

India, Israel talk war on terrorism

UNB/AP, New Delhi

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Indian leaders exchanged views Monday on the war against terrorism a priority for both nations as they fight militant Islamic groups accused of deadly attacks on their soil.

"The world is not divided between East and West," Peres said after meeting with Indian Home Minister Lal K. Advani. "The world has a new vision now, the countries that harbour terrorism and the countries that fight terrorism."

India is locked in a standoff with nuclear-armed rival Pakistan, accused by the government in New Delhi in a deadly terror attack last month on the Indian Parliament.

"Everyone asks one question, whether there will be a war or not," Advani told reporters.

"That is not the question to ask. During the last two decades, a different kind of war has been thrust upon us. The question should be whether we should continue to respond to it the way we have been doing for all these years, or should there be a change in our response."

Peres was also to meet with Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh during his three-day visit that began Monday.

At a just-concluded summit of South Asian nations in Katmandu, Nepal, Indian leaders said Pakistan must end its alleged support of terrorist groups before New Delhi agrees to reviving a dialogue on resolving their differences.

India says Pakistani backing helps many of more than a dozen Islamic militant groups seeking independence for the Himalayan

province of Kashmir.

Similarly, Israel is facing a 15-month uprising by Palestinian and Lebanese militant groups. It has also said it will resume peace talks only if terrorist violence is stopped.

A meeting of a joint commission to combat terrorism has just concluded in Tel Aviv, Israel, an Indian foreign ministry spokeswoman told journalists here.

"India finds it immensely beneficial to learn from Israel's experience in dealing with terrorism, since India too has long suffered from cross-border terrorism," said the spokeswoman, Nirupama Rao.

Israel and India had set up the joint commission in July 2000, when foreign ministers of the two countries also agreed to meet twice a year to review the work of the commission and hold strategic discussions, Indian officials said.

Although India was among the first countries to recognize Israel when it was formed in 1948, relations cooled when New Delhi supported the Palestinian cause. Diplomatic ties between the two countries were only established in 1992.

India and Israel have moved closer since Vajpayee's right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party was elected to head the government in 1998. The last two years have seen a series of high-level visits by both sides.

The Indian and Israeli defense forces have also increased their cooperation, with Israel emerging as a major arms supplier to India. Trade between the two countries, almost negligible before they established diplomatic relations in 1992, crossed the US \$1 billion mark in 2001.

DMCH emergency

FROM PAGE 1

A few minutes later, the only woman identified as Afsana Begum was sent to the ENT ward on the second floor of the hospital. Another injured, aged about 21, identified as Sumon Reza, was later sent to the neurosurgery ward.

Nurses and ward boys suggested that lifesaving drugs be bought from private drugstores close to the emergency gate. Since there was no attendant, nurses waited for the financial help that came much later.

Meanwhile, the nurses at the neurosurgery ward laid five patients, still bleeding profusely, on dirty mattresses. Only saline and bandage were provided by the hospital, while the attendants of a few bought injections.

One of the witnesses, who accompanied the injured to the hospital, Md Alamgir, said, "When I was going to my shop, I saw the bus crashing down the Salepur bridge into the ditch below. I ran down to the bus that turned upside down and pulled Moulana Anwar Hossain out of it breaking one of the glass windows open. All was done within two minutes."

Some injured needed scanning (special X-ray imaging) of their head, but the CT scanner at the hospital closed its services at 2:30pm.

"I am helpless. We have to rely on the first aid treatment. Tomorrow, we will do the CT scanning and then decide whether the injured require any operation," said Dr Md Hossain, BSS, Dhaka

the only physician available at the neurosurgery ward at that time.

Even in the case of emergency, the doctor relied on ward boys and nurses for treatment of the patients. No other senior doctor, nor even the head of the department, was called in for help until 7:30pm.

At about 6:00pm at ward No. 32, a ward boy operated on Enayet, 34, while a group of interns was idling away.

When contacted, Dr Azad said in defence, "Ward boys are better trained and we rely on them more than the physicians for minor surgeries."

Meanwhile, a truck carried the dead, including three women and an eight-month old child, to the DMCH morgue.

According to an officer of Savar Police Station, who accompanied the dead, 25 bodies were brought to the hospital and another three were taken away by the local people from the spot.

Only four of the dead were identified as — Surat Ali, 45, a milkman from Savar, Mahidul, 30, a plumber from Manikganj, Abdul Karim, 35, from Satoria, Manikganj and Abdul Halim, 70, from Salmachi Bahirchar, Savar.

Telephone numbers go five-digit digital in Bogra

BSS, Dhaka

The four-digit telephone numbers in Bogra district will be transformed into five-digit digital ones from midnight tonight, sources in the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTB) said here yesterday.

According to a BTB press release, the analogue old numbers will remain unchanged, but the subscribers have been asked to add '6' to their existing four-digit numbers. The existing nation wide dialling (NWD) code of the district (051) will also remain unchanged, the release added.

The BTB authorities have regretted temporary inconvenience caused to the subscribers during transformation.

Suicide for Simi: Hunger strike observed in N'ganj

UNB, N'ganj

Students of Narayanganj Fine Arts Institute observed a token hunger strike in front of the local press club yesterday demanding arrest of those responsible for the suicide of its student Simi.

Teachers and students of the Dhaka University Fine Arts Institute, journalists, literatures and cultural activists also joined the hunger strike.

President of Sangskritik Jote Rafiur Rabbi, Abdur Rahman of Shrut Shangsankritik Jote, Delwar Hossain Delu of Chader Hat spoke on the occasion.

They demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits, including police officer Bashar, Tofazzal, Khalil, Ripon, Mozazzal and Delwar.

Khaleda at press conference

FROM PAGE 1

She replied in the negative when asked whether she discussed export of gas and 'transshipment' facilities with Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee during their meeting in Kathmandu on Friday.

She said after assessment of gas reserve and discussion with "every-one", a decision will be taken on its "utilisation".

The chief of ruling BNP said former president Shahabuddin Ahmad come under AL attack because he did not keep their request.

"Awami League was taught a lesson by the people in the polls because of their corruption and repression on people. They are now talking all these because they lost the election".

"Everyone knows him (Justice Shahabuddin Ahmad) very well. He conducted the polls in 1991 as caretaker President. Because he played a neutral role, Awami League made him President. But he had no major role to play during the last election. Whatever role he had, he played it very well", Khaleda said.

The process for annulment of the Public Safety Act is on and the Special Powers Act will be annulled as per her election pledge, she said. "The CHT agreement will also come under review".

Asked whether the ministerial status of her Parliamentary Affairs Adviser Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury could influence trial of a murder case he is facing, Khaleda said law will take its own course.

The prime minister said the

SAARC summit was successful and it incorporated in the declaration an eight point Bangladesh proposal on poverty alleviation.

Besides the summit provided an opportunity for the leaders to meet and sort out their outstanding issues. "We have emphasised reducing ceremonies to provide more time for retreat to resolve bilateral matters", she added.

About bilateral issues coming up despite no such provision in the SAARC Charter, Khaleda said, it helped reduce tension between India and Pakistan.

Referring to her call to leaders of the two countries to hold dialogue to defuse tension, she said it worked to the extent that they (Musharraf and Vajpayee) shook hands and had an "exclusive meeting". This contributed to easing of tension.

Khaleda said despite uncertainties in the wake of tension between India and Pakistan, the summit concluded successfully, adopting a declaration and resolving to eliminate poverty and addressing other issues affecting millions of people in the region. People of the region do not want war. They want peace.

"The handshake between Indian and Pakistani leaders aroused hopes among the people about peace and dialogues to win the fight against poverty".

On her talks with Vajpayee for review of the Ganges water sharing treaty, she said it was not a request but an initiative to start the process as per provisions of the treaty.

She said Indian side gave her assurance that the process would be initiated. They also talked on

Bangladesh's trade imbalance with India, she said and added the issue will be discussed at commerce secretary level meeting later this month. The demarcation of border also figured at the meeting.

She said she talked with President Pervez Musharraf on repatriation of stranded Pakistanis. The Pakistani President assured her that they would be repatriated after the Afghan refugees return home.

She termed "unfounded" AL chief Sheikh Hasina's claim of "Taliban presence" in her government. "The difference between BNP and AL is that we do not make any comment against the country outside its soil to embarrass the nation. You should ask her who they are. If you are in movement together, there is no fault", Khaleda said without referring to the agitation by AL and Jamaat-e-Islami against her government in early nineties.

Foreign Minister M Murshed Khan, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Reaz Rahman, Foreign Secretary Shamsheer Mubin Choudhury, Information Secretary Syed Marghub Murshed, PM's Principal Secretary Dr Kamaluddin Siddiky and political secretaries Haris Choudhury and Mosaddek Ali were also present at the press conference.

Replying to a question Murshed Khan said Bangladesh is prepared to send peacekeeping troops to Afghanistan through the UN if a request comes.

Thailand bans Far Eastern Review edition

REUTERS, Bangkok

Thailand said yesterday it banned distribution of an edition of the Far Eastern Economic Review magazine because of a report in it of strained relations between Thailand's king and prime minister.

Bangkok Publishing Officer, Police Major General Tritot Ronnarittivichai who supervises circulation of all publications, told this news agency he signed an order to ban and seize all copies of the latest issue of the Hong Kong-based weekly from newsstands.

"I signed an order to ban and seize the current edition of the magazine today," Tritot said. "If anyone violates this order, we will arrest them."

He said the edition in question, dated January 10, carried an article that could cause public unrest, social disorder or affect public morality, violating Thailand's 1941 Publishing Act.

A spokeswoman for the Review told the news agency the magazine had not been informed officially of the ban.

"We (have) received nothing officially from the Thai government or from any other parties," said Nadia Stoye, director of corporate communications of publishing firm Dow Jones & Co D.J.N.

Stoye said the magazine did not think the article in question was offensive: "We stand by our article," she said.

Ctg tremors

FROM PAGE 1

record the intensity of tremors and directions of the epicentres with its outdated and antiquated equipment, experts observed.

People of the port city did not feel yesterday's earthquakes and there was no report of casualties. The city also experienced a minor tremor on Sunday while the centre recorded 37 tremors in the last year. All the tremors were measured minor to moderate categories, sources said, adding that people could hardly feel those quakes. There were also no reports of casualties.

Bangladesh lying in major seismic fault is feared to be jolted by a strong tremor in near future which may leave a trail of destruction of lives and property in the absence of adequate and effective precautionary measures, geological experts believe.

Meteorology experts said Chittagong and eastern regions of the country including Sylhet are at great risks of impending tremor while less risky regions are south-western zones.

City traffic

FROM PAGE 1

DMP would offer a seven-day training for these so called drivers and it would clamp down on fake licences from March 1. Police would also be asked to investigate issuance of fake licences and arrest those involved in it.

"We shall make sure that a driver using a fake licence after March 1 does not get away. He will be charged with criminal forgery," said the DC.

"In the last four months, we have dismantled over 4,000 hydraulic horns. Now we know that even small private cars have horns which are above the allowable decibel level. We shall also clamp down on them."

The DC said he would first like to clamp down on police vehicles emitting black smoke and then move on to take action regarding other government vehicles polluting the city's atmosphere.

The government has also taken steps to identify commercial buildings without parking facilities. These are causing great suffering to people. A move is underway to make owners of these buildings create parking facilities on their premises or face stern legal action.

Anti-dumping

FROM PAGE 12

Bangladeshi exporters outright rejected such allegations of the Indian authorities. Besides, the grounds on which the non-cooperation charge has been brought are not covered under the anti-dumping investigation rules, local battery manufacturers said.

Two Indian companies filed a petition demanding initiation of an anti-dumping investigation, and imposition of anti-dumping duty on battery exports to India from Bangladesh. Exide Industries and Amara Raja Batteries Limited filed the petition, saying huge numbers of lead acid batteries are making their way into India from Bangladesh, Japan, Korea, and China due to easing of import restrictions, and bringing import of lead acid batteries under open general licences.

A move to slap anti-dumping duty on automotive lead acid battery exports to India was rejected on March 21 last year by the Indian government after the former Bangladesh commerce minister raised the issue with his Indian counterpart during his visit to India on March 13 last year. The Indian authorities revived an anti-dumping petition in May last year against Bangladeshi lead acid battery imports.

28 die in bus mishap

FROM PAGE 1

some 30-35 feet down into the ditch like a missile, overturned and went under water at about 1:45pm," said Mahidul Islam, a transport worker, who saw it all happening.

Witnesses said the high-speed bus flew around 25 yards in the air before crashing into the 15 feet deep ditch. There were tyre marks on the reinforced concrete, guarding sloppy part of the road, which is connected to the bridge.

However, no safety pillar was found beside that part of the road, which is connected to the bridge. Local people observed that the impact of the accident could have been less had there been safety pillars on that part of the road.

Communication Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda, who visited the spot yesterday afternoon, said to The Daily Star, "Absence of safety pillars is not the reason behind the accident."

Usually, safety pillars are installed beside that part of highway, which is connected to bridge. Local people said a private car fell into the ditch about a year back, resulting in the death of one person.

Witnesses blamed the accident on reckless driving while members of the police and other agencies concerned, present on the spot, did not make any comment in this regard saying that the matter needs to be investigated.

At the Gabtali Bus Terminal, employees at the ticket counters of the buses that ply Dhaka-Satoria route said the bus that met the accident was ply a local route and had a capacity of carrying 31 passengers. It left Shatoria for Dhaka at around 11:30am, they added.

Abul Khaer, a fire brigade diver, told The Daily Star that most of the bodies were found at the back of bus. "It probably happened due to the huge jolt while the bus fell into the ditch. I found nine bodies together at the back of the bus under the roadside water."

Nabi Hossain, an employee of the ditch-side brickfield who witnessed the incident, said the bus fell into the ditch with a bang and went under water within a few minutes. There was no motor vehicle close by when it skidded off the road, he said.

Initially, four passengers managed to get out of the under-water bus and one more managed to get out a few minutes later. Passers-by, people from near by brickfields and villages rushed to the scene and some of them dived into the water, witnesses said.

Changes in admn

FROM PAGE 12

In separate notifications, a number of deputy secretaries or officials of equivalent positions have been given fresh assignments.

Badiur Rahman has been transferred from Health and Family Welfare Ministry to Bangladesh Services Ltd as its secretary. He will replace Syed Jagul Pasha who has been sent to Education Ministry.

Kamaluddin Ahmed who was in Industries Ministry has been made secretary of Islamic Foundation.

Water Resources Ministry's M Masud Elahi has been sent to Bangladesh Hotel Restaurant Registration and Class Cell as its controller. He replaces Kazi Abdul Gani who was sent to the Water Resources Ministry.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Hasibur Rahman, a deputy secretary at Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry has been made an officer-on-special duty (OSD) at the Establishment Ministry.

Jhalakati's deputy commissioner Mihir Kanti Majumder has been called back to Dhaka and posted at Health and Family Welfare Ministry.

Abdul Majid, a director of Board of Investment, has been transferred to Finance Division as a deputy secretary. Mahbubur Rahman and Suraiya Begum have been transferred from Labour and Employment Ministry to Expatriates Welfare Ministry.

They were able to rescue nearly 15 passengers trapped inside the bus and sent the injured passengers to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). Some were taken to nearby clinics by their relatives.

The officer-in-charge of Savar police station said on the spot that three more passengers succumbed to their injuries at nearby clinics. The three identified as Lat Mia, Shamsheer Alam and Zakir were taken to local clinics by their relatives.

Police could not confirm till last night whether the driver and other staff of the bus were killed in the incident.

A total of eleven injured passengers were admitted to the DMCH. Of them, two were later shifted to Orthopaedic Hospital, hospital sources said.

Two units of fire brigade arrived on the scene at around 2:15pm, followed by three others within few minutes. Later, Savar police and Dhaka Metropolitan Police personnel arrived on the spot.

A wrecker of fire brigade salvaged the ill-fated bus about 5:00pm, which was taken to Savar police station.

Twenty-two bodies were sent to the DMCH in a truck at about 4:00pm. A number of relatives of the victims were seen looking for the near ones on the spot. A huge number of people from nearby villages gathered at Shalepur Bridge to watch the rescue operation.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition In Jatiya Sangsad Sheikh Hasina, in separate condolence messages last night, conveyed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for the peace of the departed souls. Khaleda also prayed for early recovery of the injured while Hasina called for help for the families of the victims.

Meanwhile, our Sirajganj correspondent reports: At least two persons were killed in two separate road accidents on the Dhaka-Bogra Highway yesterday.

Police said an unidentified passer-by, aged about 12 years, was hit and killed by a Bogra-bound bus at Hatikumrul at around 10:30am.

In the other incident, a Dhaka-bound bus hit housewife Rina Khatun, 24, at about 1:30pm. The victim died on the spot.

Besides, some changes were brought among senior assistant secretaries. M Nasimuddin of Education Ministry, Mohammad Hanif of Local Government Division and M Babul Mian, assistant commissioner (Land), Savar all have been transferred to Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre.

Senior assistant secretary Begum Jannatul Ferdous, who was regional manager at Model Village Project in Rangpur, has been attached to the Establishment Ministry for her new posting.

Minor boy run over at Bogra

BSS, Bogra

A minor boy was run over by a speeding truck here yesterday when he was crossing the road.

The boy has been identified as Ahsan Habib, 12, son of Abdul Haque of Fulbari Madhyapara in the town.

After the tragic accident, angry people of the area in protest put up barricades on the road that resulted in traffic congestion. Later, police removed the barricades.

A case has been filed with Sadar Police Station in this connection.

Police lack device

FROM PAGE 12

Mentioning that overloading of vehicles is one of the main reasons for road accidents, he said there is no mechanism to check whether a vehicle is overloaded or not.

The two accidents killing at least 69 people including some women and children took place due to overloading and reckless driving, sources pointed out.

Of them, 28 were killed when an overloaded minibus plunged into a roadside ditch at Salepur. In the other accident near Bogra town on December 27, thirty-eight people were killed.

Frequent road accidents are killing many people. Five persons were killed and 12 injured when a tempo collided head-on with a truck in Gaibandha on Sunday. Earlier on Thursday, a bus-truck collided leaving 10 people killed in Tangail. Besides, five persons were killed in a road accident in Rajshahi on the same day.

Deputy Commissioner of Traffic wing of DMP Abu Musa Mohammad Fakhru Islam Khan identified reckless driving, over-speeding, and over-loading as the main reasons for road accidents. He admitted that lack of proper application of rules is another reason.

CHT

FROM PAGE 12

high command.

The sources said the proposed councils would increase the number of their members from five.

The government is on principle keen to form the new councils of the hill districts on a long-term basis to bring peace and stability in the region.

However, the BNP-led alliance government did not take any decision on the administrative structure of the CHT districts.

The sources said the proposed councils would increase the number of their members from five.

The government is on principle keen to form the new councils of the hill districts on a long-term basis to bring peace and stability in the region.

However, the BNP-led alliance government did not take any decision on the administrative structure of the CHT districts.



PHOTO: AFP

Five arrested

FROM PAGE 12

inspector of police in an attempt to rescue her son.

On Sunday afternoon, two supporters of local BCL, Md. Zakir Hossain, 27, and Mohiuddin, 28, were gunned down allegedly by Shibir cadres at Sannyashihut of Lelang in Fatikchhara.

Muhuri murder

FROM PAGE 1

with Shibir activists. Gopal Krishna Muhuri was gunned down at his Jamal Khan residence in the town on November 16, 2001.

Earlier, police arrested three teachers of the college and a Shibir cadre, Nasir, in connection with the killing.

An Islami Chhatra Shibir activist was arrested from C and B Colony in the city's Nasirabad area Sunday night in connection with an arms-snatching case.

Acting on a confessional statement by Giasuddin, driver of the auto-rickshaw used in killing Gopal Krishna Muhuri, police raided the colony shortly after midnight and arrested Shibir cadre Sagor Ahmed.

Gias confessed to the police that he brought to Sagor in Satkania two of the three arms grabbed from police as they tried to arrest them, while they (bandits) were fleeing after committing robbery at the Chandganj residence of Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan on May 12 in 2001.

Acid control

FROM PAGE 12

the ministries of Home, Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Health and Family Welfare, Commerce and Information, and Law enforcing agencies attended the meeting.

Speaking at the function, the Home Minister held suppliers of acid equally responsible for acid attacks.

Minister Khurshid Jahan Haque apprised the meeting that the government is pledge-bound to take effective initiatives to stop acid attacks. "Steps are underway to take action against the attackers and suppliers of this harmful substance," she mentioned.

The meeting stressed the need for quickly handing over the attackers to law enforcers and ensuring treatment of the acid victims, and asked the law enforcers to be more active in identify the real culprits.

2450-year old relics

FROM PAGE 1

ern limit of Mauryan Empire.

Dr SSM Mustafizur Rahman of Archaeology Department of Jahangirnagar University was the deputy team leader. Dr Syed Md. Kamrul Ahsan of the same department and Abul Bahser, Field Officer of the government's Department of Archaeology were the two other members.

The excavation was funded by International Centre for Study of Bengal Art (ICBSA).

After the findings were disclosed at a seminar at Jahangirnagar University on December 30, Dr SSM Mustafizur Rahman and two other members of the team revealed many aspects of the excavation while talking to this correspondent.

"We found a vast settlement of early historic period, based on an industrial area and trade centre at Wari-Bateshwar village in Narshingdi. This will open a new era of rewriting our past history", Dr. Mustafizur rahman said.

Northern Black Polished Ware (NBRW) and Rouletted Ware (RW) are chronology of marker belonging to early historic period, he said. Chips, flakes and cores of semi-

precious stone-beads indicate existence of manufacturing centre. Few pieces of raw materials like jasper and quartz support existence of production centre. The stone-beads testify the marvellous artistic skill of the ancient people of Wari-Batshwar, he said.

Hand-axes, spearheads, knives and smelted tiny parts of iron confirm the idea of furnace as well as of smelting centre there.

"We may assume, from the discovery of RW and Knobbed Ware (KW), that Wari-Bateshwar had contact with South Asian and Roman civilisations then".

Besides, NBPWs support the assumption that Wari-Bateshwar was the eastern limit of the Mauryan Empire.

Discovery of KW proves that Buddhism was practised in the area during the period.

"As no evidence of burnt brick was discovered in any other place, we think burnt bricks were limited to the Wari-Bateshwar region at that time", he added.

Though experienced archaeologists in their write-ups earlier mentioned the area as a spot of punch-marked silver coins and semi-

precious stone-beads, no government showed interest in carrying out any scientific excavation there and even the Department of Archaeology did not enlist it.

ICBSA at its meeting on October 4, 1999, decided to conduct a small-scale excavation there and Ministry of Culture gave it permission on February 1, 2000.

"We had to stop the excavation for want of funds. We are now looking for funds to resume the excavation", Prof Kamrul Ahsan said. "We have discovered most of the artifacts in a 5/3 metre trench and there is a vast area left".

Archaeologists of Bangladesh are capable of doing any kind of large-scale excavation successfully if funds are provided, he said.

Dr Enamul Haq, had been hammering on excavation at this site since 1974, he said. Bulbul Ahmed, a student of archaeology, conducted a research there in 2000.

Dr Dilip Kumar Chakrabarti had written the first professional write-up on this archaeological site