

# India reduces bunkers, checkposts in Kashmir

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

The Indian army removed six checkposts 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 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."

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.

## ECs reject

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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 Wolner 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.

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

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 Ozhias.

Dr Falz 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 Ozhias.

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

## 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.

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

## 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 Chandakona under Raiganj upazila today.

The trouble began when an invigilator recovered an answer script from an examinee at Haji Wahid 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 the 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.

Tendering their resignation to the Principal and the supervisor of Jamiat Haji Korop Ali Memorial College, the invigilators showed insecurity as the reason behind their resignation.

**Biman flight schedules in disarray**

From Our 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**

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other iftar items.

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

People began to run helter-skelter when another gang of the Karwanbazar area began a counterattack, 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.

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

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## Dhaka Book Fair begins in city

From page 1  
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.

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## 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 be attended by at least 12 heads of state, the executive secretary of the regional ECOWAS grouping, Lansana Kouyate, and Boutros Ghali, the head of the Francophone group of states and nations.

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.



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

-- PID photo

## 2 army jawans

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girl, but her brother Nazrul was cunningly left behind at Bahadurabad.

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.

## Arrested BSF men handed over

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Dec 3 : Two BSF intruders were caught by villagers while trying to steal cows at West Anarpur in Gomostapur 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.

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

## Training course on cyber journalism begins

A five-day CPJ 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 CPJ (Commonwealth Press Union) Bangladesh Section, Kazi Shahid Ahmed, Editor Ajker Kagaz and Chairman BSC, 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