

News

Demolition of Babri Mosque

Uproar in Lok Sabha as opposition demands resignation of 3 ministers

NEW DELHI, Dec 5: India's parliament was adjourned today following an uproar by opposition deputies demanding the resignation of three ministers facing charges for the demolition of a 16th century mosque eight years ago, reports Reuters.

The parliament adjournment puts off India's response to Pakistan's offer of restraint in Kashmir, a week after New Delhi adopted a ceasefire in the disputed Himalayan region.

Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh was scheduled to deliver a detailed response in both houses of parliament today to Pakistan's decision at the weekend to observe restraint along a military line of control running through Kashmir.

The speaker of the lower house, Ganti M. Balayogi, adjourned the chamber till Wednesday after slogan-shouting opposition members trooped to the centre of the house.

Shortly after, the upper house of parliament too was adjourned after opposition deputies insisted that the government drop all business and take up the issue of those involved in destruction of the mosque.

"We want resignations, we want resignations...", members of the Samajwadi Party said.

Interior Minister Lal Krishna Advani, Human Resource Development Minister Murl Manohar Joshi and Sports Minister Uma Bharti are among those charged for the 1992 destruction of the mosque in the northern town of Ayodhya.

Some 3,000 people died in religious riots across the country after Hindu fundamentalists brought down the mosque saying that it was the site of a temple to the Hindu god-king Rama.

Congress members raising the temple-mosque issue for a second day running said there could not be a fair trial until the three ministers resigned.

Earlier on Monday, Balayogi ordered the chamber to be suspended until Tuesday after lawmakers from the Congress party insisted that the three ministers step down until the courts had cleared them of involvement in the razing of the Babri Mosque.

The government has in the past turned down demands for the resignation of the ministers, saying that being charged was insufficient reason for seeking their removal.



Bangladesh National Coordinating Council (BNCC) of Textile, Garments and Leather Workers brought out a procession in the city yesterday. They demanded Tk 2 lakh compensation for families of each of the victims who died in a fire at Chowdhury Knitwear Garments in Narsingdi. -Star photo

Support for free access

From Page 1

observed. About the outcome of the talks, held in Federal Chancellery, the German leader said they had talks on increasing cooperation with Bangladesh in various fields.

"Germany will take move for positive development of cooperation with Bangladesh," he said, adding that the officials of the two countries will have talks later about the process of increasing assistance.

The Chancellor welcomed the Prime Minister to his country and praised Bangladesh's role in peaceful developments in the South Asian region.

Visiting Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, terming the meeting "very fruitful," thanked the German leader for offering Bangladesh support for allowing free access of Bangladeshi products to European market.

The Prime Minister said she thanked the Federal Chancellor for identifying Bangladesh as one of the key partner countries in Germany's development-cooperation policy in Asia.

"I sought his support in further

encouragement of German private investment in Bangladesh," she said, rating Germany as the second-largest trading partner of Bangladesh.

Since export-led growth has now become an integral element of economic development strategy of the LDCs, Hasina said it is essential that complete duty-and quota-free access of Bangladeshi goods to Germany and other European Union countries, is ensured.

Referring to EC's proposal initiated on September 20 for providing unrestricted market access to the EU countries for all products, except arms, from least developed countries, Hasina sought Germany's support to this initiative in the meeting of the European Council.

The talks of the two Premiers lasted half an hour where international issues also came up.

Both the Prime Minister and the Federal Chancellor discussed the need to strengthen the role of the United Nations. They noted Bangladesh and Germany's role in UN peacekeeping effort and felt the need for reforms of UN institutions.

Hasina said Dhaka-Berlin bilateral relations characterised by friendship and mutual understanding are improving rapidly. Last year Bangladesh Foreign Minister and the State Minister of Foreign Affairs visited Germany.

The Prime Minister hoped regular consultations at political level would contribute to further understanding and cooperation between the two nations.

She invited the Federal Chancellor to visit Bangladesh before next year's general elections.

Hasina said she briefed the Chancellor on political developments in Bangladesh as well as reforms undertaken and achievements made by her government during last four years and a half. She appreciated German support for the development of infrastructure in the CHT.

Earlier on her arrival at the Chancellery building, the Prime Minister was received by German Chancellor and taken to the presentation line. National anthem of the two countries was played while a smart contingent of German army gave a guard of honour.

Ferry ghats

From Page 1

got frightened and started crying. I was left with little option but to please the criminals."

This correspondent spoke to a number of people both at the terminals and the ferry who claimed that they were Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) employees. The BIWTC is the official body that operates ferry services in the country.

However, it was later learnt that those people were hired muslims had no connection with the BIWTC.

Surprisingly, there is no police camp nearby although untoward incidents like manhandling, harassment, snatching, extortion and pick pocketing are a common phenomenon at the terminals. Many of the commuters complain that police from the nearest outpost are never there to address the problem.

At least 400 vehicles are ferried everyday between Daulatdia and Aricha. There are over five docking stations at Aricha and three at Daulatdia.

No BIWTC officials were available for comments yesterday.

BNP bows

From Page 1

calling for the release of Ershad has created deep resentment in the rank and file of BNP and its front organisations. Leaders said that Ershad was jailed in a corruption case, which was filed by the BNP government.

They observed that the party chairperson has again come under the grip of the hardliners and is taking imprudent decisions. Many leaders said it would be very difficult for the party to restore its tainted image during the upcoming national election.

Talking to The Daily Star, a number of top-ranking BNP leaders said they do not know why and how the party demanded release of Ershad, because he is not a political prisoner.

BNP has committed a serious mistake by demanding Ershad's release, observed one of the leaders.

Double murder

From Page 12

Khalishpur thana at about 11 Sunday night. They were produced before the CMM's Court on Monday with a prayer for seven days remand. The Magistrate, however, granted them four-day remand.

Decomposed bodies of two young men were recovered from the third floor of a flat at East Rampura Friday and police initially identified them as Suman and Jon, members of infamous "Seven Star" group.

The double murder was a sequel to the killings of three youths in Gopibagh area in the city on August 29. Members of Seven Star group had killed them following a feud over sharing extortion money, sources said.

Democracy Day today

From Page 1

across the country today will celebrate their victory over the autocratic regime of the former general.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages on the eve of Democracy Day.

In his message, President Shahabuddin Ahmed urged the political leaders to work on the basis of consensus to consolidate the country's hard-earned democratic system and make it more effective.

The Prime Minister in her message paid rich tributes to the memory of martyrs including Noor Hossain, Fattah, Moiz Uddin and Dr Milon who sacrificed their lives in the democratic movement.

Until 1995, both AL and BNP organised special programmes to mark the fall of Ershad. But at a later stage, both the pro-democracy parties started pursuing

politics of convenience, forming some sort of alliance with Ershad at one time or another.

AL will observe the Democracy Day today through holding a discussion at the party's central office in the city at three in the afternoon. Its student front, BCL, will hold a rally marking the day on Dhaka University campus at 11 am today.

BNP however prefers to 'forget' the Democracy Day this year also like last year, thanks to its anti-government alliance with Ershad's Jatya Party. This alliance took a firm shape following a formal summit meeting of Khaleda Zia, Ershad, Ghulam Azam and Azizul Haq on November 30 last year.

Ruling AL had also gone soft on the former dictator following his support in helping it form government after the June 12, 1996 polls. Now, however, its relation with the ex-military general has turned sour again.

27 awarded Chittaranjan gold medal

Twenty-seven persons were awarded Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Gold Medal for their outstanding contribution to different sectors of society for the years of '96, '97 and '98, reports BSS.

Home, Post and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim yesterday handed over the medals to the recipients at a function in the city.

Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das Gashona Parishad provided the medals.

Speaking on the occasion Mohammad Nasim said Deshbandhu would remain ever respectful to all in this sub-continent for his patriotism.

Of the prominent, who had sacrificed their lives for the well-being of the Bangalee nation, Chittaranjan is certainly one, Nasim added.

He said personalities like Chittaranjan had dreamt of the freedom of the people of the country which was ultimately materialised by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Nasim said that some vested quarters who opposed our independence have started conspiracies again. These anti-liberation elements, he said, have forged greater unity to belittle our national anthem, national flag, spirit of the Liberation War and the national heroes.

Justice Kamaluddin Hossain also spoke on the occasion chaired by president of the Parishad Hesham Uddin.

Thalassaemia Society sets up blood separation machine

Bangladesh Thalassaemia Society (BTS) set up recently a "Program Control Refrigerated Blood Cell Separator" for separation of Platelets, and other blood components, reports BSS.

The most modern blood separator machine was set up at the BTS office at 290/1 Sonargaon Road in the city.

The blood separator machine was introduced, first of its kind in Bangladesh, by the BTS aimed at providing maximum support and facilities to the patients attacked by Dengue and other diseases including kidney, liver and burn.

DU Programme

From Page 12

The programmes of Victory Day include hoisting of the National Flag at all the main buildings of the university at 6:30 am, gathering at the Apejoo Bangla at 6:45 am and teachers, students, officials and employees will start towards the National Mausoleum in Savar.

A special prayer will be offered at the central mosque, mosques and place of worship in all the dormitories after Asr prayers for the salvation of the departed soul as well as seeking prosperity and development of the country.

A meeting, chaired by Vice Chancellor Prof. AK Azad Chowdhury, fixed the programmes. Among others, Registrar Prof. Abul Hashem, Registrar Prof. Md. Shahadat Ali, Treasurer Prof. Muhammad Selim, Deans of different faculties, director of the institutes, departmental chairmen and other high officials were present at the meeting.

Free world from clutches of multinationals, World Bank

PHA delegates talk tough against other int'l bodies too

By Staff Correspondent

The second day sessions of the People's Health Assembly at Savar started with a call for freeing the world from the clutches of multinational companies (MNCs), World Bank and other international organisations.

"It's the people who would decide what they need for their healthcare services and we are eager to establish this right from this people's movement," said one of the participants from Latin America in the morning session.

Speakers pointed out that the top five countries enjoy 86 per cent of the world's gross domestic product while the least developed bottom five enjoy only one per cent. They added that the rich-poor gap and inequality have been increasing in many countries since 1980. Forty-one countries now owe the rich nations \$11 billion while about 1.3 billion people globally live on income amounting to less than one US dollar a day.

Speakers, gathered at the Gonoshasthaya Kendra premises in Savar, regretted that five multinational companies based in three South Asian countries alone earn what Bangladesh, Pakistan and India spend annually. The world now spends \$780 billion a year on military expenditure whereas to address basic healthcare services and nutrition the world requires only 13 billion dollar.

"We are simply accepting these philosophy. Government health ministries and international health agencies need to be pressed to engage as partners with these sectors," said another speaker from Europe.

She added, "Policy development must be transparent and should secure broader understanding and wider ownership of health policies."

Another speaker from India proposed that the World Health Organisation should be held responsible for violating human rights. "I propose that WHO should be tried in the World Court for violating the rights of the people," she said.

Her colleague said, "More than 500,000 people in India die of tuberculosis annually and yet we have not expressed concern. But how long we will remain as a silent spectator," the young lady from India asked the jam-packed audience in the PHA conference hall.

Halidan Mahler from Denmark, David Woodward

from Britain, Thelma Narayan from India and Assetou Samake from Mali also spoke at the morning session on 'Poverty and Inequality Affecting Our Health Around the World' while discussion on the draft Charter got underway.

The Assembly brought together Africans, Asians, Arabs, Australians, Europeans, Latin Americans, North Americans and also representatives from the Pacific region. A total of 3000 participants from 95 countries are attending the five-day conference that began Monday.

Minister for Water Resources Abdur Razzak and State Minister for Social Welfare Zinnatunnessa Talukdar participated in one of the group discussions in the afternoon.

Meanwhile, calls by the Cuban and Iraqi delegations for immediate lifting of sanctions against their countries got strong approval from the delegates.

The Cuban experience in providing healthcare services to its citizens despite the hardships due to the United States imposed sanctions got an applause from the PHA-2000 participants.

The participants chanted anti-US slogans and denounced the embargo against this small country which has achieved one of the best health indicators in the Latin America and also among the developing countries.

Other speakers at the PHA-2000 forum on 'Inequality, Poverty and Health' also expressed admiration for the Cuban model of focussing on primary healthcare services and social welfare.

"No other country has been as consistent in taking measures towards achieving the goal of 'Health for All' as Cuba," said Halidan Mahler, former director-general of the World Health Organisation. "It is a country which has met all requirements of primary healthcare," he said.

David Woodward, an economist, also cited Cuba as role model which had taken people's welfare as a priority and not gone blindly for economic growth alone.

Salma Jabu, a delegate from the northern territories of Iraq, also called for an end to US sanctions imposed on Iraq after the Gulf War in 1991 that, she said, had resulted in massive destruction of infrastructure and affected healthcare facilities very badly.

2 die, 4 missing in Satkhira boat capsizes

SATKHIRA, Dec 5: Two persons died and four were missing when a boat capsized in the river Ichhamoti near Khanjia Ghat under Kaliganj upazila on Saturday night, reports BSS.

The dead were identified as Abdus Sabur, 35, son of Kurban Ali of village Shatpur and Abdur Rashid, 32, son of Bhudo Gazi of village Kashiuli under Kaliganj Upazila.

According to local sources, a passenger boat was illegally going to India from Khanjia Ghat. The boat capsized in the border river Ichhamoti, when the Indian Border Security Forces (BSF) chased the boat. Local people recovered the two bodies from the river on Sunday morning.

JS body

From Page 1

taken place on August 15, 1975.

Meeting sources said the committee may also have a detailed discussion on the events on November 7, 1975.

The opposition members told the Chief of Army Staff not to deliver his speech regarding the November 7, 1975 incident. They said that political incidents are related with those of November 7, 1975 and it requires statement from the Defence Minister and the Secretary.

The committee was informed that the trial of the Air Force and Army personnel, who were involved in the October 2, 1977 coup, was completed duly and, therefore, none was punished without trial.

Ruling party lawmakers raised question about the process of the trial. They said there has been doubt whether the summary trial in a martial law court was done properly and legally.

Movement

From Page 12

HM Ershad is a political prisoner and vowed to launch a militant movement after the Eid to free all opposition leaders and activists. He said no election could be held with any leader of the opposition alliance in jail.

None from BNP, Jamaat or IOJ, however, demanded release of Ershad.

The rally over, leaders and activists of the alliance brought out a joint procession, which ended in front of BNP central office.

Kafur thana

From Page 1

col said that sub-inspector Forkan along with 5 policemen entered his 14/B Mirpur residence on November 3 and said there was a case against him.

When the complainant asked them to show the necessary papers of the case, the policemen threatened him not to proceed and demanded Tk 1,00,000 as toll.

Later, Motiur Rahman filed an FIR against Forkan on November 8 with Kafur thana. But no action was taken against the policemen.

Finding no other alternative, the complainant filed a petition case against the accused seeking a judicial inquiry into the matter.

Advocate Humayun Kabir Monju appeared for the complainant.

Police firing at Mongla

From Page 1

during the clash that continued till afternoon.

"Police opened fire when the situation had gone beyond control," police officials said.

Port sources said the workers have been enforcing strike at the port since Friday demanding recruitment of more workers for gang booking, disrupting export-import trade.

The striking workers went on the rampage on Monday afternoon forcing the police to take positions at all vulnerable points of the port and Mongla town.

They brought out a procession with wives and other members of their families protesting the decision of stevedores, who refused appointment of more workers in the clinker-loaded ship.

Situation took an alarming turn when the Joint Director of

Labour declared the strike illegal on Monday.

Stoppage of gang booking in all other ships at the port deteriorated the situation further on Monday, paralysing port activities.

Agitating workers damaged shops and vehicles and stopped launch and ferry services.

UNB adds: The angry workers set fire to the residence of general secretary of Mongla Sramik Sangha Mustafizur Rahman.

Mongla police said at least 20 policemen were injured in the clash. "Actual number is not known as most of the riot police have gone into hiding fearing attack by the workers," said one of them.

Deputy Commissioner Nurul Islam, SP Abdus Salam and Additional DIG of Khulna Range Enayet Ullah Dewan visited the troubled spot.

Banned for five years

From Page 1

While Azharuddin, 38, admitted to fixing three one-day international matches, Javeda, Sharma, Prabhakar and Irani were accused of hobnobbing with bookmakers.

BCCI president AC Muthiah announced the decisions after a meeting of its disciplinary committee, which was authorised to fix the punishments for the players.

"These hard decisions have been taken after careful consideration," Muthiah said. "They will set an example for the future."

Muthiah added that the punished players had the right to appeal the decisions to the BCCI. Kamal Morarka, a BCCI vice-president and strong critic of the CBI findings, who advocated a soft line on the players, did not attend the disciplinary committee meeting.

Muthiah and another vice-president Ram Pershad were the other two members of the committee.

While Azharuddin had no realistic chance of playing for India, Javeda's five-year suspension rules him out from making any further appearances on the

international stage. Azharuddin, India's most successful Test captain, has been denied a chance to play his 100th Test match, becoming the world's first cricketer to be stranded on 99 appearances.

The decision to impose a life ban on Azharuddin had been supported by 28 of the 30 BCCI affiliates at its special general body meeting in Calcutta last week.

The BCCI took a hard stance despite media speculation that there was high-level political pressure to let the 29-year-old Javeda off lightly.

Morarka and former BCCI president Raj Singh Dungarpur had vehemently opposed any stiff penalty on the guilty players.

They cited the example of Australian stars Shane Warne and Mark Waugh, who were let off with a fine after admitting to taking money from Indian bookmaker 'John' for providing team information.

The duo claimed that Pakistani cricketers like Wasim Akram and Mushtaq Ahmed were still playing for their country despite being named for similar offences in a judicial report earlier this year.

Ershad: Case

From Page 1

"On December 7, 1996, I met the then Home Minister and handed him a letter calling for withdrawal of the stay order on the investigation," Inu told The Daily Star yesterday.

Inu said the government should lift the stay order and form a special tribunal to try Ershad for the crime.

Meanwhile, the issue of take-over of power by Ershad was raised at a meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Defence on Monday.

The committee is likely to have a detailed discussion on the military take-over by former Army chief HM Ershad in its next meeting on December 17.

In Monday's meeting, Jatiya Party lawmaker and Ershad's younger brother G M Qader objected to the discussion, saying that the take-over was legalised by the Constitution's Seventh Amendment.

Inu said, "The Constitution does not provide for martial law proclamation. So, no parliament under martial law regimes has the authority to legalise illegal take-over of power by virtue of any amendment."

"Ershad is being tried on charges of corruption while his biggest crime (illegal power take-over) remained out of trial for long," resented Inu, whose party is now a partner in Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's 'consensus government'.

He suggested that there should be a consensus on inclusion of a provision in the Constitution declaring illegal take-over of power as an act of sedition. "This would stop recurrence of military take-over in Bangladesh."

Workers Party president Rashed Khan Menon, who was an MP then, proposed before the parliament in 1991 that the provision be incorporated in the Constitution.

Khulna by-polls

From Page 12

Affairs, Armed Forces Division, Bangladesh Rifles, district administrations and others concerned to ensure proper security in the area during the by-polls, EC sources said.

The CEC yesterday called upon all the political parties to maintain code of conduct and election laws.

Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, Abdul Mannan Khan and Abdul Mannan of Awami League, Munirul Haq Chowdhury of JP (M-M) and Krishak Mohammad Sadiq participated in the discussions.

Meanwhile, an EC press release said there are five contestants in the by-election and three withdrew from the race on the last date of withdrawal of candidature.

The five contestants are: Advocate Badrul Alam Badal, Krishak Mohammad Sadek, Gazi

Gaohar, Narayan Chandra Chanda and Sharif Saiful Hamid Chanda.

UNB adds: There were no signs of an end to the crisis at Election Commission following rigid stance of the CEC and his three deputies although all attended a meeting.

"Everything will be okay," Syed told a ruling party leader when he drew attention on the staggering conflict over appointment of a foreign consultant and an IT professional.

The CEC expressed his "optimism" when Awami League publicity secretary Abdul Mannan asked him why they are not resolving the crisis for the sake of the nation and the institution.

Three other Election Commissioners, Mushatque Ahmed Chowdhury, Abdur Rahman and Safiur Rahman were present, but they were not 'at ease' with the CEC.

UNDP remains sour

From Page 12

The disagreement on the SEMP came as the UNDP had accused the Secretary of amending certain basic conditions on it.

There was no explanation from the MOEF Secretary why he was withdrawing suspension on the SEMP being executed by 21

Test shows no excessive arsenic in green coconut

Examining water of the green-coconut NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation categorically said yesterday that there was no excessive arsenic in green-coconut water, reports UNB.

Following publication of a news item that excessive arsenic was found in the water of green coconut of a coconut tree in Jhikargasa of Jessore district, the Forum collected five green-coconuts of the same tree and examined the water in its laboratory.

"We did not find any arsenic in the water of those coconut in our modern laboratory," said Dr Abul Hasanat Milton, Chief of Arsenic cell of the NGO Forum.

According to the scientific information so far available there is no evidence that green-coconut water is contaminated with arsenic, he added.

The Forum urged all concerned to be more conscious and responsible in providing such "false" information that creates panic among the people, said a press release today.

organisations, sources said.

Ten of those are government and autonomous bodies, the others are NGOs and the World Bank and the International Union for Conservation of Nature.