

# Iran will pursue its nuclear rights

Says Khamenei

AFP, Tehran

Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said yesterday that Iran would not refrain from its right to use nuclear technology, shrugging off a UN resolution against its controversial atomic plans.

"The Iranian nation undoubtedly will not refrain from their right (to nuclear energy) and the country's officials do not have the right to refrain from the nation's right," Khamenei said in a speech on state television.

On December 23, the United Nations Security Council imposed its first ever sanctions on Iran over Tehran's failure to heed calls to suspend uranium enrichment, a process that can be used both to make nuclear fuel or a nuclear bomb.

Iran vehemently denies charges that it is seeking nuclear weapons,

insisting that it wants to enrich uranium only for peaceful energy ends.

In his speech Khamenei also warned against what he called a US-UK-Arab alliance against Iran.

"If the Americans, British and one or more Arab countries sit down and discuss Iran's nuclear energy to see whether not to allow it or approve it or relieve Israel's concerns in this regard, this would be a political mistake" by Islamic governments, he said.

"Islamic countries' statesmen, especially those in the region, should know that Islam's glory and the Islamic republic's power is a support for them," Khamenei said.

"The occupying Zionist regime always blackmails the United States, and in return it blackmails some Arab governments. If these governments rely on a great power

they will never have to be blackmailed."

He warned Arab nations to beware falling into a trap.

"This alliance, with the cooperation of two dirty and sinister governments, is against a nation that Islam is proud of -- a nation that has sacrificed a lot. Therefore Arab countries must be careful about this dangerous trap."

He said the decision was taken as per instruction of BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

Monday's broadcast showed Khamenei to be in apparent good health, scotching rumours that surfaced Thursday on a US neoconservative academic's website that he had died.

On Sunday the foreign ministry dismissed the rumours, saying Khamenei was "in good health".

Khamenei, 67, who has the final say on foreign policy and military matters, has been Iran's supreme leader since 1989.

Nine

launches

fined

in

Chandpur

Bss, Chandpur

Nine passenger launches were fined Tk 53 thousand on Saturday for violating the existing laws.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) sources said a mobile court headed by Magistrate Akhtaruzzaman conducted raids on the vessels at Chandpur Launch Terminal and found them carrying passengers three times higher than their capacity.

The mobile court judge fined the owners of the launches on the spot for violating the existing rules.

The launches fined are: MV Paisharhat, MV Agradut, MV Nabik, MV Parapar, MV Parabat-10, MV Eagle, MV Raf Raf, MV Zam Zam, MV Abe Zam Zam and MV Tutu.

BIWTA officials told this correspondent that the mobile court will continue in the coming days.

## India to launch latest space rocket

AFP, Bangalore

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"The main focus is on the CARTOSAT which is fitted with high resolution cameras, and on the space recovery project. This is the first time we are planning to bring back a space capsule to earth after launching it," Nair said.

"A lot of new technologies have gone into it. It will perform experiments in microgravity conditions and then it will be de-orbited and recovered from a precise landing spot. This technology will help us in future manned missions," he said.

Nair said the 550-kilogramme capsule, which will be in orbit between 13 and 30 days before it splashes down in the Bay of Bengal, 140 kilometers (89 miles) east of Sriharikota from where the rocket is slated to blast-off.

"Preparations are going on as planned," Madhavan Nair, chief of the space agency told AFP. "The formal countdown has started today for the January 10 launch which is fixed at 9:23 a.m. (around

0353 GMT)."

India will launch a rocket into outer space Wednesday carrying four payloads including a capsule recovery experiment meant for future manned missions, top officials said yesterday.

The Indian Space Research Organisation said the rocket will also put into orbit a 680-kilogramme (1,496 pound) remote sensing satellite named CARTOSAT-2, along with an Indonesian earth observation satellite and another one from Argentina.

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## 2 BNP leaders expelled

Bss, Rajshahi

Two local BNP leaders were expelled from the party on Sunday for violating party discipline.

According to the BNP sources, Abu Sayeed Chand, Charghat thana president, and Zakirul Islam Bikul, Charghat Pourasabha general secretary, are contesting in the next general election as 'rebel' candidates defying the party central committee decision.

District BNP President Azizur Rahman told BSS that the two leaders were expelled from their respective posts and their primary memberships were cancelled for their activities against the party's constitution and violating the party discipline.

He said the decision was taken as per instruction of BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

## Chinese team calls on Foreign Secy in-charge

UNB, Dhaka

A six-member delegation of Shanghai Institute of International Studies (SIS) called on Ambassador Md Touhid Hossain, Foreign Secretary in-charge, at the foreign ministry conference hall yesterday.

During the meeting, the two sides expressed their satisfaction over the excellent bilateral relation that exists between China and Bangladesh.

They also discussed issues related to the possibility of increasing exports from Bangladesh to China, the possible role of China as an observer of Saarc, security related issues, China's role in the region as an emerging economic power and Bangladesh's stand on peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Ninety people were arrested from different places in the capital on the second day of the blockade.

In Keraniganj, at least 70 people including two policemen were injured when the grand alliance activists clashed with police and BDR personnel at Kadamtali crossing and Ambagicha yesterday morning.

Witnesses said police and BDR personnel charged batons on a peaceful alliance procession from Aganagar area at around 11:00am.

Following this, the demonstrators started hurling brickbats on the law enforcers leaving two cops wounded. The activists also ran-sacked and then set fire to two toll collection rooms of the nearby second Buriganga Bridge.

Police later fired teargas shells and rubber bullets to fight back the activists, triggering the nearly two-hour clash that broke out at about 10:30am.

At around noon, army troops in two vehicles rushed to the spot, and the blockaders left the place.

At Malibagh, violence erupted as police tried to intercept an AL procession towards Malibagh crossing from Shantinagar. When police swooped on the procession with batons, the participants dispersed into the adjoining alleys.

Police chased the activists and indiscriminately baton-charged anyone found there. A number of people were seriously injured.

Police also fired at least 100 rounds of rubber bullet at the crowd and arrested at least 10 from the spot.

Meanwhile, police attacked and injured 14 protesters when they tried to break the barricade at Noor Hossain Square yesterday morning.

The capital virtually remained cut off from the rest of the country due to the blockade.

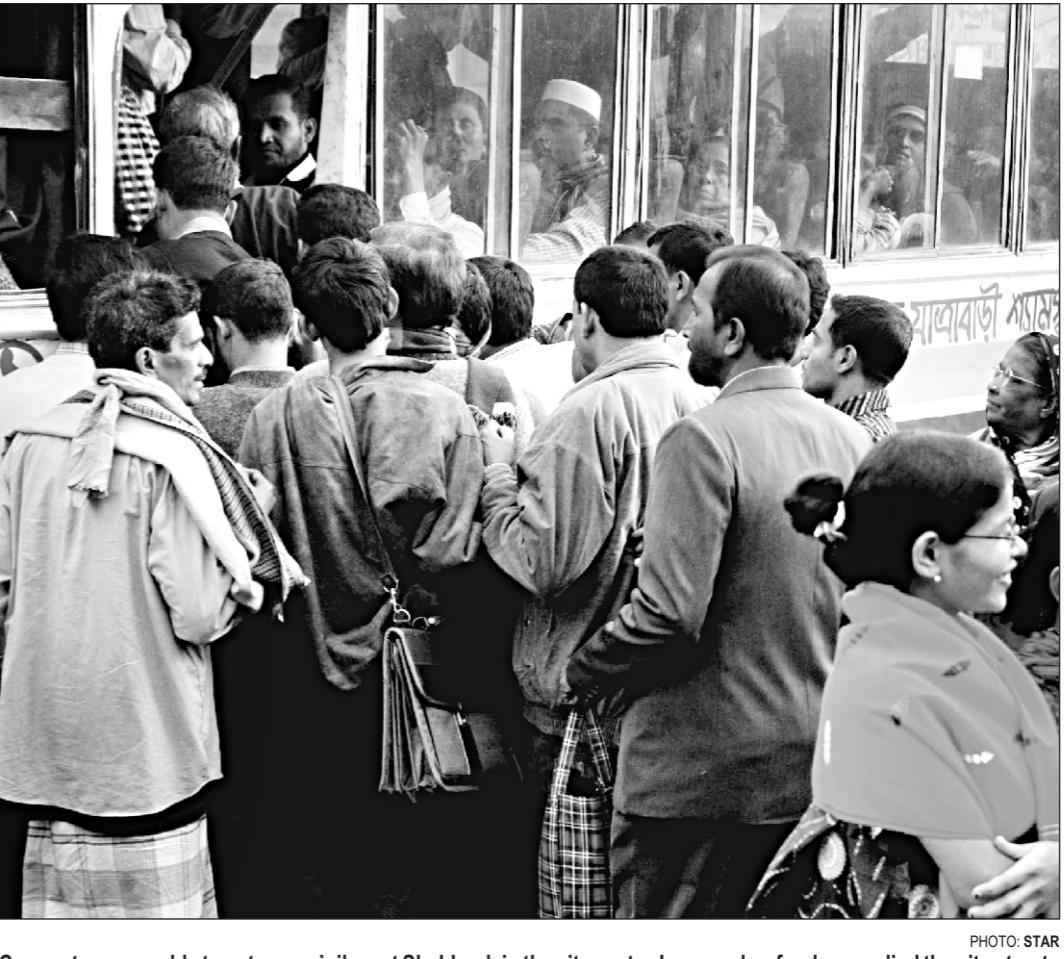
Pickets set afire two CNG-run autorickshaws and an auto-tempo at Sadarghat, Sempura and Khajurbagan and damaged several more in different areas of the city. The blockaders also set fire to a minibus in front of Jahangirnagar University.

During three-hour long clashes in Chawkbazar area of Lalbagh, Water Works Road and Swarit Ghat Road turned into a virtual battle field. At least 20 blockaders and five policemen were injured in the clashes.

Police fired more than 50 tear-gas shells, 400 rounds of rubber bullet and shotgun bullets on grand alliance supporters. And the latter retaliated by blasting more than 30 home-made bombs and throwing brickbats at police from alleys.

Panic gripped the area as the blasts shook the old buildings in the densely populated locality in Old Dhaka. Residents and shop owners were seen moving for safety.

The clashes erupted as police barricaded a procession led by the AL leader Haji Selim at



Commuters scramble to get on a minibus at Shahbagh in the city yesterday as only a few buses plied the city streets during the blockade programme enforced by Awami League-Led grand alliance.

## Schoolgirl killed in police misfire in Chuadanga

UNB, Chuadanga

A stray bullet from a police gun killed a schoolgirl at Satgari in the municipal area of the district town yesterday.

Local sources said Samanti Khatun, 12, a class-six student of a local

school, died on the spot when the misfire struck her at noon.

Police said a bullet from a policeman's rifle was misdirected during firing practice at Satgari Chandmari ground.

The killing sparked strong protests as the local residents staged demonstrations. Senior police officials rushed to the scene and calmed down the public fury.

## Naga rebels attack rival camp: 2 dead

REUTERS, Guwahati