

## News

## Ten more killed in Kashmir violence

SRINAGAR, India, Dec 23: Ten people have been killed in separatist-linked violence in Indian Kashmir, police said today, a day after a daring attack by Muslim militants in New Delhi's historic Red Fort left three people dead, reports AFP.

Five people were gunned down late Saturday by militants of the Pakistan-based Hizbul Mujahideen rebel group near the southern Kashmir resort town of Kokernag, 70 kilometres (43 miles) south of the state summer capital Srinagar.

The Muslim insurgency in Indian Kashmir has claimed 34,000 lives since its launch in 1989.

### Behind the blast

From Page 1  
age fills up a room, inmates would never get any hint that they are in a death trap," he noted.

Years ago, the authorities mixed artificial odor so that people could smell gas if case of leakage.

In the early nineties, nine people were killed in an explosion at a house at Juralin in the city when an inmate lit a gas stove.

"Our investigation revealed that there were several illegal underground gas lines with leaks near the building. As a result, gas had accumulated in the house," he recalled.

Local people said some gas-related accidents took place in Mir Hazirbagh area in the last six months.

In one incident, two sweepers were injured in an explosion in a sewerage.

## Smaller parties

From Page 12  
the very programme is due to take place for the sake of adequate preparations.

Announced at a press conference in the city on December 19, the hartal is aimed at protesting terrorism and corruption among other problems facing the public. Nevertheless, a faction of the Ganatantri Party, a component of the alliance, differed with other partners on the programme, calling it a move harmful to the people.

The call for a dawn-to-dusk hartal across the country is seen by political observers as a bid to shake off the slumber the left parties had so long been in, except in some cases when there was political turmoil.

These parties played a significant role in the anti-autocracy movement leading to the end of a nine-year autocratic rule by General HM Ershad. However, they firmly declined to take part in the Awami League-led agitation against the BNP government.

## Gen Harun takes over

From Page 1  
Commander-in-Chief of the Bangladesh forces during the War of Independence MAG Osmany was the first to be made a General after liberation. He held that position for a month and a half.

Called back from LPR, Mustafiz, an officer belonging to the Engineering Corps, was made army chief for a three-year term on contract.

Although there were speculations that Mustafiz's term would be extended by one year, the government finally decided to appoint a new army chief for what observers termed "move to restore the morale of senior generals." Presently there are 25 Major Generals in Bangladesh Army.

On his last day as army chief, Gen Mustafiz was presented a guard of honour. Later, he made a farewell call on President Shahabuddin Ahmed.

The Chief of Army Staff will place wreaths at the Shikha Anirban today. He will be presented a guard of honour at the Senakunja.

He will later address senior officers at the Army Headquarters.

Harun, an Infantry Corps Officer, is known in military circles as an efficient commander and a professional soldier.

He joined the Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) in 1970 as a member of the 24th War Course and was commissioned on September 6 that year.

He was commissioned in the Fourth Battalion of then East Bengal Regiment stationed in Comilla. He fought in the War of Independence and was awarded Bir Pratik for his gallantry. He attended the Staff College at Mirpur in the city and had higher training at the Royal College of Defence Studies in London, where he obtained 'reds'.

Harun was a Counsellor at the Bangladesh Embassy in Riyadh

### JCD-BCL clash: 4 shot

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Dec 23: Four people were shot during a clash between Bangladesh Chhatri League and Jatiyatabadi Chhatri Dal this afternoon here.

BCL leader Shahbul came under attack by the JCD activists at mobile phone store at Chouhatta area at 3 pm. He received injuries in his head and is now under treatment at a local clinic.

As a sequel to the incident, the BCL activists attacked the house of JCD activist Manik.

Manik and three of his associates were shot during the attack.

The incidents took place over collection of extortions in the area, sources said.

## Student politics in Sylhet

From Page 12  
atmosphere on the campus by the All Party Steering body for three months initially which was later extended twice.

The meeting thanked the leaders and activists of student organisations, and general students for implementing the decision.

The meeting, however, expressed its concern over the deterioration of law and order in the town for the last few weeks and called upon the authorities concerned to take special measures in this regard. The committee also decided to hold a meeting with the student leaders in January.

The meeting was moderated by the Coordinator of the Steering Committee, Sylhet Press Club President Muqtabis-Ur-Noor.

The suspension on politics in the educational institutions was slapped to ensure a congenial



Indonesians carry a collapsed passenger at Jakarta's Senen railway station yesterday as millions of people packed trains, buses, planes and inter-island ferries in a traditional annual exodus from the capital to their hometowns to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr. This year's mass people movement is compounded by Christmas and New Year celebrations falling in the same 10 days as Eid-ul-Fitr. -AFP photo

## Roundtable on arsenic

From Page 12  
Babar N. Kabir of World Bank said donors should not be blamed solely for the failure. "Please do not blame only the donors. They set programme after approval from External Resources Division (ERD)."

Kabir apprehended that arsenic might have impact on the food chain in Bangladesh. "If proved, it will be a threat to our food security".

Dr. Imamul Huq of Soil Science Department of Dhaka University quoting from his study report said there is a "mentionable amount of arsenic in rice crops and leafy vegetables in Bangladesh".

Noted economist Prof. Muzaffar Ahmed criticised the "single-ended mindset" of donors and said the amount spend for eliminating AIDS from the country is higher than that spent for removing the arsenic problem.

Bangladesh Medical Associa-

tion (BMA) President Dr. Rashid-e-Mahbub said the methods developed by donor agencies to free drinking water from arsenic is not effective. "These are ineffective".

Iftekhharul Alam of Rotary Club called for creating public awareness about the problem and stressed the need for community participation to remove it.

He said donors and NGOs could try the Rotary-developed Continuous Arsenic Removal Plant, which has proved to be an effective method.

Prothom Alo Editor Motiur Rahman in his address of welcome called upon all concerned to take immediate step to familiarise alternative sources of drinking water to save the people from the deadly poisoning.

He also underscored the need for treatment and rehabilitation of arsenic patients on a priority basis.

He mentioned that out 1.10 crore deep tube wells in the coun-

try, water of more than 50,000 is contaminated with excessive amount of arsenic.

Noted water expert Dr. Ainun Nishat said the government should frame a clear-cut policy for sinking new tube wells.

People can not be barred from taking drinking water from red-marked tube wells as they become confused seeing sinking of new tube wells near the old (red marked) ones, Dr. Nishat said.

Health Secretary Alamgir Farook Chowdhury said grassroots level people should be involved in arsenic mitigation programmes.

Shafiqul Islam of Unicef, Ibrahim Khaledi, Managing Director of Pubali Bank, Mustak R Chowdhury and Noor Jahan Begum of BRAC, SMA Rashid and Fariduddin Ahmed Miah of Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation Water Supply Project (BAMWSP) and Shireen Hossain also took part in the dialogue.

## Use of proper technology

From Page 1  
Bangladeshi technologists, Prof. Yunus asked: "Can we not do what is happening to the neighbouring country?"

He said the government must create an environment by providing policy and infrastructural support.

Creating a new ministry for information technology will not help much. Rather, it will help much if the government gives priority in practice to it, he observed.

Information technology and biotechnology will bring about significant changes of our lives in near future," Prof. Yunus went on. "We have to sow good seeds and cultivate our land properly for getting good results."

In his speech, the BUET vice-chancellor said the convention would initiate a continuing process of technology transfer for the rapid socio-economic development of the country.

In today's world most of the

technologies are developed in the industrialised countries. Obviously the technology transfer process takes place from industrialised to developing countries, he said.

The science and technology minister assured the non-resident Bangladeshi of all-out cooperation from the government in transfer of technology as well as IT development in order to boost the economy.

In this regard he mentioned the government's plan to set up an IT Village on 47 acres of land in Mohakhali area but admitted that the land was still under illegal occupation.

The minister said the country could not yet meet the requirement of IT professionals although universities and engineering colleges are producing many professionals every year.

Prof. Jamilur Reza Chowdhury said NRBS could play very significant role in the field of software development and some other

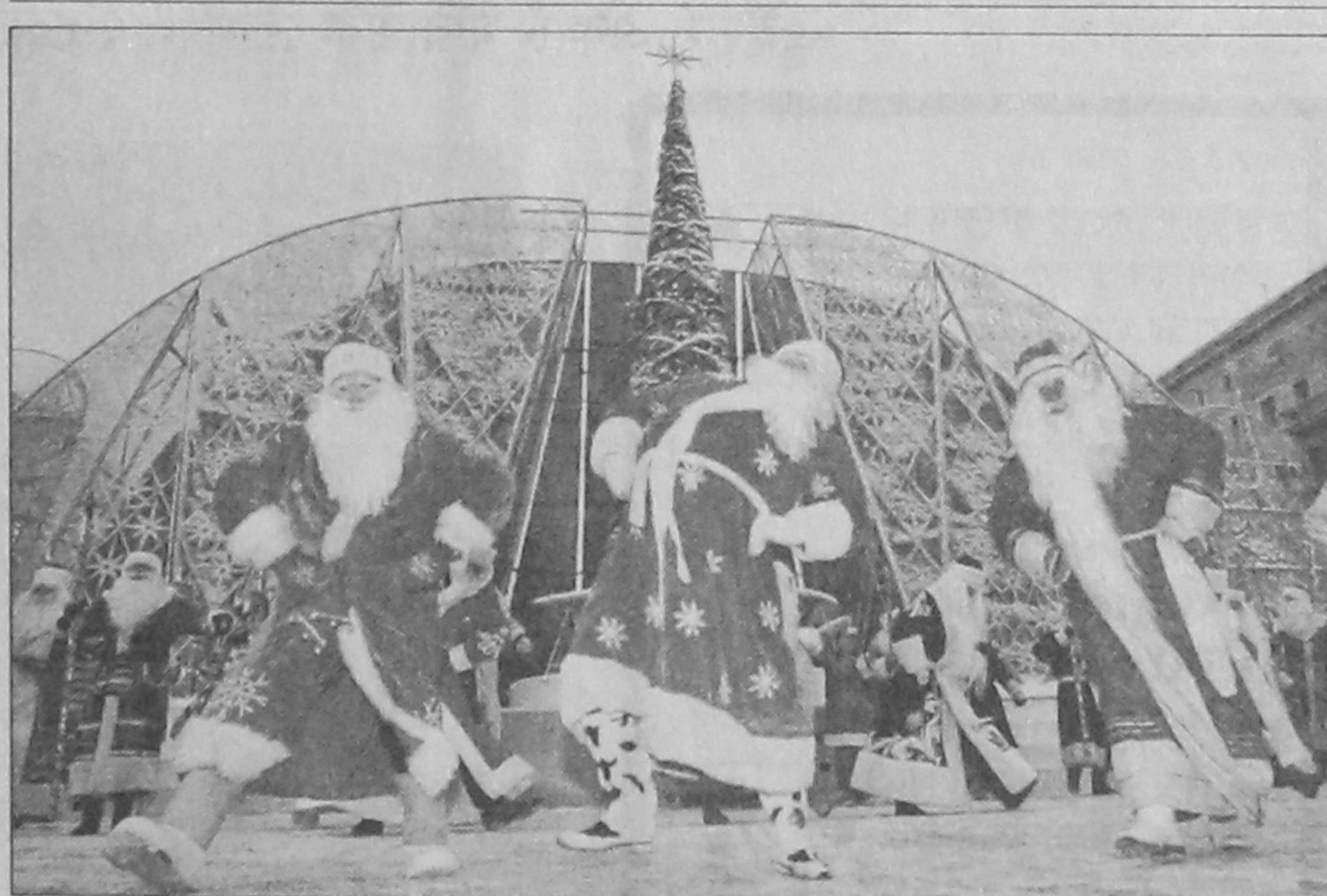
areas of information and communication technology.

Citing examples of non-resident Chinese and Indians, he said they were now contributing to the technological and economic developments in their respective countries.

Bangladeshi technologists have started going abroad over the past three to four decades. And now they have also started to contribute to the country's development," Chowdhury observed.

Dr Abdullah of IBM said that the convention aimed at tying technologists, investors, entrepreneurs (TIEs) from both the resident and non-resident Bangladeshi.

The sooner the government, business communities and entrepreneurs build a working partnership with the NRBS, the sooner the goals of TechBangla in the overall economic development of the country will be achieved," he added.



Father Frost figures in a frolicking good mood entertain passing shoppers from a stage up in central Moscow yesterday during a meeting with the main Russian Father Frost in downtown Moscow. -AFP photo

## Press Club polls: Monir, Swapan reelected

From Page 12

The elected members are Kazi Rounaq Hossain (direct), Yusuf Pasha (Janakantha), Parveen Sultan, Musa Juma (Janakantha), Shehabuddin Ahmed Nafa (Daily Star), Shafiqul Karim Sabu (BSS), Mostafa Kamal Majumder (Independent), Syed Abdal Ahmed (Janakantha), Zahiduzzaman Faruque (Arthanit), Muzaffar Hossain Manik (New Nation), and Rosy Ferdous (Inqlab).

Speaking on behalf of the panel, Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury told newsmen yesterday at the Jatiya Press Club (JPC) that besides ballot paper manipulation, a number of irregularities and foul games were resorted to in the election to announce a certain quarter the winner.

Shafiqur Rahman, who contested the election as a president candidate on behalf of the panel, also made a brief statement before newsmen.

"Our victory was hijacked," Chowdhury said while claiming

that the conscious voters gave clear mandate in favour of Shafiqur-Swapan Parishad. He demanded fresh polls to maintain the dignity of the Press Club.

Chowdhury said, "a section of election commission officials resorted to ballot manipulation, replacing a bundle of 25 ballot papers when the Shafiqur-Swapan Panel was leading with a good margin after counting of 450 ballot papers out of the 487 votes cast."

He said immediately after this "misdeed", both Shafiqur Rahman and Swapan Kumar Saha lodged a written protest with the election commission late Friday night.

Among other things, Chowdhury said despite demands raised by a number of

voters, the election commission supplied ballot papers without any serial number and counterfoils.

He further alleged that although Jatiya Press Club is an organisation of professional journalists, many of the working journalists including Editor of the Prothom Alo Motiur Rahman and Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam were not given membership of the club.

Shafiqur Rahman demanded re-polling and fair inquiry into their allegations.

He also urged the election commission not to announce the poll results before settlement of the issue. Otherwise, he warned that the election commission alone would be held responsible for any consequence.

## 2 kidnapped businessmen rescued in Narayanganj

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Dec 23: Two businessmen were abducted by some miscreants in the town on Friday night.

Police rescued the businessmen and arrested two persons identified as Palash, 32, and Gamru Hasan, 30.

A case under Public Safety Act (PSA) was filed against them.

A group of miscreants abducted Amjad, 35, and Nazrul, 25, at gunpoint from Chashara area in the town, police said.

The miscreants took them to a house in a private car in Isdair area. They tortured the businessmen and later shifted them to a house in Godhal area. They demanded Tk 1.5 lakh from Amjad Hossain's wife. Amjad's wife Selina informed police headquarters about the incident. Later, police rescued the victims and arrested the two.

This is the second case filed under PSA in Narayanganj. The first case was lodged by police against the followers of Charmonia Peer last July.

### SEC

From Page 12

its affairs through the audit reports authenticated by auditors."

Adoption of these standards also helps an investor take informed decisions, he added.

Forty accounting standards have been internationally accepted, of which 36 are effective.

The ICAB has recently issued a circular to all its members, instructing them to adopt internationally practised standards while conducting audits and approving a financial statement.

Bangladesh has adopted 23 such IAS, of which 19 are effective and many others are in the process of review," said the ICAB circular to its members.

Bangladesh has also adopted as many as 45 of the 46 international standard of auditing (ISA), it said.

### Kolkata

From Page 1

accepted the proposal of the State Government of West Bengal to change the name of the city of Calcutta to Kolkata," the statement read.

New Delhi deliberated on the request for a year-and-a-half before agreeing to the change.

All government departments and agencies will have to change their names to comply with the directive, made after more than 50 years of independence from Great Britain.

Bombay, India's financial capital, was renamed Mumbai more than four years ago by the Hindu nationalist Shiv Sena government. Most Indians, though, still call it Bombay.

Many other cities followed its example. Madras in southern India was renamed Chennai, and Trivandrum was changed to Thiruvananthapuram.

For Calcutta, the change may not be so big. Bengal speakers have always called it Kolkata, and within a fraction of a second, the kitchen and two rooms on its both sides collapsed".

### Noor Jehan

"She was a true Pakistani and sang some memorable patriotic songs, which would ever remain in the hearts of people."

Jehan started her career as a child singer at the age of eight from India.

She remained Pakistan's most popular singer for more than four decades and sang around 20,000 songs in Urdu and Punjabi language films in both Pakistan and India.

Family sources said she stopped singing for films after developing cardiac problems in 1989.

"We will always miss her as a mother of singing," said prominent Pakistani singer Mehnaz Begum.

"We will always remember her patriotic songs during the 1965 war with India," said retired army officer Hasan Akhtar Zaidi.

The deceased was to be buried at a graveyard in Karachi, family sources said.

Challenging the report, BNP