

Jamaat condemns arrest of workers at Cox's Bazar

By Staff Correspondent

Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh has strongly condemned the arrest of 25 leaders and workers of the party and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir at Cox's Bazar on Wednesday.

Jamaat Acting Ameer Abbas Ali Khan and Secretary General Maolana Mattur Rahman Nizami in a statement Thursday alleged the arrests were made with heinous motive to foil their party's victory in the ensuing polls.

The Jamaat leaders also accused the local administration of playing biased role. It did not arrest the attackers rather took into custody the leaders of Jamaat and Shibir attacked by the miscreants. They demanded immediate release of the arrested persons.

Cassette war rages on

By Staff Correspondent

Along with the war of words, the contending parties in the forthcoming general election are also engaged in a war of songs.

Hundreds of campaign camps set up in the city are the theatres from where this war is waged.

From morning till late at night megaphones blare out the songs, mostly in audio cassettes and compared in folk tradition, extolling parties and leaders. Campaigners also take time to hold microphones in praising their leaders and blasting the opponent.

Until recently Awami League and Bangladesh National Party were the rivals in the combat. Now Jamaat-e-Islami has also joined the race.

Their songs also follow folk

styles, but are devoid of instrumental music. The songs are interesting. One such song says 'I voted for so many symbols in the past but did not get peace'.

Says an Awami League source, he came across about nine audio cassettes eulogising Awami League, its founder Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Sheikh Hasina, and urging people to vote for 'boat'. None of the cassettes were launched by the party, but by pro-AL cultural organisations, he said.

A BNP source also gave a similar reply. He said the audio cassettes brought out by different cultural groups were definitely welcomed by BNP leaders. Otherwise they should not have been used in election

campaigns, he said. A Jamaat source said the election cell of the party had produced a good number of such cassettes.

In the popular elections of the past commercially produced music cassettes or records were used to entertain voters and transmit party messages at intervals.

Meanwhile, with the election only 12 days away, the campaign in the city as elsewhere in the country has gained momentum. Campaign arches of contesting candidates have been erected at almost every important road junction.

Processions and miking campaigns are on at every mahalla of Dhaka city. House to house campaign is expected to begin next week.

Conspiracies against constitution on : Khaleda

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She pledged if elected, her party government would expedite development of north region. "We have to change the face of the northern districts remaining backward for decades".

Speaking about the stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh, Begum Zia said, if voted to power, her government would expedite the process of their repatriation. "Those who will opt for staying here will be ensured equal rights like a normal citizen of Bangladesh," she told the meeting.

Referring to the Jamuna Bridge project, the BNP chief said BNP had first floated the idea of building a bridge over the river Jamuna to link the northern and southern parts of Bangladesh. "If voted to power, we shall, Insha Allah, construct the bridge with railway line as desired by the people of North Bengal" she said.

Begum Zia said the North Bengal would be turned into a "rice bowl" by giving top priority to agriculture.

Earlier Begum Zia launched a video cassette entitled 'Jiban Bangladesh Amar Maran Bangladesh' at the party's Banani office on Wednesday.

Police foil hartal at Hathazari

CHITTAGONG, Feb 14 : Police Thursday foiled a hartal called by local unit of Jatiya Party at Hathazari Upazila headquarters and restored normal life by removing road barricades and opening shops, police said, reports BSS.

Jatiya Party had called for a half-day hartal from 6 am demanding release of former President and Jatiya Party Chairman Ershad and withdrawal of warrant of arrest on former Foreign Minister Anisul Islam Mahmud.

Pact with India

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Faruq read out the Election Manifesto at a press conference held at the party's central office in Dhaka. Party leader Col. (ret.) Rashid also addressed the press conference.

If voted to power, it said, it would try to remove unemployment, repeal Special Powers Act, introduce an effective education system and ensure freedom of the press and judiciary.

The manifesto said the 25-year agreement between Bangladesh and India should be scrapped immediately.

It said after the successful revolution on August 15, 1975 leaders of the Freedom Party did not usurp the state power in the hope that a people-oriented government will be established to ensure multi-party politics, free economy and free press.

The tenure of the government that ruled the country between August 15 and November 3, 1975 was the "golden era", it added.

It criticised both Awami League and BNP regimes saying those had resorted to misrule causing endless miseries to the people but urged the people to vote for BNP as a nationalist force in those places where Freedom Party did not field any candidate.

About the ousted regime of Jatiya Party, it said autocracy and corruption went on in the same breath during the rule of Ershad. It also blamed the deposed President for trying to prolong his rule by destroying the nationalist forces.

Freedom Party was also critical of the caretaker government for keeping in force the controversial Special Powers Act of 1974. It also questioned the legality and neutrality of the interim

administration. BSS adds: Referring to the Armed Forces the Manifesto said this national institution would be kept above all debates.

In reply to a question Col. Rashid alleged that Awami League workers were attacking Freedom Party workers and were trying to undo their public meetings in different places. But he said his party workers were showing utmost tolerance.

Replying to a question Col. Rashid said the government was trying to hold the election free and fair and even then if anybody tried to adopt unfair means, the people would resist him. He said if the election was held free and fair then the nationalist forces would come out successful.

BSP won't take responsibility of future strikes

Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Parishad (BSP) on Thursday called upon the journalists to come to a consensus over the formation of a neutral inquiry committee to investigate any illegal benefits that might have been taken individually by the owners of newspapers and journalists during Ershad regime, reports BSS.

In a statement issued in Dhaka following an emergency meeting, the BSP made the call in response to the allegation brought by various journalist organisations against the BSP members of taking illegal benefits from Ershad government.

The BSP said, the owners only tried to talk about the financial constraints in newspaper industry while mentioning the one-sided announcement of the Wage Board awards during Ershad rule.

The BSP said, excepting a few, most of the newspapers had no financial capability to pay the salary and benefits as per previous Wage Board awards.

The BSP pointed out that during the mass upsurge against autocracy the newspapers were closed for five days and the owners paid salaries and other benefits for those days. The BSP, in future, would not take any responsibilities for such strike in the newspaper industry, it added.

Lankan forces

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ported seeing guerrillas taking away the bodies of four dead colleagues.

The current operations were among the biggest in recent months carried out against the LTTE, which is fighting to establish a separate state for the island's two million Tamil minority concentrated in the northeast.

At least 70 people, including 16 security personnel, have died in violence in the three days till Wednesday, according to government figures.

Guerrillas kept up harassing attacks on the main military camp in Elephant Pass at the entrance to the LTTE's stronghold of the Jaffna peninsula, the spokesman said.

Processions banned

The Sri Lankan government Thursday announced it had banned all political processions ahead of a planned meeting by a women's organisation to protest disappearance of thousands of their loved ones.

State Minister for Defence told reporters that processions and demonstrations will not be tolerated and said police had been ordered to use any force to maintain law and order.

The government move came four days ahead of a planned rally by the Mothers' Front, a grouping of women, who lost their children or relatives during the height of a violent anti-government Sinhalese uprising crushed in late 1989.

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Sheikh Hasina addressing a campaign rally in the Tejagon Industrial Area on Thursday.

—Star Photo

Hasina

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had been fighting for parliamentary system to supplant Zia Ershad model adding "we don't want any man in uniform to usurp power. Major (Retired), Abdul Mannan is the BNP candidate from the same constituency. Sheikh Hasina was campaigning in.

Sheikh Hasina said in an emotion choked voice: "I have lost my father, mother, brothers and relatives. I have nothing left to lose. I just want to finish the unfinished programmes of my father."

Presided over by Abdul Mutaleb, president of AL Ward no 71, the meeting was also addressed by Abdul Hanif, Abul Hossain Bhuiya, and Shahabuddin.

Speaking on the problems the workers are facing, Sheikh Hasina said if voted to power her party would resume production in the factories shut down by the past government.

As the Awami League chief was about to leave completing her brief speech, the big platform from where she addressed gave in at the weight of people. She was unhurt, but some party workers received minor injuries.

APSU

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among others, Khairul Kabir Khokon, Shafi Ahmed, Nasir-ud-Doza, Fazlul Haque Milon, Mostafa Faruk, S.M. Kamal Hossain, Abdus Sattar and Akhtar Sobhan Mashur.

DUCSU General Secretary Khairul Kabir Khokon said Ershad has no right to do politics as he negated the political organisations capturing state power by force.

A nine-point demand was also announced at the rally. The demand include trial and shifting of Ershad to the Central Jail before polls, announcing February 14 as 'autocracy resistance day', universal scientific education system, arrest and trial of all corrupt associates of Ershad and publication of the list of those killed in anti-Ershad movement during the last nine years.

BDR firing

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a case lodged with Boalta police station. Some 15 shots were fired to disperse the angry crowd, witnesses said.

Among the injured, four are BDR personnel—Naik Kalam, Sepoy Hadiul Islam, Sepoy Kalam and Sepoy Abdul Motalab.

Former RUCSU VP Fazle Hossain Badshah, a candidate from Rajshahi Sadar Constituencies in the coming parliament polls, was also injured.

BDR said the trouble erupted as they came under mob attack when they were in drive to seize smuggled goods.

Suit against Ershad

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regime. Mr Ahmed was subjected to harassment and suffered illegal detention for quite a long period for his unwillingness to fund Jatiya Party activities.

The statement said as an act of intimidation, the Ershad government declared his two houses - one at 29 Dulu Road and another at 79 Gulshan as abandoned property, though the mutation of those houses were settled on November 13, 1972. The Rajdhan Unnayan Katripakha (Rajuk) took the possession of the two houses respectively on February 10, 1988 and August 18, 1988 allegedly at the behest of former president Ershad.

The house at Dulu Road was allotted to Mrs Mansura Mohiuddin, wife of H. G. Mahiuddin - a brother-in-law of Ershad while the Gulshan house was occupied by Rushan Ershad in the name of Centre for Treatment of Drug Addiction.

Mr Ahmed, who has US citizenship, was also barred from leaving the country and was arrested on July 20, 1988 on charge of illegal transfer of money from Bangladesh. The then home minister M.A. Matin filed criminal case against him. The High Court Division of the Supreme Court declared his arrest as illegal on two occasions.

Yet the government did not release him.

Meanwhile, Mrs Hosneara Ahmed, wife of Mr Ahmed who is now working as a member of a task force of US President approached Congressman Stephen Solarz to request the Bangladesh president for releasing her husband on health reason. Stephen Solarz, in response to the request, wrote a personal letter to President Ershad requesting him to release Mr Ahmed. He also raised the issue with Ershad during his visit to Bangladesh and later Mr Ahmed was released.

But though the Supreme Court declared the occupation of the two houses illegal, those were not returned by the erstwhile regime.



Young Palestinians at Ain Al-Helwi refugee camp protesting the Allied air raid in Baghdad.

—AFP photo

Outrage in Arab world

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the Arab world condemned Wednesday's destruction of the Baghdad air raid shelter as a brutal massacre of innocents.

UK, France, Egypt, Libya, Jordan

The attack triggered some protests in the Arab world, but key Allied nations only hardened their positions against Saddam.

Britain, France and Egypt, major allies in the US-dominated multinational force opposing Iraq, lamented the civilian casualties, which included women and children. But they affirmed that the allies have been attacking only military targets in the air campaign that started Jan 17.

Iranian warning

At the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati warned Thursday that

many women and children as a result of bombing on a Baghdad air raid shelter on Wednesday.

Soviet peace body

The Soviet peace committee Wednesday called on US President George Bush to stop the devastating bombardment of Iraqi cities.

It also urged the Iraqi forces to withdraw from Kuwait after the United States stops its bombing.

The appeal said the air raids carried out by the multinational forces are out of control, and seem to be trying to cause more material and morale damage to Iraq.

Iraq urges UN condemnation

Iraq on Wednesday urged UN Secretary General Javier Perez De Cuellar to condemn the Allied bombardment of an air raid shelter in Baghdad, describing the attack as an "odious crime."

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman today expressed 'deep regret and anxiety' at the death of more than 400 innocent civilians including

The Midnight File

Anti-abortion rally in Manila

MANILA, Feb 14 : About 1,000 students marched around gynec bars and massage parlours in the Philippine capital's tourist district in an anti-abortion campaign today. The protesters from a Roman Catholic University carried signs reading "Don't be cruel to unborn babies", reports Reuter.

Flow of information barred

BRUSSELS, Feb 14 : The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) said on Wednesday the Allied pool system of Gulf war reporting restricted the free flow of information and discriminated against non-American and non-British journalists. The IFJ, representing more than 175,000 journalists around the world, added that it was seriously concerned over reporting restrictions imposed on journalists covering the Gulf conflict, reports Reuter.

Six killed in US ship fire

COLOMBO, Feb 14 : Six American crew members were killed in a fire aboard a US merchant ship off the southern Indian coast last week, US Embassy officials said Thursday. The ship, Stonewall Jackson, crippled by Saturday's fire in its engine room, was towed to Colombo Thursday by a salvage tug boat, the officials said, reports AP.

German stabbed in Amman

AMMAN, Feb 14 : A German man was stabbed and wounded Wednesday in the Jordanian capital, authoritative sources said. The assailant, who was arrested by police, was quoted as saying he wanted to "avenge the Arab nation," reports AFP.

Iranian journalists in Iraq

NICOSIA, Feb 14 : A group of Iranian journalists has crossed into Iraq to report on the Gulf war. Iranian radio said another group was waiting at the Khosravi border post while formalities were dealt with, the British Broadcasting Corporation reported on Wednesday night, says Reuter.

Massive blast in Dutch factory

CULEMBORG (Netherlands), Feb 14 : A massive explosion wrecked a Dutch fireworks factory Thursday, causing dozens of injuries and widespread damage, police and eyewitnesses said. Two people were reported missing, and 30-40 suffered slight injuries from flying glass and rubble, according to Deputy Mayor Jan Koedijk, reports AP.

Fuel oil spill in England

SUMBRIDGE (England), Feb 14 : A 12-mile (19-kilometer) long oil slick in the River Severn estuary, which threatens thousands of birds in this major wildlife preserve, is breaking up and moving out to sea, the National Rivers Authority said Thursday. But patches of the fuel oil slick, spilled from a British Steel Corp. plant at Llanwern, Gwent, now could affect birds on the Somerset coast, south of the estuary, said Phil Hewitt of the NRA, reports AP.

Allied raids

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pummel Iraqi Republican Guard positions as well as Iraqi command and control facilities, and French Jaguar fighter-bombers hit Iraqi tank battalions in Kuwait.

Iraq said Thursday it would seek its revenge on the field of battle and warned that Arab leaders supporting the allies would be swept away by the "anger boiling in the chests" of their own people.

"We swear to the one and only God Almighty - we pledge... to take the severest revenge," official Iraqi radio said, a day after scores of civilians were killed in an allied air raid on a Baghdad bomb shelter.

The US-led allies thin their air sorties over Iraq and Kuwait are effectively smashing the communications network Saddam Hussein needs centrally to direct the Gulf war, US military sources say.

But the allies admit the Iraqi army is most effective when it is not taking orders from the top.

The US sources said on Wednesday the sorties, which have topped 65,000 since the Gulf war began on January 17, were destroying Saddam's communications with his troops in Kuwait.

He was being forced to stitch together a patchwork of phone and radio links that may be useless when the time comes to fight a ground war.

Military sources said that the same thing happened in the Iran-Iraq war but worked that time to Iraq's advantage.

Allied air power is systematically destroying Iraq's military power four weeks into the Gulf war, but significant gains can be made by further bombing before any ground attack is launched, US Defence Secretary Dick Cheney said on Wednesday.

British Defence Secretary Tom King said on Thursday there was no sign Saddam Hussein was planning to withdraw from Kuwait and that a land war was now very likely.

"I think the way Saddam Hussein is behaving at the moment, that looks very unlikely and I fear that a land war now looks very probable," King told British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) radio.

Iraq fired two missiles at the northeastern Saudi Town of Hafir-Al-Baten Thursday, hitting a building at a hospital and an inhabited patch of desert, eyewitnesses said.

A worker at a local hotel, Hisham Taha said by telephone that one of the missiles demolished a workshop at King Khalid Hospital, 3 km (two miles) from the town centre, but no one was injured.

He said the second missile exploded harmlessly outside the town, the main base in Saudi Arabia of Arab forces in the US-led coalition against Iraq.

Meanwhile, the UN Security Council Wednesday night decided to hold a private meet-

ing on Gulf situation on Thursday.

By a vote of nine to two with four abstentions, the Council adopted a British proposal that the meeting be held in private to facilitate exchange of views.

Of the five permanent members, China abstained while the other four - Britain, France, the Soviet Union and the United States - voted in favour.

Meanwhile, Vice-Chairman of the Iraqi Revolutionary Council Saadoun Hammadi Wednesday declared that his country is ready to negotiate a peaceful solution to the war without preconditions.

At a press conference held in Rabat, the special envoy of Saddam Hussein said a resolution to the war 'does not depend on us, but on the other side'. "If the other side decided on a dialogue for peace, after the halt of aggression, we are for peace. But if the choice is continued war, we are ready to take up the challenge", Hammadi affirmed.

He stressed the need to totally implement all of the UN resolutions concerning the Arab world, and accused the US of selectively applying resolutions that are only in its favour.

In another development, Soviet envoy Yevgeny Primakov, returning Wednesday from Baghdad to Moscow, said there was a "glimmer of hope" in the Gulf conflict following the decision by Iraq to send its Foreign Minister to Moscow.

Mr. Primakov, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's special envoy, was responding to a journalist at Moscow airport on his arrival from Baghdad where he held talks Tuesday with Saddam Hussein.

Trial of Ershad

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scription of arms. But the arms recovered from Sera Bhaban were for prohibited nature which are not included in the exemption list, and as such there is no illegality in prosecuting the former President for possessing illegal arms.

Earlier, in the morning, Kazi Shahadat Hossain, counsel for the petitioner, submitted that even if the former President was found liable, he would at best be liable for non-registration of arms and for violation of Rules thereof. He further submitted that punishment provided for violation of the Rules is much less than the punishment provided under the Arms Act.

Now there appears to be a bar to try the former President for possessing illegal arms. Kazi Shahadat Hossain assisted by Sheikh Razul Karim appeared for the petitioner. Aminul Haque, Attorney General, Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan, Additional Attorney General, A. P. Hasan Arif, Deputy Attorney General were present.

The judgement was declared in crowded court room by Justice Habibur Rahman Khan to which Justice Abdul Bari Barker agreed.