

Tremors killed over 21000 around world last yr

Normal in terms of seismic activity: USGS

REUTERS, San Francisco

Earthquakes killed some 21,436 people in 2001, an unusually high death toll for a year that scientists said was "normal" in terms of seismic activity.

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) said on Thursday that there were 65 significant earthquakes around the world last year, compared with around 82 in 2000.

A "significant" earthquake is defined as a tremor of magnitude 6.5 or greater that causes fatalities, injuries, or substantial damage.

The USGS said that during a typical year, 18 major tremors, magnitude 7.0 to 7.9 and one "great" earthquake, 8.0 or higher, occur worldwide. But those quakes do not usually result in such a high number of deaths.

"Dense urban populations coupled with weak building structures near the epicenters are responsible for most of the fatalities in any year," said Waverly Person, director of the USGS National Earthquake Information Center in Golden, Colo.

The deadliest quake of the year -

- accounting for the vast majority of the year's fatalities - was a magnitude 7.7 that hit the state of Gujarat in north-western India on Jan. 26.

That earthquake killed more than 20,000 people, many of whom perished in collapsing buildings that had not been designed to withstand quakes of that magnitude.

USGS officials said the average number of people killed annually by earthquakes is about 10,000 although the total can vary greatly from year to year. In 2000, only 231 people died in earthquakes, but in 1999 the death toll was 22,711 after major quakes struck Turkey and Taiwan.

The deadliest year in this century was 1976 when at least 255,000 people, and perhaps more than 600,000, were killed after one quake hit near Tianjin, China.

The largest earthquake of 2001 was a magnitude 8.4 off the coast of Peru in June. It caused more than 100 deaths, but the impact of such a large quake was reduced because of its offshore location.

In the United States, the most memorable event occurred in the

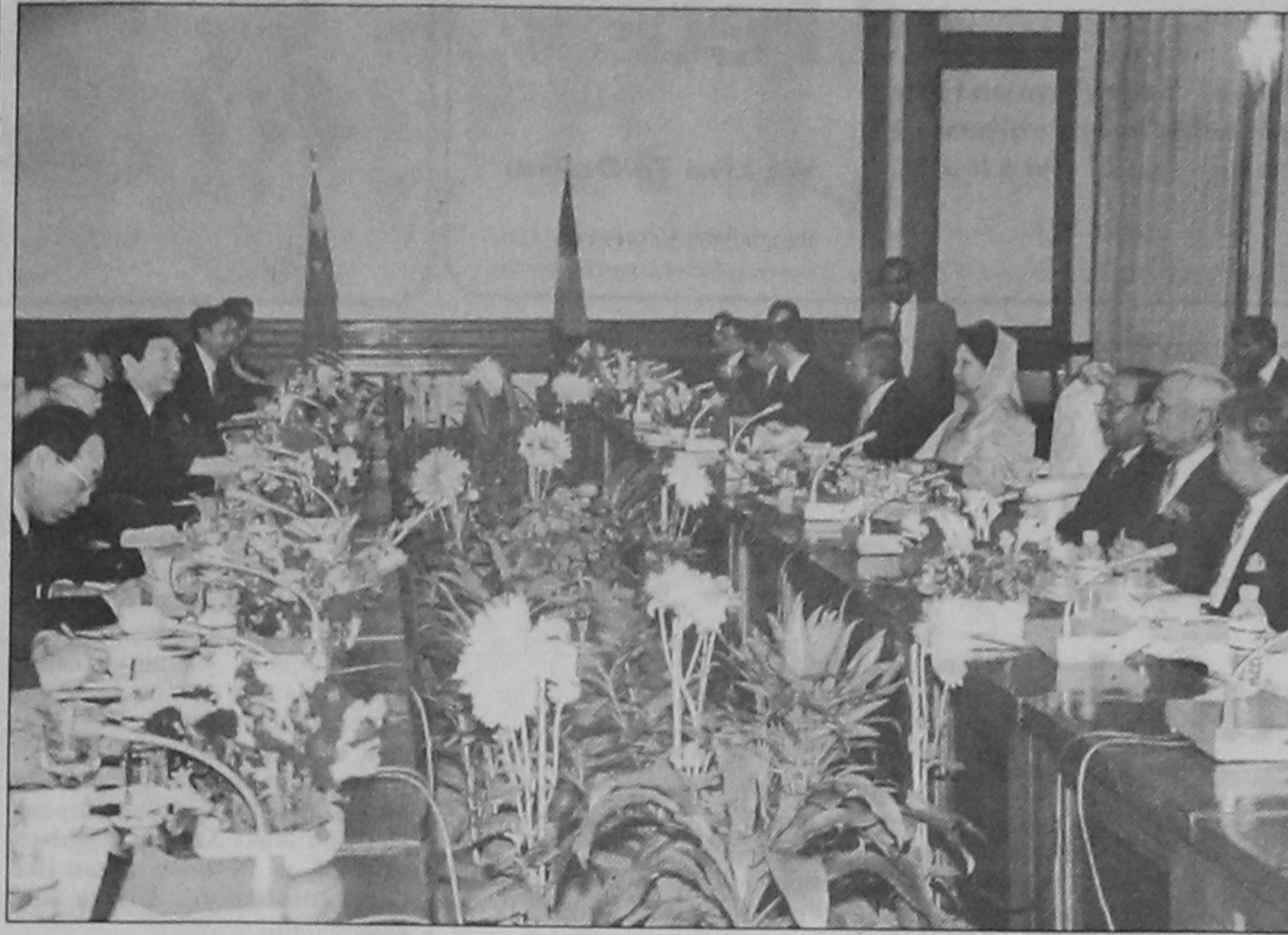
Seattle-Tacoma area of Washington State in February, when a magnitude 6.8 quake shook the US Northwest. No deaths were directly attributed to the earthquake but more than 400 people were injured and damages were estimated at about \$1.5 billion.

The USGS said that damage from the Seattle quake was significantly less than it would have been in many other cities of the world due to extensive seismic preparation programmes instituted by local governments.

El Salvador may have broken records, having suffered two devastating earthquakes in one month.

"That could well be a record for back-to-back quakes occurring so close to each other," said Heidi Koehler Koonz, a USGS spokeswoman.

On Jan 13, a magnitude 7.7 quake killed more than 5,000 people and destroyed more than 250,000 homes. One month later, on Feb. 13, a magnitude 6.6 earthquake killed or injured another 3,500 and damaged or destroyed an additional 55,000 homes.



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji lead their respective sides at the official talks between the two countries at Prodhannontri Bhaban in the city yesterday.

FIFA bans Bangladesh

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No sooner had the ad-hoc body headed by President SA Sultan sat down to work, a legal dispute developed after the ousted Harun group informed AFC General Secretary Peter Velappan of the change of power.

Velappan, in a strongly worded letter on December 27, gave the BFF a January 5 deadline to reinstate the elected body or face consequences. The ultimatum was extended by three days, but a stubborn State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman refused to bow down.

"We are ready for the ban. We will not bow our heads and in no way will the previous committee be revived," the sports minister had told The Daily Star Sport on Wednesday.

Fans phoning The Daily Star office observed that the senseless and stubborn stance of Rahman against the world football's most powerful body only revealed the lack of sporting wisdom and knowledge of the state minister. "His acts have made Bangladesh an object of shame internationally," one of the fans fumed. The defiant statements made by Rahman and SA Sultan against the AFC and FIFA also exposed the present government's incapability in dealing with sensitive international issues. The blatant politicisation of local sports by the BNP government was a recipe for disaster and football has been its first victim, felt another football buff. (More stories on Sports pages)

Confce on arsenic

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convenor of the conference and also Chair of DCH Trust, said, "As we have been saying from the very beginning, we must have a watershed management policy for adequate use of water. As you all know a barrel of oil costs \$15 against \$35 for a barrel of water in Europe. In Bangladesh we have the second highest per capita surface water."

"On the contrary," Prof Zaman said, "For unknown reasons, all international investment is for groundwater in Bangladesh. But we cannot ignore surface water because of the simple cause of water-borne diseases like diarrhoea."

"In fact, diarrhoea still kills over 100,000 children a year in Bangladesh. So sinking deep tube-wells have not changed the picture except for making the rural people dependent on tube-wells instead of ponds, dug wells and rivers," he said.

In the context of the crisis centering arsenic contamination of our people and the magnitude of the problem of access to safe drinking-water for poor rural Bangladeshis, DCH and SOES decided to hold international conference and make the bilateral and multilateral agencies accountable for their development interventions in Bangladesh.

The reality of development is that donors take more than they put in. They employ their own people and enter into contracts with their own companies. Domestic control of the development process has to be generated but successive weak governments have failed to facilitate this.

Thus, a major focus of the conference is to generate pressure on the Bangladesh government and its relevant departments to establish an effective policy framework for key development issues of which access to safe drinking-water for people has to be a major priority.

We cannot leave the evolution of Bangladesh in the hands of international agencies. The discriminations, the gross inequalities that have become endemic in western development models has to give way to a more equitable people-oriented process that can genuinely generate sustainable development in the crucial field of water access and beyond, the press conference was told.

Prof Mahmudur Rahman, Coordinator of DCH Trust said, "There are disputes over figures even with the numbers of tubewells."

Some say four million while others put the figure three or four times that. But we still do not have reliable data on the researches on arsenic."

We hope to address the problems of the use of water and its management, of dealing with patients and other major issues during the conference. We also hope to learn from others about their experiences on remedy and mitigation of arsenic contamination.

Among those who will attend the conference are, Dr Dipankar Chakraborti, Director of SOES, Jadavpur University, Prof Alan Smith of University of California, USA, Prof R Wilson from Harvard University, USA, Prof Ravi Naidu from Australia, Prof K C Saha from India and Prof Ben Rees from UK.

Chairman of Bangladesh Law Commission and ex-chief Justice of the Supreme Court Justice ATM Afzal will inaugurate the session today while President AQM Badruddoza Choudhury will be present as chief guest during the concluding session on Sunday to be held at the Bangladesh Institute of Administration and Management.

AL leader, 3 others arrested at Rangamati

BSS, Rangamati

Police arrested an Awami League leader and three others from different parts of the town yesterday.

They are Rafique Ahmed Talukder, vice-president of Langat-upazilas unit of Awami League, Raisul Islam Rassel, Fazlul Haque and Abdul Maleque.

Police arrested persons are accused in separate cases.

They were produced before the court and later sent to Rangamati jail, court officials said.

Raozan

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According to police sources, at least 10 people were killed and over 200 injured in Fatikchhari and Raozan in the past three months. Besides, about 30 people were abducted and later released on payment of ransom.

Two BCL activists were killed in a gunfight with Shibir activists at Fatikchhari on Sunday.

7 MoUs signed

FROM PAGE 1

Seven memoranda of understanding (MOUs) were signed for implementation of both short term and long term projects by the Chinese in Bangladesh under "mutually agreed terms."

It was learnt that Bangladesh would discourage signing future assistance contract under Suppliers contract.

Briefing newsmen at Sonargaon Hotel later, Foreign Secretary Shamsheer Mabin Chowdhury said seven MOUs were signed and the terms and conditions of the contracts for their implementation will be worked out in future.

One MOU was signed for Economic and Technical Cooperation for construction of the sixth Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge at a cost of 6.5 million dollars. The site of the bridge will be selected by the government through appraisal.

Two MOUs were signed with the Ministry of LGRD for construction of a water treatment plant and the other for construction of a sewage plant.

Another MOU was signed relating to handing over of the International Conference Centre. The hall built with Chinese assistance of 100 million RMB Yuan is due to be handed over today.

Two MOUs were signed in the energy sector. These are for construction of 210 MW Khulna Power Plant and two coal fired 125 MW power plants at Barapukuria. Another MOU was signed in the cultural field.

At the talks, Chinese side responded positively to a Bangladesh's request for investment and cooperation to bolster the country's textile sector. It was said Bangladesh wanted to expand its textile manufacturing capacity to support the growing ready-made garments sector.

Bangladesh side pleaded

strongly to reduce the yawning trade gap between the two countries, which is overwhelmingly in favour of China. The trade gap is of nearly 500 million dollars.

The Chinese premier assured that his country would take positive steps to find out ways to do so and assured that a delegation would be sent to study appropriate measures to help increase Bangladesh's exports.

China, although itself a jute producing country, immediately announced that it would abolish all duties and provide zero tariff facilities for the entry of Bangladesh jute and jute goods.

Regional And Int'l Affairs

Both the leaders discussed the need for peace and stability in the region.

Bangladesh hoped that China will play an effective role in the WTO to protect the interests of least developed countries.

Zhu Rongji said it considers Bangladesh a trusted friend of China.

He also said China and Bangladesh shares similar views on most regional and international issues including Afghanistan, South Asian peace and stability and nuclear non-proliferation.

The Chinese premier mentioned that late president Ziaur Rahman following his visit in 1986 laid the foundation of a strong and stable relationship between Bangladesh and China.

Khaleda Zia reiterated her desire to maintain strong ties with China and recalled her last visit as leader of the opposition. She also referred to SAARC and said Bangladesh attaches great importance to it.

Referring to the current standoff between India and Pakistan, the Foreign Secretary said both the sides desired that all disputes should be settled through peaceful negotiation.

Arsenic: Massive campaign

FROM PAGE 1

He stressed the need for the media to play an important role in creating awareness among the people about the adverse effects of arsenic and urged the newsmen of both the print and electronic media to continue to play their role.

Referring to the arsenic situation in Bangladesh, the minister said some 10,600 arsenic patient have already been identified across the country. He said 2,000 doctors and 15,000 field workers are now engaged in taking care of arsenic patients.

He however, regretted that there is lack of accurate information about the arsenic situation and other related matters. Seeking support of all quarters concerned in resolving the arsenic problem, he said "although the task of mitigating the arsenic situation is not so easy, we cannot sit idle...we all have to work together to face the challenge."

The health minister lauded the role of FEJB saying that the journalists of this organisation have long been engaged in sensitising environmental issues, including the arsenic issue. He hoped that the FEJB would continue its efforts to create awareness among policymakers, politicians and people in general.

Speaking as special guest, Secretary of the Local Government Division AYBI Siddiqui said that despite massive awareness, the government concerned, donor and other agencies could not launch a co-ordinated campaign against the arsenic menace in the past decade.

He said currently 60 per cent of the country's more than 10 million tube-wells were feared to be pumping arsenic contaminated water while 35 million people were drinking in their ignorance about the presence of the toxic element.

Siddiqui said President Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, who is a renowned physician, has agreed to be the chief patron of the national committee for resistance of arsenic contamination. He said Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and LGRD and Co-operatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan are also very much earnest about mitigating the arsenic disease and the issue has been included in the government's 100-day programme.

Vice Secretary General of the Third World Water Forum Toshio Okazumi told the conference that the much-talked about ministerial level conference of the forum to be

held in Japan next year would focus on major water issues including arsenic contamination.

He said his forum was gathering "Water Voices" by messengers for the date base. "We want to promote voices of the people, by the people and for the people collecting real water voice from all over the world to help make the conference a success," he said.

World Bank representative Paul Martin termed the arsenic crisis as an "unknown monster" because of lack of knowledge on the intensity of the crisis. "There could be nothing more frightening than fighting an unknown monster," he added.

He said promotion of appropriate technologies for safe water was the most crucial challenge before the media along with creating arsenic awareness.

Han Heijnen of the World Health Organisation (WHO) said the media campaign to pressurise policymakers and generate public awareness alone was not enough and the pressmen should also suggest action plans disseminating correct and appropriate information.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) representative Ki Hee Ryu said more donors should join hands with ADB and other organisations in combating the arsenic menace in view of the exposure of millions of people to the contamination.

Editor of Weekly Holiday Enayetullah Khan said the media should ensure a "total coverage" of the arsenic issue instead of focusing on policy issues alone without being influenced by any political considerations.

WWF Secretary General and FEJB Chairman Quamrul Islam Chowdhury in his opening remarks said the media strategy should focus not only on the arsenic problem but also on educating people in facing the problem.

"In the two-day conference we want to chalk out a plan to go about in making a successful media campaign in fighting the menace of arsenic," he said.

Philippino Journalist Elisabeth Roxas laid emphasis on the political will in the planning and implementation process to fight the problems like arsenic contamination.

Journalist Mangal Man Shakyia of Nepal underlined the need for regional co-operation in dealing with arsenic and other water related issues.

He said although it was never

heard before, the experts recently detected the presence of arsenic in the plain regions of his country. But, he added, the problem has not been made public, as detail information in this regard is not yet available.

Dr. Firoze Ahmed of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Professor Ainnun Nishat of International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Zita Lichtenberg of the World Bank, Dr. AZM Iftakhar Hussain of the Arsenic Mitigation Programme of the government, among others, later took part in the first-day technical session.

Hosts run over

FROM PAGE 1

Inzamamul Huq holed out at deep mid-wicket for 43.

Earlier, Abdur Razzak, who completed his third century and second against Bangladesh on the second day, hit a career-best 134.

The Lahore-based all-rounder, who also took two wickets in the second innings, was adjudged man-of-the-match ahead of leg-spinner Danish Kaneria.

Kaneria, who seems to have assumed a tormentor's role for Bangladesh, destroyed the hosts' batting line-up in the second innings to finish with a career-best 7-77. The 22-year old cricketer from Karachi finished with match haul of nine wickets.

The lanky right-arm twerker took 12 wickets on his debut against the same opponents in Multan last August.

Bangladesh, who made only 160 in the first innings, fared no better despite going in to lunch on 32 without loss.

However, everything went horribly wrong for the hosts after the break as they collapsed to 52 for four in the next six overs. And when the scoreboard read 7/90 it looked as if getting past the three-figure mark was a big ask.

Debutant off-spinner Fahim Muntasir was required to chip in with the willow to spare the hosts further blushes. The right-hander staved off the Pakistan victory with a gritty 33. It was also the highest individual score for Bangladesh in the second innings.

Opener Ashraful made 22 and Al-Shahriar, pushed down the order after injuring his right-hand earlier in fielding, briefly entertained the crowd with a 15-ball 21.

He took Kaneria to the sword, hammering three boundaries in the 24th over that yielded 13 runs.

Pakistan will now travel to Chittagong to play in the second Test, starting on January 16. (Scoreboard and more stories in Sports pages)

Stop telling lies

FROM PAGE 1

tory comments.

Taking serious offence in the finance minister's terms of criticism, Kibria said something must have unhinged him, as otherwise a person in his position could not have used such disgusting language.

"The finance minister had used intemperate language against me in the past but this time he has exceeded the limits of civilised conduct and behaviour."

Pointing out that Saifur has the right to criticise his policies and vice versa, Kibria said, but such debates must take place with the decency and decorum befitting persons in their position.

"Instead, he has used gutter language that is unbecoming of a gentleman," the Awami League leaders said.

Referring to reports that Saifur in the meeting with the NBR fulminated against the supplementary duties, Kibria said if he can withdraw all the supplementary duties and still reach the revenue target, he is most welcome.

"A change of policy is only to be expected when there is a change of government. But this does not justify use of abusive language against his predecessor."

On duties on machinery, he said as far as he could recall all machinery of export-oriented industries had zero import duty and all other machinery either zero or five per cent duty on their import.

"He should get his facts right before launching on a tirade," said Kibria about his successor.

Referring to reports that Saifur at a meeting in Habiganj, claimed that it was he who had built the Habiganj-Nabiganj, Habiganj-Lakhai and some other roads, in the district, Kibria asked him to cease from making such 'false claim.'

"The Habiganj-Nabiganj road was raised to the level of a regional highway in the meeting of the ECNEC and funds for its implementation were earmarked with my active support and effort," he said.

The same is true of the Habiganj-Lakhai road and many other roads built during, he said, the AL times.

Hasina to return home

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would also feature in the meeting to be convened after Hasina's arrival," said a senior party leader who wished not be named. He also said most of the party leaders are in favour of a special council of the party much earlier than it is scheduled.

The party convened a special council in June 2000, which extended tenure of the existing central committee until June 2002.

"Awami League now needs massive reforms particularly in the leadership. Young leaders should be promoted to make the party more dynamic and modern," said a mid-ranking AL leader, requesting anonymity.

The central committee will take action against some leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra League and Jubo League for their error-riddled survey conducted and placed before the committee ahead of the general election.

To drum up support for an anti-government action programmes in the days to come to face "the government-sponsored atrocities on the AL activists and common people", central party leaders are likely to embark upon an organisational tour across the country soon. During the tour, the leaders will project the recent price hike of petroleum products and other essentials, and other 'anti-people' decisions taken by the government of Khaleda Zia.

The party will also look into the prospects of attending the Jatiya

The roads are all there and the records are all there, too. The members of the public will also testify to these facts.

"The last minister of communication, the secretary of the ministry and even the engineers are all alive. He cannot get away with making a fictitious statement. Since Mr Rahman is an accountant, he should rely on the official records before making false and exaggerated claims."

Kibria said people of the district know who did what and so, he would only lose his credibility if he made this type of statements based on "falsehood and deception."

"If Mr Rahman so wishes, let him prepare, from the official records, a comparative statement of funds spent and development activities undertaken or completed during the last BNP government's term and Awami League's tenure, concluded Kibria."

57 pirate raids

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MV Radian Store was attacked on December 23, and MV Nicolas on December 7. Robbers attacked MV Suman, MV Silver Fish, MV Maritime Victoria, MV Atholes and MV Nandisti in last December, the sources said.

The most recent incident occurred on the night of January 4 this year in MV Madhubongya, a South Korean ship. The chief officer of the ship, Kim Yong, 40, was fatally injured when he, among other crew members, came under armed attacks during a robbery in which all the valuables of the ship and personal belongings were looted. The injured chief officer was later admitted to the Surgical Clinic at Sonadanga, Khulna. He is yet to recover.

Most of the victims have squarely blamed the law-enforcement agencies for their connivance with the ringleaders of the gangs in the incidents.

Police did not help them when they sought security, nor did they attach any importance to the written complaints filed with the police stations, lamented the injured chief officer of the Korean ship.

Young man stabbed to death in Jessore

UNB, Jessore

A young man was stabbed to death by unidentified assailants at village Bhabanipur

in Manirampur upazila on Thursday night.

Police said the victim, identified as Ziaur Rahman, 22, came under attack when he was returning home from a tailoring shop where he used to work.

The body was sent to Jessore General Hospital morgue for autopsy. A case was filed with local police station.

BRTA

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underhand dealings. We suspect this might have led to his abduction," said a source in the CMP preferring anonymity.

Toufique is accused in eight criminal cases, including repression on women, filed with different police stations. Over the years, he has risen to a criminal height through his involvement in gunrunning, the source further said.

AR Yusuf

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admitted to CMH on December 1, 2001.

Barrister AR Yusuf was Minister of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Information, Law and Justice from 1984 to 1985. He was also the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Biman Bangladesh Airlines in 1986.

The namaj-e-zanaja for AR Yusuf will be held at National Eidgah after Zohr prayers today. He will be laid to rest at Banani graveyard.

Shopping malls

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It is still a reality that in spite of the prices generally charged by the shopping malls in select areas, there is no dearth of customers at many of such establishments. The constant traffic jams in front of most of such establishments is a pointer in this respect. Of course, the customers of those shopping malls belong to affluent groups in society.

Collision

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another bond for Pateswari.

Nine of the injured were sent to Rangpur Medical College Hospital where one Mominur Rahman succumbed to his injuries.

Twelve of the injured were admitted to Kurigram Sadar Hospital while others to Nageswari Upazila Health Complex.

Barapukuria

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said they have taken adequate preparation to handle any kind of flooding.

According to Warwick, the company has installed pumps to drain out 3322 metre cube per hour to prevent the mine from flooding. During such flooding, the flow of water normally is 1200 metre cube per hour which can go up to 1800 metre cube per hour at the maximum, he said.

"The amount of output from coal mines is guaranteed nowhere in the world, but practical assurance can be given about the production," Warwick said.

Talking about the amount of production, Chen Yuyu, deputy general manager of CMC in Barapukuria, said, "We are quite confident about producing one lakh tons of coal by October 2004."

India 'ready for war'

FROM PAGE 1

was clearly intended to send a message to Islamabad ahead of a national speech by Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf today in which he is expected to unveil fresh curbs on Pakistani-based Kashmir militants.

India accuses Pakistan of sponsoring the militants in a proxy war. Pakistan denies this, but says it has offered moral support.

"Pakistan now needs to abandon terrorism and if it refuses to do so it faces serious consequences,"

Brahma Chellaney, an analyst at New Delhi's Centre for Policy Research, told Reuters.

"I guess this is what the Indians are trying to hammer home."

Pakistani officials have been downplaying prospects of a history-making move by Musharraf in the Kashmir dispute, which has sparked two of the three wars between the neighbours since their birth in 1947.

Musharraf has denounced terrorism and vowed a crackdown on extremists within his borders. But India has demanded more concrete action, including Pakistan's surrender of 20 alleged terrorists and crushing of two groups New Delhi blames for a December 13 suicide attack on its parliament.