

BNP's council session

Happy reunion of leaders, workers

By Staff Correspondent

Inclement weather failed to disrupt the happy reunion of the leaders and workers of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) on the occasion of their national council yesterday after long four years.

Braving incessant downpour, thousands of party workers converged at the Manik Miah Avenue in front of the Jatiya Sangsad in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, since morning to attend the opening of the fourth council.

The area acquired a festive look on the occasion which coincided with the 15th founding anniversary of the party founded by late President Ziaur Rahman.

A huge canopy was erected covering almost a quarter of the broad Manik Miah Avenue to accommodate some 50,000 delegates, more than 2,000 councillors, members of Parliament, foreign invitees, representatives of the foreign missions and thousands of party workers.

But the huge canopy failed to cover the milling crowd, a large number of whom were standing outside the tent under pouring rain which continued incessantly until 9:30 am and



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia offering Fatah at the mazar of BNP founder Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman in the city yesterday, the 15th founding anniversary of the party. Also seen in the picture are Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder, Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury and ASM Mostafizur Rahman on her left and Mirza Golam Hafiz and M Majid ul-Haq on her right.

— Star photo

intermittently until 11:30 am.

The organisers had to delay the grand opening by an hour because of bad weather although thousands of party workers and guests had reached the venue by 9 am.

Slogan-chanting supporters carried banners, festoons, placards, national and party flags. Several groups wore T-shirts and red filets while some others carried portraits of late Zia and party chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia.

Several hundred party volunteers garbed in half-sleeve red and blue vests, ushered the guests to their respective seats.

Some of the enthusiastic party workers made their way to the security area besides the dais but many others had to witness the function standing under the open sky.

Talking to The Daily Star after the opening, a number of councillors said the council will boost their morale and strengthen the organisation at the grassroots level.

"It is an organisational boost as well as a happy reunion between the leaders and workers of the party," Shahiba Ahmed Shaheen, a councillor from Jhalakathi, said.

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Begum Zia also criticised some political parties for their past and present activities.

"There are those whose dream of gaining power have been shattered due to the electoral triumph of the BNP. They, along with their political associates, are now spreading canards against the party," she said in an oblique reference to the Awami League.

When all are supposed to work unitedly for giving an institutional shape to democracy, she added, these people are constantly creating obstacles. She alleged that these political forces themselves provide shelter to terrorists while speaking eloquently against terrorism.

The founder secretary general of BNP, Dr Chowdhury called upon them to take part in the government programme for alleviating poverty.

"We must have revolutionary success in our mass education, preventive health programme and ensure clothes for everybody," said the reputed physician.

They speak of the anti-autocratic movement, yet they maintain ties with the fallen forces of autocracy. "They accuse the government of slow national growth rate," Begum Zia noted, "and yet provide patronage to activities directed against pro-

duction."

Forgetting their own record of imposing one-party rule and hated autocracy, they conspire to divide the nation in the name of implementing the spirit of the Liberation War," she pointed out.

The BNP chairperson, to deafening cheers, declared: "We want to forcefully assert that the BNP, founded and personally organised by the proclaimer of independence Shaheed Zia, is a truly nationalist, democratic political organisation and is the genuine torch-bearer of the real spirit of our Liberation War."

She said stringent measures had already been taken to improve the law and order situation which had deteriorated during years of autocratic rule.

Saying that the country was a 'bottomless basket' under the Awami League, she added: "Our government has been able to make conditions congenial to make its currency fully convertible in 2 years and 6 months. This attests to the economic and development policies of our government and its success in the area of monetary and fiscal management."

She also pointed to the increased internal resource mobilisation, surplus revenue budget and increased private investment, which jumped from Taka 37.35 billion in 1990-91 to Taka 81.80 billion in 1992-93.

"We are happy at the progress made so far, but we are not fully satisfied. We have to work harder to achieve further progress," Begum Zia said.

She also noted the progress made in the communications, energy, telecommunications, education and other sectors during the past two years.

Outlining the future objectives, she said: "We will be satisfied when our poverty alleviation programmes will succeed not only to ensure *dal-bhat* for everybody but also to guarantee a healthy and better life for all."

Begum Zia identified the pri-

ority areas as strengthening democracy, providing basic education and primary health care, keeping the population under control, building total transparency and accountability in all government activities, grabbing power by underhand and undemocratic means, politics of coup and killing, demolishing people's property, obstructing production, tricking and confusing our people."

Dr Chowdhury expressed the hope that councillors must formulate future programmes for the people and to update the party constitution compatible to the practical factors of the country as well as the world.

After the conclusion of the inaugural session a colourful procession was brought out by the leaders, delegates and workers of the party and its front organisations which paraded city streets before dispersing near Mouchak.

Asghar Khan

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never forget," he said while addressing the inaugural session of the national council of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

It was also addressed by invitees from China, Germany, India, Iran, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Japan and a representative from the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Earlier, BNP's secretary general and Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder introduced the dignitaries of 11 foreign countries before the audience.

They are: Li Chengren, member of the Communist Party of China, Makoto Taneda MP, of the ruling Social Democratic Party of Japan, Jacques Denis of the French Communist Party and also a member of the European Parliament, Dr Bernadette Brown of Germany's Free Democratic Party, Ali Reza Nowai of Iran, Zia Ispahani of PPP (Benazir), Air Vice Marshal (Retd) Asghar Khan of Tahrir-e-Islami Party and Sartaz Aziz of Pakistan Muslim League (Newaz) from Pakistan, Mrs Mohsina Kidwai of Congress and Shankar Dayal Singh of Janata Dal (VP Singh) from India, Sirsena Cooray of the United National Party and the Minister for Housing and Construction and Kingsley T. Wickramaratne of Shri Lanka Freedom Party from Sri Lanka, Baudouin Riesel, joint secretary of the ruling Nepalese Congress and Madav Kumar of the Communist Party of Nepal and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament from Nepal, Ismail Hasan Metacum, Chairman of the Opposition Development Party of Indonesia and the PLO representative Zamal Khorani.

Addressing the session, Indian politician Shankar Dayal Singh, a Janata Dal member of the Rajya Sabha, stole the show when he spoke in his Hindi-accented Bangla and said: "Aparn Sonar Bangla amar antore gaththa achey (your golden Bengal is etched in my heart)."

He was greeted with a loud round of applause from the crowd.

The colourful function, under a several thousand square metre canopy, was also addressed by Deputy Leader of the House and party vice chairman Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, Chowdhury Tanbir Ahmed Siddiqui and a number of the foreign dignitaries invited to the BNP council.

"We must prove that BNP is the foremost champion of independence and sovereignty of Bangladesh and the true

It was for the first time that Khaleda Zia, chief of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), officially showed respect to Mujib from a party platform. Khaleda Zia, while delivering her inaugural speech to the councillors and delegates, leaders of different political parties and foreign guests, said: "I also take this opportunity to recall with deep respect the great contributions of our departed national leaders — Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, Shere-e-Bangla A K Fazlul Huq, Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman."

The name of Ziaur Rahman, the late President and founder chairman of the BNP, was mentioned in the Prime Minister's speech after those of the four national leaders.

The BNP activists appreciated this unusual gesture of the Prime Minister.

Osmany's birth anniversary observed

Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Alhaj Abdus Samad Azad yesterday called for proper and full practice of democracy in the country to take the nation towards its desired destination, reports BSS.

Paying homage to Bangabir General MAG Osmany on his 75th birth anniversary at a memorial meeting here Azad said, establishment of unfettered democracy would be the best way to show respect to the Supreme Commander of the Liberation War.

Held at the National Book Centre auditorium, under the auspices of the Jatiya Janata Party (JJP), the function was also addressed by eminent lawyer Barrister Syed Iftaque Ahmed, Rasheed Khan Menon, MP and Advocate Gazul Haq.

Sheikh Asad, president of the JJP was in the chair.

The Midnight File

Talks on Palestinian self-rule resume

WASHINGTON, Sept 1: Israeli and Arab negotiators resumed peace talks today with a Palestinian self-rule plan ready for signing and Israel-PLO recognition apparently close at hand. The talks in Washington continued for a second day just hours after the conclusion of secret meetings in Oslo between representatives of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation, reports Reuter.

Iraq urges UN to lift sanctions

GENEVA, Sept 1: Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz today called on the UN Security Council to lift its sweeping economic sanctions against Iraq. Aziz, who held 75-minute talks with UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, told reporters they had discussed UN Security Council resolutions which would allow a partial lifting of an oil embargo against Iraq, but he disclosed no details, reports Reuter.

Libya won't bow to West

TIRPOLI, Sept 1: Libyan leader Moamer Gaddafi today said discussions with the West to resolve a dispute over the Lockerbie bombing had been suspended and that Libya would not bow to western threats. Libya, which is refusing to hand over suspects in the 1988 bombing of a Pan American airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, "will not be threatened into changing its position on the Lockerbie affair," Colonel Gaddafi said.

Miladunnabi

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were decorated with miniature national flags and flags inscribed with "Eid-E-Miladunnabi" slogans. Arches with the same slogans were erected at different streets in the metropolis. Traffic islands were decorated with colourful fountains.

Hundreds of Muslim devotees joined a massive bus-and-truck procession on the occasion defying inclement weather. Organised by Anjuman-e-Rahman-e-Maenai Majlis, it began from Mirpur and terminated in front of the Supreme Court after parading different streets.

Other religious organisations also brought out similar processions in the capital to observe the day.

2 MPs

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Akbar Hossain personally handed over the letter of invitation to the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina.

Sheikh Hasina had reportedly informed Col Akbar that she had been suffering from fever and cold and if she felt better she would attend the opening ceremony.

Hasina, however, did not turn up nor did any of her party colleagues at the function.

UNB adds: When contacted, Awami League Assistant Publicity Secretary Abdul Mannan said Hasina refrained from attending the council following a last-minute change in the decision of BNP policy-makers.

BNP leader Col (Rtd) Akbar Hossain went to 29 Minto Road a few days ago as an emissary from the ruling party to formally invite Hasina with a request to deliver her welcome address at the inaugural session.

Finance Minister Saifur Rahman succeeded in persuading the bank to lift its suspension on disbursement from the 16 towns power distribution project. This suspension was withdrawn in February 1993 soon after Finance Minister Saifur Rahman visited the WB headquarters and held discussions with the Bank President Lewis T Preston.

The current ban on new lending to the power sector was imposed concurrently by the WB and the Asian Development Bank in October 1990. Subsequently, in September 1991, the WB went on to suspend disbursement out of the 16 towns power distribution project. This suspension was withdrawn in February 1993 soon after Finance Minister Saifur Rahman visited the WB headquarters and held discussions with the Bank President Lewis T Preston.

Finance Minister Saifur Rahman succeeded in persuading the bank to lift its suspension on disbursement from the 16 towns power distribution project because until then power sector systems loss was showing a downward trend. The WB, however, held firm to its position that such 'marginal' improvement was not sufficient ground for it to embark on new lending. This position has not changed yet.

The government has already been advised by the WB that it will come forward to support new capital investment in the power sector only if the Energy Ministry succeeds in bringing about significantly higher performance level for the PDB by commercialising it and making it face competition from the private sector.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
National Board of Revenue
Dhaka
Notice

The date for advance income tax payment for the 1st quarter of the current financial year is September 15, 1993.

The advance income tax payable by the concerned taxpayer is to be paid through IT Form No. IT 31(B) (amended) challan.

The taxpayers should pay the advance tax filling in the said challan form as usual by replacing the figure "74(1)" with the figure "64" in as many places as it occurs in the form.

It may be mentioned that the financial limit of total income for payment of advance income tax for all classes of assessees is now Taka 1,00,000/-.

All assessees concerned are requested to pay their advance income tax for the 1st quarter of the current financial year relevant to the assessment year 1994-95 under this system by September 15, 1993. Simple interest @ 12% per annum will be leviable if the advance income tax is not paid or paid at a lesser amount than due.

National Board of Revenue



A part of the BNP procession in the city yesterday.

— Star photo



Singapore Airlines, Dhaka recently concluded its TV Commercial Quiz Programme for July 1993. The winner of the Quiz Competition, Mrs Kashefa Ahmed is seen receiving a free return ticket from the General Manager of Singapore Airlines, Bangladesh, Mr Thia Hui Juat. A simple handover ceremony was arranged at Singapore Airlines Head Office in Dhaka. A similar quiz competition programme will be organised in September 1993.

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