

India, Pakistan call for recognition as N-powers

AFP, New Delhi

The foreign ministers of India and Pakistan each appealed for their countries to be fully accepted as nuclear powers, six years after the neighbours conducted back-to-back nuclear tests.

Indian Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha said yesterday that New Delhi became "reluctant nuclear power" because of the world's "imperfect non-proliferation order".

He rejected suggestions that the 1998 nuclear tests carried out by his just-installed Hindu nationalist government were "purely a political act aimed at enhancing its status in the world by breaking into the exclusive nuclear club".

"In a world where weapons of mass destruction are still to be eliminated, nuclear weapons are sadly the ultimate guarantor of a nation's security," Sinha told a seminar in New Delhi.

Indian officials had said in 1998 that the nuclear deterrent was aimed at China -- not Pakistan, with which India has fought three wars and which carried out its own nuclear tests just days after India.

Pakistan's nuclear program is under the spotlight after top scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan publicly admitted in early February that he sold nuclear secrets abroad. Khan, considered a national hero, was

pardoned by President Pervez Musharraf.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri told a separate seminar Thursday in Islamabad that the world should recognise Pakistan, India -- and Israel -- as nuclear powers.

He called for changes in the international Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which restricts nuclear weapons to five states: Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States.

"Some method should be found whether through the multilateral arrangements or any other method, if NPT cannot be amended," Kasuri said, according to the state-run Associated Press of Pakistan.

He said the Pakistani government had never proliferated and would never do so as it was fully conscious of its international obligations.

But he said Pakistan "will never freeze or roll back" its nuclear program as it guaranteed national security.

The US imposed sanctions on India and Pakistan after their nuclear tests but lifted many of them when they joined the coalition against terrorism after the September 11, 2001, attacks.

Israel has never acknowledged having a nuclear arsenal.



Artistes of Biswabina, a cultural organisation, perform at an evening of Tagore songs on spring at the Shishu Academy auditorium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Country heading towards uncertain situation: Manju

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman Anwar Hossain Manju has called for strengthening the party as the country is heading towards an uncertain situation.

He was speaking at a reception organised by Chunarughat unit of JP in Habiganj district yesterday.

The JP chairman said the politicians should work not for their own interest but for the countrymen.

"Those, who do not want corruption and violence, will have to find the correct path to serve the country," he added.

Additional Secretary General of the party Sadeque Siddiqui, Organising Secretary of Sylhet division Iftekhar Hossain Limon, and Habiganj district unit President Abdus Samad were also present.

Obituary

Rasheda Islam Jasmine, daughter of former prime minister Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, died of a cardiac arrest at Birla Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 44, says a press release.

Rasheda, who lived in the USA with her husband, three daughters and one son, came to Dhaka recently to visit her ailing father.

Her body has been kept at the hospital mortuary. She will be buried after her husband and two daughters arrive in Dhaka from the USA.

Set up more tissue culture labs for agri development

Speakers tells seminar

BSS, Dhaka

Private sector entrepreneurs and non-government organisations (NGOs) have set up only five modern tissue culture laboratories in the last few years.

This was disclosed at a seminar on 'Application of plant tissue culture for agricultural development in Bangladesh' yesterday, organised by Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) Alumni Association of Bangladesh.

The speakers called for establishing more laboratories to supply quality seeds to the domestic market and also to earn foreign exchange by exporting micropropagated plant materials.

Minister for Science, Information and Communications Technology Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan addressed the function as chief guest and the association President Dr M Enamul Hoq was in the chair.

The tissue culture is a sunrise technology for the multiplication of superior plant on a large scale on a perpetual basis and for production of novel and improved plants, said Director of Atomic Energy

Commission Dr Mokbul Hossain in his keynote paper.

"Tissue culture in simple terms refers to the cultivation of cells and tissues free from the mother plant in appropriate nutrient substance under sterile condition. The cells in culture divide, multiply and produce compounds specific to the plants."

Since these plants are identical to mother plants, tissue culture has been effectively used for commercial production. Application of the plant tissue culture will be particularly rewarding in the areas of agriculture, floriculture, agroforestry, plant medicine and gene transfer, he added.

Prof. Hadiuzzaman said plant tissue culture techniques have opened up a new horizon in the development of agribusiness and agro-industry throughout the world.

It is high time to formulate a strategy for the prospective area, he added.

He said it is estimated that there is a world market potential of 15 billion US dollars per year for tissue culture products. At present, the demand for the micropropagated

plants far exceeds the production of commercial laboratories.

Agriculture is likely to remain as a large part of Bangladesh's economy well into the next century, Prof. Hadiuzzaman said.

With the vast majority of population living in the rural areas and more than half of them living below the poverty line, no growth and poverty alleviation strategy can be succeeded without a healthy agriculture sector, he added.

Prime minister's Principal Secretary Dr Kamal Siddiqui, JICA resident representative Takasi Sakamoto and President of Tissue Culture and Plant Association Dr Hadiuzzaman also spoke.



Science and ICT Minister Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan visited a stall of the International Education Fair that ended in the city yesterday. The three-day fair was organised by S S Business Corporation Limited.



Swedish Ambassador to Bangladesh Borje Mattsson speaks at a reception accorded to the President of Swedish Bangladesh Friendship Society Babul Siraji at the Dhaka Club in the city on Thursday.



Vice-Chancellor of State University of Bangladesh Professor Dr. Momtaz Uddin Ahmed speaks at a programme titled 'Meet the Guardians' held on the campus in the city yesterday.

DHAKA
TODAY

Photography exhibition

A roundtable on the impact of a bridge to be constructed between Road 3/A and 4 in Dhamondi, sponsored jointly by Dhamondi Parishab Unnayan Jote and Bangladesh Sthapati Institute, will be held. Venue: House-11, Road-4, Dhamondi. Time: 4.00pm.

Installation ceremony

The installation ceremony of the students union of the College of Development Alternative will be held with State Minister for Cultural Affairs Begum Selima Rahman as chief guest. Venue: Auditorium of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh. Time: 10.00am.

DHAKA
TOMORROW

Film show

Academy Film Society will screen an American film titled 'It runs in the Family' (2002). Venue: Society auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

Inauguration

The inaugural ceremony of the regional office of David & Noyarit Consultant, a UK-based immigration law firm, will be held with Commerce Minister Amit Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury as chief guest. Venue: CIRDAP auditorium, Topkhana Road. Time: 4.00pm.

Meeting

Democracy Watch and The Hunger Project jointly organise an opinion sharing meeting on the government decision to increase women seat in parliament. Venue: Democracy Watch, Circuit House Road. Time: 10.30am.

Library inauguration

City Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka will inaugurate a library. Venue: Office of the ward commissioner 44, Mohammadpur. Time: 10.00am.

Seminar

A seminar on 'Rights, security and employment of women in Bangladesh' sponsored jointly by Nari O Manabdhikar Foundation and Bangladesh Development Partnership Centre, will be held. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3.00pm.

Solidarity rally

Sammitto Nigarik Samaj will hold a solidarity rally demanding the arrest and trial of the persons involved in the attack on eminent writer Humayun Azad. Venue: Central Shaheed Minar. Time: 4.00pm.

Course inauguration

The inauguration of a month-long training course on 'News reading and presentation', organised by Bangladesh Institute of Communication Studies and Public Relations, will be held. Venue: Conference room of the institute, Elephant Road. Time: 5.00pm.

Rotary meeting

Weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club, Shahbagh. Time: 1.30pm.