

'Lanka's ruling party regains lost majority'

COLOMBO, Sept 1: Sri Lanka's ruling party today said it had regained the lost majority in parliament to defeat an unprecedented motion impeaching President Ranasinghe Premadasa on a wide range of charges, reports AFP.

State-run Sunday Observer quoted United National Party (UNP) loyalists as saying that 116 out of the 125 of their MPs pledged their support to Premadasa who faces a revolt within the ruling party.

"As many as 116 of the total 125 Members of Parliament of the ruling UNP had given written assurances to the Prime Minister D.B. Wijetunga, that they had not signed an impeachment motion," the newspaper said.

However, Lalith Athulathmudali, former minister and one of the rebel UNP leaders told reporters Saturday the anti-Premadasa faction had the "solid backing" of 47 government MPs.

The motion entertained by Speaker Mohammad Haffila Mohammad has triggered a constitutional crisis with Premadasa suspending Parliament for a month to give him time to win over dissident government MPs.

Athulathmudali, announcing his resignation from the education portfolio Friday, declared that the government no longer had a majority in parliament after 47 UNP legislators supported moves to overthrow Premadasa.

The rebel faction is hell bent on dismantling the French style executive Presidency in preference to establishing a British-modelled parliamentary democracy.

Press reports quoted Premadasa as saying over the weekend that only the people could change the present system of government in Sri Lanka hinting that any structural changes would require a nation-wide referendum.

BNP, AL strength

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lial election in 1970 against late General Osmani has a very good reputation within the BNP. However his joining the BNP greatly depends on the gesture of the BNP towards him.

Ganotantri Party leader Suranjit Sengupta under pressure from supporters in his constituency to become a Minister also tried to gain the sympathy of the ruling party. But because of pressure from his party central committee and his adversaries within the BNP Suranjit Sengupta has reportedly lost his touch with the ruling party.

Prior to the February 27 parliamentary elections all the smaller components of the seven party alliance merged with the BNP. There is also a probability of K M Obaidur Rahman's joining the BNP.

On the other hand, the Awami League has also focused its eyes on like-minded political parties.

In a bid to unite all believers of "Bangali nationalism" and ideals of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the Awami League has already made a successive move in taking back the BKSAL under the leadership of Mohiuddin Ahmed and Abdur Razzak, who defected from the Awami League in 1983.

Now the Awami League is also trying to woo the Janata Mukti Party originally a fragment of the JSD led by Mirza Sultan Raja and Mahmudur Rahman Manna.

The leaders of the party have also started talks with the Awami League on the question of a merger.

Besides, a good number of JSD (Inu) leaders including Kazi Aref Ahmed and Nuruddin Jahed Manju are also trying to cede to the Awami League on the question of unity of the believers of Bangali nationalism.

Meanwhile, Shahjahan Khan of the JSD (Inu) is contesting by-election from Madaripur on the Awami League ticket.

Meanwhile, the former pro-Soviet left parties that include the CPB, NAP and Ganotantri Party are trying to forge a front on the basis of the theory of social democracy.

The CPB which will hold its fifth plenum from October 3 to October 8 has not yet given its consent on this question.

Insiders of all these parties have hinted that quite a good number of elements in these parties intend to merge with the Awami League.

A very small fragment of the Transport strike in Mymensingh called off

MYMENSINGH, Sept 1: A nonstop transport strike that paralysed road communications in 18 routes of the district for a week was called off Sunday unconditionally, reports UNB.

Leaders of Dhaka-based Kendriya Sarak Paribahan Sramik Federation, Bus-Truck Owners Association, and Paribahan Sramik Union met the Deputy Commissioner this afternoon and announced end to the strike.

The strike was started on August 26 for an indefinite period at the call of the district Bus-Truck Sramik Union demanding unconditional acquittal of a convicted bus driver.

Driver Dulal was sentenced to five days imprisonment for a road accident on August 19 in which a minor boy was killed. He was also fined 500 Taka.

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Published by the Editor on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed by him at Offset Printing Dialogue Publications Ltd., 19 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215. Editorial, News & Commercial offices: 28/1, Toynebe Circular Road, Dhaka-1000. Tel: Editorial & News: 863036. Commercial: 863035. PABX-246023-4. Fax No. 88-02-863035. GPO Box No. 3257 GRAM: DAILY STAR, DHAKA.

Nizami condemns attack on Shibir at Islamic varsity

By Staff Correspondent

Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General and leader of its Parliamentary Party Maulana Matur Rahman Nizami on Sunday condemned the armed attack by a terrorist group on the Chhatra Shibir activists of the Islamic University in Kushtia recently.

This group is forcing the closure of one academic institution after another by creating terror on the campuses, he said in a statement. The terrorist group attacked the Shibir activists in order to close the only Islamic University in the country, he said and appealed to all to come forward to resist the 'conspiracy' to close the university. He called for immediate investigation into the incident and demanded arrest of those found guilty.

Mustafiz off to Ghana

Foreign Minister ASM Mustafizur Rahman left Dhaka Sunday for Ghana to attend the 10th ministerial level meeting of the non-aligned countries beginning today in Accra, reports BSS.

The Foreign Minister will lead a four-member delegation to the conference.

The ministerial meeting's main agenda is fixing the venue and date of the 10th conference of the heads of government and state of the non-aligned countries, official sources said.

Politics of intrigue

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ment would do its best to show respect to the martyrs.

The meeting was also addressed by Mirza Golam Hafiz, Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, Abdus Salam Talukder, Majidul Haque, Khandaker Delwar Hossain, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Rafiqul Islam Miah, Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Jamiruddin Sircar, Kamrul Islam, Sarwar Rahman, Col (Retd) Akbar Hossain, Mir Sawkat Ali, Iskander Ali, Gayeshar Roy, Amanullah Aman and Kazi Asaduzzaman.

Senior party leaders, ministers and state ministers were also present at the meeting attended by tens of thousands of people from all walks of life.

Khaleda Zia said that the people had given the BNP the mandate to rule the country for the next five years adding that the party would complete its full term and fulfill the commitments it had made.

She said that within fifteen days of its being in power the BNP had fulfilled three commitments including exemption of agricultural loans up to Taka 5,000, waiving of tax on land up to 25 bighas and relaxing the age limit for government job up to 30 years from 27 years.

Khaleda Zia said that in future her government would start providing jobs to the unemployed youth. "All efforts will be made to provide our citizens with jobs," she said. She added that the government had already implemented the report of the Pay Commission.

Giving a historical background on the formation of the BNP she said the party came into being to establish the rights of the people, ensure freedom of the press and the rule of law, shattered during the rule of the previous regime.

The BNP was the party of the people of this country, which she said was established by Shahid President Ziaur Rahman.

Khaleda Zia said that the conspirators killed Ziaur Rahman when he started production in different sectors both in the agricultural and industrial fields. The conspirators later also disrupted the democratic process and established autocracy by ousting an elected government in 1982.

She said that after nine years of the democratic movement the BNP was again voted to power by the people of the country and now the government has again decided to begin the development programmes initiated by Shahid President Zia. She said that the BNP would again start canal-digging and mass education programmes to lead the nation to prosperity.

Khaleda Zia said those who forecast that the BNP would not get more than 10 seats were proved wrong.

The BNP bagged 165 seats and the conspirators became active to tarnish the image of her party, she added.

She said that the BNP believed in the politics of democracy but the conspirators wanted to destroy democracy.

She said that throughout the democratic movement the BNP had said that parliament would take a decision on the form of government and the BNP brought the bill to switch



The birth anniversary of Hindu God Sri Krishna was celebrated in the city on Sunday with a colourful religious procession including a devotee posing as Sri Krishna. — Star photo

JP not in a movement to change govt, says Mizan

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Party Acting President Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury Sunday said his party was not engaged in any movement to change the government.

"We don't demand resignation of the present government, nor we are politicking to topple it. We just demand stopping of repression on our leaders and workers to ensure a democratic atmosphere in the country," Chowdhury told two by-election rallies at Rangpur, according to a JP press release issued last night.

Mizan alleged that JP Chief and ex-President H M Ershad was imprisoned illegally and many party leaders and workers were being subjected to political repression and demanded immediate end to those acts.

He claimed Ershad was the only head of state in last 50 years who did the largest volume of development work in the country during his period. The JP leader also commented that Ershad is still the most popular leader and hoped the people would reelect Ershad and his party to power in the next general elections.

Held at Pagla Pari of Gangachhara upazila and Bairaighat of Mithapukur upazila, the rallies were also addressed by, among others, Ismail Hossain Bengal, Muntulri Haq Chowdhury MP and Shah Alam MP.

Dhaka-Colombo j economic body meets today

A three-member Sri Lankan economic delegation led by Mr. P B Weerasekera, Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Commerce arrived in Dhaka on Sunday to attend the second meeting of Bangladesh-Sri Lanka Joint Economic Committee beginning today, reports BSS.

AL-BAKSAL re-union function

A re-union function of the leaders of city Awami League and the now-defunct BAKSAL was held Sunday evening at the party central office at the Bangabandhu Avenue, reports UNB.

City AL leader Mozaffar Hossain Paltu presided over the function.

It was addressed, among others, by Abdur Razzak, MP, Amer Hossain Amu, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, M A Aziz, Akhterul Alam, Kamrul Islam Advocate, Faiz Ahmed, and Khandaker Habibur Rahman.

President

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also implicated Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia for "an underhand support" in it. A book, written by me, disqualifying women becoming Prime Minister might have angered her, Rahman told a press conference at the national press club Sunday.

Asked how he becomes President after September 16, he said people would overwhelmingly cast 'no vote' in the referendum thereby preferring presidential system and he being the only aspirant would declare himself President. The choice would be fall him at that moment because Acting President would be gone by that time, he said.

Then, he would set up the Presidential office at the Dhaka University mosque to be with the students because they support him. His first duty would be to pacify the tense and trouble-ridden university campuses.

He said he preferred presidential system because it is in the United States, the richest country in the world.

The Midnight File

Iraq to reopen major shrines

NICOSIA, Sept 1: The Shiite shrines of Ali and his sons Hussein and Abbas, damaged during riots after the Gulf war, will open Monday following the first phase of their restoration. President Saddam Hussein ordered 35 million Iraqi dinars (112 million dollars) as well as 100 kilos (220 pounds) of gold and 200 kilos (440 pounds) of silver to be used for reconstruction of the shrines in Najaf and Karbala provinces, the Iraqi News Agency said Sunday, reports AP.

Nepal team leaves for Delhi without Water Minister

KATHAMANDU, Sept 1: A Nepalese delegation left here Sunday for high-level talks in New Delhi without Water Resources Minister Shyam Prasad Adhikari. The Water Minister's absence apparently meant a delay in important talks on proposed hydroelectric, flood-control and irrigation projects in Nepal.

Opposition legislators, especially those from the Nepal Communist Party, have charged that the Nepali Congress government was preparing to negotiate water projects for the larger interest of India, reports AFP.

Reconfirmed Biman seats vanish

By Staff Correspondent

Where have our reconfirmed seats gone, was the question asked by MA Rahim who had to return from the Zia International Airport on Saturday midnight. He along with three other members of his family were to fly to London by Biman flight No 005.

A Bangladeshi businessman resident in London MA Rahim's family had been in Dhaka on a summer vacation. Rahim reported at the airport at 8-30 pm on Saturday along with his family but did not get boarding cards. He contacted senior officials of Biman. But all efforts failed.

An inquiry into the incident suggests that it was a case of failure of the customer service of Biman, Bangladesh Airlines. Sources say it's not due to lack of coordination but for adoption of unfair means by certain elements to give boarding cards to some other passengers for money. It was a case of mishandling by the traffic wing of Biman.

Mahanagar Sarbajantin Puja Committee and other socio-cultural organisations of the Hindu community arranged various programmes and also brought out colourful processions which paraded the main thorough fares of the city.

The Sarbajantin Puja Committee procession which began from Dhakeswari Mandir premises was led by Major General (Retd) C.R. Dutta, Dr. Laht Mohan Nath, Barrister Shudhir Das, K.B. Roy Chowdhury, Dr. Nim Chandra Bhowmik, P.K. Halder, Jayanta Sen Dipu, Anil Nath and Rathindra Nath Roy.

The processionists, attired in various colourful dresses befitting the occasion, displayed different activities of Lord Krishna, danced and also sang devotional songs.

The members of the Hindu community observed fasting the whole day, offered 'puja' to Lord Krishna in the evening and broke their fasting by distributing 'prashad'. Special prayers were also offered seeking peace, progress and prosperity of Bangladesh and also communal harmony.

Mahanagar Puja Committee arranged 'Gita' recitation of verses from the sacred 'Gita' seeking divine blessings and welfare of the people and also staged a dance drama on Sri Krishna Sunday as part of its three-day programme. It will hold a seminar and cultural function today.

Osmani

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Academy Sunday. Former Chief Justice Kemaluddin Hossain was the chief guest while Abul Hossain Khawja presided over the seminar. Journalist Gias Kamal Chowdhury, Shahjahan Seraj MP, Rashed Khan Menon MP, Brig (retd) Hannan Shah MP, Brig Feroj Salahuddin and Nurul Islam Khan spoke on the occasion.

Justice Kemaluddin said Osmani not only took over the command of the war of liberation but also fought for establishment of parliamentary democracy. Referring to the passage of Constitution 12th Amendment Bill, Justice Hossain said people's sovereignty can be ensured through parliamentary democracy only. He called upon the ruling and opposition parties to honour people's consensus in taking any major decision in the parliament.

Major in Moscow

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Brent Scowcroft said on Saturday that the Soviet legislative may consider the matter on Monday. Scowcroft said Bush would have something to say on the subject on Monday whether or not the parliament resolved the matter.

"I just wanted to touch that base and we did and it went pretty well," the President said of his conversation with the Lithuanian leader.

"I think he knows what our interest is — our interest is in the independence and freedom of Lithuania," Bush added. Scowcroft, speaking on CNN television's 'Newsmaker Saturday' programme, cited a possibility that no central authority would re-emerge to coordinate relations among the centre and the 15 republics, 11 of which have declared independence, including the Baltics.

"On the other hand, I think there are some obvious advantages to preserving a centre here," he said, adding that there would be "lots of complications" if the breakup were total.

US officials said Bush was waiting for the Soviet parliament to act on the independence declarations of the three republics. National security adviser

KUTUBDIA: A repaired portion of the polder embankment on the western side of Kutubdia.



KUTUBDIA: A repaired portion of the polder embankment on the western side of Kutubdia. — Star photo by MK Majumder