

Opposition in JS blasts govt 'Hassan Imam threatened for criticising PM'

The opposition in parliament yesterday lambasted the government for "harassing its opponents" and failure to protect life and property of the people, reports UNB.

It is now clear that the threat to life of Hassan Imam is an attempt to retaliate for his criticism of the Prime Minister," said Awami League stalwart Tofael Ahmed.

He warned that BNP cannot stay in power for long because of its arrogance and intolerance.

In a sharp retort to Wing Commander (Retd) Hamidullah Khan of the Treasury Bench, Tofael said that nobody was above criticism in democratic dispensation.

Intolerance and arrogance brought down many heads in the past, he reminded the government.

Earlier, Hamidullah Khan pointed to repeated attempts by the opposition at raising out of the way discussion on Hassan Imam, "a man of bad taste."

"He (Imam) had made personal attacks on people, including the Prime Minister, in abusive language proving himself a man of bad taste.... He does not deserve mention in this august House," said Hamidullah.

Soon after the House resumed its sitting 40 minutes behind schedule at 2-40 pm, Abdur Razzak of Awami League took the floor and reopened the issue yesterday. Referring to newspaper reports, he said armed miscreants had visited the residence of Hassan Imam, a member of Ghatka-Dalal Nirmul Committee, and threatened to take his life.

Identifying the armed men as followers of Farooq-Rashid (of Freedom Party), Razzak said he (Rashid) was the killer

CPB: No solution yet

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major reforms in line with changing world scenario and the reality inside the country, while the hardliners proposed sticking to Marxism-Leninism.

A senior leader of liberal group who was present at Thursday's meeting told The Daily Star that 10 of the 12 members present opined for reforms of the party which would be discussed in the 75-member Central Committee meeting beginning at 10 am Friday.

Muzahidul Islam Selim and Morshed Ali are opposing the reform proposal, the source said.

Rabiul Huq of Jessore, Ahsanullah Chowdhury of Chittagong and Shadullah of Demra were absent at the meeting on Thursday.

When asked whether the party would split or change the name, the two leaders belonging to two groups said that it was too early to comment on the matter.

"It may be decided at the end of the three-day Central Committee meeting," one leader said on condition of anonymity.

Party insiders said that the reformists who outnumbered the hardliners were campaigning for accepting a majority

Democratic Forum

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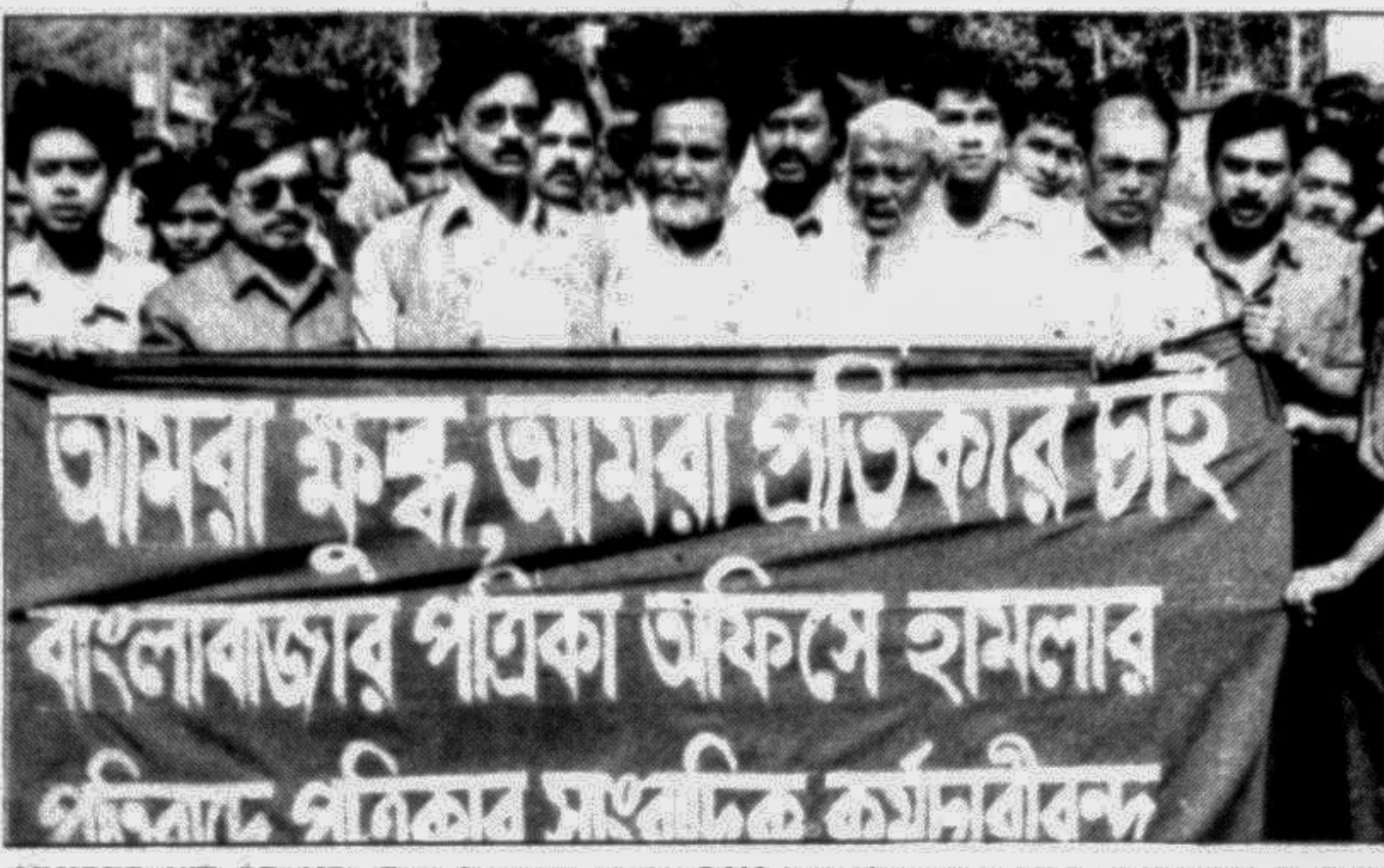
ing committee of the organisation would then decide the date of the convention. The preparatory committee is expected to propose in its report, if the Democratic Forum could be converted into a political party. The convention is likely to discuss at length the report's proposals and incorporate those.

The central body of the Forum met yesterday evening at its Segun Bagicha office to discuss today's meeting, chaired by Dr Kamal Hossain, last night's meeting was informed that one or two leaders of the Forum's district branches and central leaders of a number of political parties had been invited to attend today's programme.

Meeting sources said, leaders of Communist Party of Bangladesh, Ganatantri Party, National Awami Party (NAP) and JSD factions led by Hasanul Huq Inu and Shahjahan Siraj agreed to participate in the meeting.

Among others, attending yesterday's meeting, were Barrister Amrul Islam, Fazlul Halim Chowdhury, Ex-VC of Dhaka University, Fakhruddin Ahmed, former Foreign Secretary, Zillur Rahman Siddiqi, Ex-VC of Jahangirnagar University, Sagir Anwar and Ziaul Haque.

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UNITED WE STAND: Two factions of the DUJ brought out a joint procession in city yesterday protesting attack on Banglabazar Patrika. — Star photo

Newsmen observe 3-hour token strike today

By Staff Correspondent

Journalists and press workers of all the newspapers in the capital will observe a three-hour token strike today protesting attack on the office of the Banglabazar Patrika early Tuesday.

They will also hold a rally at 11:00 am today in front of the Jatiya Press Club.

The call for the pen down from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm came at a protest meeting yesterday at the Green Road office of the Banglabazar Patrika.

Presided over by the unit chief of the newspaper Mostafa Firoz, the meeting was addressed, among others, by the acting President of BFUJ Alhaj Zahirul Huq and General Secretary Amanullah Kabir, DUJ leaders M Shahjahan Mian, Alaf Mahmud, Jahirul Huq and Ruhul Amin Gazi, National Press Club President Hasan Sharif and General Secretary Shawkat Mahmud, former BFUJ leaders Habibur Rahman Milon and Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, former DUJ General Secretary Abul Kalam Azad and Banglabazar Patrika Editor Matiar Rahman Chowdhury.

Later, a silent procession of the journalists and press employees paraded the city streets.

BJP rally foiled

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publicity surrounding it made the demonstration a success even before it began.

"Whatever violence there has been so far has been from the police and not from us," he told Reuters by telephone from a central Delhi police station after his arrest.

"I'm very happy at the tremendous response we have got. Thousands of common people have defied the ban to be with us."

Advani earlier told reporters he wanted to be arrested to demonstrate what he called oppression by the embattled government of Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao.

"This has been a tradition in India for decades," Advani said, recalling peaceful protests started by Mahatma Mohandas Gandhi which led to independence from Britain in 1947.

The BJP believes its support has blossomed in the wake of the destruction of the 16th century mosque in the northern town of Ayodhya by mobs who claimed it stood on the birthplace of the Hindu god Rama.

The BJP, eager to keep up the momentum of protest, announced it would hold "anti-repression day" rallies throughout the country on Friday.

Rape not forgivable, says AG

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Pointing out that rape during war occurred "when command fails", the Court said "our fault is that we couldn't protect our women and they (the Pakistani soldiers) have raped our women behind our backs as most of our men were busy fighting a war."

On the fifth day's hearing yesterday Barrister A R Yusuf, acting on behalf of the petitioner, continued reading the split decision judgement given last year during the initial hearing of the petition by a Divisional Bench of the High Court Division comprising Justice Md Ismailuddin Sarkar and Justice Badrul Islam Chowdhury.

He quoted Justice Sarkar as saying "the question is whether the petitioner continues to remain so resident in Bangladesh" as he meets the other two requirements.

Barrister Yusuf noted, "Justice Sarkar gave a very strict construction."

This was in reference to Article 2 of the Bangladesh Citizenship Temporary Order (Po-149 of 1972) which sets three conditions, born in the territory now comprising Bangladesh, being a permanent resident on March 25, 1971 and continues to remain so resident, to be deemed to be a citizen.

Saying that the "law does not compel the impossible", the Court wanted to know how long a person is required to remain so resident. "It depends on the facts of each case," the Court added.

However, Barrister Yusuf contended that the "law has made it very clear that the commencement date (March 26, 1971) is the material date".

The requirement to remain permanent resident, he added, is for "one day" — resident upto the commencement date of March 26, 1971. "My continuance will culminate on the commencement date."

The Court noted that this is one of the ways of looking at the matter.

To which, Barrister Yusuf said "this is the only way of looking at it." He noted that the petitioner continued to remain a permanent resident upto November 22, 1971, when he went to Pakistan "only for 10 days".

Referring to the case (27DLR) of Bishal Das Tiwari versus the State in which the petitioner, who was born in Bangladesh, later went to India and returned after a number of years, was charged under the Foreigners Act, Barrister Yusuf

243 more Rohingyas go home

COX'S BAZAR, Feb 25: Two hundred forty-three Rohingya refugees of 81 families today voluntarily went back to their homes in Myanmar through three transit camps at Teknaf here, reports BSS.

This was the 29th batch of Rohingyas repatriated to Myanmar.

According to official sources, the total number of repatriated Rohingyas refugees stands at 21,645.

About 13,000 refugees are awaiting repatriation in three transit camps, the sources said.

At present there are 2,29,475 refugees in 20 camps including those in three transit camps, the sources added.

College principal arrested for defalcating Taka 2.5 lakh

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested Mustafizur Rahman, principal of a newly established college in the city on charge of defrauding both teachers and students Tuesday night.

Mustafizur Rahman established Dhaka Laboratory College at Road No. 27, Dhanmondi in the current academic session and admitted over 170 students as well as appointed some 17 teachers reportedly taking bribe, both college managing committee and police sources said.

They said that the college was running without government recognition and the students were not registered with the Higher Secondary Education Board, Dhaka, to appear in the HSC examinations in 1994. Moreover the principal defalcated some Taka 2.5 lakh of the college fund, they added.

Following a decision at a meeting of the recently formed managing committee of the college, the principal was handed over to Dhanmondi police who produced him before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate in Dhaka Wednesday, said police.

Talking to The Daily Star over telephone, Chairman of the committee, Dr. Nur-e-Alam Patwary said that the principal was a graduate and we did it as his deceit left over 170 students and 17 teachers in despair and uncertainty.

Lalmonirhat lawyers begin court boycott

LALMONIRHAT, Feb 25: Lawyers started today (Thursday) a week-long boycott of all the criminal courts in the district demanding transfer of a thana magistrate for his alleged misbehaviour with an advocate on January 25, reports UNB.

According to the strikers Hatibandha Thana Magistrate M Abdul Hamman Sarkar exchanged hot words with former General Secretary of the district Bar Association Advocate Fazul Haque Khandker on the bail issue of a case.

The Midnight File

Kuwaiti warplane crashes

KUWAIT, Feb 25: A Kuwaiti warplane crashed and burst into flames at Kuwait International Airport today but the pilot ejected to safety, the official Kuwait news agency said. The brief report did not say whether there were injuries or further damage, reports Reuter.

Zaire troops hold legislators prisoner for second day

KINSHASA, Feb 25: Troops were holding Zairean legislators prisoner for the second day today, demanding they approve use of controversial banknotes which have caused riots and crippled trade. Witnesses said armed soldiers kept up an overnight siege at Kinshasa's People's Palace Conference Centre, where they blocked off a meeting of the opposition-dominated High Council of the Republic (HCR) on Wednesday. Some 400 members of the transitional parliament, set up last year by a pro-democracy conference, were trapped inside. The troops were demanding that HCR Vice-Chairman Joseph Ileo read a statement on state radio sanctioning use of new five-million-zaire banknotes, worth about 2 dollars, reports Reuter.

Democracy under threat: Hasina

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday observed that the hard-won democracy was under threat while inefficiency of BNP in governing the country plunged the nation into frustration, reports UNB.

Hasina made the remarks during a meeting with newly elected chairman Sheikh Shahidullah Bacchu of Pabna, Solaiman Ali Sarkar of Thakurgaon and Mostafa Kamal of Laksham pourashavas who called on her at 29 Mintoo Road in the morning.

Welcoming the chairmen, Hasina asked them to work for the people with sincerity and honesty in their respective areas to fulfil the aspiration of the people.

Earlier, the newly elected chairmen presented Hasina with bouquets.

President's Rule extended in Kashmir

NEW DELHI, Feb 25: The Lok Sabha today approved the extension of President's Rule in Jammu and Kashmir by another six months with the Home Minister declaring that the centre was open to the suggestion of granting greater autonomy to the state, if it provided a permanent solution, reports PTI.

Mixed reaction

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of VAT on capital machinery are piecemeal in nature which would help the investors little. He said instead of announcing such piecemeal measures the government should offer a package of facilities. "Piecemeal measures would only lead to loss of revenue to the government," Yunus said.

He further said the bank rate reduction may hit the fixed earning group hard leading them to go for "wrong utilization of their money". He said the government should introduce investment schemes and float bonds and securities for attracting their savings as the country's capital market is still weak.

Yunus also said the low rate facility must not be hindered by any bureaucratic tangles.

Meanwhile, BJS said the step to lower bank rates would help remove the stagnation of the economy and would also help the commercial banks to play a bold role in disbursing loans.

The BJS also hoped that bank rate reduction would bring down the interest rate on loans for running capital to nine per cent from the existing 14 per cent. The association felt that this would make the jute industries competitive in the world market.

Fund under MPs

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Opposition felt that it had won and pressed for a division, but lost.

The Treasury bench MPs are constitutionally bound to vote in favour of the party decision on any issue.

Another resolution seeking electrification of all the villages of Haimechar and Chandpur thana under Chandpur district by the 1993-94 fiscal year was withdrawn following the concerned minister's assurance that the demand would be met gradually.

Prof Mohammad Abdullah MP of the BNP moved the resolution and a large number of MPs from the Opposition bench spoke in its favour.

Energy, Petroleum and Mineral Resources Minister Khandaker Mosharruf Hossain while speaking on the resolution said that the government was willing to bring all the villages of the country under electrification as soon as possible.

Limitation in the field of technical assistance was the main obstacle to implementing the government desire in this regard, the minister said.

TSP Complex

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formed that the Trisuper Phosphate (TSP) fertilizer manufacturing factory had also begun to produce Single Super Phosphate (SSP) and gypsum fertilizer since the last two years to cover losses.

The TSP Complex incurred a loss of Taka 6.85 crore in 1990-91 and Taka 16.17 crore in 1991-92 because its products were exposed to an open competition with the subsidised privately imported fertilizers, Islam also informed.

But with the adoption of manifold steps in production the factory had made a profit of Taka 4.85 crore in the six months July to Dec of 92-93, Islam said.

The installed capacity of this factory is 1,52,000 MT.

strike

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district towns on April 12 to drum up support, and abstain from work for a full day on April 19 and arrange a grand rally in the capital on the same day.

BMA President Dr M A Majed spoke at the press conference. BCS coordinating committee Chairman M Abu Hena and Secretary General Engineer M Ruhul Matin, BMA Secretary General Dr Gazi Abdul Fuq, IEB President Dr Jamilur Reza Chowdhury and honorary General Secretary of IEB M A K Azad were present among others at the press conference.

Dr Majed said that the country's professionals had joined the anti-autocratic movement in the hope of having a modern and democratic administration led by the public representatives.

But the objective of the movement had seemingly failed since the power still remained at the hands of some bureaucrats, he said.

Dr Majed said that under the present administrative system there was no scope for accountability to the people because the public representatives had no share in it.

The country's development was impossible under the existing neo-colonial administration system, he added citing an example that the February 27, 1991 parliamentary polls became a success because the "anti-people bureaucracy could not put its fangs on it."

Professional group leaders said that they had submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister with their demands on February 13 and hoped that the government would take specific steps in favour of the demands by March 26.