

Zia, Khaleda

FROM PAGE 16 killer Major Noor. On the day of grenade attack on August 21 in 2004, Khaleda Zia gave passports to two killers of Bangabandhu – Colonel Faruk and Major Rashid," Hasina said, speaking at a discussion titled 'Killing of Bangabandhu and Present Bangladesh' at the Institution of Engineers Bangladesh.

Bangabandhu Parishad organised the discussion marking the National Mourning Day on August 15. On that fateful night in 1975 some disgruntled army officers assassinated the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with his family members.

Severely criticising the prime minister for her several birth dates including August 15, Hasina questioned her motive of celebrating birthday on the day when Bangabandhu was assassinated.

The revenge for killing Bangabandhu will be taken when the people would be imbued with the spirit of the Liberation War, she said.

Khaleda Zia, who once condemned the ousted autocrat President HM Ershad, is trying to get his support only for power, Hasina said.

The AL chief urged the people to oust the BNP-Jamaat coalition government and elect a pro-people government.

Coming to power in 2001 through massive rigging and changing the election results, the BNP-Jamaat government has been busy with money making through a syndicate and looting public wealth, she said.

The former prime minister said the country has been a champion in all negative sides including violation of human rights, corruption, torturing journalists, women and children, and extra-judicial killings by the Rapid Action Battalion during the present regime.

The opposition leader urged the international community to take appropriate measures to put an immediate end to the ongoing Israeli invasion in Lebanon and Palestine where hundreds of children and women have been killed. The AL chief also urged the international bodies including the United Nations to stop arms race and to donate the money used in arms race for the poor and hungry children.

Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, Prof M Shamsuzzaman Khan, Bangladesh Observer Editor Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Prof Mamataz Uddin and Prof AK Azad Chowdhury also spoke at the discussion chaired by Bangabandhu Parishad President Justice KM Sobhan.

Tigers struggle

FROM PAGE 1 The Tigers overcame a spirited Kenyan effort, mainly coming from all-rounder Thomas Odoayo who smashed 84 and took four wickets, to crawl to the target of 186 runs losing eight wickets, with four overs to spare. The victory gave Bangladesh a 2-0 lead in the three-match series after their six-wicket success in the first match on Saturday.

Mashrafe, coming in at number nine and with 65 runs remaining, mixed caution with aggression to guide the visitors to a nervy win after the fall of skipper Khaled Mashud.

Bangladesh faced the looming prospect of a defeat when they were reduced to 134-8. But Mashrafe in company with Abdur Razzak produced a scintillating 51 runs for the unbroken ninth wicket. Both played remarkably and the match ended, fittingly, with a Mashrafe boundary through the covers. He faced 53 balls and struck six fours. Razzak was his perfect foil, scoring 14 off 23 deliveries with one boundary and a massive six.

The two lower-order batsmen were left to do the dirty job after the more established Tigers batsmen fell again to some poor shots, even though they were chasing a modest

target. Aftab Ahmed played with some responsibility and scored 38 off 68 balls but fell to a pull-shot.

Earlier, left-arm seamer Syed Rassel demolished the Kenyan batting with four wickets for 22 at the top of the innings as the Kenyans collapsed to six for 45 in the 14th over.

Mashrafe, the batting hero and later adjudged man-of-the-match, took three for 53, while a miser Abdur Razzak continued his good form taking two for 21.

The final match of the series takes place at the same ground on August 15, concluding the Tigers tour to the African continent.

Cabinet body approves jail code reform

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet committee on jail reforms yesterday approved the draft amendment to the Jail Code to modernise the existing one which had been prepared by the British colonial rulers.

The cabinet committee headed by Law Minister Moudud Ahmed approved revisions of 146 and repeal of 192 of the 1388 codes of the existing Jail Code in accordance with the recommendations of the jail code amendment committee, which had been working since March 21, 2003 to update the antiquated one.

The amended Jail Code will be enacted in September after the cabinet approves it, Moudud, head of the six-member cabinet committee on jail reforms, told reporters while briefing them on the salient features of the amendment.

"This is going to be a historic reform by the present government," he said, identifying it as a milestone success.

To remove inhumane provisions, whipping has been abolished and a 'check and balance' has been ensured in shackling of prisoners, he said.

Although in the old jail code there was a provision of shackling notorious convicts or violent detainees for three months at a stretch, according to the amended code a prison officer of DIG (deputy inspector general) rank will have to approve shackling of a prisoner exceeding seven days from now on.

Besides introducing a provision of releasing on parole for rehabilitation, prisoners who are not convicted of heinous crimes, after they have served half of their terms, the amendment also increased jail term remissions to one third of a prisoner's term from the previous one fourth.

The amendment abolished hard labour like stone crushing, removal of earth and operating old-fashioned oil mills manually besides removing discriminatory policies in allocation of food for inmates.

Talking about increased facilities in jail hospitals, he said posts of pathologists, radiologists, part-time dentists and laboratory technicians will be created for better treatment of inmate patients, adding that welfare officers, psychiatrists and sociologists will also be introduced.

To raise hygiene inside jails, there will be a sanitary latrine and a washing basin in each ward and each prisoner will get a toilet soap and two laundry soaps.

Talking about simplification of the system of division facility, Moudud said, "Although either the court or the ministry have the power to approve divisions now, jail superintendents will from now on be able to approve divisions."

In some cases, the home ministry will take the decision of providing divisions to prominent citizens of the country.

Prisoners enjoying division facilities will also get toothpastes, soaps, shaving cream, slippers, prayer mattresses, prayer caps, and towels from now on.

Other members of the cabinet committee on jail reforms, Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain, Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas, Social Welfare Minister Ali Abbas Mohammad Mujahid, State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar and State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Alamgir Kabir were present at the meeting.

New survey

FROM PAGE 1 World Bank and Asian Development Bank.

Meeting sources said the donors' representatives suggested the planning ministry to discuss the draft HIES report at a seminar before finalising it.

A meeting source quoting from the draft report said urban poverty has declined 23 percent during the last five years while the decline is 20 percent in rural areas.

Dhaka, Sylhet and Rajshahi divisions have witnessed poverty reduction, while there has been no change in poverty rate in Khulna, the source added.

Dr Zaid Bakht told The Daily Star that the country has witnessed a sound growth in service and construction sectors resulting in reduction of poverty in urban areas.

Two gunned down

FROM PAGE 1 upazila, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) officials told our correspondent.

BDR officials quoting family sources said Wahab Ali, 30, son of Abdul Hanif went to visit his relatives on Wednesday and was returning home on Saturday night.

Wahab died on the spot and BSF dragged his body into Indian territory.

BDR of 14 Rifles Battalion strongly protested the killing and asked BSF to return the body.

The killing generated widespread tension around the bordering areas of Biral.

Meanwhile, tension is also escalating between BDR and BSF personnel at Achintapur village under Birampur upazila as BDR challenged and foiled BSF's attempt of putting up barbwire fences near the 294 main pillar at Achintapur village on Friday afternoon.

In Thakurgaon, BSF shot dead a Bangladeshi citizen yesterday morning in Baliadangi upazila, reported UNB.

Local sources said BSF of Baragharia camp opened fire on Helaluddin, 30, son of Majed Mistri of Paria village under Baliadangi upazila when he went near the main pillar 378. Helal died on the spot.

BSF took away Helal's body inside the Indian territory and sent a message to Paria BDR camp at 7:30am to identify the body.

Earlier, on July 3, the BSF gunned down another Bangladeshi, Golam Mostafa, 28, at Harinami border under the same upazila.

Dhaka protests

FROM PAGE 1 made totally unfounded allegations against BDR," he said.

He said the issuance of allegations by the Indian High Commission through public statement "clearly runs contrary to established diplomatic norms and basic courtesy."

"The High Commission of India's admonition to BDR to avoid indulgence in provocative unilateral act is also ironic," the spokesman said. "Because Indian BSF caused death of innumerable Bangladeshi civilians."

He said BSF firing killed 373 civilians on Bangladesh side between October 2001 and August 10, 2006. In six months till May 2006, 52 Bangladeshi civilians became victims of BSF firing.

The spokesman said as far as border incident is concerned, senior official-level meeting between BDR and BSF is the right forum to address the issues. "Going to the press with unfounded and one-sided allegations on the eve of the meeting (BDR-BSF) can only serve to further vitiate the atmosphere," he said.

Poll observers

FROM PAGE 1 styled Election Working Group (EWG) on last Thursday, he said they have yet to be informed of such developments.

Neutrality of some election observers of the alliance has come into question when they have yet to begin the task of monitoring the next general election.

"The Election Commission will decide on who will be appointed election observers and for that the time is not ripe yet," the secretary said.

Abdur Rashid said, "The issue of election observers will be discussed on completion of the ongoing voter list update. I will suggest that the commission strictly follow the policy and guidelines in granting permission to observe elections."

"The policy and guidelines for election observation should be amended, if need be," the secretary added.

About the ongoing voter list revision, he said as of last Saturday, over 1.46 crore people have applied for being registered as voters while 19.52 lakh applications received seek deletion of names from the existing voter list.

The task of updating the voter list by visiting from door to door will continue till August 20.

The EC Secretariat sits with the senior officials of the Dhaka City Corporation today to expedite the task in the capital.

The secretary yesterday clarified that the updated voter list will be kept open for public inspection for three days from August 25.

16 Bangladeshi recruiters

FROM PAGE 16 Malaysia's Immigration Department's discovery that they had hired the 103 Bangladeshi workers with false documents.

Under an amnesty programme two years ago, illegal workers including those from Bangladesh were given permission to return to Malaysia if they had proper work permits.

Some 11,000 illegal Bangladeshis are said to have taken up the amnesty offer.

Datuk Ishak, director general of immigration in Malaysia, told The Malaysian daily that he witnessed workers carrying false documents at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

Each worker had paid between Malaysian Ringgit 12,000 and 18,000 (Tk 2.5 lakh to 3.6 lakh) to go to Malaysia, Datuk said.

Manpower businesses fear that many more agencies would be caught if the Malaysian authorities conduct a probe into how the 11,000 workers went to Malaysia after opportunity was offered under the amnesty.

Nearly 90 per cent of the 11,000

workers went to Malaysia using the names of the genuine workers who did not go to Malaysia after they had been sent to Bangladesh under general amnesty as their date of working in Malaysia expired, said a recruiting agent in Dhaka.

The immigration officials both in Bangladesh and Malaysia were involved in this illegal process, he said, adding that the workers had to go through fingerprint tests with biometrics machines and it could not be forged unless the officials concerned had a hand.

Recruiting agencies are afraid that the newly opened manpower export to Malaysia would be seriously hampered if the government and Baira (Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies) fail to take strong action against the blacklisted agencies.

Under the present guidelines of importing manpower, Malaysia restricted engagement of any representatives of Malaysian employers or Bangladeshi recruiting agencies in Malaysia as engagement of representatives 'creates anomalies in the business and add to the workers' cost of

BNP insiders confused

FROM PAGE 1 committee officials and members have died since then while a few others have become inactive or left the country.

Meanwhile, the number of those who have become active after the BNP came to power is also not less and they are now holding important posts. A few of them have even become ministers.

Advocate Zainul Abedin was nominated the law affairs secretary of NEC in 2003, but the party official list still bears the name of previous secretary Mujibur Rahman. Zainul said, "As per our constitution, the party has one post for law secretary."

He could not specify the total number of NEC members, even the number of vice-presidents. "I do not exactly know the total number of the members...it may be more than 150," he told The Daily Star.

Abul Hossain, one of the four secretaries for information and research affairs, said the total number of NEC members may be 190 and the number of vice-presidents is five.

Official papers, however, show that the BNP has 17 vice-

presidents, including Khurshid Jahan Haque who died recently.

BNP Organising Secretary Moshir Rahman was surprised when he heard the NEC meeting will take place on August 26. "I spent the last two weeks in hospital due to illness and have been suggested complete rest, so I do not know anything about it," he said.

Badruzzaman Khasru, secretary for small and cottage industry affairs, is also in the dark about the meeting. "We have no value when the party is in power," he said.

BNP Treasurer Shah Alam is also an unknown person to many party leaders. Badruzzaman told The Daily Star, "Shah Alam is a senior leader of the party. Once we used to run party activities from his Shyamoli residence but nowadays he has become inactive due to age and illness."

Meanwhile, no BNP leaders agreed to comment on the inclusion of the party chairperson's younger brother Sayeed Iskandar as "secretary on special duty", a post that does not have any validity in the party constitution.

The six international affairs secretaries of BNP are also com-

pletely inactive. One of these secretaries, Shamsul Alam, is currently living abroad.

The NEC came to learn about the death of one of the three industry secretaries, KM Abu Zahid, after a long time of his demise.

Swechchhasebok Secretary Kazi Asaduzzaman is also unknown to most NEC members.

A total of 462 BNP leaders, including 84 NEC officials and 73 members, 71 district level leaders, 12 members of the party standing committee, 198 lawmakers and 24 advisory council members, will be invited to attend the meeting.

The BNP high command decided to hold the NEC meeting at the PM's evening office Jamuna on Hare Road although the BNP central office at Naya Paltan has been named on the invitation card as the official venue. Sources said the venue could still be changed at the last moment.

BNP Office Secretary Mofikul Hasan Tripti said they will send invitation letters to all NEC members and others concerned. "We are finalising the list," he said.

25 injured in Shibir attack at Ruet

RU CORRESPONDENT

At least 25 students were injured as cadres of Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) beat them up on the Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (Ruet) campus on Saturday midnight.

Protesting the attack, general students started indefinite strike on the Ruet campus yesterday.

Some 20 injured students, who were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital after the attack, left the hospital yesterday morning fearing further attack by Shibir while a tense situation is prevailing between Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and ICS, student wings of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami.

On Thursday, the students of 'Batch 2004' (those enrolled in 2004 academic year) pasted huge posters on the campus, announcing an annual get-together on the Ruet auditorium, sources said.

As the ICS men pasted their posters covering the Batch 2004 students' ones, the two groups locked in an altercation on Friday night.

Following another altercation on Saturday night, some 60/70 ICS cadres led by RU unit President Mahub Alam Salehi, also a key suspect in the murder case of RU teacher Taher Ahmed, swooped on the students of Shahid Shahidul Haque Hall at around 11:30pm.

Shibir men beat up the Batch 2004 students with hockey sticks and iron rods, injuring 25. Condition of seven were critical, said the Batch 2004 students.

At least 10 of the injured are JCD men, Ruet unit JCD President Sajib Barua, said.

The epicentre was 304 kilometres away from the Chittagong seismic observatory at Ambagan, sources in the observatory said.

They said the observatory recorded 10 earthquakes this year and this was the first of this month.

A mild earthquake shook Sylhet city and its surrounding areas at 2:51am yesterday, our staff correspondent in Sylhet reports.

The tremor shook the city twice lasting for about 10 seconds each time.

An official in the seismic observatory confirmed the earthquake but could not say where the epicentre was or how strong it was as there are no equipments to determine that in the seismic observatory in Sylhet.

Construction of the seismic observatory centre in Sylhet was completed years ago but the seismograph machine is yet to be set up there.

Travellers will have to pay a total of Tk 225 as travel and embarkation fees while purchasing tickets.

14-party holds

FROM PAGE 16 Bheramara upazila around 4:45pm and ended at memorial pillar of the Liberation War at Chourash in Kushtia town at 6:30pm.

Arally was held on the Link Road near Lalon Shah Bridge in Bheramara before the road march. Several other street rallies were also held at different points of Kushtia Sadar, Mirpur, Bheramara upazilas.

Thousands of opposition activists took part in the march waving colourful banners, festoons and placards and carrying symbolic boats [the electoral symbol of the AL] on cattle drawn carts and rickshaws.

Police, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and intelligence agencies, were deployed along the march-route to ensure security. The law enforcers beaped up security on the 25-kilometre road from Bheramara to Kushtia. They blocked the Kushtia-Bheramara road and stopped all vehicles from plying on it for about two hours.

The road march was led by AL General Secretary and Coordinator of 14-party Abdul Jailli, while AL presidium members Abdur Razzak, Motia Chowdhury, AL leader Mohammad Nasim, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haq Inu, its Secretary General Syed Zafer Sazzad, Gono Forum leader Pankaj Bhattacharya, local 14-party leaders Barrister Amir-ul-Islam, Mahubul Alam Hanif, Ajar Ali also attended the road march and street rallies.

The leaders in the rally vowed to resist any election in the country without electoral reforms. They said major political parties of the country would not allow the next general elections to be held under a caretaker government which would virtually become "a shadow government of the ruling BNP".

They slammed the four-party alliance government for the price hike of essentials, rise of militancy patronised by ruling Jamaat-e-Islami and countrywide disruptions of power.

Jailli said, "They [ruling four-party coalition] have made arrangements to appoint the chief of the caretaker government and have already appointed the chief election commissioner (CEC) in their attempts to rig the polls." "But the nation will not let their dreams come true," he added.

Jailli urged the people to unite behind the 14-party alliance and oust the four-party alliance government. Terming the 14-party alliance as 'people's force', he said 14-party must form the government after the next polls and ensure the rights of the people.

Lanka fighting

FROM PAGE 16 rebels for initiating the latest fighting.

The upsurge in violence has claimed more than 1,400 lives by official count since December despite a February 2002 ceasefire.

An estimated 60,000 people have been killed since the Tamil insurgency began around three decades ago.

UN truce

FROM PAGE 1 than 1,100 people in Lebanon, most of them civilians, and at least 151 Israelis, most of them soldiers, and laid waste to much of Lebanon's infrastructure.

Israel's cabinet was meeting Sunday to give its verdict on the resolution, which calls for a full cessation of hostilities and the deployment of a 15,000-strong international force in southern Lebanon.

But with Hezbollah vowing to fight until the last Israeli soldier leaves Lebanon and Israel stressing that it will respond to any attack on its troops or rocket fire, hopes of complete ceasefire in the immediate future looked dim.

Israel's massive assault involving 30,000 troops was continuing after the killing of 24 soldiers in its highest single-day death toll of the conflict, and troops were clashing with guerrillas near the southern port city of Tyre.

Dubai-based Al-Arabiya television reported that another seven Israeli soldiers were killed Sunday but this was not confirmed by the Israeli army.

In what the media have said is the largest ground operation since the 1973 Middle East war, Israel is sweeping through south Lebanon where Hezbollah is rooted – some troops reaching the strategic Litani River which runs as far as 30km from the border.

Fighter jets also pounded targets in the south, east and north of Lebanon, and at least 11 civilians were killed, including a mother and her three children, Lebanese police said.

Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres sought to put a positive spin on the war's outcome despite the failure to stem the hail of Hezbollah rockets on the north of the country, which killed a 70-year-old man on Sunday.

"I think that we have finished more or less the victors both militarily and politically," Peres told army radio, predicting that Hezbollah would end with "its tail between its legs."

Trade Minister Eli Yishai also issued a stark warning to Lebanon even if the ceasefire comes into force, saying, "If a single stone is thrown at Israel from whatever village that happens, it should be turned into a pile of stones."

In Tyre, warplanes bombed five petrol stations, sparking a huge fire that threatened to engulf a nearby hospital.

"The flames are lashing the building, our ill and wounded patients are threatened with smoke inhalation," hospital director Jawad Najm told AFP. "Nobody has come to help. Not the firefighters, not neighbours."

Fierce clashes between Hezbollah militants and Israeli troops continued through the night southeast of Tyre, on the outskirts of the bombed-out militant stronghold of Khiam.

The International Committee of the Red Cross slammed the continuing heavy civilian casualties as unacceptable.

"It is unacceptable that after more than 30 days of ongoing military operations, all necessary precautions to spare civilian life and those engaged in medical work have still not been taken," the agency said.

In addition to the heavy death toll in Lebanon, more than 900,000 people have been displaced by Israeli bombardments that have left much of the country's infrastructure in ruins.

The Israeli general in charge of the northern command said he

hoped troops involved in the expanded offensive will have secured control of most of south Lebanon by Monday.

"I think we will be in a much better situation (on Monday) than we are today," General Udi Adm said. "Assuming that the ceasefire will take effect, we will stop the moment we are told. If it doesn't, we could continue."

The Litani has served as a tactical boundary for Israel's operations in Lebanon since it first invaded its northern neighbour in 1978, leading to a long and bloody occupation that ended only six years ago.

The UN resolution, drafted by the United States and France, calls for all Israeli troops to withdraw from southern Lebanon after an end to the fighting.

It also calls for the release of the two captive Israeli soldiers whose seizure on July 12 triggered the conflict, and for a solution to the issue of Lebanese prisoners held by Israel.

The resolution authorizes an increase in the current UN Interim Force in Lebanon's strength to a maximum of 15,000 troops from about 1,990 now. They will be matched by the 15,000 troops Lebanon plans to send to the south.

While approving the resolution, the Lebanese cabinet expressed reservations that it did not go far enough in condemning the large-scale Israeli destruction and that it failed to address the issue of the Israeli-occupied Shebaa farms.

HC asks govt

FROM PAGE 16 A division bench of the High Court formed with Justice Syed Mohammad Dastagir Hossain and Justice Mamnoon Rahman issued the order following a writ petition filed by Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) and Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) seeking judicial intervention to address the sufferings of the affected people.

In the writ petition, director general (DG) of Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), deputy commissioner of Jessore, deputy director of the Department of Environment, Khulna and the Upazila Nirbahi officers of the three affected upazilas have been made respondents.

The bench also directed the government agencies to show cause within a month as to why their failure to protect the lives, properties and livelihoods; provide safety, comfort and healthcare to the villagers affected by such water logging in the three upazilas should not be declared unlawful and in violation of their duties.

The respondents have further been directed to show cause within four weeks as to why they should not be directed to draw up necessary action plans in consultation with the local people and why a direction should not be issued upon them to form a committee composed of the persons nominated by the Supreme Court to permanently resolve the problem and arrange adequate compensation for the local people against the losses resulting from such water logging.

Senior advocate AFM Hasan Arif appeared on behalf of the petitioners while S Rizwana Hasan and Iqbal Kabir assisted him.

The joint petition of BELA and BLAST has been filed at a time when more than one lakh people of 144 villages are forced to live in an inhumane condition due to the flawed Khulna Jessore Drainage Rehabilitation Project (KJDRB) of ADB and BWDB as their homestead, agricultural lands, academic institutions and roads have been under water since October 2005, said a BELA press release.