



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing the BNP's youth front Jubo Dal's founding anniversary function at the Institution of Engineers yesterday. —Star photo

Youths must give democracy solid foundation: Khaleda

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has said students and youths are the future of the nation and they have to play a positive role to make the country self-reliant and give democracy a solid foundation, reports UNB.

The students and youths, who spearheaded the anti-autocratic movement, now have a different role to play in consolidating the hard-earned democracy, she told a discussion meeting here Tuesday.

Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal, the youth front of the ruling BNP, organised the discussion at Engineers' Institute this evening on occasion of its 13th founding anniversary.

People had voted BNP to power to restore democracy and make the country self-reliant, the Prime Minister said adding that it's time to implement the 19-point programme of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman.

She praised the youths who held the BNP flag high when many had deserted the party during the nine years of anti-autocratic movement aimed to restore people's fundamental rights.

Begum Zia called on the Jubo Dal workers to spread organisational activities up to the Upazila level for overall progress and development of the country.

"We'll have to sacrifice a lot although we're in power", she said urging the youths to exer-

cise tolerance and dedicate themselves towards nation building activities and welfare of the people.

BSS adds: Presided over by Dhaka city Mayor and Jubo Dal president Mirza Abbas, the discussion was addressed, among others, by Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Social Welfare Minister Tariqul Islam, State Minister for Education Principal Yunus Khan, State Minister for Law and Justice Aminul Haq, State Minister for Forest and Environment Gayeswar Chandra Roy, State Minister for Women Affairs Mrs Sarwar Rahman, Salah Uddin Ahmed, MP, Prof Rezaul Karim, MP and Jubo Dal leaders Haris Chowdhury and Atwar Hossain Shamsu.

Begum Khaleda Zia recalled the sacrifices of the Jubo Dal leaders and workers during the past nine years and said the nation would ever remember their sacrifices for the cause of democracy. She said time had come for them to strengthen their party and help establish an exploitation-free society based on justice.

The Prime Minister referred to the misuse and misdeeds of the autocratic regime and said responsibilities had been reposed on us to lead the country towards progress and prosperity from the catastrophic condition created by the regime.

She expressed her firm belief that the BNP government,

with the active cooperation of all, would overcome the problems and lead the nation towards progress and prosperity. In this regard, she referred to the various steps taken by her government to attain self-reliance in every aspect of national life. "We will implement the 19-point programme initiated by shaheed president Ziaur Rahman to change the lot of the people," she added.

Begum Zia said president Zia had constituted a separate ministry for the youths and wanted them to become a productive force in country's overall development. Similarly, he (president Zia) also constituted the Jatiya Mahila Sangstha for enhancing the dignity of the womenfolk.

She said her government wanted to give stress on the development of the rural areas so that people living there could enjoy the modern facilities of the urban areas.

The Prime Minister reminded the audience that self-sufficiency could not be attained only through the foreign aid and added "we have to make our own efforts in this regard."

Begum Zia asked the Jubo Dal workers to go back to their respective areas and organise their party involving the local people. "You should build up yourselves to take the leadership to run the country in future," she told them.

Govt, opposition differ over northern situation

The opposition members in Parliament last night blasted the government for "mismanagement and negligence in facing the famine" in northern region but the ruling party members claimed the "food problem" has been overcome, reports UNB.

Allegations against the government came during a protracted debate on the situation in the country's northern districts as the opposition MPs demanded declaration of the region as famine area.

They also called for gearing up relief work, including test relief, and opening of gruel kitchens to "save people from starvation and disease."

The ruling party MPs, however, denied the reports of famine and said these were all politically motivated to discredit the democratic government.

As many as 28 members from the treasury and the opposition benches took part in the debate that ended last night after two days of discussion.

Winding up the debate, Communications Minister Oli Ahmed told the house that the government had overcome the food problem in the north by taking appropriate steps at appropriate time.

Oli Ahmed said such food problems experienced in the famine prone northern districts during the month of September and October every year.

The crisis this year was due

to prolonged flooding that lasted for nearly six months, he said. "Unfortunately, some newspapers published misleading news and photographs on the situation."

The Communications Minister said the government has reached relief to all places in the affected areas and faced the problem successfully.

Earlier, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad requested the government to deal with the crisis unitedly with the opposition by rising above party politics and save people from hunger and death.

"Don't play with the lives of the hungry people. Accept the reality and face the challenge unitedly," he urged the government.

Azad asked the government not to politicise the relief distribution. He suggested opening of gruel kitchens and exempting agricultural loans in the affected areas.

Social Welfare Minister Tariqul Islam denied any death from starvation but admitted nearly 1500 people died of diarrhoeal diseases.

Besides government's efforts, he said, Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) have provided relief worth Tk 16 crore in the affected northern districts.

Abdur Razzak of Awami League alleged that about 9,000 people have died of starvation and diarrhoeal diseases in the northern districts.

Derogatory remarks against Hasina: Hartal, clashes in Gopalganj

From Our Correspondent
GOPALGANJ, Oct 29: At least 35 persons were injured today during clashes in the town among the supporters of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), police and Chhatra League (BCL).

A half-day hartal was also observed protesting the use of abusive language against AL chief Sheikh Hasina by JCD workers.

BCL workers brought out a procession at around 10.30 am Tuesday protesting the derogatory remarks against Hasina by JCD workers following the death of two of their mates in the Dhaka University clash on Sunday.

The procession paraded the town and when it reached the BNP and the JCD offices near Chaurangi, unknown persons pelted stones at it.

Press Council Act to be amended

The government is considering to amend the Press Council Act, 1974, with a view to making the Press Council more effective. Any suggestion in this regard may be sent to the Senior Assistant Secretary (Press-1 section) of the Ministry of Information by November 2, an official release said today, reports BSS.



Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina visited late Chhatra League leader Parag's house in Pabna town on Monday to console his mother. Parag was recently killed allegedly by activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal. —Star photo

Jamuna bridge issue

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national importance of the project for Bangladesh. But the "affordability" of the project still remains a critical issue for re-examination in the context of "poor" domestic resource mobilisation in Bangladesh, he said.

Explaining "affordability", Willoughby said that the question of what investments the bridge might draw from other sectors would need a thorough reassessment.

The question will determine whether the bridge, involving gigantic construction and engineering works, is affordable in the context of the overall investment programme in Bangladesh, he added.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB), the largest multi-lateral source of development funds for Bangladesh, and Japan, also the country's largest source of bilateral aid, will be the co-financiers for the project, if it receives the final clearance from the third co-financier, the World Bank itself.

The procrastination of the approval process because, either of the World Bank's dilly-dallying tactics or of the government's failure to prove its "affordability", will however mean the loss of one more working session for beginning the construction works. This may adversely affect its economic viability because of cost overruns.

The decision to construct the bridge was taken as far back as in June, 1984. A techno-economic feasibility in two phases was completed by the foreign consultants for the project in August 1989. The consultants recommended for either a four-lane road-cum-power bridge or a four-lane road-cum-meter gauge (MG) railway-cum-power bridge (20.3 metre wide), having the capacity to carry telecommunication and gas pipelines. Both the proposals were found technically feasible and economically viable by the consultants.

A pre-appraisal meeting was later held in November 1989 in which a consensus was reached among the co-financiers through discussions about the width of the bridge at 18.5 metre. The bridge is to initially accommodate a four-lane road with foundations designed to carry both rail and road and with a superstructure that can be strengthened for an MG rail on the bridge, according to the decisions reached in that meeting.

Another round of meeting between the government and the co-financiers was held in Washington in May 1990 where all reiterated their support for the project, pending a final appraisal. Instructions were later given to the consultants to finalise bid documents on the basis of the agreed Bridge configuration.

The final appraisal for the project is however yet to be done. Specific donor commitments on foreign exchange component will be made only after this final appraisal, including World Bank's clearance for floating international bids. However, the ADB had earlier given an indicative financing plan for an amount of 150 million dollars. The IDA indicated its funding level at 100 million dollars.

The visiting ADB press team which arrived Dhaka Sunday last made specific queries about the development potentials of disaster-prone and chronically aid-dependent Bangladesh in meetings with the ERD Secretary and the WB resident mission chief on Tuesday.

The members of the team, mostly from the western developed donor countries, had earlier discussions on the economic situation in Bangladesh with the Acting Chief of the ADB mission office in Dhaka. They also visited Monday the ADB-aided Northwest Rural Development Project. It is a two-country (Bangladesh and the Philippines) visit for the 12-member ADB press team this year.

DU killings

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The incident was an outsider in the DU campus, while Obhi, Ilias and Niru were the creation of BNP.

Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali, who was trying from the very beginning to pacify the house, said that allegations and counter allegations would not solve the problem. He mentioned that the matter has been sent to a Special Committee which would come to a decision.

The Chief Whip of the Treasury Bench Khandker Delwar Hossain deplored Tofael's comments on the Minister's statement and said that it was devoid of rules of procedure. He urged the Speaker to expunge Tofael Ahmed's comments from the proceedings.

BNP MP Amanullah Aman said that some dalles misrepresented the incidents at Dhaka Medical College Hospital when Prime Minister went there to see the victims of Sunday's incident. At one stage, Aman bitterly criticised Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina saying that she had tried to stab the anti-autocratic movement. This generated more heat in the House.

Opposition Chief Whip Muhammad Nasim protested Aman's remarks. After over half-an-hour's uproar, the Speaker managed to pacify the agitated members by switching over to next agenda in the order of the day.

Timbigha

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repatriation of the stranded Pakistanis was expected next year.

Bangladesh played an active role in the just-concluded Harare meet that called for promotion of values of democracy around the world. Mostafiz told the news conference at the Foreign Office.

Begum Zia, he said, "was a focus of great attention in the summit" as leader of a democratic government elected through internationally-acclaimed free and fair election.

Begum Zia led the Bangladesh delegation to the week-long Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in the Zimbabwean capital.

The Foreign Minister returned home on Sunday after attending the conference.

JCD threatens

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Sheikh Hasina must be tried for these, it added.

The rally pledged not to return home until the killers were tried and called upon all to be united in ousting the Chhatra League 'killers' from the campus.

The rally was addressed by JCD Joint Convenor Fazlul Huq Milon, DUCSU Assistant General Secretary Nazimuddin Alam, Rizvee Ahmed, Elias Ali, Abdul Malek, Habibunnabi Sohel, Ali Akkas Nadim, Rafiqul Islam Jaghu and Maniruzzaman Manir.

Fazlul Huq Milon termed the alleged killers of Dr Shamsul Alam Khan Milon as the reserve force of Sheikh Hasina now being used to kill JCD activists.

Meanwhile, the Awami League-backed Chhatra League (S-A) held a counter rally at the Gulistan square protesting Sunday's tragic killing on the Dhaka University campus.

The rally said that the terrorist acts carried out by the armed hoodlums of the JCD in the educational institutions were not unknown to the people. Sunday's killings were part of those activities that originated from an internal conflict in the JCD, it added.

The rally alleged that the JCD was now trying to blame the BCL (S-A) for the killings. But the BCL did not believe in the politics of arms, it said.

It termed the incidents of terror as part of the conspiracy to foil the movement to realise ten-point demands of the students.

The BCL (S-A) decided to hold country-wide demonstrations November 2 protesting the violent incidents.

The rally was addressed by Shahe Alam, Ashim Kumar Ukil, Jahangir Sattar Tinku, Mozammel Huq, Maniruzzaman Badal, Mamtazuddin Mehedi, Golam Mostafa Suzan and Quamruzzaman Ansari.

Meanwhile Dhaka University Officers' Association (DUOA) executive body at an emergency meeting Tuesday sought cooperation of all concerned in creating a favourable atmosphere on the campus to continue peaceful academic activities.

The meeting presided over by Muhammad Selim, President of DUOA also demanded arrest and trial of all armed hoodlums to ensure security for the students, teachers, officers and employees of the University.

Govt not allowing me to talk in JS: Hasina

ARICHA, Oct 29: Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina today called the BNP government "neo-autocrat" and said its anti-democratic attitude and administrative failure has endangered democracy and multiplied economic problems, reports UNB.

Hasina alleged that the ruling party was "not allowing the opposition and herself to discuss national issues in Parliament which was established after a long drawn anti-autocratic struggle. It is ignoring the democratic values and parliamentary practices."

She was addressing a rally at Aricha ghat on way to Dhaka. Earlier she also addressed another public meeting at Pabna.

She alleged that the government has failed to tackle the "famine-like" situation in northern districts, deteriorating law and order situation, price-hike of essentials and unrest in different areas of national life.

"We extended our cooperation to face national problems unitedly but the government spurned our offer," the Awami League chief alleged, adding, people would not forgive if democratic process was obstructed.

Referring to Sunday's armed clashes on the Dhaka University campus, she held

DU campus

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ber of resident students left their respective halls fearing a fresh spurt in violence though armed police are deployed at all strategic points on the campus.

Armed outsiders have apparently left the halls but arms were still found in some of them. Police raided almost all the halls after Sunday's incident. Three rounds of gunshots were fired from the Fazlul Huq Hall compound Tuesday evening.

Campus sources reported that a large number of residents of Jagannath Hall left the hall Tuesday night as a rumour spread that an armed attack would be launched by the JCD that night.

It may be mentioned that no Chhatra League (S-A) leader or worker was found on the campus after Sunday's gunbat-

BNP and its student front Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) responsible for the incident.

Hasina defended her party's student wing saying that the government is unnecessarily blaming Chhatra League (BCL) for the occurrence. The campus violence was the result of internal conflicts in JCD, she said.

She said her party is pledge bound to free the campus from armed hoodlums and restore congenial academic atmosphere in the country for ensuring the future of the coming generation.

Hasina said the ruling party was trying to politicising the administration. Many officials in the administration are being harassed by the government, she alleged and called for keeping the administration neutral as per the Constitution.

The opposition leader also called for immediate repeal of the Indemnity Ordinance to eliminate the "politics of coup and killing and to restore rule of law".

Earlier at Pabna, she visited the residence of Arifur Rahman Parag, a BCL leader in Rajshahi University, who was killed allegedly by JCD activists.

The Awami League President talked with Parag's mother and expressed sympathy for the bereaved family. She also demanded punishment to the killers.

Old woman

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line she suddenly started shouting for water to drink and then collapsed and died.

Additional District Magistrate Abdus Saleq visited Tussit Begum's house and talked to her daughter.

Meanwhile there has been a rise in cases of diarrhoea in the Barabati with six patients affected by the disease being admitted to the local health centre.

Officials here fear that the rise in the cases of diarrhoea may be due to the consumption of food relief items donated by a Middle East country. Some of these items are from very old stocks while others are to be consumed immediately after opening the container which is probably not being done causing cases of diarrhoea.

The Midnight File

Bush, Gorbachev fail to reach accord on Western aid

MADRID, Oct 29: US President George Bush said today he failed to reach any specific agreement with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev on Western aid to the Soviet Union. At a joint press conference after their talks here, Bush said he had asked Gorbachev for certain clarifications on the Soviet request for food and humanitarian aid. The United States tried to come as close as possible to the Soviet request, but there is no specific agreement on the Western assistance to the Soviet Union, Bush said, reports Xinhua.

VP Singh arrested, released

RAM SANEHI GHAT (Barabanki), Oct 29: Former Prime Minister, V P Singh, who was arrested here while proceeding to Ayodhya was released later in the day. Soon after his release, he alleged that the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh was colluding with the VHP and allowing "free passage" to the Karsewaks to participate in tomorrow's VHP programme. He demanded immediate suspension of the VHP activities in Ayodhya, reports PTT.

US forbids trade ties Haiti

WASHINGTON, Oct 29: President George Bush issued an order Tuesday prohibiting virtually all US commercial transactions with Haiti as a means of pressuring that country's military rulers to restore democracy. Bush exercised authority granted him under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act. His order will take effect on November 5, reports AP.

Kaunda says he will win polls

LUSAKA, Oct 29: President Kenneth Kaunda predicted Tuesday that he will win the country's first multiparty elections in 18 years and promised to bow out gracefully if he lost. "We will get a landslide," independent Zambia's founding father told reporters. But, he added, if opposition leader Frederick Chiluba does triumph during Thursday elections, "I'll show him around (the) State House and the gardens," reports AP.

100 injured in Narsinghdi storm

NARSINGHDI, Oct 29: A storm sweeping over eight villages of the district this morning killed one woman and injured about 100 others, officials said. The Deputy Commissioner of Narsinghdi said Firoza Begum (38) of Jharkandi village in Ralpura upazila was killed reports UNB.

Rohingyas

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filled the entire Arakan region with cantonments, military camps and outposts. The military forces Muslims to work for it without wages. They are promoting Buddhist settlements in Arakan to provoke communal violence and turn the Muslim majority in the area into a minority, refugees say.

According to some refugees atrocities of the Burmese regime against the Rohingya Muslims increased since the 1988 mass upsurge that toppled the government of Gen Ne Win. The Rohingyas had participated in the democratic movement. The present military regime has reportedly forced Muslims to pay compensation for government property damaged during the mass upsurge.

The Rohingyas Muslims have also been subjected to an oppressive tax collected in the form of crop sharing from fields. The Arakan area is facing a food shortage as the movement of foodgrains from the rest of the country is restricted.

The April 29 cyclone that has killed an estimated 140,000 humans and caused colossal loss of life and property in Bangladesh has also inflicted extensive damage on the inhabitants of the Arakan region in Burma. But the military government reportedly did not care to mitigate the sufferings of the Arakanese Muslims.

What is more, under a citizenship law of 1982 the Arakanese Muslims are being regarded as aliens in Burma, some refugees said. Their citizenship is being questioned and property confiscated.

The sad plight of the Muslims of Arakan—a former Muslim kingdom—dates back to 1936 when the British rulers had allowed self government in Burma separating it from the rest of India. Muslims of Arakan were left completely unprotected as Burma gradually turned into a Buddhist state. Influx of Rohingyas Muslims into Bangladesh territories (then East Bengal) started in 1942.

Successive dictatorial regimes in Burma further aggravated the situation of the Rohingyas Muslims, and since the early eighties a section of them have taken up arms to help end atrocities.

This in turn has increased oppression of the civilian Rohingyas Muslim population by the Burmese military. Burmese military men often enter villages, harass and beat up people. People are also, beaten to death in some cases, and women are dishonoured, some refugees complained.

Discrimination against the Muslims in Burma had increased since 1962 when the military took over ending democratic rule, and declared Arakanese as illegal immigrants, some refugees recalled.

Meanwhile, as the influx continues the refugees are forced to live in make-shift camps not having regular supply of food, safe drinking water and medicines.