

# India reduces bunkers, checkpoints in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, India, Dec 3 : Indian troops have started reducing security checkpoints in Kashmir after New Delhi offered a ceasefire for the holy Muslim month of Ramadan, the state's police chief said today, reports AFP.

The Indian army removed six checkpoints in the border towns of northern Kashmir recently, Kashmir police chief Ashok Suri said.

"I have asked the army and paramilitary that we should remove the barriers in the holy month of Ramadan to facilitate the free movement of people."

Several of the barriers and road blocks have been removed. Vehicle checking and frisking has been stopped.

Suri, however, pointed out that although "Combat operations against militants in the state

stood suspended during the Ramadan ceasefire, normal policing against criminal activities would continue."

"Where ever we feel we can remove the security bunkers we are doing that, but at several places locals want us (to be there), as militants will again start using our houses as hide-outs," Suri said.

Border guards have removed six bunkers from the outskirts of Srinagar, the state summer capital, said R.P. Singh, Deputy Inspector General of the Border Security Force (BSF).

Singh said BSF troops stopped vehicles in Srinagar late Saturday to offer water and dates to Muslim passengers, who broke their daily fast after sundown.

"When we asked the buses to stop most of them thought it was a routine check but they were

surprised and happy when they saw our soldiers offering them water and fruits," Singh said.

Army and paramilitary forces suspended operations against Muslim militants in Kashmir from midnight, November 27, in line with the one-month ceasefire announced by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee.

Most militant groups have rejected Vajpayee's ceasefire offer as propaganda and threatened to step up violence against the security forces, but level of violence has since ebbed.

It is the first time the Indian government has offered a unilateral ceasefire in Muslim-majority Kashmir since the launch in 1989 of a separatist insurgency that has claimed some 34,000 lives.

## Examinees clash with police in Sirajganj: 60 hurt

From Our Correspondent  
SIRAJGANJ, Dec 3: At least 60 people including a magistrate and four invigilators were injured in a clash between the outsiders and police in front of a degree examination centre at Chandaikona under Raiganj upazila today.

The trouble began when an invigilator received an answer script from an examinee at Haji Wahed Morium College centre. The answer script was supplied to the examinee by Raiganj upazila Juba League secretary Shahidul Islam.

After the examination, the supporters of Shahidul Islam attacked the invigilators and the magistrate.

Police clubbed the outsiders, fired tear gas shells and bullets to rescue the magistrate and invigilators.

## 10 invigilators resign

From Our Correspondent  
SIRAJGANJ, Dec. 3: All 10 invigilators of an examination centre here today resigned saying they would not be able to discharge their duties during the remaining degree examinations. Tending their resignation to the Principal and the supervisor of Jamiatul Haji Korop Al Memorial College, the invigilators showed insecurity as the reason behind their resignation.

## Biman flight schedules in disarray

By Special Correspondent  
International flight schedules of Bangladesh Biman are in a disarray as two of its aircraft have developed mechanical trouble at foreign airports and another is undergoing major overhauling abroad, airline sources said yesterday.

One DC-10 is sitting at London's Heathrow airport since Saturday. Another DC-10 is grounded at Karachi airport since Saturday.

Another DC-10 is undergoing D-check at Singapore. The DC-10 that went to London on Saturday, is expected to return home today after repair. One of its wheels burst during landing. The DC-10 at Karachi requires replacement of an engine. It will take some time. An engine was sent to Karachi yesterday.

Biman has five DC-10-30 and three Airbus A310 aircraft in its fleet which connects 25 international destinations.

The national flag carrier has procured another DC-10 on lease, which will be pressed into service soon.

## Karwan Bazar

From page 12  
They exploded at least 20 crackers and fired several gunshots and took away Tk two thousand from a puff seller, the shopkeepers alleged.

People began to run helterskelter when another gang of the Karwanbazar area began a counter-attack, firing gunshots and exploding crackers. They however managed to drive out the attackers with the help of ansars and shopkeepers.

When contacted, Tejgaon police failed to confirm any arrest.

## Quest

From page 12  
Snake bite patients are usually treated as accidental cases in the hospitals or treated by traditional healers known as Ozhas.

According to a survey conducted by a snake-bite study group of doctors at CMCH, more than four persons per 100,000 people fall victims to snake-bite with a mortality rate of 20 per cent.

The survey conducted in 1995-96 covered 21 districts in the country. The highest incidence of snake bite was in Chittagong and Barisal divisions (seven per 100,000) and most of the victims were farmers and housewives.

The study said rural people usually do not go to thana hospitals for treatment of snake bite and mostly they seek treatment from Ozhas.

Dr Faiz mentioned that 943 snake bite cases were treated in CMCH since September 1993. Snake bite patients should not get frightened and they should be rushed to hospitals, without taking to Ozhas.

He went on, "People should be made aware of the availability of scientific treatment of snake bite in hospitals."

## ECs reject

From page 1  
reaction on the recent developments in the Commission had told newsmen earlier. "Under no circumstances will there be any compromise regarding the appointment of Lionel J Volner and the IT experts to the EC project. They shall stay until the work is completed. No one can remove them."

The tussle between the CEC and his deputies surfaced in August last when the CEC made the appointments allegedly ignoring opinions of the three Election Commissioners. The three commissioners in several meetings during the CEC's trip to the United States reversed his previous decisions.

On return home, the CEC served a note on the three Election Commissioners and other EC officials on November 26 challenging their decisions taken in the Commission's meeting during his absence.

"It is very unfortunate and unwarranted that the CEC has been trying to give legitimacy to his illegal decisions by giving wrong explanation of the Constitution, which had been declared void by the Commission meeting," the letter said.

There is no scope for raising any question about any decisions taken under the chairmanship of Abidur Rahman who was nominated by the CEC to act as the Chief Election Commissioner during his visit to the USA, they said in the letter.

There has been precedence of Acting Chief Election Commissioner as per the convention and the decisions taken under the chairmanship of Acting CEC were considered as those of the Commission, it said.

In conclusion, the three commissioners termed the CEC's constitutional explanation as 'capricious' and said 'an illegal attempt could not be confirmed through whimsical explanation of the Constitution...'

The contention of the CEC that holding of meetings in the absence of the Chief Election Commissioner in the chair cannot be considered as those of the Commission is contradictory to the spirit of the Constitution, law and the conventions, said the letter.

They said the Commission in its meetings had decided to reverse the decisions taken unilaterally and unlawfully by the CEC and the decision must be implemented soon.

The letter noted that an international consultant was appointed in the Election Commission Strengthening Project unnecessarily and illegally. Earlier an eight-member Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) led by Dr. Jamilur Reza Chowdhury successfully completed the project specification and other tasks.

It is clear that the persons (the consultant and his associates), who are charged with corruption directly and indirectly, have been assigned to purchase computer equipment from abroad.

The Election Commissioners demanded immediate probe into the matter so that the public knows facts.

They said misuse of public money would increase if the appointment of the consultant is not canceled, and the person who made the appointments will be held responsible.

Illegal activities cannot be swept under the carpet by giving untrue and misleading information to the press, they noted. "Many embarrassing information may come out if the Commission's files are reviewed, the letter said."

There has been difference of opinions, but the Commission is the only forum to express views, different those may be, and the matters related to the Commission can be resolved in the Commission meetings, the Election Commissioners said.

They hoped that the contentious issue could be resolved through talks at the appropriate forum.

## Khaleda

From page 12  
Palestine and Dean of Diplomatic Core, Ambassador and High Commissioners and diplomats from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, USA, Australia, Bhutan, Brunei, Canada, China, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Vatican City, Iran, Iraq, Korea, Libya, Malaysia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, The Netherlands, Nigeria, The Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Russia, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey and United Arab Emirates, Acting Ambassador of Norway, Acting High Commissioner of UK, Mission chief of Uzbekistan, Ambassador of European Union, and chiefs of ADB, World Bank, IMF, UNICEF, WFP and UNESCO attended the iftar.

## Dhaka Book Fair begins in city

The 7th Dhaka Book Fair began in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria inaugurated the 15-day fair on Mohammadpur Physical Training College premises.

A total of 75 publishing houses including two from India are taking part in the fair where 72 stalls and three pavilions have been set up.

State Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader, Director of Jatiya Grantha Kendra N M Paniruddin Haider and Managing Director of Universal Press Limited Mohiuddin Ahmed spoke on the occasion. Cultural Secretary Syed Abdur Rab chaired the function.

Speaking on the occasion Kibria underscored the need for a social movement to create the habit of reading as well as publish quality books. "Books are the prime means of acquiring knowledge," he observed.

He expressed the hope that the book fair would help encourage the publishers to publish quality books.

Later, the ministers went round the stalls of the fair.

## Alternative roads to be built in city to ease traffic jam

In a bid to ease traffic congestion, the government has decided to construct alternative roads in the city in a month, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at a meeting with Home Minister Mohammad Nasim in the chair yesterday.

The meeting was told that alternative roads would be constructed from Mohakhali to Moghbazar via Tejgaon, Baridhara to Rampura, PM office to Karwan Bazar via Holy Cross College.

Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Mohammad Hanif, Home Secretary MM Reza, Inspector General of Police, were among others, present in the meeting.

The meeting also decided not to allow setting up of shops and bazars on the city roads and cancel the route permits of unfit vehicles.

## Bangladesh, Vietnam to expand areas of cooperation

Vietnam and Bangladesh have agreed to expand cooperation in different socio-economic areas including tourism and cultural affairs between the two countries, an official release said yesterday, reports BSS.

This was agreed in Hanoi at the formal talks between the delegation of Bangladesh led by Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Minister Kalpa Ranjan Chakma and the Vietnamese Minister for Minority Affairs Hoang Duc Nghi.

The Bangladesh delegation visited Vietnam from November 27 to 30.

In response to Chakma's emphasis on reopening of a resident Vietnamese diplomatic mission in Dhaka, the Vietnamese minister said he will communicate the proposal to the relevant authorities. They also discussed possible areas of cooperation relating to the minority communities of the two countries.

## Annan to attend democracy conference in Benin

COTONOU, Dec 3 : UN Secretary General Kofi Annan was scheduled to arrive in Benin late Sunday ahead of a conference on new and restored democracies due to be attended by representatives of more than 90 countries, reports AFP.

The conference, which opens Monday in Cotonou, will also be attended by at least 12 heads of state, the executive secretary of the regional ECOWAS grouping, Lansana Kouyate, and Boutros Boutros Ghali, the head of the Francophone group of states and nations.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Saturday visited the historic city of Pompei in Italy which was destroyed by volcanic eruption nearly 2000 years ago.

## 2 army jawans

From page 12  
girl, but her brother Nazrul was cunningly left behind at Bahadurabadghat.

The girl told the Magistrate that in the train, the jawans raped her one after another and tore her clothes. Finding the situation unbearable, the girl cried out when the train reached near the Islampur station. The army men pushed the girl out of the slow moving train.

She managed to reach Islampur station and narrated the whole episode to station officials. They informed the matter to Mymensingh station through telephone.

Information of the incident spread rapidly at Mymensingh

station, where people gathered and waited for the train carrying the jawans. As the train reached the station at 6.30 am today (Sunday), the mob forced 31 army men out of the train and kept them confined in the waiting room.

Railway men at Islampur sent the girl by the following train that reached Mymensingh station at 11.30 am. But before the train arrived with the girl, army officials from the cantonment secured release of the army men at 10.30 am.

The incident has caused a stir in the district town, but a certain quarter is trying to divert attention by branding the victim as a prostitute.

## Samonnoy Committee to lay siege to Pak embassy on December 7

Jatiya Samonnoy Committee will lay siege to the Pakistan embassy on December 7 demanding unconditional apology from the Pakistan government for the recent audacious comments of a Pakistani diplomat on the War of Liberation of Bangladesh, reports BSS.

Activists of the Samonnoy Committee will assemble at the Gulshan-1 crossing at 2 pm on the day to march towards the embassy with huge procession, a press release said yesterday.

Convener of the committee Syed Hasan Imam and other leading figures of the Samonnoy Committee will lead the procession.

## Arrested BSF men handed over

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Dec 3: Two BSF intruders were caught by villagers while trying to steal cows at West Anarpur in Gomastapur border area were returned after a flag meeting, reports UNB.

BDR said the BSF armed men identified as Krishan Kumar and Ara Kumar in plainclothes entered into the area and fired blank shots to scare the farmers working in the field and tried to steal cows on Nov 27.

But at one stage the villagers overpowered them and handed them over to BDR of Bangabari BOP.

A flag meeting was held on the following day on request of the BSF of Ashrafpur camp and the two men were returned.



Participants of the People's Health Assembly placed flowers at the Jatiya Smriti Soudha at Savar yesterday.

## PHA delegates visit Savar Smriti Shoudha

Hundreds of international delegates to the People's Health Assembly (PHA 2000) at Savar laid flowers at the site of the Jatiya Smriti Shoudha (National Martyrs Memorial) to honour the heroes of its Liberation War in 1971, reports BSS.

Same with the spirit as that of the martyrs, the PHA 2000 participants pledged to fight on till the noble goals of providing health for all was achieved throughout the world. Arabs, Africans, Europeans, Americans and Asians joined together to make the people's health movement a truly global one, a press release said.

The five-day Health Assembly begins in Savar today.

The delegates marched from the Gonoshasthaya Kendra to the national monument in a colourful procession yesterday. Solidarity of people resisting globalisation was the main theme of march.

The demands of the PHA 2000 participants focused on making the health and well-being of people, the centre of all national and international policy making.

## Autarky

From page 12  
presence of different contaminants in their seeds stock. The problems reported by farmers in order of importance are presence of soil particles (65 per cent), mixtures with weed seeds (57 per cent), mixture with seeds damaged by insects (45 per cent), mixture with seeds of other varieties (43 per cent) and mixture with discoloured seeds (42 per cent).

In general, farmers are concerned about seed quality and are quite knowledgeable of the conditions that affect seed quality. Lack of care in threshing, drying, weeding and storing affects seed quality. Irrigation coverage, land fragmentation, farmers' education also matter.

Experts say that the rate of seed replacement is very poor in Bangladesh. In some cases, farmers retain their seeds from harvests for year after year. As a result, yields decline. The government's 1993 Seed Policy acknowledged that country needed quality seeds to increase its agricultural output.

The main roadblocks in the development of seed enterprises are inadequate financing, insufficient storage facilities, poor technical knowledge, lack of seed processing facilities and shortage of breeder and foundation seeds.

Talking to The Daily Star an Agriculture Ministry official said the government would give priority to setting a standard for seed health because improved quality held the future of agriculture in the country.

## Training course on cyber journalism begins

A five-day CPU training course on "Cyber journalism" how to exploit the Internet" kicked off yesterday at the PIB cyber corner, reports UNB.

Some 20 journalists are taking part in the course being conducted by the renowned Australian cyber journalist Pieter Wessels.

The main course will be followed by a one-day condensed version to accommodate almost an equal number of journalists who did not secure a berth in the main course.

The course was inaugurated by Justice Habibur Rahman Khan, Chairman, Bangladesh Press Council and was addressed, among others, by Amanullah Khan, UNB Chairman and Treasurer CPU (Commonwealth Press Union) Bangladesh Section, Kazi Shahed Ahmed, Editor, Ajker Kagoz and Chairman BSP, the course facilitator, Pieter Wessels and PIB officials.

Justice Habibur Rahman Khan in his inaugural address described free and fair press as the cornerstone of democracy and human rights adding that the freedom of expression and speech are established through the media which forms the fourth pillar of the democratic polity.

He stressed that the press freedom constitutes the most important freedom that guarantees other freedoms.

He also mentioned that Internet gives the journalists much needed lead as to what may be regarded as vital and useful information.

# Situation crossed all limits in Feni: Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has strongly protested what she called killing of her party activists in Feni, burning their houses and looting property by terrorists belonging to ruling Awami League.

In a statement yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament said the terrorists let loose a reign of terror there since AL came to power.

They are also killing opposition activists in other areas. Over 400 leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations have been killed by armed activists of the ruling party since it assumed power, she claimed.

They have crossed all limits in Feni. They are also kidnapping BNP activists from different areas of the district and assaulting women. Such incidents take place regularly, forcing many people to leave homes, the former prime minister said.

Referring to Friday's incident in Feni, she said 70 to 80 armed cadres of AL gathered at Sonagazi

Bazar and then attacked Char Chandina village. The terrorists, divided into two groups, fired shots indiscriminately and torched houses and shops.

They fired on local BNP leader Zainal Abedin and chopped him to death. Juba League and Chhatra League activists set fire to 20 houses and shops. Eighteen people were bullet-hit in the massacre, she said.

While returning, they killed another BNP activist named Joyal, whose body was recovered later.

She claimed that the DIG of police of Chittagong Division was present at Sonagazi police station when the massacre was done. This proves that

police and the local administration are cooperating with ruling party in its activities in Feni.

Khaleda Zia demanded a judicial inquiry into Friday's incident and exemplary punishment of those involved in it.

## Ershad's lawyer

From page 1  
Ershad's attorney to obtain a copy of the audio cassette containing the conversation, which was submitted to the Bench by the Manab Jamin.

Hossain pleaded that he was not certain whether the tape contained his client's conversation fully, or whether it was spiced with others' voices.

As a former president, Ershad had talked with many people. Unless he hears it, he can not say with whom Ershad had talked and what exactly was the conversation, Hossain pleaded. The court observed that Ershad could have spoken to a judge since he had appointed many people.

It was opposed by Attorney General Mahmudul Islam and Barrister Rokonuddin Mahmud, representing the Manab Jamin.

The court order followed hearing of a contempt rule on the Manab Jamin which published on September 20 a report based on the conversation between Ershad and the judge.

The Bench had also served a show cause notice upon Ershad asking him why contempt proceedings would not be drawn against him for trying to influence the course of justice.

Justice Latifur Rahman, a

judge of the High Court, resigned last month after the notice was served on Ershad. The resignation took place before the court could take a decision whether to proceed with contempt proceedings against the judge.

Later, the same Bench noted that contempt charges could be drawn against a sitting judge as it was not yet informed whether the resignation was accepted.

The court will hear today the reply on a show cause notice served on a retired judge, Justice Naimuddin Ahmed, asking him why contempt proceedings would not be drawn against him for his remarks about the judiciary. The remarks, based on the Manab Jamin report, were published in the Ittefaq, the Sangbad and the Janakantha recently. Justice Naimuddin Ahmed is now a member of the Law Commission.

Subsequently, show cause notices were also served on the Manab Jamin and the other three newspapers. Barring Janakantha, others complied with the notices.

Editor of the Janakantha and the reporter concerned appeared before the court yesterday.

The Janakantha will give its submission on December 10.

## India to step up actions against Assam rebels

GUWAHATI, India, Dec 3 : India's armed forces will step up their actions against separatist groups in northeastern Assam state, where guerrillas killed up to 75 people last month, officials said today, reports AFP.

Top Indian officials and army and paramilitary commanders met in the state capital of Guwahati on Sunday to plan the unified military action against various separatist groups in oil-rich Assam.

"From now on, the army's presence will be more visible and dominant in vulnerable areas with a view to reassuring the people against militant attacks," said Lieutenant General Mahesh Vij, chief of a unified command.

The meeting came in the wake of a string of massacres by separatist guerrillas last month. At least 75 people, mostly non-Assamese traders, were gunned down in the wave of militant-led attacks.

"We cannot guard every inch of Assam despite our best efforts," Vij said. He accused Pakistan of backing the shadowy regional guerrillas groups.

New Delhi plans to deploy an additional 3,000 paramilitary soldiers for the stepped-up action.

"We want more personnel to fan out across the state to instil confidence among the people",

## Power situation

From page 1  
deprived the country of another 210MW for some time, sources said.

The power situation started improving Saturday night when Ghorasal-6 along with Ghorasal-4 and Ashuganj-3 resumed power generation. But Ashuganj-4 with a capacity of 150MW remained inoperative till last night, sources added.

PDB's production target for the day was 2,422MW against a countrywide demand of 2,600MW. Its control room said last night.

When contacted last night, the DESA control room said that PDB was providing them with more than 950MW and there was scheduled load-shedding in its command areas yesterday.

Sylhet Gas, Shahjibazar Gas Turbine-3, Fenchuganj Gas Turbine-2, Fenchuganj-Steam, Khulna Barge Mounted Power Plant-1, Khulna-110MW, Rajganj 1 and 2, Ghorasal-3, Ashuganj-4, Ashuganj Gas Turbine-1, Ashuganj Combined Cycle Power Plant Steam and Siddhirganj-50 MW are the ones still out of operations.

Assam police chief Hare Krishna Deka said.

"We have already deployed a number of our trainee policemen to combat terrorism," Deka said.

More than 10,000 people have been killed in Assam during the past decade of insurgency.

## More killings

From page 1  
thing to do with the killings at Gopibagh.

Both incidents took place inside flat at the dead of night and the killings were executed in the same way; killers used firearms and sharp weapons and kept the bodies inside the flat before locking it.

Meanwhile, the pattern of police investigation has changed following the arrest of two youths in Khulna and statement of the owner of the flat. He told police that Suman, who rented the house in the first week of November, is not among the two victims.

Khulna police in Khulna on Friday arrested two youths identified as Suman and Liton.

Sub-Inspector of Khilgaon thana Delwar Kabir left Dhaka for Khulna on Saturday night to bring the two young men to the capital. Police will interrogate them soon after they reach Dhaka.

Police will also summon the landlord to identify whether the arrested person is Suman.

Meanwhile, no-one went to the Khilgaon police station or Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue to claim the decomposed bodies of the two young men till yesterday.

## Ghorasal.

From page 1  
ber 8 last year, the plant remained inoperative for nearly 624 hours.

Since it began commercial operations, the unit has generated power for 515 days and the loss incurred so far due to 'temporary' shutdowns is in the tune of Tk 76 crore (Tk 2.50 per kilowatt-hour), according to sources.

Moreover, during this period of poor performance the unit could barely reach its peak capacity and whenever it did it resulted in undue tripping in most cases.

Due to 'hydrogen leakage' during the last six months of disturbance, the authorities had to shut down the unit several times, said another PDB official.