

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 division 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 spokesman, 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.

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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, Muhidul, 30, a plumber from Manikganj, Abdul Karim, 35, from Saturia, Manikganj and Abdul Halim, 70, from Salmachi Bahrchar, Savar.

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 (BTTB) said here yesterday.

According to a BTTB 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 nationwide dialling (NWD) code of the district (051) will also remain unchanged, the release added.

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

Suicide of Simi: Hunger strike observed in N'ganj

UNB, N'ganj

An expatriate worker was allegedly kidnapped by a group of miscreants from the city's Tikatuli area here Sunday.

Police said Shaheed Ali, an expatriate worker in Bahrain, was kidnapped from Tikatuli area at about 6 pm Sunday when he was going towards Motijheel by a rickshaw with his maternal uncle.

The miscreants identified themselves as police and forcibly separated Shaheed from his uncle and took away him to an unknown place, police said.

Motahar Alam Chowdhury, uncle of the victim, also a vice-president of Gano Forum, Moulavi Bazar district unit, lodged a case with Motijheel police station. The victim recently returned home from Bahrain.

CEC: By-polls

FROM PAGE 1

Presided over by the CEC, the meeting, held at National Economic Council (NEC) auditorium, was also attended by Election Commissioners Safir Rahman, MM Munshi Ali and AK Mohammad Ali, and Home Secretary Sadat Hussain, IGP Modabbar Hossain Chowdhury and representatives of different intelligence agencies, BDR and other officials concerned.

The CEC called upon the officials to make the by-election as fair as the October 1 general election to uphold the dignity of the commission.

The meeting was apprised of the preparation for the by-polls. It emphasised the deployment of members of the armed forces to aid the civil administration.

They demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits, including police officer Bashir, Tofazzal, Khalil, Riton, Mofazzal and Delwar.

Khaleda at press conference

FROM PAGE 1

She replied in the negative when asked whether she discussed export of gas and 'transhipment' 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 "everyone", 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 Choudhury 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 but an 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 Parvez 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 Shamsher Mubin Choudhury, Information Secretary Syed Marghub Murshed, PM's Principal Secretary Dr Kamaluddin Siddiqi and political secretaries Haris Choudhury and Mosaddeq Ali were also present at the press conference.

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

Five arrested

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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 Sannyashitul of Lebang in Fatikchhari.

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Telephone numbers go five-digit digital in Bogra

BSS, Dhaka

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Acid control

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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 denationalisation process began as per a WB suggestion of reform measures under the Structural Adjustment Policy (SAP). Under the SAP's golden handshake programme, workers who served more than 25 years were relieved of their duties.

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 identifying the real culprits.

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2450-year old relics

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earliest 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 (ICSBA).

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.

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

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