

## Musharraf: Kashmir policy

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Interior ministry sources also said police in all four of the country's provinces had been ordered to guard mosques and religious places.

"The move is aimed at warding off any attempts by extremist groups to disturb law and order," an interior ministry official said.

Earlier report says, four Pakistani soldiers were killed yesterday in cross-border shelling in Kashmir, Indian officials said.

Lieutenant Colonel H S Oberoi said Pakistani troops started the shelling on Indian border villages in Krishna Ghati area of Poonch, 255 kilometres northwest of Jammu, Kashmir's winter capital.

Indian forces retaliated, killing the four Pakistani soldiers and destroying six bunkers, he said.

He said there were no Indian casualties, although some homes, which had been deserted by villagers, were damaged.

There has been heavy firing and shelling recently between Indian and Pakistani troops which are massed along the border in a tense military stand-off.

The tensions were triggered by an attack on the Indian parliament in December which New Delhi blames on two Pakistan-based militant

groups. India has demanded that Pakistan clamp down on militants. Meanwhile a Muslim boy was injured overnight when Indian and Pakistani troops exchanged heavy artillery fire elsewhere in Kashmir. The firing was reported along the Line of Control (LoC) -- the de facto border that divides Kashmir between India and Pakistan.

In the Gurez sector of the northern Kashmir district Baramulla the 12-year old boy was injured when Pakistani shells hit the area, officials said.

The fire was returned by Indian troops.

"The exchange of fire lasted for some time last (Friday) evening," a senior police officer of the district said.

He said the injured boy was admitted to a military hospital. The officer accused Pakistani troops of opening "unprovoked" artillery fire on Indian army positions in the area.

A police spokesman said Indian and Pakistani troops overnight also exchanged artillery and machine gun fire along the LoC in Kargil. Officials said there were no casualties on the Indian side and that the army was trying to ascertain if there were any Pakistani casualties.

## Arrest of Selim Lalbagh AL calls hartal in Dhaka-8

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lalbagh thana Awami League (AL) will enforce a half-day hartal today in Dhaka-8 constituency comprising Lalbagh, Kamrangirchar and Hajirbagh, protesting the arrest of former AL lawmaker Haji Mohammad Selim.

The Detective Branch of Police arrested Haji Selim from the Zia International Airport area yesterday morning.

In a press release, the AL unit said the BNP government arrested him without any warrant.

All AL units, Jubo League, Chhatra League, Sechchhasebak League and Mohila Awami League in the area jointly called the hartal, the press release added.

Haji Selim was granted bail in all cases lodged against him by the BNP government, it continued.

The local AL leaders called upon all activists and residents of the area to make the hartal a success.

Meanwhile, the local AL leaders and supporters brought out a procession from in front of the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday in protest at the arrest.



Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji places wreath at the National Memorial at Savar in homage to the martyrs of the War of Liberation.

## Hasina, Zhu discuss issues

**FROM PAGE 12**  
delegation called on the visiting Chinese Premier at Hotel Sonargaon yesterday afternoon.

In the 40-minute meeting, the two sides touched upon bilateral matters, regional and international issues of common concern.

The Chinese Prime Minister appreciated Sheikh Hasina for her hard work as Prime Minister for socioeconomic development of Bangladesh during her rule.

He recalled the first visit of what he called Bangladesh's founding leader Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to China in 1953 establishing friendly relations between the two countries.

Referring to Sheikh Hasina's visit to China as opposition leader in 1993 and as Prime Minister in 1996, Rongji said her trips had contributed significantly to strengthening the ties of friendship and economic cooperation.

"The two countries," he said, "now enjoy excellent relations." He hoped that Bangladesh would enjoy unity, stability and economic growth and assured Chinese assistance.

Reciprocating the sentiment, Hasina said economic cooperation between Dhaka and Beijing was enhanced significantly during her five-year rule when a number of contracts were concluded in road infrastructure, power, fertiliser and water-treatment sectors.

After the talks, Sheikh Hasina told reporters that they had very good discussion in a cordial atmosphere where the two sides expressed willingness to strengthen cooperation in various sectors.

She said during her times, the two countries witnessed an increased economic cooperation. She also mentioned her government's initiative to build the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre for the NAM summit.

In reply to a question, Hasina said they also exchanged views on situation in South Asia, including the brewing tensions between India and Pakistan. She said both the sides felt that the problem should be settled through peaceful negotiations by avoiding any war.

Meeting sources told the news agency that issues relating to present political situation in the country also came up during the discussion.

Hasina said her government had approved a number of projects, including Barapukuria coal-fired power plant and 250MW Khulna Thermal Power Plant.

She thanked the Chinese government for extending financial assistance for construction of the China-Bangladesh bridges and Bangabandhu Conference Centre whose name was "unfortunately" changed by the present govern-

ment. The sources said the AL delegation mentioned that the present government is seeking increased cooperation with China on the one hand and on the other filing corruption cases against former Ministers of the AL government for approving contracts for some Chinese-aided projects.

About her rule, Hasina referred to the signing of the Ganges water-sharing treaty with India and CHT peace accord ending armed tribal insurgency in the Hill Tracts.

She also mentioned country's food surplus, 6.6 per cent GDP growth, per-capita income and low inflation of 1.59 per cent achieved by her government.

Turning to international terrorism, she said her party stands against all forms of terrorism for peace, but said "extremist parties in the 4-party alliance government support terrorism."

Hasina also said Awami League supports one-China policy and maintains the foreign policy of friendship to all, enmity to none.

Awami League leaders Abdus Samad Azad, S A M S Kibria, Sajeda Chowdhury, Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Abdul Hamid Advocate, Suranjit Sengupta, Mohammad Nasim, Abdul Jaill, Matia Chowdhury, Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Saber Hossain Chowdhury and Syed Abul Hossain were present.

## PM opens DITF

**FROM PAGE 12**  
She hoped that the fair would help make the products of the participants popular and also help flourish domestic industries.

Khaleda blamed the past Awami League government for creating indiscipline in every sphere of national life, bringing a pause in production and ruining the economy.

Mentioning the tireless effort of her government to redeem the situation, the prime minister sought support of all in overcoming the hurdles.

Referring to the present global recession, the prime minister observed that its impact on Bangladesh export trade is natural, but it calls for more caution and patriotism to face the challenge and enhance the country's exports.

Khaleda released a bunch of colourful balloons at the DITF gate marking the opening of the international fair. She also visited some stalls at the fair.

Finance Minister Saifur Rahman, Commerce Minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, State Minister for Commerce Barkatulla Bulu, FBCCI president Yusuf Abdullah Harun and EPB vice-chairman Abu Saleh also spoke on the occasion.

## Hasina

**FROM PAGE 12**  
The Awami League leader called upon the people to build up a united resistance against the government's attacks on freedom of speech, independence, democracy and human rights.

She said the government earlier arrested former MPs Alhaj Mokbul Hossain and Kamal Ahmed Majumder filing false cases against them.

Arrest, torture, extortion, terrorism, attacks on Awami League workers by the ruling party have become all too common these days, she said.

Hasina said the police have been let loose to attack peaceful rallies and processions of the opposition activists.

"This alliance government has turned the police force into a 'Jatiyatabadi police force' to launch attacks on Awami League leaders and workers," she alleged.

Police even did not hesitate to beat mothers and sisters and were issuing threats to gouge out the eyes of the innocent people.

## Shahriar

**FROM PAGE 1**  
from Calcutta on November 22, 2001. Police seized some video cassettes in his possession.

He was sent to prison on November 25, 2001 under Special Powers Act with a 30-day detention initially. Later he was charged under a sedition case, which is now pending with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court.

Quamrul Islam Choudhury, it was also addressed by Environment Secretary Sabihuddin Ahmed.

The minister also mentioned government steps to reduce the pollution caused by polythene shopping bags, vehicle smoke and noise. He highly appreciated the response from the people and the media to make effective the government ban on polythene bags in the capital. The ban came into effect on the New Year's Day.

"We have decided to ban polythene shopping bags throughout the country from March 1.

"I am sure jute will regain its lost glory and millions of people will get jobs in jute industries as a result of this save-environment drive."

Referring to government's initiative to make lead-free fuel available in the market, he said efforts are on to introduce "catalytic converter" and "diesel particulate" in vehicles to reduce air pollution. People are being encouraged to convert their vehicles into CNG-driven ones. Some city streets have been declared "silent zones" to reduce sound pollution, he said.

He lauded FEJB's efforts in creating public awareness about the effects of arsenic contamination.

Quamrul Islam Choudhury expressed concern at the rapid expansion of arsenic contamination in ground water in so many countries including Bangladesh, China, Thailand, India, Nepal, Laos, Cambodia, USA, Australia and Canada.

Toshio Okazumi said there will be a special session on arsenic at the Third World Water Forum to be held in Japan next year.

Earlier, World Bank representative Zita Lichtenberg; Ki Hee Tyu of Asian Development; Toshio Okazumi of the Third World Water Forum; Elizabeth Roxas of WWFJ; journalists Dr. HD Gunasekara of Sri Lanka, Mangal Man Shakyra of Nepal and Nava Thakuria of India; Dr. Mahfuzul Haq of the Ministry of Environment; journalist Rezauddin Ahmed and Jatiya Press Club President Khondakar Monirul Alam spoke at the technical session.

## Beijing trusted friend

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The Centre will be an ideal venue for hosting international conferences, grand cultural events and even holding large assemblies. It has moveable seating arrangement.

A huge wall electronic display screen adorns the plenary hall. The computer controlled hall involves the latest technology, which would enable conference participants to view digitally on screen any video material under all types of illumination.

Some 400 Chinese engineers and technicians completed the construction work in record 16 months. The Centre has seating capacity for 1,672 people. The same Chinese company earlier constructed the International Conference Centre in Cairo.

Besides the huge plenary room, the Centre has two auditoriums, each with sitting capacity for 400 people. There are also four 'negotiation rooms' for diplomatic or political parleys during any international conference.

Engineers at the Centre said, the opulent complex built with steel, aluminum, glass, granite and extensive wood masonry has latest facilities for simultaneous translation in four languages and a palatial banquet hall for holding any major international conference.

Some 30,000 square metres of space outside the Centre will enable parking of some 700 vehicles.

The entire complex is centrally air-conditioned and a huge arch spans its outer reaches, which allows natural light to enter.

At the Centre yesterday, the first to arrive was the Chinese Premier, accompanied by Madam Lao An. They were received by Minister of Works Mirza Hafiz.

Later, Zhu Rongji received the Bangladesh Prime Minister when she reached the porch of the imposing Centre.

Earlier on Friday, an MOU was signed between the two governments for hand-over of the Centre to Bangladesh.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan later said at a press conference that Bangladesh and China

are set to make a quantum leap in political, economic and cultural relations following the current visit of Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji.

Both countries are committed to the quest for peace and stability in the region and beyond, he said.

"Both Delhi and Islamabad should start meaningful dialogue. Our view, as discussed during the Chinese premier's visit, is that it is only through meaningful dialogue that peace can be maintained in the neighbourhood," the foreign minister said.

"This visit has cemented our bonds further. We are now going for a quantum leap in our relations as we have decided to identify new areas of cooperation," said Khan.

He said the Chinese premier was very appreciative of the country's role in the region as members of different international bodies.

Bangladesh, he said, has expressed interest to participate in Asean.

On Bangladesh-China trade relations, he said the Chinese side has assured of equitable balance by taking remedial steps.

The leaders of the two countries have also discussed zero-tariff facilities in some areas and China has already assured of providing zero-tariff access of jute and allied products.

Asked about the change of name of the International Conference Centre, he said, "It is the most appropriate name. It speaks of the friendship between the two countries and is not a partisan name."

**FIFA Ban**  
On FIFA ban on Bangladesh football, the foreign minister said, "Every international organisation runs by its own statutes. Corrective measures may have to be taken. However, the line ministry (Sports) has not approached us yet for suggestion."

**Tokyo Confic**  
Khan said he will participate in the conference on the reconstruction of Afghanistan to be held in Tokyo on January 21. Bangladesh, he said, will seek the opportunity to participate in the reconstruction process of Afghanistan.

## Hasnat, Rafiqul

**FROM PAGE 12**  
construction of a power house in Meghna Ghat.

The petitions seeking anticipatory bail for the Awami League leaders were moved by Barrister Shafiq Ahmed and assisted by Abdul Matin Khasru and Mushfiqur Rahman Khan.

The bail petitions were opposed by Deputy Attorney General Golam Kibria.

## HC bail

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The High Court, comprising Justice M A Aziz and Justice Nazrul Islam Chowdhury, granted ad-interim bail to the Awami League leaders for three months or till submission of police report.

The following day of a country-wide hartal, observed by Awami League on January 9, cases under the Public Safety Act were filed against the AL leaders and some other activists for blocking road in the city.

Police, however, baton-charged pickets and used teargas to clear the roads for traffic.

The same bench of the HC granted anticipatory bail to former Deputy Minister for Shipping Saber Hossain Chowdhury for three months or till submission of police report in an embezzlement case.

Saber Chowdhury has been made an accused in the case of misappropriating wheat and rice amounting to Tk 17,55,32,274.

The misappropriation charge was filed in a regular FIR that says he has "misappropriated 18,783.88 MTs of wheat and 3397.37 MTs of rice sanctioned for the purpose of a project."

All the four bail petitions were moved by Barrister M Amirul Islam, Deputy Attorney General Abu Kaisar and DAG Golam M Chowdhury Alal opposed the bail prayers.

## Alam murder

**FROM PAGE 1**  
accused Noor Alam Babul and Jahir Alam Khokon and another housemaid Henowara.

After hearing the prayer, Magistrate Sirajul Haider granted a fresh remand of two days for Farida's interrogation in the third phase, and sent the three others to the Dhaka Central Jail.

Industrialist Mohammad Alam along with three housemaids were slaughtered at his Alamabagh residence at New Jurain in the city's Shyampur area on the night of January 2.

The Detective Branch of police is investigating the case. DB police are looking for Farida's brother Dulal but has so far been unsuccessful in locating him.

## Surface water

**FROM PAGE 12**  
ence jointly organised by DCH and Shoel of Environmental Studies (SoES).

Professor Quazi Quamruzzaman, chairman of DCH Trust, said, "It is time that we chose to use either poisoned water or safe water. We have repeatedly urged all to opt for surface water, but in vain."

Justice ATM Afzal, chairman of Bangladesh Law Commission and a former chief justice, inaugurated the two-day conference attended by more than one hundred experts including some 40 foreign ones.

In his speech, Justice Afzal said, "Groundwater arsenic contamination problem is no longer confined to only rural areas. Deep tubewells supplying water to many cities in the country are also contaminated."

"There is no alternative to surface water," Professor Dipankar Chakraborty, director of the SoES, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, West Bengal, said. "We still have time to shift to surface water. It would not cost much to motivate people to use water from ponds and wells."

It is also important to re-examine artificial water bodies to collect rain water during monsoon by involving private agencies, the speakers observed.

## Police prevent AL men

**FROM PAGE 1**  
It was only after she left the VIP Lounge that bouquet carrying senior party leaders welcomed her. Hasina commiserated party colleagues Matia Chowdhury, Mohammad Nasim and other AL leaders who had been hurt in police clubbing three days back.

Much to everyone's surprise, Syeda Zohra Tajuddin, Sajeda Chowdhury, Tofail Ahmed, Matia Chowdhury, Abdul Matin Khasru, Abul Hasan Chowdhury and others of the AL were prevented from entering the VIP Lounge premises.

Tofail Ahmed, who identified himself as an ex-lawmaker, was told by officials responsible that only sitting MPs were to be given access. In protest, the AL lawmakers who had entered the lounge left and waited outside.

Barred roads to ZIA  
Earlier on, police thoroughly checked the vehicles carrying the AL leaders. The jeep, which was to carry Sheikh Hasina, was searched too. On-duty police asked the AL leaders to leave their accompanying political and personal aides behind on way to the airport.

Two minibuses carrying journalists from the Jatiya Press Club were halted a number of times. They were first halted near the Mohakhali crossing where police had placed barbed wire fences narrowing the road. Police officials checked the ID cards of each and every newsmen.

The journalists were questioned again at the Khilkhet-Biswa Road point, at the Airport bus stop and several other points till they reached the VIP Lounge entrance.

Journalists who did not carry accreditation cards with them, which are not usually necessary, were kept stranded for an hour outside the VIP Lounge entrance. At 7:30am, a ZIA security official came

and told the police that they could allow the media persons to enter, whether they had cards or not.

Some AL activists, who managed to sneak past the police cordon or passed themselves off as office-goers, later told reporters that several hundred vehicles carrying AL leaders and workers had been stopped at Gazipur and Tongi.

AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman said, "The government besieged the entire city today. Police even searched the jeep of the Leader of the Opposition."

Abdus Samad Azad, acting AL chief during Hasina's absence, told reporters that police forced buses parked near the AL central office to move away. These were meant for carrying AL supporters to the airport.

He said thousands of party leaders and workers from Tongi, Gazipur, Narsingdhi, Narayanganj, Mymensingh and other adjoining districts were forcibly stopped by police on their way to the airport. "We never saw such barricades and obstacles, not even during the martial law regimes of Pakistan," recalled Samad Azad.

"Our party General Secretary Zillur Rahman rang up BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and asked for help. Mannan Bhuiyan expressed his ignorance about such a situation and promised to ring back after learning the facts. He called back later but said he couldn't contact the concerned persons."

"At that stage, I tried to talk to the home minister over phone. His personal secretary picked up the phone and said the minister had not come down from his room yet," said Azad. "I asked for a return call from the home minister and gave my phone number to his PS. But that call never came."

## SPA unlikely to go soon

**FROM PAGE 1**  
However, the government has started scrutinising various aspects of the law to determine the status of cases filed under it as well as which parts of it are useful for the state.

"The problem with scrapping the SPA is that there are thousands of pending and on going cases under it," the law minister said. "We are also careful about not interrupting the trial process of the pending cases under SPA."

According to the minister, the new law would redefine the detention process under SPA. He however said the new detention process has not yet been designed. "We are taking suggestions in this regard."

The SPA is mostly used for irrational and long detention order. Most of the detention orders under SPA, if challenged in the High Court, are declared illegal. Even yesterday, the High Court declared illegal extended detention of writer Shahriar Kabir under SPA.

"If there is growing political unrest in the country, SPA is unlikely to be scrapped till the expiry of term of this government. This is because SPA is a very convenient tool for thwarting any opposition," noted an adviser of the former caretaker government.

Promulgated in 1974, the SPA was used by successive govern-

ments as a political weapon for harassing leaders and activists of opposition parties, human rights activists and any quarters considered a threat.

After the fall of the autocratic government of HM Ershad, the demand for repeal of this black law turned into a national demand. Since then, all major political parties have been promising repeal of it.

## One shot dead by terrorists in Laxmipur

UNB, Laxmipur

A man was shot dead by unidentified gunmen at his house in Ramgati upazila in the early hours of yesterday.

The victim was identified as Mirajuddin, 32, son of Abdul Matin of Charlaxmi village.

Police and local people said some armed terrorists stormed into the house at about 1am and shot him dead on the spot.

The cause behind the killing could not be known immediately.

## Hasina at ZIA

**FROM PAGE 1**  
She asked her party rank and file to stand beside the repressed people and get ready for movement against the government.

On the question of joining the parliament, the opposition leader said her party would consider the matter at a proper time.

Asked whether her party would participate in the January 17 parliamentary by-polls, Hasina said, "We would decide after assessing the situation."

Claiming that no fresh tax was imposed and prices of essentials were increased during her five-year rule, the former prime minister said the coalition government raised prices of essentials and utility ser-

vices right after coming to power.

Mentioning that during her rule, the country had attained food autarky, Hasina claimed that famine was now stalking the northern districts.

She blasted the government's actions against the officials and employees who took part in the so-called 'Janatar Mancha' in 1996. She reminded Khaleda Zia that the latter could become prime minister because of such a movement that led to the establishment of the caretaker government system.

"Had there not been a caretaker government who would have brought you to power? Who would have ensured your victory through rigging?" Hasina quipped.

## Shazneen case

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Mojibur Rahman, also complainant of the case, told the court that Shahid was taken on a five-day remand for interrogation on April 28, 1998.

Shahid was not tortured during the remand to give confessional statements before the magistrate, the witness added.

After completion of a five-day remand, Shahid was taken on fresh remand for squeezing out secret information from him (Shahid) about the rape and murder of Shazneen, Mojibur told the court.

Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, 15, youngest daughter of Latifur Rahman, Chairman of Transcom Group, was raped and murdered at their Gulshan residence on April 23, 1998.

Latifur Rahman filed a murder case with Gulshan thana on April 24, 1998 against Shahidul Islam alias Shahid, a domestic help at his house.

Mojibur Rahman filed a rape case with Gulshan thana after six months investigation into the murder case.

All the six accused -- Shahid, Hasan, Badal, Shaniram, Minu and Parvin -- were produced in the court during the hearing.

Advocate ABM Sharfuiddin Khan Mukul, Mahbub Ahmed, Saima Khanam and Sheikh, Baharul Islam appeared in the court on behalf of the state while advocate MA Kamrul Hasan Khan Islam and Mohammad Ali for the accused.

The murder case, pending with the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka was earlier stayed by an order of the Supreme Court.

The stay order will remain valid till disposal of the rape case.

## Officials, employees lock Gaibandha poura office

UNB, Gaibandha

Officials and employees of local Pourashava yesterday put the municipality office under lock and key protesting assault on an engineer.

They alleged that sub-assistant engineer Shahidul Islam was beaten up by ward commissioner Shamsul Alam and other commissioners in presence of Poura Chairman.

But the commissioners denied the allegation and said that altercation took place among them following misappropriation of water purifying medicines by the engineers.

The assaulted sub-assistant engineer works in the water supply section of the municipality.

Poura officials and employees also stopped supply of water and electricity and halted cleanup activities in the town protesting the incident.