eleven years putting it back to the medieval era. A blast ended his life along with that of some senior generals who were travelling in the same plane.

Soon the civilian government was installed but another bureaucrat Ghulam Ishaq Khan as President retained the power of dismissal of the elected governments. The end result was like the seat of power was turned into a musical chair rotating between Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif. Under cover of civilian rules the army were in fact pulling the strings. When Nawaz - nurtured and groomed by Ziaul Haque - posed to be too smart for the army General Pervez Musharraf in a dramatic move cut short his rule abruptly. If Nawaz had really intended to skyjack the plane carrying the General in his flight from Colombo to Karachi, the General in his turn had in fact hijacked his government and semblance of democracy in Pakistan. Hence during the 53

years of Pakistan's history one Prime Minister was assassinated, another Prime Minister was executed, one military dictator (Yahya Khan) was put under house arrest, another military dictator (Ziaul Haq) plane burst into flame killing him instantly, no civilian government that followed was allowed to complete its term and Prime Ministers were dismissed at the whims and caprices of the Presidents. Also there were so far four constitutions and another in the process of being promulgated. Such topsy turvey was unheard of in any other South Asian country.

Pakistanis had rarely witnessed peaceful transfer of power in their long more than half a century of nationhood. Democracy, therefore, could not gain ground in Pakistan and there is no indication that it can in future with the situation remaining as it is in the country.

Indications are indeed rife that General Pervez Musharraf will follow the footsteps of his predecessors - Ayub Khan and Ziaul Haque - and is likely to stay in power longer than is expected. He has already mapped out his strategy when he said that he would introduce new brand of politics - genuine democracy - where the tested politicians, who were in power in the past, would have no place. Had he a short time strategy he would not have gone for introducing what he termed as grassroots or bottom up devolution of power when the time will be opportune he will also assume a quasi-civilian coating for legalising his regime, form his own band of political party and handpick persons loyal to him - Pakistan is, therefore, seemingly in a vicious trap and conundrum of authoritarian rule and under the tentacle of army with democracy remaining as elusive as it had been in the past.

Says...

Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh: "What I have said, said it for the people, so that they can get justice and the rule of law can be established in the country." Gen. Parvez Musharraf, Chief Executive of Pakistan: "Survival of Pakistan lies in its economic revival and for economic revival we need to revive the industry, specially the textile sector...I have hosted a number of small lunches and dinners to discuss the matter with the Pakistani businessmen and find out what can be done to revive the confidence of the investors." Javed Jabbar, Pak Federal Information Minister: "Chief Executive Gen. Pervez Musharraf was sincere to resolve masses' problems. The government would eliminate corruption from politics and corrupt politicians would never be allowed to come in power at any cost." Yoshio Mori, Prime Minister of Japan: "It is extremely important that both India and Pakistan sign the CTBT towards preventing nuclear proliferation...I hope to see progress during my visit in this end...The relationship between India and Pakistan is important to establish peace and stability in the region...I strongly hope that both India and Pakistan will overcome their difficulties and resume dialogue." Mamta Kulkarni, Indian film actress: "Manisha would be finished in a year." Abida Hussain, member of PML (Nawaz Sharif): "Kulsoom should learn lessons from Nusrat Bhutto." Lord Nazir Ahmed, British Parliamentarian: "Without Pakistan, it is impossible to resolve Kashmir issue." Bal Thackeray, Shiv Sena supremo in India, while criticising Farook Abdullah: "He is not a patriot. He wants to be called a prime minister. Kashmir is ours, so how can you have two prime ministers?"

People

Pak Trio Face Sex Probe

PAKISTAN cricket coach Javed Miandad is to submit a report on alleged sexual misconduct by three international players. The Pakistan Cricket Board chief General Tauqir Zia asked Miandad to produce a report on the incident which took place prior to the team leaving for Singapore for a tri-nation one-day series. Three members of the Pakistani cricket team allegedly invited women into their hotel rooms in Lahore.

Bangla's Rolling Stones

It's Bangla rock's second coming. But unlike in Bangladesh it's still to become a viable financial success in West Bengal. Don't call it hard rock. Don't call it acid. Don't even call it neo-fusion. Some of them say they play 'band' music. Others sneer saying 'band' music sounds infra-dig, and they play folk rock. They also insist the Rolling Stones are a folk-rock

act. Never mind. A few others say they play neither rock, nor grunge, nor folk. Just something indefinably "different". What it's, straight up, is 'Bangla' rock. spirited calow vocals belting out homespun lyrics about life, love, lollipop and loneliness set to a smorgasbord of largely borrowed - or inspired - sounds. It's also the current rage in Bengal.

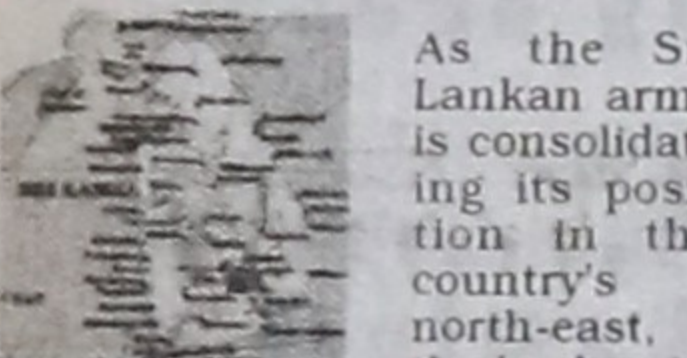
Kumarangalam Passes Away

The Union Power Minister, P.R. Kumarangalam who was battling for life in the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) for the past one week, died following a massive heart attack. He was cremated with full State honours in the electric crematorium at Nigambodh Ghat in the evening. The last rites were performed by his 21-year-old son.

Sri Lanka

More than Conflict Resolution

By Navine Murshid



Colombo have been busy with the proposed constitutional reforms. In these circumstances, a two-pronged strategy of 'war for peace', and 'consensus for peace' was being simultaneously waged by the Lankan government to end the ethnic crisis. However, there was a stalemate on both fronts - the government and Tamil Tigers.

For President Chandrika Kumaratunga, it was a personal setback when her bid for a constitutional change - stipulating a quasi-federal state structure and devolution of power in the form of granting autonomy to Tamil-dominated north-east - failed to get the required two-thirds majority in parliament. Then she decided to abandon her plan for the time being and decided to wait describing it as a long-term strategy for ending the strife.

The proposed new constitu-

tion sought a merger of the Tamil-dominated north-eastern provinces with a provision for interim council and a referendum subsequently to decide whether the eastern and northern units would stand de-linked or not. This referendum was to facilitate the Sinhalese and Muslims to decide whether they wanted to remain in the merged region or would like to have a separate eastern province where they are almost in the majority. But the Tamil leadership in parliament opposed this provision of future delinking of the two regions claiming that colonisation by the Sinhalese has given them this advantage to which they cannot reconcile.

The opposition United National Party (UNP) has also opposed the devolution of power. According to the draft constitution the Prime Minister was to be given the power of the Chief Executive, but Chandrika would retain presidency with executive powers for a period of six years (up to 2005). Her argument was that as the country is passing through a war situation it needs a strong president in the interim period till the in-

urgency comes to an end. The UNP termed it as contradictory and a clear negation of devolution. Kumaratunga also angered the LITE by asking them to enter into a meaningful dialogue on the devolution package by giving up what she termed as its 'murderous and terrorist ways'.

Chandrika's setback is going to have significant and substantial impact for the People's Alliance (PA) in the upcoming parliamentary elections on October 10. Chandrika's strategy was to marginalise LITE separatists through the creation of autonomous north-east. She thought her moves will create fissure among Lankan Tamils who in increasing numbers may withdraw their support from LITE and integrate themselves with Federal State structure, thus in the long run the insurgency will die down.

In the meantime, Kumaratunga has dissolved the parliament on August 18 and announced a general election on October 10, cancelling her earlier plan to reform the country's electoral system. While she still seems adamant on her

plans, the leader of the UNP, Raul Wickremesinghe has already launched his party's campaign for general elections by accusing the government of attempting to subvert democracy in her hurry to introduce a new constitution and of failure on the military and economic fronts. "Only the UNP has the teams, a track-record of efficient management of the country, the vision and the plan to rebuild this nation which the People's Alliance has ruined," he was quoted to have said.

He also claimed that when his party handed over the reins of government to the PA in 1994, the war was contained to the north-east and the economy was healthy, but "today people are finding it difficult to have three full meals a day, unemployment is rampant and the war has spread to all parts of the country", predicting that "this is going to be the PA's last waltz."

Although Sri Lanka has the best human development record among the South Asian nations, according to the UN, but people in Sri Lanka would expect more than conflict resolution from the political parties. The latest

UN human development report places Sri Lanka at the 84th position in the world human development index.

Sri Lankan analysts say people now want to see some economic development. Increase in the cost of living has assumed alarming dimension in the recent past and it is always being linked or attributed to the ongoing war in the north-east. Successive governments have spent billions of rupees in the war effort. Apart from this mismanagement of the country's economy, alleged dishonesty among ministers and members of parliament, setting up Provincial Councils, colossal waste of public funds etc., are also major factors having direct impact on the high cost of living. People seem to be aware of the political manipulations. They do not want to suffer in silence any more with the high cost of living. Questions are being raised on government's spending on Provincial Councils and the number of ministries every year.

At this juncture candidates are duty-bound to explain the public as to what benefit the

people of Sri Lanka have derived since the establishment of Provincial Council and also by increasing the number of ministries and deputy ministries. These establishments, according to analysts, are only to safeguard the interest of the politicians and their kith and kin at the expense of the people. The commoners now want to know from their electoral candidates about their position with regard to their Provincial Councils.

Although the inflation being brought down from 16 to 5 per cent and the budget deficit from 10.5 GDP to 8 per cent the benefit of such achievements have, so far, not reached the people. Life is becoming tougher. Due to corruption practiced at the high level by the political circles and also with the unfulfilled promises on various important national issues recently there is move by some quarters to spoil their valuable votes to express their dissatisfaction. There is serious erosion of confidence in politicians which is ultimately going to harm the democratic process. Therefore the upcoming elections are very important for the politicians to garner public support.

India-China

On the Upswing

By Dinkar Shukla

THE recent visit to China by Indian President K R Narayanan of India has yielded a positive outcome. His personal inter-action with his host, President Jiang Zemin and other Chinese leaders, has first and foremost helped remove the chill in India-China relationship that had set in after India conducted nuclear tests at Pokharan in May, 1998. The red carpet was accorded to Narayanan in Beijing and other places amply demonstrates that the process of normalization of ties is back on the rails.

Beijing had taken an unusually strong view of the Pokharan nuclear tests, believing that India's nuclear programme is directed against it. However, it now appears to be coming to terms with the reality of India's nuclear programme, which aims at putting into place a minimum nuclear deterrence. India's declared intention of 'No First Use' is a proof of her peaceful nuclear intentions. It is, therefore, not surprise that Pokharan tests did not figure in the discussions held during President Narayanan's visit.

On his part, Marayanan also refrained from making any reference to the issue of Beijing's assistance to Pakistan's nuclear and missile programmes. By mutual consent, contentious and security-related issues were assigned to the recently constituted Security Dialogue between the two countries. Observers feel that by not raising contentious issues, leaders of both embarking upon the path of friendly and cooperative relationship.

Another positive feature of the visit has been the Chinese endorsement of India's call for global action against terrorism. China for the first time, came out forcefully, at the highest level, against terrorism when President Jiang joined Narayanan in the call for greater international cooperation in combating this menace. The two leaders agreed that there is no justification in using terrorism as a political tool.

President Narayanan also held comprehensive discussions with Prime Minister Zhu Rongji, Chairman of the National People's Congress Li Peng, Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan, Head of the People's Political Consultative Committee Li Ruihan, and other senior party and government leaders. The discussions covered a wide range of bilateral

issues. The two sides agreed on greater cooperation on global issues. Most importantly, both countries stand for a more pluralistic world order, seeking an end to the instability of the present unipolar world.

Narayanan also conveyed to his host India's sense of urgency in seeing an early resolution of the long-standing border issue between the two countries. Responding to the Chinese position that problems should better be resolved now than be left over for history. In his address to the Beijing University, President Narayanan observed that the two neighbours should strive to make it a boundary of eternal peace, friendship and cooperation. In his discussions, he stressed upon the need to accelerate the negotiations on delineating the Line of Actual Control so that there could be a forward movement towards resolution of the border issue. However, any impact of these exhortations will only become apparent at the next round of the Joint Working Group set up to resolve the border issue.

On bilateral issues, the two sides had strikingly similar views on the need to make a fresh beginning in mutual cooperation. President Jiang wanted the two neighbours to "scale new heights" and work for constructive cooperation in the 21st century. Narayanan stressed that cooperation between the two nations is a historic necessity. He went on to echo the sentiments of the supreme Chinese leader, Deng Xiaoping by saying that "Asia would not realize her destiny until India and China learn to cooperate with each other". Both sides fully acknowledged that opportunities for cooperation exist in the bilateral, regional as well as in the international fields.

India attaches importance to her relations with China. Except for the brief, post-Pokharan interregnum, the process of normalization of ties with China began in 1988, after the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China, and has proceeded satisfactorily so far. Important recent landmarks in this process are the visits by External Affairs Minister Shri Jaswant Singh and President Shri K R Narayanan to China in June, 1999.

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The Region This Week

Compiled by Navine Murshid

Apology for war crime

THE Joint Action Committee for Peoples Rights, Lahore, has demanded of the Pakistani military government to formally apologise to the people of Bangladesh for the atrocities committed by the Pakistani army during the War of Liberation of 1971. A resolution to this effect was unanimously adopted at a largely attended seminar on "The theme of Hamood-ur-Rahman Report and Tasks for Justice" at Lahore Press Club on Monday.

Rocking Nepal

SEVERAL bombs went off in Kathmandu and throughout the country late Wednesday, including at the residence of Home Minister Govinda Raj Joshi, but no has been reported injured. A small bomb exploded at about 7 p.m. Wednesday evening just outside the residence of Home Minister Joshi. All it did was shatter a window pane. Another explosion went off in Patan, and near the Mahendra Police station. Bombs also went off in Terhathum, Dhankuta, Kalyaia and Saptari.

Mori tours South Asia

THE Japanese Prime Minister, Yoshio Mori, has begun an eight-day visit to South Asia which will take him to Nepal and Bangladesh, as well as India and Pakistan. The visit comes despite continuing Japanese economic sanctions imposed on India and Pakistan after their nuclear weapons tests two years ago. South Asia has been something of a neglected region for Japan, which has focused on its more important trading relations with East Asia, as well as the United States and Europe.

Editor shot dead

A lawmaker, a newspaper editor and five others were killed in three separate incidents since Sunday in India's northeastern region. Unidentified gunmen shot dead editor Braja Mohan Singh in Manipur late on Sunday night, police said. The editor was travelling on his motorbike along with a friend when the gunmen fired at him from their automatic weapons. A bullet hit his head and he died on the spot, a police official said. Singh, editor of "Manipur News", was killed in the state capital Imphal.

Sex workers await decision

BANGLADESH is waiting for a final decision on a highly controversial court case - to decide whether prostitution is legal or not. In May, the High Court ruled that it was legal and that the government had been wrong in evicting thousands of prostitutes from brothels in Dhaka the previous year. Now the Supreme Court is about to make a final decision and the community is bitterly divided about the outcome.

So Much for Protection



A half-day strike called by opposition parties in Bangladesh has passed off peacefully. Many shops and businesses have reopened since the strike ended. The strike - the latest of many - was in protest at the murder of a lawyer and opposition activist on Sunday and recent increases in the price of petrol. The nationwide protest was called by an alliance of four opposition parties, led by the Bangladesh National Party (BNP).

Women sign up

OFFICIALS in Bangladesh say they have received a huge number of applications from women for commissions in the country's army. Recently the military changed its longstanding policy and decided to allow female officers in all but combat roles. A newspaper report said nearly 15,000 applications have been received, more than twice the number for male applicants.

Jayalalitha charged

THE former chief minister of Tamil Nadu, Jayalalitha Jayaram, has been charged with a further case of corruption relating to her time in office between 1991 and 1996. The charge concerns allegations that she used her position to influence the sale of shares from a government-run petrochemicals company. Jayalalitha, a former film star, is already appealing against two earlier convictions for corruption.

Fresh proposal

A Kashmiri separatist leader has offered to mediate between India and Pakistan as part of a peace effort in the troubled region. Abdul Ghahar Bhat, who heads an alliance of Kashmiri separatists, said that his party could facilitate talks between India and Pakistan. India has refused to talk to Pakistan because it says Islamabad support's violence in Kashmir - a charge which has been consistently denied.

IOC rejects Taleban plea

THE International Olympic Committee (IOC) has rejected an appeal by Afghanistan's Taleban movement to be allowed to send a team to the Sydney Olympics next month. The IOC says a delegation from the Taleban travelled to Lausanne to make the request, but were told that their team cannot participate.

Strike paralyses Assam

THE north-eastern Indian state of Assam has been paralysed by a general strike in protest against separatist violence in the region. Most shops and businesses, financial and educational institutions in the state capital, Guwahati, have remained closed, and many long distance trains have been cancelled or postponed. The strike was called by the Bodo Literary Association Bodo Salitva Sabha following the killing of its president, Bineshwar Brahma, by separatist rebels on Saturday.

Fuel price rises

OPPOSITION parties in Bangladesh have staged demonstrations to protest against rising prices for fuel and gas. The government brought in the increase last week in an attempt to compensate what it said were heavy losses caused by high world oil prices. Organisers say the decision will hit the poor hardest and that many people will find it impossible to spend extra money on the necessary fuel and gas.