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Opposition parties quiet, planning fresh strategies

By Moinuddin Naser

The opposition parties are assessing the political situation to prepare for next moves, providing ample opportunity for the government to cover up its deficiencies.

On the other hand, the BNP government, which is now contemplating to shift its attention once again towards canal digging to be formally inaugurated on November 22 by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia herself, is in a state of complacency.

It was earlier perceived that the Awami League would launch a movement to press passage of Indemnity Ordinance (Repeal) Bill in the Jatiya Sangsad (parliament). But the party has now concentrated its efforts to organise its strength at the grassroots level.

General Secretary of the Awami League Sajeda Chowdhury told this correspondent that the government took 70 days' time to bring the Indemnity Repeal Bill in the House.

Now the party is preparing to hold conferences of thana councils to be followed by district councils and then national council, she added.

Sajeda Chowdhury, however, said that the special committee of the parliament had not sat as yet for discussing the Indemnity Ordinance after the prorogation of the session. The Awami League would launch movement if the Bill was not repealed in the parliament, she added.

Insiders in the party who preferred anonymity said that the Awami League has changed its strategy. Earlier the Awami League took a strategy to create pressure on the government from different fronts: domination on campuses, making the 'want of food and work' in northern districts an issue of debate in the parliament, etc.

Awami League sources said the policy of intense politicking over the issues did, not
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Squalor amid the splendour: Houses on stilts over unhygienic drains coexist with multistoried buildings springing up all over the city.
 — Star photo

Varsity teachers' rally blasts govt Nov 30 ultimatum to curb campus unrest

By DU Correspondent

University teachers Saturday gave a November 30 ultimatum to the government for taking effective measures to curb-campus terrorism and threatened greater movement for noncompliance.

The Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers Association (FBUTA) at an 'anti-terrorism rally' at the Central Shaheed Minar blamed government's 'inaction' for continued campus terrorism and demanded stern action against it.

Education system would collapse and the future generation would be ruined if terrorism in educational institutions continue, said a written declaration adopted at the largely attended rally.

FBUTA is the apex body of teachers of six universities of

the country. More than 1500 teachers of Dhaka University and Engineering University (BUET) are already on strike protesting governments 'inaction' to contain campus violence.

The declaration, read out by Prof Enamul Haq Khan, FBUTA President, also called upon the political parties to cooperate with the government to root out campus violence. The declaration accused the political parties of sheltering terrorists and demanded announcement by party leaders that they would no more shelter such elements and expel any party activist if identified as terrorist. The major political parties and their student organisations have failed to show sincerely to stop campus violence
 See Page 12 Col. 4

'Responsibility to curb terrorism lies with govt'

Star Report

Prof Enamul Haq Khan, President of the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers Association (FBUTA) has said the primary responsibility to root out campus terrorism lies with the government.

He, however, said campus violence could be curbed to a great extent if the university authorities utilised their powers properly and boldly.

In an exclusive interview with The Daily Star he said the university authorities completely failed to show honest courage in utilizing their powers, provided with by the University Ordinance '73. He said, 'the Vice-Chancellors of the universities must admit it and state clearly why they are unable to utilize their powers or perform their duties.'

No Vice-Chancellor, could state the reasons, although they were holding their posts
 See Page 12 Col. 5

Unabated smuggling cripples industries, says Khaleda

NATORE, Nov 16 : Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today called for maintaining law and order to ensure democratic process and development in the country, reports UNB.

'Peace and stability are the main preconditions for any development in the country', she told a huge rally at Natore Government College here this afternoon.

Describing smuggling as the greatest hurdle to economic growth, the Prime Minister said that the unabated smuggling has led to closure of many local industries leaving an adverse impact on national economy.

She referred to economic policy of her government and said the BNP attached importance to boosting production to attain self-sufficiency in the vital sectors.

Begum Zia said certain quarters which do not believe

in democracy are trying to create chaos and confusion in society to, destabilise hard-earned democracy and the development process.

'Identify those who create terrorism and disturb normal life... isolate them for good to consolidate democracy.'

The BNP government will revive the canal digging programme and encourage entrepreneurs of small and cottage industries in rural areas.

Begum Zia said that the government will provide small loans for small and cottage industries and enterprises for generating job opportunities in rural areas.

Talking about the government's priority to education sector, she said mass and primary education programme would be strengthened further, adding the education sector has been given the highest allocation in the budget of the current fiscal year.

The Prime Minister called for concerted efforts to make the nascent democracy functional to meet the basic needs of the people. 'Democracy, achieved after a nine-year struggle, will be meaningless if we cannot fulfil people's prime needs.'

Chaired by the district BNP President Serajul Islam, the rally was addressed, among others, by Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, State Minister for Communications Fazlur Rahman Patal and State Minister for Land Kabir Hossain.

Health Minister Kamal Ibne Yusuf told the rally the government has given due importance to the health sector to ensure health for all.

State Minister Fazlur Rahman Patal said the government will modernise the Natore Municipal Telephone Exchange.

Anniversary of Bhasani's death today

By Staff Correspondent

The 15th anniversary of death of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, the leader of millions of oppressed people, will be observed today.

Different political and socio-cultural organisation chalked out day-long elaborate programme to observe the day in befitting manner.

'Maulana Bhasani was the living conscience at the time of every crisis in the national life,' President Abdur Rahman Biswas said in a message on the eve of the late leader's death anniversary.

The bold leadership of late Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani would remain ever memorable because he had upheld the interest of the

See Page 12 Col. 3

Number of UPs to go to polls undecided

Star Report

The Election Commission is yet to ascertain the exact number of union parishads in which elections can be held as per schedule.

Election to the union parishad (UP), whose tenure has expired, will be held from January 14 to 25 next year in order to reorganise these parishads, the Election Commission (EC) announced Friday.

The EC ran into the problem of figuring out the actual number of UPs where elections should be held on the announced dates as the tenure expiry dates vary in a large number of them.

See Page 12 Col. 7

Bank rate reduced by 0.50 pc

Bangladesh Bank has decided to reduce the bank rate from Taka 9.75 per cent to Taka 9.25 per cent, reports UNB.

This was the first reduction of the bank rate in the last 22 months.

The decision of the Bangladesh Bank was disclosed at a high-level meeting held in Dhaka Saturday with Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman in
 See Page 12 Col. 8

Benazir predicts war with India

KARACHI, Nov 16 : Rising Muslim separatism in Kashmir could lead India and Pakistan to fight a third war over the disputed territory, Pakistan opposition leader and former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said in an interview.

As a violent independence campaign gathers momentum in the southern two-thirds of Kashmir under Indian control 'there will be a danger of war between Pakistan and India,' Benazir told AFP.

'There will be more temptation for India in this period to divert attention from other issues,' she said.

Asked whether she would support an independent Kashmir if she were returned to power, Benazir, who was sacked as Prime Minister in August 1990, expressed 'reservations' about changing the terms of the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan.

'I think the option is either

to opt for India or Pakistan,' she said, but added, 'Kashmiris must decide what is best for them.'

In neighbouring Afghanistan, she said, 'it is essential to have a dialogue through the UN Secretary General or his representative, especially when (Soviet-backed) President Najibullah is not stepping down.'

'We cannot wait for him to go,' she said adding: 'I prefer that Najib step down but paramount for me is a peace settlement.'

Pakistan currently shelters the Afghan Mujahideen resistance and some three million refugees from the 12-year-old Afghan civil war.

Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan and the central Asian republics would form the backbone of a new regional market but only following resolution of the conflict, she said.

Govt making admn corrupt: Hasina

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, Nov 16: Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina today accused the government of crippling the country's economy by corrupting and making the administration partisan.

She said that Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia had confessed about the country's economic condition while addressing a public meeting in the capital on Friday.

Addressing a gathering of her party workers at the local Circuit House auditorium this afternoon Hasina blamed the government for not reciprocating the cooperation extended by her party to bring economic emancipation of the people.

The opposition leader alleged that the ruling party was instead instigating terrorism by its student wing to root out opposition workers in the

campuses which had led to the indefinite closure of many educational institutions.

Citing the suspension of activities of her party's student wing in the Dhaka University, Hasina regretted that the ruling party did not respond to the act positively. It was rather attacking her student activists and harassing them through issuance of warrants of arrest and raids on their houses, she added.

On the Indemnity Ordinance, Hasina said that if the ruling party did not repeal it then it would be proved that the late President Ziaur Rahman was involved in the killing of Bangabandhu.

She cautioned that her party, through a mass movement, would compel the government to repeal the ordinance to pave the way for the trial of Bangabandhu's killers.

See Page 12 Col. 6

By-poll violence kills 4 in India

NEW DELHI, Nov 16 : Indians on Saturday voted in national by-elections seen as the first public test for the policies of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's fledgling government, report UNB.

Among the 1,200 candidates are Rao and Defense Minister Sharad Pawar, who must win to keep their five-month-old jobs.

Violence, endemic during Indian elections, claimed at least four lives in the eastern state of Bihar known for lawlessness even in normal times.

The government-run Election Commission said an estimated 55 percent of the

23 million registered voters participated in the elections to 15 Parliament seats and 56 seats in various state legislatures.

Polling in one state assembly constituency and two parliament seats — one in New Delhi and the other in the eastern city of Agartala — were countermanded earlier because of deaths of candidates.

Despite heavy rain and cold weather voters stood in queues from 7 am (0130 GMT) when polling began in 15 of India's 25 states. Voting ended at 5 pm (1130 GMT). First results are expected late Sunday.

In Bihar, two people were

shot and killed by unidentified gunmen outside a polling booth in Vaishali, Press Trust of India news agency said. In Fatepur, police opened fire on a mob trying to stuff ballot boxes, killing one person, Press Trust said. One person was killed in Madhepura when a bomb he was making exploded, it said.

Voter intimidation, rigging and sporadic violence was reported in two other states, Press Trust and United News of India said.

An estimated 60 per cent voters cast ballots in Nandyal, where the Prime Minister is contesting, the news agencies

said. Rao was not a member of Parliament when he was named to head the minority Congress Party government on June 21. By law, a Cabinet minister must win a Parliament seat within six months of appointment to retain the job.

Rao became Prime Minister after he took over as Congress Party President following the May 21 assassination of the then party chief Rajiv Gandhi by a suicide bomber.

Congress had 223 seats going into the by-election, while its closest rival, the Bharatiya Janata Party, had 117,

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