

Premadasa faces heckling in Parliament

COLOMBO, Sept 24: Beleaguered President Ranasinghe Premadasa abruptly went off state radio today while addressing parliament a mid unprecedented heckling by legislators campaigning to impeach him, reports AFP.

The live broadcast of Premadasa went off the air and was replaced by music as listeners heard noisy protests and insults hurled at Premadasa as he made his policy statement. The radio gave no reason for the interruption.

The government's television did not telecast the inauguration of parliament, suspended by Premadasa 2 days ago in a calculated move to delay impeachment proceedings against him, even though it had earlier planned to do so.

Premadasa was speaking about his achievements in the economic sphere when the radio went off the air.

The opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) had earlier said it was "incongruous and ludicrous" for Premadasa to reopen a parliament without first facing trial. The SLFP had vowed to question Premadasa at length.

A powerful section of the governing United National Party (UNP) and the opposition has linked Premadasa to an arms scandal involving supplies to the main Tamil guerrilla group accused of

killing thousands of security personnel.

Premadasa has admitted that the LTTE cooperated with Sri Lankan forces to attack a rival Tamil group. But he said he did not deserve impeachment and vowed to remain in office until his term ends in four years.

The Defence Ministry said in a statement Monday that they shared equipment and made use of Tiger guerrillas to attack the pro-Indian Tamil National Army in the island's northeast between 1989 and last year.

Gasgrid

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Resources Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Whip Mahbul Alam Tara, Chairman of the Petro-Bangla MA Lutful Majid, MA Malek and MA Basit. Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah, State Minister for Textiles Maj (Retd) Abdul Mannan, Farida Hasan, MP, Halima Khatun, MP, and Zainul Hajari were present.

Drilling of the Feni Gas Field by the Petro Bangla commenced in 1980 following the visit of Shaheed President Zia.

The country spends lion's share of its export earning for importing fuel, the Prime Minister said, stressing maximum utilisation of gas to reduce the expenditure.

She called for gas and oil exploration in the western region and said it would be possible to supply natural gas to country's north-western-southern region.

After the commissioning of the Jamuna Bridge, the Prime Minister said, the concerned organisation would be directed to supply liquefied petroleum gas to country's western region until the supply of gas there.

She said directives have also been given to increase the use of compressed natural gas instead of petrol and diesel in motor-vehicles.

Shaheed Zia had a great contribution in the discovery of Feni Gas Field, Begum Zia said.

The government has inherited a ravaged economy, the Prime Minister said, expressing her government's commitment to ensure the maximum utilisation of limited resources to revitalise the economy for people's welfare.

The Prime Minister thanked the workers and the persons who were involved with the gas field's work.

She noted with satisfaction that although the cost was estimated at Tk 30 crore for the start of the gas field, it could be done only at Tk 7.50 crore due to cooperation of the people.

"It's a shining example of patriotism of the people," the Prime Minister said.

Diarrhoea

From Page 1 Col. 4

Kishoreganj reports that diarrhoea has been spreading alarmingly in the district which claimed 65 lives in three weeks. District civil surgeon however confirmed 52 deaths. Over two thousand people were attacked by the disease.

Our Rangpur correspondent adds: Diarrhoea broke out in an epidemic form in the five districts of greater Rangpur. Scarcity of drinking water has worsened the situation. Stock of medicine with the district health authorities is not adequate to tackle the situation.

Meanwhile, flood situation again deteriorated in Pabna, Sirajganj and Noagaon due to heavy rains and downflow of waters from upper catchment areas. Low lying areas of Pabna town have been inundated.

Water Development sources said the Padma at Hardinge point was flowing 3 cm below the danger level Tuesday while the Jamuna at Nagarbari point 8 cm below the danger mark.

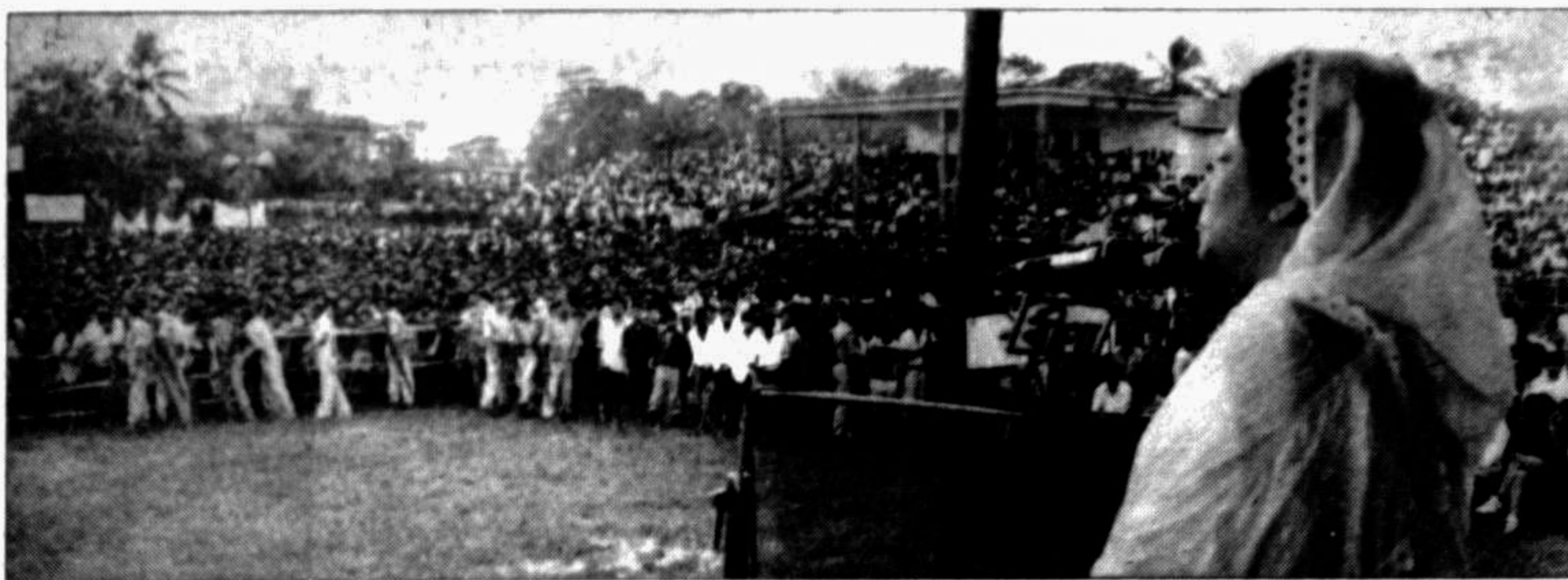
The sources feared that rivers might cross the flood level if incessant rainfall continued.

Meanwhile, a 12-year-old boy, Stalin, was drowned in flood waters Tuesday morning.

Over one lakh people in 8 unions of Tarash upazila of Sirajganj district were rendered homeless by onrush of flood water from the upstream and continued rainfall during the last 24 hours.

Water level in Chalan beel and Gumari river rose further while 1.50 inches of rainfall was recorded in the district.

Road communication between Sirajganj and Tarash remained suspended for 22 days as the connecting Deovogue bridge which had collapsed earlier, has not yet been restored.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a big public meeting at Feni Stadium on Tuesday.

—PID photo

Soviet army ordered not to interfere in internal conflicts

MOSCOW, Sept 24: The Soviet Defence Ministry has instructed regional military commanders not to intervene in ethnic conflicts in sovereign republics. Tass reported Tuesday.

The announcement by Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Vladimir Lobov follows Monday's order by one regional commander of the Soviet troops not to be used in Tadjikistan to enforce a state of emergency, Tass said.

Col. Gen. Ivan Fuzhenko, commander of the Turkestan Military District, ordered that no Soviet troops in Central Asia be deployed in Tadjikistan where thousands of people have massed outside the republic's parliament buildings for two straight days, Tass said.

The Tadjik demonstrators are demanding the dissolution of the parliament and the resignation of an old-style Communist installed as President on Monday.

Tass quoted Lobov as saying the Central Asian decree was "fully in line" with the new Defense Ministry instructions.

Soviet troops have long been used to quash ethnic disputes and independence movements in the republics, often against the wishes of local authorities.

Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin, appealed the West Tuesday for "maximum cooperation" to reconstruct his country's economy.

The White House gave no details immediately of how

Pankin's appeal was received. Bush has promised to supply food and medicine to help the Soviets through the coming winter but so far has ruled out direct US financial help.

The feuding republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed Monday to a cease-fire in ethnic fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh and to limited self-government for the disputed region, news agencies reported.

But the deal, reached under the mediation of Russian Federation President Boris N. Yeltsin and Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazerbayev, will require further negotiations, the reported.

The agreement calls for Armenia to relinquish claims it made to the disputed territory in 1989. In return, Azerbaijan which has administered the region for decades, agreed to allow the mostly Armenian residents of the enclave to choose their own government and run their own affairs. Interfax and the state news agency Tass reported.

A Kazakh legislator who has been on a week-long hunger strike to protest parliamentary procedures in his republic asked for political asylum in the Russian federation Tuesday, Tass reported.

In a letter to Russian Federation President Boris N. Yeltsin, lawmaker Vladimir Chernyshev said that the leadership of my republic violates laws and it is impossible to do anything the Soviet news

agency said.

Chernyshev said he began fasting after his protests about the legitimacy of decisions passed at a parliamentary session when there was no quorum went unheeded, Tass said. It did not say what those decisions were about.

There was no immediate response from Yeltsin.

Besides being a lawmaker, Chernyshev is a building foreman from the Kazakh city of Kustani, Tass said.

Leading Soviet reformers said on Monday conservatives were preparing a counter-attack after the failed coup last month and warned the country was facing a catastrophe if radical reforms were not started immediately. Former Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, Moscow Mayor Gavrill Popov, and leading economist Pavel Bunich, attending a meeting of the Democratic Reform Movement (DRM), called for unity of "democratic forces" in the tailspinning economic crisis.

"Two days ago (the DRM leadership) came to the conclusion that the country is in economic and political chaos. If extraordinary measures are not taken, we face national catastrophe," Shevardnadze told reporters.

He recalled that the Movement's leadership had said a coup was imminent just two days before top communist and state officials temporarily ousted President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Khaleda

From Page 1 Col. 7

Begum Zia said the democratic government of Bangladesh had already gained confidence of the international community. Foreign loans of over one thousand crore taka had recently been written off by a donor country. This had manifested their confidence in the government and their willingness to cooperate with it in every field of development, she said.

She said her government had the firm pledge to uproot corruption implanted by the nine year of autocracy through discharging their responsibilities with sincerity and honesty.

Turning to the local problems of Feni district Begum Zia called upon the people to volunteer in the work of protecting the main irrigation project, one of the main irrigation projects to help attain food autonomy.

She said a telephone exchange with one thousand lines would be set up in the district to improve the communication network of the country.

Begum Zia also addressed two big separate gatherings at Fulgazi High School ground and Chhagalnaya Upazila headquarters where she reiterated her firm determination to fulfil her pre-election commitment for the progress of the locality as well as the nation.

Begum Zia said the issue of nationalisation of Porshuram Government Degree College would be taken into consideration. She also presented an ambulance for the Chhagalnaya Hospital.

Biswas

From Page 1 Col. 5

Noman and State Minister for Textile Maj (retd) MA Mannan. Abdus Salam Talukdar told newsmen waiting at Sugandha that his party wanted to do more surveillance of the activities of other parties represented in the Parliament before making a decision today.

He told a questioner that the three names — Abdur Rahman Biswas, Mirza Golam Haifz and Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury — that were publicised through the press were under consideration of the party for nomination for the post of President. He ruled out the possibility of nominating anybody from outside the party.

It, however, transpired that Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas has already been informally told about the decision of the BNP leadership to nominate him. Similarly, Deputy Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali has been given an intimation that he would have to shoulder the responsibility of the Speaker of the Parliament.

The 13-member Standing Committee which is expected to formalise the party's nomination for the post of President, is the highest decision making organ of BNP.

Important Standing Committee members who were in Dhaka but were not present at last night's meeting at Sugandha were Law Minister Mirza Golam Haifz, Deputy Leader of the Parliament Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury, Chief Whip Khondaker Delwar Hossain, Dr RA Ghani and Prof MA Baten. Two other members, Foreign Minister ASM Mustafizur Rahman and Col (Retd) Oli Ahmed are now abroad, while Imran Ali Sarkar is not in Dhaka.

Last night BNP leaders consulted Jamaat's parliamentary group leader Moulana Matur Rahman Nizami. Salam Talukdar said they would also consult other parties before finalising their decision.

According to AL sources, most of the party leaders at last night's meeting gave opinion against participation in the election under open ballot system. They believe that participation under this system would be meaningless for AL. However, some of the leaders were in favour of fielding a candidate since they thought that the election should not go unchallenged.

A central leader of the party told the Daily Star that AL was observing BNP's move and a final decision would be taken this morning. The AL leader said that his party was not approached by BNP till last night for reaching a consensus for nominating a single candidate for the post of President.



Flood affected Noagaon town—Star photo by Ruthin Sanyal

Floods render 100,000 homeless in Naogaon

By Staff Correspondent

Over one lakh people in Naogaon district have been rendered homeless by flood.

When contacted last night, district administration sources said that the homeless people have taken shelter in a total of 231 schools and other places.

Flood waters have started receding from the Naogaon municipal area, but vast areas of the district were still under water Tuesday.

According to reports available from Naogaon, over nine lakh people in nine upazilas of the district were affected by the floods. The most affected upazilas are — Atrai, Ramnagar, Mohadevpur, Patnitala, Manda and Badalgachi.

Over 66,000 dwellings in the affected areas were damaged totally or partly by the floods.

Embankments in Ganga-zoar, Fatehpur, Khidirpur have been washed away by the onrush of water from the upstream for which new area of Chandipur and Boalia union under Sadar upazila have been inundated.

A number of villages including Chandipur, Khidirpur, Sultanpur, Chakrampur, Ptojpur, Ilshabari, Simulia, Satni, Boalia, Par-Naogaon, Fatehpur, Debipur were badly affected.

The road connecting Naogaon town with Mahadevpur went under knee-deep water.

Growing support in PLO for US' Middle East confce plan

ALGIERS, Sept 24: Senior Palestine Liberation Organisation officials meeting at the Palestinian parliament in exile expressed growing support today for US plans for a Middle East conference, but called for the enforcement of existing UN resolutions, reports AFP.

Ahmad Abderrahman, just-designated spokesman of the Palestine National Council (parliament), told journalists early today that the PLO viewed "more and more positively" US President George Bush's Middle East peace proposals.

Abderrahman echoed statements Monday by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat who pledged during the opening of the PNC that his organisation would contribute to the success of plans for a US-Soviet sponsored peace conference.

The PNC, which on Monday made appointments and heard a report on political developments since the last PNC met here in 1988, is set today to debate issues central to the peace process.

Arafat repeated his call for an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

The United States, which is on record as supporting autonomy for the Palestinians, regards east Jerusalem as occupied territory. Washington wants its status to be decided in negotiations.

Two Palestinian delegates from east Jerusalem will go to New York or Washington later

this week for further consultations with US Secretary of State James Baker III, Abderrahman said on Monday.

Abderrahman said at a brief press conference that "we are ready to participate in a peace conference because we are the nation under occupation."

"A peace conference would put an end to our people under occupation."

"Arafat said that we would do our best to remove the last obstacles on the way to the peace conference."

"We want a participation that would guarantee the Israeli withdrawal from Arab territories, the possibility for the Palestinian state on the land of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital."

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The Midnight File

France, Belgium send troops to Zaire

KINSHASA, Sept 24: France and Belgium flew hundreds of troops to Zaire today after 30 people were killed in a wild spree of rioting and looting by mobs led by mutinous soldiers. In Paris, an official source said one French soldier was shot dead and another was wounded when shooting broke out as French troops intervened to help round up some of the 3,500 French residents in the capital Kinshasa. Hundreds of foreign nationals scrambled to flee the sprawling central African country and more than 1,000 people took refuge in the luxury intercontinental hotel in Kinshasa, reports Reuter.

UN gives Iraq deadline to free inspectors

NEW YORK, United Nations, Sept 24: The UN Security Council today gave Iraq a deadline to release all members of the nuclear inspection team detained in Baghdad and issue a written response to the UN demand to fly helicopters over its territory. Council president Jean-Bernard Merimee of France warned Iraqi Ambassador Abdul Amir Al Anbari that his country would have to comply with both demands before the council convened for their next meeting at 5:00 pm (2100 GMT), reports AFP.

UN inspectors accused of spying for Washington

NICOSIA, Sept 24: Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz accused UN weapons inspectors held by security forces in central Baghdad today of carrying out espionage for the United States, reports Reuter.

Benazir's aide arrested

ISLAMABAD, Sept 24: Naheed Khan, political secretary to former Pakistan prime minister Benazir Bhutto, has been arrested by the police, an opposition official said today. She was detained in Karachi on Monday, said the secretary general of the Peoples Democratic Alliance, Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, during a press conference in Islamabad, reports AFP.

Yang Shangkun to visit Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Sept 24: Chinese President Yang Shangkun is to visit Pakistan from October 26 to 30, Foreign Secretary Shaharyar Mohammad Khan said today. It will be the first visit to Pakistan by a Chinese leader since Premier Li Peng came in November 1989, reports AFP.

Dispute between JU students, transport workers settled

The recent dispute between the students of Jahangirnagar University and transport workers was settled in an emergency meeting of Dhaka Zila Sarak Paribahan Committee held in Dhaka in Monday, reports BSS.

Presided over by Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka Nazmul Alam Siddique, the six-hour meeting was attended by Proctor and Assistant Proctor, hall provosts, of Jahangirnagar University, VP and GS of JUCSU, leaders of hall unions of the university, officials of BRTA, Police Superintendent of Dhaka leaders of Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samity, Bangladesh Truck Owners Association, Dhaka Sarak Paribahan Samity, Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samik Federation and Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samik Union. Mohammad Niamat Ullah, MP, of Savar area and Shahajahan Khan, MP, of Madaripur and other committee members were present the meeting.

The meeting, after detailed discussion, decided to check recurrence of any untoward incident between the students and the transport workers. Concerned parties also agreed in the meeting to honour the bilateral agreement signed earlier. It was also decided to form a committee comprising the representatives of the JU teachers, JUCSU and transport workers and owners.

Communication of Dhaka-Aricha Road remained suspended for 24-hours on Saturday following a feud between the students and the transport workers.

Swapan granted bail by CMM

By Staff Correspondent

Former minister and editor of the weekly Friday Shaflul Ghani Swapan was granted bail by the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate on Tuesday.

CPB for consensus on electing president

By Staff Correspondent

Parliamentary Party leader of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) Shamsuddin, MP on Tuesday urged the selection of a candidate for the country's presidency on the basis of a consensus.

In a statement he said that the parliamentary system of government was established in the country following a consensus by the major political alliances and parties.

The people of the country also supported the system by voting 'yes' in the referendum. The people now hope a respected person will be elected by the Members of Parliament as President on October 8, he said.

The CPB leader also said that there was no alternative to a national consensus on important issues to further the cause of democracy in the country.

JCD advised not to hold rally

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dressed by, among others, Shahe Alam, Ashim Kumar Ukil and Quamruzzaman Ansari. The speakers blamed JCD for campus violence and urged the BNP leadership to control the "armed hoodlums" sheltered by its student wing.

BCL leaders said JCD should not forget that Natun Bangla Chhatra Samaj which enjoyed backing of state power during Ershad regime had to leave the DU campus.

They said if JCD continued to behave like this it would have to face the same fate.

They also demanded arrest of the persons responsible for Monday's incidents.

JSD (Inu) backed Chhatra League (N-S) also held a rally at the Madhu's Canteen premises.

Meanwhile police force has been reinforced on the campus to maintain peace although in the past they were found remaining mute spectators during clashes between student groups.

Ershad's trial

From Page 1 Col. 7

some documents relating to the visit of the Investigating Officer to Gulshan sub-jail.

The Defence lawyer objecting to it made a prayer not to allow the recall of the prosecution witness at this stage.

He further said that the prosecution in spite of getting ample time failed to submit documents earlier which it brought yesterday.

Citing the Evidence Act and judgements by various courts the Attorney General Aminul Haque said that the Court has the authority to allow recall of any witness before the delivery of judgement for the ends of justice and added that there was no illegality in recalling PWs as stated by the Defence. The Attorney General also challenged the Defence to show any article of the Evidence Act that forbids recall of witnesses.

Judge Mohammad Ali Khan on hearing both sides upheld the prayer of the Attorney General allowing the recall of the last witness in the case.

At this stage the Defence lawyers made a prayer to adjourn the cross-examination of the IO until tomorrow.

The Court admitted the prayer and adjourned the case to resume it today (Wednesday) at 10 am.

Depositing in the Court Prosecution Witness Matur Rahman said that he called on Ershad at the Gulshan sub-jail on February 10, 1991 with the permission of the Home Ministry and in this connection the Special Branch also recorded a diary about the interrogation of Ershad.

With the cross-examination of the Prosecution Witness Matur Rahman the prosecution in this case is likely to be completed today.

After completion of cross-examination of the Prosecution Witness the accused will give a statement under Section 342 and later to prove that statement the Defence may name Defence Witnesses.

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