

MUSHARRAF ARRIVES IN INDIA TODAY Delhi for further talks on confidence-building

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Ahead of President Pervez Musharraf's three-day visit to India beginning today, India has asked Pakistan not to press for a deadline to resolve the Kashmir issue and said it will propose fresh set of confidence-building measures.

India's External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh told "Outlook" magazine in an interview that "it would not be prudent to impose a time frame or deadline for resolution of the Kashmir issue, an issue which has defied solution for long and which, by all accounts, is complicated."

According to the excerpts of the interview released by the news magazine, Singh said any discussion with Pakistan on Kashmir must be focused "first and foremost on the need to end cross-border terrorism and dismantling the infrastructure of terrorism across the Line of Control."

"There is no question of taking Pakistan off the hook on the issue of cross-border terrorism and terrorism in the (Kashmir) valley," he said. Singh's remarks assume significance as Musharraf had on several occasions in the past talked about setting a timeframe for resolving the Kashmir issue.

The Indian external affairs minister said Pakistan has not yet given formal or informal options on possible resolutions of the Kashmir issue. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had said in the past that his country was ready to look at all options to resolve Kashmir issue except redrawing the maps and another partition of the country. Meanwhile, India's National Security Advisor M K Narayanan told NDTV news channel that Manmohan Singh would put forward during his talks with Musharraf in Delhi a series of new confidence-building measures including more

"When two heads of state meet, they are unlikely to talk about only 'googlies', 'doosras' and what not. So, we have been sort of catered to the fact that discussion would necessarily have Kashmir as important item on the agenda," he said.

Musharraf reaches Delhi today ostensibly to watch the final one-day international cricket match between India and Pakistan on April 17.

Asked if any specific confidence building measure would be offered to Musharraf, Narayanan said "we have already put these suggestions and we will repeat them." "Most of the meetings will be exclusively between the prime minister and President Musharraf. He will certainly put forward on the table a series of new measures, each one hopefully adding to the level of

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Judgement in Ahsanullah murder case today

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Judgement in the Awami League (AL) lawmaker Ahsanullah Master murder case will be delivered today. Judge Shahed Noor Uddin of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 will pronounce the verdict at 11:30am, tribunal sources said.

The hearing on arguments from

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Pahela Baishakh celebrated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation on Thursday greeted Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bangla New Year 1412, amid colourful festivities and a determination to move forward with its cultural heritage, leaving behind the gloom of the past year.

Pahela Baishakh has its origins in the Mughal period when Emperor Akbar employed the Bangla calendar to facilitate tax collection. In this line traders and shopkeepers open Halkhata (fresh accounts book) on this day and offer sweets to their customers.

Tight security measures were taken in and around the traditional venue of the occasion, Ramna Green, to avert any kind of untoward incidents like the bomb explosions that left 10 people dead here on this day in 1408 (2001).

About 8000 members of law enforcement agencies in uniform and plain clothes including Rapid Action Battalion and police personnel kept a close eye on the move

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Students of the Institute of Fine Arts of Dhaka University bring out a colourful procession in the morning of Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bangla New Year, on Thursday.



Family members and relatives of slain Awami League leader Shah SAMS Kibria join 'Blue for Peace' programme with others on Thursday.

'Blue for Peace' protest on

UNB, Dhaka

Family members and relatives of slain Awami League (AL) leader SAMS Kibria on Thursday observed 'Blue for Peace' programme near National Museum in the capital demanding fair investigation into his killing.

Around 250-300 protestors, including political leaders and followers of Kibria, also joined the programme, wearing blue dresses and carrying festoons and placards.

After the programme that started at 8:00am and terminated at 9:30am, the protestors distributed placards among the people celebrating Pahela Baishakh.

Five sisters of Kibria and their husbands, Rina Sultana Kibria, wife of Reza Kibria, and other relatives of the slain AL leaders joined the programme.

Speaking on the occasion, Kibria's elder sister Shirin Islam raised a question about the willingness of the government to find out his real killers as police did not

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Awami League President Sheikh Hasina receives her son Sajib Wajed Joy at the VIP lounge of Zia International Airport Thursday morning.

I'm not thinking of joining politics: Joy

UNB, Dhaka

Sajib Wajed Joy, the only son of opposition leader Sheikh Hasina, returned home on Thursday to help his mother in politics, but refused to join politics right now.

"I'm not thinking of joining politics, but I'll try to help my mom," he told reporters after his arrival, the second time in a year, at Zia International Airport.

Joy, a US-educated computer engineer, expressed concern about the news that he met Indian Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee. "I haven't joined politics yet, but before that a pernicious campaign has been launched against me."

In response to a query, Joy denied to have met Pranab Mukherjee.

"I don't know why such a false story was run by the state-run news agency. You need to ask them why they did so," he said.

Sheikh Hasina received and hugged Joy on his arrival at the airport. Senior leaders of the Awami League and its front organisations were present.

SATKHIRA AHMADIYYA COMPLEX SIEGE PLAN

Bigots march in shrouds to drum up support

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Activists of International Khatme Nabuwat Movement (IKNM) wearing burial shrouds took out a procession in the town after Jum'a prayers yesterday to drum up support for their demand to declare the Ahmadiyyas non-Muslim.

The procession paraded the thoroughfares of the town, aggravating the tension prevailing in the district ahead of the IKNM plan to besiege an Ahmadiyya complex at Sundarban Bazar in Shyam Nagar upazila tomorrow to drive its demand home.

"At least 10,000 people from the district will gather in Harinagar High School ground on April 17 before the

siege," said IKNM Nayeb-e-Amir Noor Hossain Nurani. Over 3,000 madrasa students with their teachers and people from elsewhere will also join the siege, he added.

However, he said the siege will be a peaceful and democratic demonstration.

Nurani said IKNM will declare its next actions if the government fails to meet its demand by April 17. "It [the government] lacks courage to declare Ahmadiyyas Kafirs. Those who do not consider Kadianis as Kafirs are themselves Kafirs," he claimed and threatened that the government will face trouble if it does not declare Kadianis non-Muslim.

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3 journalists injured in attacks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Three journalists were injured in separate attacks in Kushtia, Jhenidah and Rajshahi since last Monday.

A gang of armed men stormed Metropolitan Press Club (MPC) in Rajshahi and wounded Ziaul Haque

Zia, senior staff reporter of local Bengali daily Natun Prokhat, during Pahela Baishakh celebrations on Thursday evening.

Zia, also sports and cultural affairs secretary of the MPC, was rushed to Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital (RMCH) as he was

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Afridi-powered Pakistan

REUTERS, Kanpur

Shahid Afridi tied the second fastest century in one-day internationals to power Pakistan to a five-wicket victory over India on Friday, giving his side a 3-2 lead with one game left in the six-match series.

The 25-year-old opening batsman, who also holds the record for the fastest one-day hundred (37 deliveries), equalled West Indian Brian Lara's 45-ball effort against Bangladesh in Dhaka in 1999.

Afridi struck a 46-ball 102, all but eight runs coming in boundaries, as Pakistan made 252 for five in 42.1 overs in reply to India's 249 for six.

He smashed a 20-ball half-century, the seventh fastest in one-dayers, as he put on 131 for the first wicket with Salman Butt (21).

Man of the match Afridi drove Harbhajan Singh for a straight four

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Prayer Timing		
April 16		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-35	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-24	6-28
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation