

Opposition conspiring to disrupt election: PM

UNB, Patritola, Naogaon

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday accused the opposition of conspiring to disrupt general elections as their pre-poll survey forecast bad results for them once again.

She said her political opponents are out to destroy democracy and introduce one-party rule by foiling the elections. "But the people will not let them do it," she warned.

"They had a survey and saw no chances of doing better in the next elections too -- their result would be worse than it was in the past elections for their destructive politics," Khaleda told a big rally at the local Zia Maidan.

Claiming that BNP has restored parliamentary democracy, she asserted that this system would continue. She said her government would hand over power in October for holding elections in January next year in a democratic way.

She urged the people to cast their votes judiciously so that the incomplete development work could be finished when they return to power.

Khaleda criticised the "destruc-

tive politics" of the opposition Awami League in last five years, saying that it has created chaos and indiscipline both inside parliament and on the street. But people have rejected them, she said.

"Their movement on the streets did not succeed, while in parliament they even wanted to assault the Speaker to create chaos," she said.

Khaleda said the people would have to take decision whether they are for chaos and terrorism or for development, democracy and peace.

Citing various positive indices in socio-economic sectors, she said foreign reserve and per-capita income have increased and overall economy has been put on a strong footing under the alliance rule.

On the contrary, she alleged, the previous Awami League rule had ruined the economy and turned the country into a market of a foreign country.

"But we do not want to be a market for others. We want to increase production in the country and increase exports by creating new markets abroad after meeting the local demand," the prime minis-

ters said. She struck a high note of optimism about the prospect of this country. "Bangladesh is a prospective country and none can obstruct its progress through conspiracy," she said.

In this context, the PM mentioned recent unrest in the garment sector, which she said was part of a conspiracy to ruin this promising industry. But the people stood united and foiled that design, she said.

Presided over by lawmaker Shamsuddoha, the meeting was also addressed by BNP Vice-Chairman Begum Sarwari Rahman, Telecommunications Minister Aminul Huq, PM's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury, State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Alamgir Kabir, Rajshahi City Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu, State Minister for Health Mizanur Rahman Sinha, State Minister for Education Ehsanul Huq Milan, lawmaker Shamsul Islam Pramanik and Jatiyatabadi Swechchhasebak Dal President Rizvi Ahmed.

'Stop Israeli attack on Lebanon'

DU CORRESPONDENT

Sammilita Nari Samaj, a women's organisation, formed a human chain in the city yesterday protesting Israeli military offensive against Lebanon with the 'direct support' of the United States.

Criticising inaction of the United Nations (UN) in the face of Israeli aggression, Nari Samaj leaders demanded immediate ceasefire and an end to the ongoing Israeli-US atrocities.

Protesters at the programme in front of the National Museum were carrying placards and banners inscribed with anti-war slogans.

The speakers said Israel has been carrying out heinous bomb attacks on Lebanon for three weeks, killing hundreds of people, including women and children, and destroying infrastructure and cities, rendering thousands of people homeless.

They said the attacks are tantamount to crimes against humanity.

Farida Akhter, convener of the organisation, said Israel is continuing aggression with the direct support of the USA.

PHOENIX BUILDING COLLAPSE Proper compensation for victims demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Construction workers yesterday demanded better treatment for the injured and proper compensation for the families of the victims who were killed in Tejgaon's Phoenix building collapse on February 25.

The incident left 22 people dead and another 50 injured.

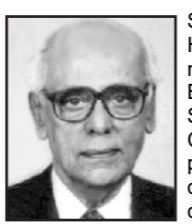
Bangladesh Nirman Sramik League (BNSL), a platform of construction workers, in an urgent meeting at its office in the city also urged the government to meet their 14-point demand.

Speakers at the meeting said that the workers who were killed and received injuries in the accident did not receive proper compensation. Their families are now leading a miserable life, they added.

They also demanded resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner and an accurate voter list.

BNSL President Shariful Islam Sharif chaired the meeting while Chittagong unit Advisor Md Nurul Islam, Vice Presidents Talukdar Muhammad Sirajul Haque and Sheikh Muhammad Abdul Haque and Haji Md Shamsul Haque were also present.

Obituary



Syed Mujibul Huq, a former member of the Bengal Civil Service Commission, passed away due to heart complications yesterday morning at the age of 83, says a press release.

Mujibul Huq, who graduated from the Presidency College of Kolkata, joined the Bengal Civil Service in 1946. After independence, he joined Messrs MM Ispahani in 1973.

He left behind his wife, a son, four daughters, seven grandchildren and a host of relatives and friends to mourn his death.

MH Mojumder



MH Mojumder, an advisory committee member of the Association of Travel Agent of Bangladesh (ATAB) and the founder of Atlas Travels Ltd., passed away on Wednesday, says a press release.

He was also a social worker and established a mosque and madrasa at his home village in Comilla.

He left behind his wife, three sons, two grandchildren and a host of relatives, friends and well-wishers to mourn his death.

He conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.



Sammilita Nari Samaj stages a demonstration at Shahbagh intersection in the city yesterday protesting Israeli military offensive against Lebanon.

DIALOGUE WITH STRIKING TEACHERS Education ministry still undecided

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education ministry is yet to decide if there will be a dialogue with the teachers on strike after BNP-backed Shikhhak Karmachari Oikya Jote (SKOJ) sent invitation letters on Wednesday to the government proposing the dialogue.

Leader of SKOJ, Shariful Islam, sent letters to the Education Minister Osman Farruk, State Minister for Education Ehsanul Haq Milan, Education Secretary Montazul Islam and Political Secretary to the Prime Minister Harris Chowdhury on Wednesday inviting them to join a discussion at Mohammadpur Central University College on July 30.

SKOJ leader Prof Mazharul

Hannan said that the education ministry received their letters but did not reply yet.

"We sent invitation letters to these four responsible figures of the government as they did not arrange a dialogue with us even after the prime minister instructed them to do so nine days ago," Hannan told the Daily Star yesterday adding that they also sent invitation letters to all groups of teachers.

Earlier, on July 17, the prime minister called Osman Farruk, Milan, Montazul and Harris Chowdhury to her office and asked them to solve issues with teachers through dialogue.

The striking teachers of SKOJ yesterday observed a two-hour sit-in programme at Mukhtangin in the

capital demanding salary rise. Afterwards, they brought out a procession and marched through different streets of the capital.

Meanwhile, the National Front of Teachers and Employees (NFTE) has declared a series of month-long programmes including roads and waterways blockade in the districts on August 1, grand sit-in programme in Dhaka on August 22 and a half-day hartal in Dhaka on August 23 to press home their demand of cent per cent salary from the government exchequer.

Teachers and employees of non-government high schools, colleges and madrasas under four organisations have been on indefinite strike since July 6.

Prudenté provides assistance for street children

Prudenté Aviation Consultancy Limited, a company providing solutions to the aviation industry, recently extended its voluntary charitable support towards Street Children Partners Bangladesh, a venture of the French NGO 'Partners' in the country, that strives to rehabilitate underprivileged street children, says a press release.

Under its 'Solidarity for Children' fund, Prudenté pledged to provide annual supplies of essential medicines and equipment for vocational training for the street children under rehabilitation at the NGO.

Imran Asif, managing director of the company, handed over the medicines and vocational training equipment to Nargis Akter Kakoli, local administrator, Street Children Partners Bangladesh, recently.

Jacques-André Costilhes, ambassador of France in Bangladesh, and AB Siddique Chowdhury, chairman of Prudenté, were present at the equipment handing over ceremony at its office.



Imran Asif, managing director of Prudenté, hands over medicines and vocational training equipment to Nargis Akter Kakoli, local administrator, Street Children Partners Bangladesh, in the city recently.



Nari Uddug Kendra, a centre for women's initiative, forms a human chain at Mukhtangan in the city yesterday demanding implementation of the tripartite agreement in the garments sector.

GARMENT INDUSTRY 'Implement tripartite agreement'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nari Uddug Kendra (NUK), a non-governmental organisation, formed a human chain at Mukhtangan in the city yesterday demanding immediate implementation of the tripartite agreement signed between the government, the garment factory owners and the workers.

They also demanded declaration of minimum wage of Tk 3000 for the garment workers to resolve the crisis prevailing in the apparel sector.

They said the garment workers

must be given appointment letters, identity cards, weekly holiday, maternity leave with full salary and trade union rights.

Mashhuda Khatun Shefali, executive director of NUK, said if the workers are given due salary and facilities, they will behave responsibly.

Maksuda Sultana, social sector supervisor of NUK, called on the government and the garment owners to immediately implement the tripartite agreement to restore normalcy in garment industry.

SHILPAKALA ACADEMY Activities to be expanded at upazila level

BSS, Dhaka

The activities of Shilpakala Academy will be extended to all upazilas in phases, with a view to promoting culture.

The decision was taken at the 28th meeting of the standing committee on the Ministry of Cultural Affairs held at the Sangsad Bhavan yesterday, an official handout said.

The meeting was told that Shilpakala Academy complexes have been established in 63 districts and six upazilas so far.

Committee Chairman Prof Shahidul Islam presided over the meeting attended by

Advocate Abul Kalam, Alhaj Shafi Ahmed Chowdhury and Masud Arun.

The meeting discussed formulation of policies to bring dynamism to the cultural activities and strengthen Shilpakala Academy programmes at district and upazila levels.

It also discussed the reports submitted by the ministry on the investigation into the allegation of corruption in the construction work of Paharpur and Bagerhat projects.

The meeting recommended taking necessary steps to recover the 'Khasporan idol from Banaripara, Barisal.

Indian HC gives projector, theatre system to DU

DU CORRESPONDENT

The High Commission of India in Bangladesh provided a multimedia projector and a home theatre system for the Department of History of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday, says a DU press release.

Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri formally handed over the projector and the theatre system to DU Vice-chancellor Prof SMA Faiz at a ceremony at RC Mojumdar auditorium of the university.

Prof Faiz thanked the High Commissioner for lending a helping hand to the university.

Addressing the ceremony, Sikri said India wants a peaceful solution to all prevailing problems between India and Bangladesh on the basis of mutual understanding.

She assured DU of providing all possible assistance and cooperation in developing education, research and infrastructure.

Presided over by History Department Chair Prof Muntasir Mamun, the ceremony was also addressed by Prof Mesbah Kamal.

Youth killed over land dispute in Kishoreganj

UNB, Kishoreganj

A man was killed allegedly by his cousin over a land dispute at Bakarkhanda village in Sadar upazila early yesterday.

The dead was identified as Bipul, 23, son of Tofazzal Hossain of the village.

Police and local sources said Tofazzal Hossain had a dispute over land with his younger brother, Zahurul Islam, for a long time.

As a sequel to the dispute, Zahurul's son Mohsin and his men picked up Bipul from his house and took him to a nearby cropland at about 2:00am.

The gang hit Bipul with lethal weapons, leaving him critically injured. Injured Bipul was rushed to Sadar Hospital where he died at about 10:00am.

Police arrested one Sagar in this connection.

Unity of journalists stressed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Speakers at a meeting of South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA) here yesterday stressed the unity of journalists.

They said the newsmen are being persecuted by criminals and other vested quarters due to absence of unity among them.

"We want enactment of press freedom and media law in order to ensure free flow of information and the rights and safety of journalists," said National Press Club President Reazuddin Ahmed.

A united platform of journalists is needed to have all black laws repealed, he added.

Former BFUJ president Iqbal Sobhan called on the newsmen in Jessore to initiate a campaign to reunite the journalists.

He also demanded proper investigation into all journalist murder cases to ensure proper justice.

National Press Club Secretary General Shaikat Mahmud, BFUJ Presidents Monzurul Ahsan Bulbul and Mozammel Haque, and Secretaries General Abdul Jazil Bhuiyan and Ruhul Amin Gazi also spoke.

About 130 journalists from Jessore and Khulna attended the meeting.

BNP protest programmes

UNB, Dhaka

The ruling BNP has announced a countrywide programme to protest what it said anarchy, chaos and a conspiracy to foil the forthcoming national elections.

As part of the programme, the BNP will hold rallies and bring out processions at upazila headquarters tomorrow, district headquarters on Sunday and divisional headquarters on August 2.

Prof Habibur Rahman passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Prof Md Habibur Rahman, a noted educationist and vice-chancellor of Metropolitan University, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at his house in Sylhet yesterday morning at the age of 64.

Born on January 1, 1942 at Nabiganj in Habiganj, he was a former vice-chancellor of Shahjalal University of Science & Technology (SUST).

He left behind his wife, four sons, a daughter and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

Professor Habib joined the Shahjalal University as registrar in 1992. Later, he served as departmental head, dean, faculty chairman and pro-VC. He was also the president of the SUST Teachers' Association. He became the VC in 1997 and served until 2001.

A regular contributor to different national and regional dailies, including the Prothom Alo, Prof Habib has a number of publications to his credit.

He was buried at his village home at Nabiganj.

Death anniversary

The third death anniversary of Md Khaled Syful Islam Shimul, son of Joint Secretary Md Monsur Ahmed, will be observed today, says a press release.

Qurankhwani, milad mahfil and special prayers will be held at village Boro Masuya in Mathbaria, Pirojpur, after Juma prayers.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the programme.

Atiya Bagmar

Today is the 10th death anniversary of Atiya Bagmar, an organiser of the liberation war, says a press release.

Doa mahfil will be held at her Banani residence in Dhaka and at Jamalpur Bagmar Bari Mosque in Gazipur.

Chehlum

Chehlum of Noorjahan Begum, mother of Syed Afzal Hossain, senior sub-editor of The New Untouchable, will be held at her village home at Patiladi in Madaripur today, says a press release.

Qurankhwani and milad mahfil will be held after Juma prayers.

Noorjahan Begum died of a cardiac arrest on June 15 at the age of 70. She left behind her husband, seven sons, two daughters.

DHAKA TODAY Founding anniversary ceremony Musical programme Extended meeting Prize giving

WEATHER TODAY No change in temperature Jubo Dal leader killed in road accident