

Reexcavation of Zia Khal begins Progress hinges on better life of farmers : PM

NAOGAN, Dec 3: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today inaugurated the reexcavation work of 'Zia Khal' (Zia canal) at Atrai upazila of the district with a call to the people to put in their voluntary labour in development activities, reports BSS.

Addressing a big rally held on the occasion Begum Zia underlined the need for making the rural people especially the farmers self-reliant to achieve all-round development in country's agro based economy.

Begum Zia said Shaheed President Zia had initiated the canal digging programme with the realisation that the country could not progress without ameliorating the condition of the farmers.

The Prime Minister said the present government had chalked out a well drafted plan to make the canal digging programme a success and committees at national level had been constituted.

She said canals would not only increase food production but also help develop numerous fisheries.

The Prime Minister said khas lands would be brought under cultivation to achieve food autarky. Begum Zia also said fisheries would be developed in derelict ponds all over the country.

Stressing the need for checking smuggling the Prime Minister said industrialisation would be hampered greatly if

the smuggling could not be checked. She sought cooperation of all to help curb smuggling.

Begum Zia said the mass literacy programme would start soon so that the nation could gradually be freed from the curse of illiteracy.

She said we believe that without the involvement of people in all programmes the country's development could not be achieved as people's involvement was the main target of democracy.

Dwelling on the local problems the Prime Minister said the construction work of Naogaon Road was progressing and hoped that it would be completed within the stipulated time.

The rally was addressed, among others, by Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, State Minister for Land Kabir Hossain, State Minister for Finance Mujibur Rahman, State Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Aminul Huq, Alamgir Kabir MP and Farida Hasan MP.

The Zia canal which was excavated by Shaheed President Zia on February 22, 1980 will be 4,725-km long. With the completion of the project 46,000 hectares of land would be saved from the devastation of recurring floods.

The canal will also facilitate irrigation work during the dry season in lakhs of acres.



Streams of people in the capital on this day last year. — Photo Mohsin

The day Ershad was forced to resign

By Nazmul Ashraf

Rejection of Ershad's offer by the mainstream opposition political alliances and parties steered demonstrations throughout the country during the whole day of December 4. People in lakhs came out of houses and kept the city streets occupied during the whole day of December 4. Civil servants joined the demonstrators. The protesters also forced out some officials and employees from the government offices. Mob attacked government offices outside Dhaka.

Withdrawal of support by some of the donors weakened the government's base and fuelled demonstrations. The mainstream opposition alliances announced fresh action programmes. Professional groups including teachers, lawyers and businessmen joined the masses for democracy. Publication of bulletins and leaflets inspired the protesters.

People's agitations turned into jubilations when a news-caster at the 10 o'clock TV bulletin on December 4 aired the long-awaited news — 'the President has decided to resign from his office immediately.'

The entire nation burst into ecstatic jubilation. Again they thronged the streets and public venues to share the victory through dancing, embracing each other and showing victory signs. Even people asleep, woke up to join the jubilant masses, parading the streets after the TV bulletin.

UP nomination filing Dec 7

Election Commission Tuesday announced rules and procedures for the ensuing Union Parishad election, reports UNB.

A total 1,110 returning officers will receive nomination papers from the intending candidates on December 7 from 10 am to 5 pm.

Officers at the upazila level have been appointment as returning officers, said an official handout.

Any voter from wards of the union can propose or support any candidate contesting for chairmanship.

To elect a member of the ward, any voter of the ward in the union can propose or support the name of eligible candidate. A total of nine members will be elected from three wards of each union.

No voter can propose or support more than three nominations for the post of member of the ward. No voter can support or propose more than one candidate contesting for the post of chairman.

No one can simultaneously contest for the post of chairman and member. All nominations will be cancelled if any one found doing so.

Every candidate for the post of chairman and member will have to submit a treasury challan, bank receipt or receipt given by the returning officer as security worth Tk 1000 and five hundred respectively along with his nomination paper.

Returning officer will not receive nomination paper which does not accompany such bank challans or bank receipt.

Malaysian embassy denies report

Malaysian embassy Tuesday refuted recent press reports that the Kuala Lumpur government was persecuting foreign workers, including Bangladeshis, to force them out of the country.

An embassy official told UNB that the government had extended the deadline to enable illegal immigrants to obtain valid travel documents.

Foreigners without valid travel documents and hired as plantation and construction workers or domestic maids will be allowed to register themselves with the immigration department from December 1, 1991 to June 30, 1992, he said.

Under the circumstances, he said, the issue of taking actions against foreigners on immigration matters did not arise.

About 100,000 workers from Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Thailand and Burma are reportedly staying in Malaysia without valid documents.

The Midnight File

Next round of Mideast talks in Moscow

WASHINGTON, Dec 3: The United States and the Soviet Union on Tuesday set a continuation of the Mideast peace talks in Moscow for late January to deal with arms buildups, water shortages and other regional problems. More than two dozen nations are expected to send their foreign ministers to the session. It will follow negotiations scheduled to open here on Wednesday on the Arab-Israeli conflict, reports AP.

Mandela for gradual lifting of sanctions

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 3: African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela urged the world community Tuesday to keep economic sanctions against South Africa, lifting them only gradually as apartheid is eradicated, reports AP.

3 Shantibahini men arrested

RANGAMATI, Dec 3: Three members of the outlawed Shantibahini were taken into custody today after exchange of fire with law enforcing agencies at Betejhari in Naniarchar Police Station. Those arrested were identified as Indu Chakma, Minto Chakma and Riko Chakma. One 12-bore pistol, some ammunition, Tk 1,033, Shantibahini uniform and toll receipt books were recovered from them, officials said, reports UNB.

Samphan will return to Cambodia

PATTAYA (Thailand), Dec 3: The four Cambodian factions agreed Tuesday to return to Phnom Penh and resume peace processes derailed when a mob attacked Khmer Rouge leaders last week and forced their evacuation to Thailand, reports AP.

"We have settled all the problems," Premier Hun Sen told reporters.

His announcement came after daylong talks involving the Cambodians, UN representatives and the five world powers that brokered the peace accord that formally ended 13 years of civil war.

Asked when the Khmer Rouge would return to Cambodia, he replied: "Within the next few days. You can be sure of that. The Khmer Rouge have agreed to return to Phnom Penh."

AFP says, Khmer Rouge leaders will return to Phnom Penh, faction chief Khieu

Troops take Togolese PM into custody

LOME, Dec 3: Togolese troops stormed the residence of civilian Prime Minister Joseph Koffigoh today and took him into custody on the fifth day of a putsch by soldiers loyal to president Gnassingbe Eyadema.

"We decided to seize Koffigoh. Restraint had gone on long enough. At the time we are speaking, he is completely safe in the hands of the Togolese armed forces," radio Lome occupied by the army, announced at 9.10 am (0910 GMT).

Half an hour later General Eyadema ordered the putschists and the Prime Minister's guards to 'lay down their arms.' A presidential statement received by AFP in Abidjan, 'condemned acts of violence' and called for 'dialogue to reach a consensus.'

The troops backed by tanks attacked the Prime Minister's official residence, the Premiere, at 6.30 am (0630 GMT). The building had been under siege since Thursday except for a short interval when troops briefly withdrew from the seaside government offices zone at the weekend.

Witnesses reported that two tanks burst through the main gate and a side-door into the courtyard of the Prime Minister's compound. The tanks opened fire on the main building from a distance of around 150 meters, they said.

The 60-odd French-trained guards defending the residence retaliated with machine guns. After several minutes of sustained shooting the gunfire subsided gradually until 8.00 am when a huge plume of black smoke was seen rising from the residence.

Fleets of ambulances and army lorries were rushing to and from the scene. The civilians were held up in their homes and all intercity and international phone line were cut.

Campus terrorism

From Page 1 Col. 5

4. No political party will extend support to offenders if legal and punitive actions are taken against any arms holders.

5. Stop giving shelter to any non-students in any hall or hostel in order to create peaceful atmosphere on the campus.

6. No political party or student organisation will give any protection to any arms holder on the campus. Party or organisation concerned will abandon such arms holders politically.

7. Asked the university authorities for their allotment cooperation in cleansing the campuses of arms.

Earlier Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, in her introductory statement, expressed deep concern at the existing situation in the wake of armed terrorism.

She said that a parliamentary committee was formed to review the situation prevailing in the campuses and recommend measures to ensure healthy academic atmosphere.

This meeting, the Prime Minister said, is not an alternative to the parliamentary committee.

She said the meeting is meant to discuss with the political parties who were in the nine years anti-autocracy movement but some of which do not have representation in the present parliament.

According to insiders, after the Prime Minister's introductory speech, Awami League leaders started arguing that the ruling party must play the pioneering role in eliminating campus violence. They also accused the government of being partial in arresting the hoodlums destabilising the academic atmosphere in the country.

BNP leaders, refuting the accusations, said that all the

Freedom fighter BCS officers demand promotion

By Staff Correspondent

Freedom Fighter civil servants Tuesday urged the Government to fill the vacant posts of deputy secretary or equivalent posts with BCS officers from among them recruited in 1973.

Bangladesh Muktojodha BCS Officers Kalyan Samity in a statement also welcome the government steps taken to remove the complications regarding promotion of the freedom fighter BCS officers.

The statement viewed that only the batch of 1973 should be considered eligible for promotion to the vacant posts since they had attained the requisite qualifications.

The statement alleged that the then autocratic government had illegally promoted the officers, belonging to the last batch of CSP (Civil Service of Pakistan), to the posts of Deputy Secretary depriving the FF officers.

The samity demanded that written eligibility test should be taken by the Public Service Commission, instead of the 40-mark viva-voce system as decided by the present government.

The samity also accused some top bureaucrats of obstructing the promotion of the freedom fighter officers and misleading the government by providing wrong and motivated information.

Committee for monitoring canal digging programme

A central committee headed by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has been formed to formulate policies and monitor the progress of canal digging programme, an official source said Tuesday, reports BSS.

The government has decided to start the programme throughout the country during the current dry season, the source added.

Related story on page 3

Bimal Mitra

From Page 1 Col. 8

Mitra, who was a prolific writer, wrote more than 500 stories and over 100 novels. His readership spread across the length and breadth of the country as his works began to be translated in various languages and staged.

His other important works are 'Kari Diye Kinlam', 'Bagum Mary Biswas', 'Ekak Dashak Satak', 'Pati Param Guru', 'Saraswatya' and 'Asami Hajir', which was serialised as 'Mujrim Hazir'.

Bimal Mitra, who was influenced by Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Dickens and preferred a large canvas with myriad characters, has to his credit other novels 'Mithun Lagna', 'Sesh Pristha Dekhun' and 'Sab Jhut Hai'. His last novel 'Jasher Mashul', appeared in the annual Puja edition of Navakalol this year.

He also wrote scripts for the cinema.

Mitra, who earned a large number of accolades for his works, was awarded the Rabindra Puraskar for 'Kari Diye Kinlam', the Sarat Puraskar, the Asoke Kumar Smriti Puraskar and the Tarahand Botaria Award from Punjab.

Shyamoli : Court

From Page 1 Col. 8

Tejgaon police Tuesday sent the recovered revolver, the used bullet and the bullets pellet to the CID for examination for report of finger prints on the revolver.

The body of Mukhter with bullet wound in the head was found in a car parked near Holy Cross College at Tejkonipara on Friday night. Earlier on Monday police got the autopsy report which said it was a suicide.

Shyamoli, immediately after the incident had told police that she and her six-year-old daughter Pincky were with the former chairman in the parked car when he shot himself with a revolver.

Shyamoli, 23, a divorcee, also admitted to police that late Mukhter had an extramarital relationship with her for two years.

Police also recovered some more letters of Mukhter written to her. Earlier police also recovered three bank cheques amounting to Taka three lakhs in total which were given to Shyamoli by Mukhter.

Our Narayanganj Correspondent adds: Mukhter Smriti Sangsad of Fatullah Tuesday cancelled its Thursday's half-day hartal programme at Narayanganj and Fatullah protesting the 'killing' and demanding trial of the 'killers'.

At a condolence meeting in at Fatullah play ground, speakers said that since Shyamoli was still on police remand, they decided to call off the programme. They however said that the autopsy report of Mukhter Hossain was not 'correct'. It was not a suicidal but a 'killing', they claimed. Presided over by M Shajahan the meeting was addressed by M A Sayeed, Aminur Rahman, Giasuddin (birprotik) and Rukonuddin.

Transport strike

From Page 1 Col. 7

Normal bus services will resume from the Saidabad and Gulistan terminals today.

Earlier, several buses were damaged on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway. Five buses were damaged at Kutubkhali at around 11am and another two were reported to be damaged near Shanir Akhra.

Bus services were also disrupted on the Dhaka-Sylhet route at Habiganj and also at Comilla.

Our Staff Correspondent from Khulna adds: The strike by the transport workers has affected all major inter-district routes in the area, causing suffering to thousands of passengers in Khulna, Jessore and other districts.

Our Rajshahi Correspondent reports: The strike severely disrupted the inter-district passenger bus services in most of the 16 northern districts. Prices of essentials have recorded a rise due to lack of supply in Rajshahi, Rangpur and other districts.

Jamuna bridge

From Page 1 Col. 7

But the government has been pursuing its early implementation and also incorporated it in the three-year rolling investment programme for priority projects.

The designed bridge now has only a power interconnector but will have provisions for a meter gauge railrack and a gas interconnector.

The World Bank pledged 100 million US dollar for the project while ADB and Japan 150 million each.

Without rail and gas interconnector, project cost will stand around 500 million dollar, according to officials.

Various technical studies on infrastructural and economic matters on the proposed project began in early eighties, and the government has already spent about Tk 50 crore to pay off the consultants.

In a message of condolence he said that Siddiqui had rebuilt the society in the initial period of country's independence and raised its image and importance in the international field.