



Sonia Gandhi (2nd R), widow of assassinated former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, is followed by her children Rahul (R obscured) and Priyanka (3rd R) on the first anniversary of Rajiv Gandhi's death as they circle a memorial dedicated to her husband. — AFP photo

## Sonia's tribute to Rajiv amid heavy security

NEW DELHI, May 21: Indians paid tribute to slain former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi Thursday in low-key memorial services on the first anniversary of his assassination by a suicide-bomber, reports AFP.

At daybreak, Gandhi's Italian-born widow Sonia and their two children, son Rahul and daughter Priyanka, visited the site of his cremation on the banks of the Yamuna river here amid heavy security assured by hundreds of commandos.

The family, dressed in Indian mourning white, bowed in prayer and placed flowers on a red-brick memorial dedicated to the former Premier, killed in the midst of elections that brought his Congress (I) party back to power.

Thousands of Gandhi admirers, including Cabinet Ministers and movie stars, flocked to the memorial located between Shakti Sthal (place of power), where his as-

assinated mother and predecessor Indira was cremated, at the mausoleum of his grandfather Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Premier.

Many opposition leaders were in attendance.

A helicopter showered rose petals on the memorial as Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao joined the Gandhi family in silent mourning to the background strains of Indian devotional music.

Rao, who succeeded Gandhi as Congress (I) party chief when his widow refused to step into his shoes, and then became Prime Minister, later flew to the Southern Indian State of Tamil Nadu to visit the site of his assassination.

Rao was to attend observances of the anniversary at Sriperumpudur, the town where a woman with explosives wired to her body pretended to touch Gandhi's feet and set off the blast that killed the former Premier, herself and 16 others.

## Colombo won't ban Tigers

COLOMBO, May 21: Sri Lanka implied today that it would not follow India in banning dominant Tamil separatists because such an action could harm the work of a Parliamentary Committee set up to resolve the island's civil war, reports AFP.

New Delhi last week outlawed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerrilla organisation of the grounds that it was a threat to India's sovereignty and prompting separatist movements in that country.

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Dingiri Banda Wijetunga told Parliament that the government was awaiting the result of the parliamentary committee work which "has gone about its work with deep commitment and seriousness of purpose."

## Dhaka dist AL

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organising secretary of the pro-AL BCL, was killed on the campus in an inter-party conflict during the time.

Mantu told The Daily Star that most of the central leaders, named as guests, would be present at the conference.

He said that Syeda Johra Tajuddin would inaugurate the conference that would be attended by Abdul Mannan as chief guest, Dr Kamal Hossain and Salauddin Yousuf MP as special guest while party secretary Sajeda Chowdhury would present as the main speaker.

Tofael Ahmed, Advocate Sirajul Islam, Mohammad Hanif and he himself were named special speakers while Subid Ali and K M Saifuddin were to be the other speakers of the conference that would be presided over by acting president of the district unit Abdul Aziz Munshi.

Mantu said that besides those central leaders 30 of the 35 district committee executives would be present at the conference.

He however said that some central leaders might be absent because of their programmes outside Dhaka. None of the AL leaders was available for comment.

Meanwhile, the AL high command has asked all the leaders not to attend the conference at Engineers' Institution, a reliable source said.

"There is no question of attending a conference organised by an expelled leader," the source said.

The source said that president member Kamruzzaman and office secretary Fazul Huq would attend the conference at Savar.

Another source said that all conference posters put up by the Khan Majlish group have been torn off from the party central office at Bangabandhu Avenue and that Mantu's supporters have posted their posters in those places.

## Thai troops

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But leaders of the four opposition parties expressed doubt that the government was sincere in wanting to amend the constitution. They urged the people to come to parliament on Monday when debate was due to open to hear the government's proposals.

In a late announcement however, the Speaker of the House Ukrit Mongkolkeha said the debate had been postponed until May 29 at Suchinda's request as the government wished to explain to parliament beginning Monday its actions in suppressing the demonstrations.

The opposition leaders also promised to investigate claims of missing people and to ascertain exactly how many were killed.

Leaflets appeared today claiming that the death toll was as high as 12,000, with many of the bodies being taken by troops to a crocodile farm on the outskirts.

Air Chief Marshal Kaset Rojanawit, the supreme military commander, asserted that the military had avoided tough action except to protect their own lives.

But ordinary people were quick to voice their anger that the compromise appeared to have left Suchinda unpunished for the shootings. "He has become the most hated man in Thailand," said a market trader.

A diplomat commented: "The violence has been stopped but the root cause of the problem remains. The political chaos and lack of quality leadership is still there."

The problem still remains finding an acceptable Prime Minister. The only elected politician put forward after the elections, Narong Wangwan, was quickly discredited by alleged links to drug trafficking, leaving the way open to Suchinda.

Despite this, the stock exchange soared more than nine per cent and Bangkok's famed Patpong red light district reopened for business.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a public meeting in the Godagari College premises, Rajshahi yesterday. Story on Page 1 —PID photo

## Sharif orders crackdown on Sind 'saboteurs'

ISLAMABAD, May 21: The Pakistani government said today it had ordered a military crackdown to fight crime and sabotage in troubled Sind province, reports Reuters.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif blamed unspecified anti-state elements and foreign hands for the unrest in the southern province bordering India, and told reporters the situation needed an immediate remedy.

Earlier, Interior Minister Shujaat Hussain told parliament that the crackdown, following a new wave of kidnappings and violence, would be carried out by the 18,000 strong paramilitary Mehran force under army command.

But he said it was wrong to assume that the army had taken over the province.

Gunmen kidnapped a senior government official near the central Sind town of Hyderabad this morning in the latest of a series of kidnappings of prominent people.

Provincial Health Department Director General Sajjan Memon was kidnapped from his jeep by four gunmen while driving to the provincial capital Karachi, the official APP news agency said.

Earlier this month, 11 businessmen were kidnapped during a picnic outside Karachi. Ten were rescued and one died of exhaustion. A tycoon kidnapped in Karachi last Sunday is still untraced.

On Monday, masked gun-

men on motorcycles sprayed bullets in a street in Hyderabad killing six people and wounding five.

The Pakistan People's Party of Opposition Leader Benazir Bhutto says the authorities arrested about 3,000 of its members last week under the cover of an anti-crime drive.

But Hussain in a statement to the national assembly (lower house) said the operation was directed against robbers and saboteurs and will not be used for any political victimisation.

"However if any political worker or any party is found involved in some illegal activity, then he will not be spared, he said.

## Dhaka shuts mission in Belgrade

Bangladesh has decided to close down its mission in Belgrade and called for complete withdrawal of all Yugoslav troops from the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina, a newly-independent state in Europe, reports UNB.

A spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said this in Dhaka yesterday and expressed Dhaka's serious concern over the continued military action in Bosnia-Herzegovina causing senseless bloodshed and loss of lives and property.

## Govt may go for mass communication policy soon

SAVAR, May 21: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said here Thursday that the government was contemplating introduction of a mass communication policy suiting the country's developing democratic society, reports BSS.

Underlining the importance of the people's involvement in the mass-media programmes, Begum Khaleda Zia said in a democratic system mass media or public relations are not monologue but they are dialogue, a two-way traffic. Because of this, mass communication workers had to go to the people and know about their attitude and feel their problems which should be properly reflected through the information media, she said.

Begum Khaleda Zia was addressing the inaugural function of the new 100 kw transmitter of Radio Bangladesh installed at its Savar transmission centre.

The function was also addressed by Information Minister Nazmul Huda.

The Prime Minister unveiled the plaque on the occasion and went round the operation building of the newly-installed medium range transmitter.

The cost of the project is Taka 1543.93 lakh with Japanese grant of Taka 922.58 lakh.

## The Midnight File

### Israeli planes raid Hezbollah bases in Lebanon: 9 killed

BAALBEK (Lebanon), May 21: Israeli warplanes on Thursday blasted guerrilla bases of the Iranian-backed Hezbollah in two raids on Lebanon. Police said nine guerrillas were killed and 20 wounded on the third straight day of spiralling hostilities, reports AP.

### Australia praises PLO's moderate role in ME talks

CAIRO, May 21: Australia on Wednesday praised the PLO's "moderate and constructive" role in the Middle East peace process, in the first high level contact between the two since the Gulf crisis. Visiting Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans held 90 minutes of talks with Cairo-based Nabil Sha'ath, senior aide to PLO Chief Yasser Arafat reports Reuters.

## Currency trader robbed of Tk. 1.5 lakh

By Staff Correspondent

Muggers snatched Taka 1.5 lakh on gun point from a money changer, shot him injured and burst several hand-made bombs before leaving the spot in the capital Thursday, police said.

Officials at the Sabujbagh Police Station said that Yusuf Miah, a currency trader at the Wage Earners Branch of Sonali Bank at Dikhhusha area, was mugged by a group of five or six young men near the Mugda Bazar on the Biswa Road at about 9 am.

They said the muggers held pistols over the chest of the trader and asked him to give away the bag containing Taka 1.5 lakh. When Miah refused to obey they hit him with a chopper on his head and grappled with him to snatch the bag.

The businessman passed the bag on to his nephew Mahbub who was also on the rickshaw. However, the nephew gave away the bag when he was also threatened with guns.

The muggers set off several bombs and shot one round which hit the right thigh of Yusuf Miah.

The armed youths left the

spot in a private car parked nearby.

Profusely bleeding, Miah was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he was operated upon, our DMCH correspondent adds.

None was arrested so far till writing this report.

## SKOP

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of the agreement. The commission's deadline for announcing minimum wages for the workers expired on April 24 this year.

Besides, there was no tangible progress in amending the existing labour laws promised in the agreement, SKOP sources said.

The first round of talks between the government and the SKOP in December failed to provide any consensus on labour law amendments, they added.

SKOP Convention Preparatory Committee sources said that countrywide programmes like rallies and demonstrations would also be adopted at the convention in support of 48-hour strike.

A resolution for country-wide tour by the SKOP central leaders will also be adopted in the convention, sources said.

All the major political parties including the ruling BNP and opposition Awami League have their representation in the SKOP, the SKOP leaders pointed out adding that BNP's labour front Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal might disagree in adopting the strike programme.

The government will have to face a series of action programmes being planned by the trade union bodies in the government, semi-government and private sectors probably from early June.

The jute and textile mills workers have already announced a parliament-gherao programme on July 24 protesting, among others, government plans for denationalisation and retrenchment of public sector employees.

## Saifur

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conomic realities and performances in the current fiscal, the Finance Minister said the government has severely contained the revenue expenditures this year while revenue earnings exceeded the budgetary target. Yet we have to further contain the revenue expenses for generating more funds for the development budget, he said.

Spelling out the national priorities, Rahman said, we have to encourage foreign investment and create congenial market environment for an export-led development. Rule of law, transparency, accountability and peace are the preconditions for democracy and development, he said.

Stressing the need for expansion of rural credits to boost agricultural production, the Finance Minister said there was no dearth of funds but we could not yet be able to reach with credits to the rural people. He sought suggestions of the MPs and the professionals to help evolve an effective rural credit delivery system.

Participating in the discussion, CPB President Saifuddin Ahmed Manik said, we have to expand the tax net while reducing the tax rates. Stressing the need for structural reforms in the public sector corporations, he said these enterprises should also face competition to raise efficiency.

Pointing out the serious management problem in the country's private as well as public sector, Manik said labour was not at all a problem in this country and at times it was more efficient, disciplined and productive than the neighbouring countries.

JSD General Secretary Hasanul Hoq Inu underscored the need for proper planning and state interventions for development. He urged the government to raise the confidence of the investors, make productive investment and subsidy to the agricultural sectors.

## Education for all

From Page 1 Col 7

mulation group be set up specially for this purpose to work with the Planning Cell of the Ministry of Education in order to expedite the process of working out the details of the projects and draw up the formal proposals.

The JGUAG also proposed that an independent division in charge of basic education be created under the Ministry of Education to control and coordinate the works of the existing departments. It felt that the four divisional Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) offices needed restructuring to accommodate appropriate units to plan, implement and monitor basic education programme components.

It also advised for strengthening the district and upazila education offices with adequate decentralisation of functions.

The government has in the meantime drawn up a project to fulfil certain objectives in the field of education. The objectives are: increasing equitable access to primary and secondary schooling, improving the quality of education at the primary and secondary levels, strengthening the management capacity of the primary and secondary sub-sectors and preparing future policies and programmes to reform the structure and financing of higher secondary and post secondary levels.

The cost of the project titled 'General Education Project' was estimated at 310 million US dollars. The government will contribute 42 million US dollars in the project while the rest is expected by the government to come from eight co-financiers.

The International Development Agency (IDA) is likely to contribute the largest amount: 159 million dollars. The other co-financiers are Asian Development Bank (ADB) (57.5 million), the Netherlands (14 million), Sweden (14 million), UNICEF (10 million), UK (5.7

million), UNDP (5 million) and UNFPA (2.4 million).

Under the project, the government has decided to construct 10,000 conventional and 12,000 low-cost classrooms, throughout the country and 200 low-cost satellite schools in about 10 upazilas with at least two classrooms each.

The components of the project also include, funding of limited non-formal primary education programmes with the cooperation of selected NGOs, pre-service training of the teachers and others involved in management, development and introduction of revised curriculum and associated teaching materials, development of textbooks, strengthening of National Academy of Education Management (NAEM) and National Academy of Primary Education (NAPE), establishment of a sectoral education management system and strengthening of Bangladesh Bureau of Education Information and Statistics (BANBEIS), strengthening the management and educational audit capacity and supporting teachers and other categories of staff, special scholarships for female students at the secondary level, researchers and studies of different description.

## Quake kills 22 in Peshawar

PESHAWAR, May 21: An earthquake rocked a remote region of northern Pakistan on Wednesday, killing at least 22 people as it collapsed houses of dried mud, state-run television reported, says AP.

Pakistan Television said most of the dead were Afghan war refugees.

The quake, measuring 5.5 on the Richter scale, struck Northwest Frontier Province at about supper time. The television said most of the dead lived in Kohat district, about 40 miles (70 kilometres) southwest of Peshawar.

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Vendors brought out a procession in the city yesterday protesting eviction of pavement shops at Baitul Mukarram. — Star photo

## Rangamati incident

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moi Chakma was addressed by Bangladesh Chhatra Federation General Secretary Uday Paul, JSD Chhatra League leader Abdullah Hel Quaiyum, Bangladesh Chhatra Moitry leader Ragib Ahasan Munna, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Chhatra Front leader Mostafa Kamal and Secretary of Chhatra Union Nasir-ud-Duza and others.

The student leaders urged the government to publish a white paper on the Loangang incident.

Karunamoi in his address said that the justified demands of the hill people could not be brushed aside by speaking of conspiracy in the hill regions.

Meanwhile, in a statement yesterday, PCP Assistant Secretary Sangsanu Marma and Karunamoi Chakma reacting to the resignation of Rangamati District Council Chairman Gautam Dewan said that his resignation was a proper decision.

They said that Dewan and two other district council Chairman had helped the Ershad regime to linger the hill problems. They said that those Chairmen should resign too.

Meanwhile, various political and student organisations in separate statements Thursday condemned Wednesday's incident in Rangamati and sought a political solution to the Chittagong Hill Tracts issue. Saifuddin Ahmed Manik and

Nurul Islam Nahid, President and General Secretary respectively of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) termed the incidents in the hill areas 'dangerous' for the whole nation and urged the government to find a peaceful solution to the problems.

It also urged the government to compensate the people affected in Wednesday's incident.

## 'Normalcy returns to Rangamati'

RANGAMATI, May 21: The overall situation in the town returned to normal after Wednesday's incident in which two rival student groups fought pitched battles, leaving a dozen people injured and 69 houses and shops torched, reports UNB.

Authorities clamped section 144 to prevent further clashes between the activists of Pahari Chhatra Parishad (Hill Students' Council) and All-Party Students' Council, a conglomerate of non-tribal students' organisations.

Officials said today some unruly people set afire 40 houses of tribals and non-tribals, and 29 shops of non-tribals during the clash.

A high level emergency meeting held at the Deputy Commissioner's office today took stock of the situation

## Vendors protest Wednesday's incident

By Staff Correspondent

Hundreds of street vendors, united under several unions, staged a demonstration in the city Thursday morning in protest against Wednesday's attack on their comrades at the Baitul Mukarram area.

They chanted slogans against the merchants of the Baitul Mukarram Market for forcing the vendors out of the pavement of the market by hired hoodlums.

The demonstrators paraded different streets in the city and staged a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club.

Several people were injured Wednesday when musclemen of the merchants of the Baitul Mukarram Market forced vendors out of the pavement.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal leaders Kazi Aref Ahmed and Hasanul Huq Inu in a joint statement Thursday resented the assault on the street vendors at Baitul Mukarram Wednesday.

They also demanded separate spaces for the hawkers to sell commodities.

Helaluddin Helal and Mohammad Shahabuddin, President and General Secretary respectively of the Federation of Dhaka Metropolitan Shopowners' Association in a joint statement Thursday demanded rehabilitation of the hawkers.

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