Step up agitation to oust BNP govt: Hasina

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday called for stepping up the current agitation to force the BNP "regime" to resign and pave the way for elections under a neutral caretaker authority. reports UNB.

Addressing a group of political and social workers of Sunamgani, who joined Awami League at 29 Minto Road, Hasina blamed the ruling party for destroying democracy by ignoring the demand for scraping the rigged by-election in Magura-2 and fresh voting in the constituency.

She questioned as to how democracy will be protected if people are not allowed to exercise their voting rights independently.

Hasina, the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, said BNP has failed to govern the nation for its inefficiency. People have lost their faith in the government because of its widespread corruption.

The AL chief said the government has now resorted to under Anti-terrorism Act.

Hasina, who visited the affected areas in Cox's Bazar. said cyclone victims have not yet received relief materials. The government's propaganda about relief distribution is con-

A press release of the Awami League said Sunamgani pourashava Chairman Mominul Moizuddin, pourashava commissioner, former BNP president of Sunamganj district and ex-MP Dewan Shamsul Abedin along with more than 200 political, social and cultural activists met Hasina and formally joined the party.

Pre-budget dialogue

From Page 1 Col 4 ture and tighten our belts." he

The finance minister said the government now wants economic growth with reason-

"We are going for a growth strategy that would ensure employment," he maintained. "I believe that poverty will go down with growth taking

"Resource will not be a problem, but we need a good guidance for poverty alleviation," he added.

He explained that the rereducing poverty.

sector comes forward with investment, the government will continue investment in physical and social infrastructure.

Saifur Rahman said he is still at a loss about what to do

round the speech delivered by Prof Rehman Sobhan.

government should monitor the results of the budget policies, and added, "It is imperative for the finance minister to because of his policies. This next budget," he said.

Bank which, he said, is "the

Admin reform

skepticism is, however, tempered by the appreciation that significant and long lasting reform of the administrative system will not be possible without getting support from the Opposition parties.

The donors want that the held Aid Group meeting in well as parliamentarians of all

the action programme for administrative reform open to public debate is going to put the government into some difficulty. Among the four committees that are reviewing administrative reform proposals two are composed of are official-level committees civil service cadres have representation. None of the comoutside the government and,

switchover from the heretofore closed process to an open and consultative process of administrative reform will take some time. Reaching of consensus on an action programme for reform will take longer. The only way that the deadline of December 1994 can be met is close understanding on administrative reform between the government

repression to stick to power She alleged repressive measures including detention of her party leaders and workers

for inadequate relief in cyclone-hit Cox's Bazar, Hasina said the news of relief distribution broadcast by radio and television had no link with the

fined to helicopters and televi sion screen only.

able distribution of resources.

place."

form programme which would stop wastage of resources in unproductive sectors and shift them to productive ones will ultimately lead to growth, thus He said until the private

with the surplus employees of some organisations like the TCB, and the import control offices in Dhaka and Chittagong. "The TCB has 1300 workers and the import offices have 600 employees doing virtually noting," he said, adding "This is a touchy prob-

The dialogue revolved

Prof Sobhan felt that the actively know what, is going on would help correction in the

Being highly critical of the donors, specially the World

From Page 1 Col 4 administrative reform: This

action programme for administrative reform be drawn up through open public debate. In a background paper prepared by the UNDP for the recently Paris, the Government has been requested to involve the private sector, civil servants as parties in deciding upon the nature, scope, method and timing of administrative re-

The requirement of making ministers. The remaining two where only three of the 29 mittees have members from according to the UNDP, they

lack transparency. Observers say that the and the Opposition.

Criticising the government

neo-East India Company located at Washington DC". Prof Sobhan said, "It sets our agen-

da for investment and withdrawal of subsidy. Whenever these policies fail, the backlash

comes upon us."

He suggested spelling out our own agenda and relating them to targets to be evaluated by the society. Prof Sobhan observed that

the government has no specific poverty alleviation programme. He called for reducing 'delivery cost of poverty programmes to the poor "Presently, for delivery of every one Taka, three Taka is being spent on studies and foreign trips," he said. Prof Sobhan felt that since

the agriculture sector has a major contribution to the economy, it should get more attention. He was critical of the withdrawal of agro-subsidy and said the government should think whether the money thus saved and invested in other sectors was profitable.

"I feel concerned because the money taken from the least privileged people (the farmers) are being invested for unforeseen results," he said. "The government should do some study of macro-economic efficiency of funds," the noted economist maintained.

The macro-economic priorities of the donors bury the macro-economic priorities of the government, he stressed.

Environment Minister Akbar Hossain said that whatever money has been withdrawn from the agriculture sector should be returned

Agriculture Minister Majidul-Hug said there has been no fresh investment in agriculture for a long time and some cash support should be given to the sector for growth.

Industries Minister Zahiruddin Khan said the industries sector should be given due attention alongside agriculture. He said growth in the industries sector will outshine growth in any other sector.

Shahjahan Siraj demanded reduction of diesel and fertiliser prices and introduction of easy-term loans for educated unemployed youths and farm-

Ahmedul Kabir said the agriculture sector should be given top priority in budget considerations. Availability of power at cheaper rate will make the industries viable and that bank loan rates should be reduced.

Red Crescent Day today Bangladesh will be among

161 countries to observe the World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day today, reports BSS.

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) has taken up an elaborate programme to observe the day, which symbolises the birth of the founder of the organisation Jean Henry Dunant.

This year's theme for the day is "Dignity For All, Focus on Children."

Hasina for Japan

From Page 1 Col 8

gin tomorrow. Hasina will deliver a speech at the seminar

Shah AMS Kibria, a member of the AL advisory council, Abul Hasan Chowdhury MP. Syed Abul Hossain MP and Nur-e-Alam Chowdhury MP will accompany Hasina during her visit to Tokyo. Saima Wazed, her daughter, will also be with

She will return home on

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a public meeting at Kotchandpur in Jhenidah yesterday

-PID pheto

Educate students

in practical

farming, PM tells

BNP govt striving to improve country's image: Khaleda

KOTCHANDPUR (Jhenidah). May 7: The nation has improved its image by turning itself into a country of development, production and new potentials. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today said. reports UNB.

"The country has now improved its image abroad. We have succeeded in establishing democracy and increasing production," she told a mam moth public meeting here. Addressing at the local high

school ground this afternoon meeting. Begum Zia said the people had fought for independence to bring democracy and economic emancipation. But that dream could not be realised immediately after independence because the post-Liberation government was busy in realising its own inter-

failed to play their due role."

About the much-taiked-

about by-election in Magura.

Dr. Kamal alleged that rigging,

the use of arms and muscle-

men and violation of election

rules had made the electoral

protests like hartals, called by

the AL, the GF leader also

questioned the justification of

launching anti-government agi-

tations simultaneously with the

defeated autocratic forces

Kamal said, the issue of hold-

ing the next general elections

under a caretaker administra-

tion should be resolved

through dialogue and by mobil-

ising public opinion on the is-

sue. He, however, avoided

questions on his party's stand

on the matter and said they

were yet to decide on the is-

Answering questions about

Replying to a question, Dr.

(meaning the Jatiya Party).

Dr. Kamal also criticised the

In an oblique reference to

process questionable.

two opposition parties.

est, ignoring the people's wel-

The country was then branded an international basket case," she said, pointing out that it was the government of late President Ziaur Rahman which succeeded in erasing such a negative image through its policy of development and increasing production.

The Prime Minister also said the country was once again branded a "nation of beggars" during the past autocratic regime. The BNP government has now again removed such bad image through its policy of ensuring national development that aims at changing the lot of the commonman," she added. "We have reduced foreign

dependence. A nation cannot hold its head high by depending on foreign aid or relief."

The Prime Minister asked the people to think about the country and fts development. "We have fought a war of independence and shed streams of blood for our country, we must get rid of poverty and attain self-reliance in every sector."

Begum Zia assured that two bridges on the river Chitra at Ekra and Jalalpur points would be constructed and the Kotchandpur and Mohespur thanas will come under rural electrification soon. The Khalishpur-Jalalpur road and Kotchandpur-Talina-Signboard roads would be metalled.

She further assured that the Kotchandpur thana health complex would be upgraded from a 31-bed to 50-bed hospital

agri officers The Prime Minister yester day told district agriculture of ficers to help secondary teach-

ers in imparting practical education to students who are studying agriculture as a compulsory subject from this year reports UNB. "You are experts in different branches of agriculture. In

addition to your responsibilities, you should educate the students in practical farming. Begum Khaleda Zia said while inaugurating a day-long work shop at the International Conference Centre (ICC) in the The workshop was attended

by about 300 district agriculture, animal husbandry, forest and fisheries officials.

Shopowners demand

From Page 1 Col 5 cessively ... Not only the Opposition, even different fronts of the government party have also been calling hartals. Amir Hossain Khan said. He said they had already

met Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina, Jatiya Party leader Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and Left leader Nirmal Sen and apprised them of the cost of hartals borne by the shopown-The opposition leaders

as saying that hartal calls would not be required if the opposition political activities and programmes were conveyed to the common people through Radio and Television. The federation expressed solidarity with the Opposition demand and wanted to know

why the government feels so

were quoted by he federation

shaky in projecting Opposition views and programmes over the state-owned media. If the present government really wants the people's welfare and to protect shopowners from financial losses caused by hartals, it will accept the Opposition demand im-

mediately," Khan told the

press conference. The federation leaders are also planning to meet the ruling party leaders to request them to accept the Opposition's "just demands" in the interest of trade and

business Dispelling the idea that the federation, patronised by the government, is campaigning against hartals, Khan said they were not opposed to this effective democratic means. "We may have to call strikes to realise our just demands. But what we want to say is that we are against repeated hartals."

The federation viewed that "wrong decisions of the government, its intransigence and indifferent attitude compel the Opposition to go for hartals."

JS session From Page 1 Col 7

bench was ready to introduce their bill seeking constitutional provisions for caretaker government in the House for discussion. The Jamaat sought to move the bill in the second session of the present Parliament. A top leader of the BNP

standing committee told this correspondent Friday that the ruling party did not have 'any strong reservation as regards allowing the proposed bill to be discussed in the House. "But the bill required presidential approval before being

introduced in the House for discussion because it was a 'money bill' concerning the public exchequer of the state" The standing committee leader, who is also a minister, told The Daily Star that the ruling party was committed to

making the electoral process

sound by strengthening the

Election Commission. "If the opposition agrees, we can consider the constitutional provision for empowering the EC to stop all kinds of transfer of officials three months ahead of the holding of general elections," he said on condition of anonymity.

The Parliament is scheduled to take up for discussion the Parliament Secretariat Bill seeking setting up of a separate secretariat for the Jatiya -Star photo | Sangsad today.

Stolen 'Scream' recovered

OSLO, May 7: Norway's most famous painting, "The Scream' by Edvard Munch, has been recovered almost four months after it was stolen from an Oslo museum, police said Saturday. Ellen Holager Andenaes of the Oslo police said the painting was apparently not damaged. The painting was recovered at an Oslo hotel. Police arrested three people, the national news agency NTB reported, says AP.

The Midnight File

Velayati in Sarajevo to open embassy

SARAJEVO, May 7: A high-powered Iranian delegation headed by Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati arrived in Sarajevo today to open an Embassy in the Bosnian capital, officials said. Velayati was greeted by President Alija lzetbegovic on his arrival at the Presidency where around 100 people had turned out to welcome him.

BATEXPO '94 ends

Orders worth \$56m expected

The country's garments manufacturers and exporters are expected to receive orders worth US dollar 56 million from foreign buyers who attended a three-day export fair, BATEXPO, that ended in Dhaka yesterday, reports UNB.

Redwan Ahmed, MP, chairman of the BATEXPO '94 organising committee, told newsmen at a press conference at the end of the exposition that spot orders worth US dollar 22.57 million had already been received by Bangladeshi participants at the "Our participants and units

are still negotiating for more orders with the visiting buyers and their representatives. Redwan, who is also the president of the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers' and

Tagore From Page 1 Col 8

ing up the path of jealousy and hatred and called upon all to devote with renewed zeal to

lishing human values and dig-The Prime Minister said that it would be the best way to pay respect to the great poet who championed peace and

work together to create a

peaceful atmosphere for estab-

humanism. She also called for re-evaluation of Tagore in his totality because the great poet's genius did not keep him confined to literary pursuits alone. He also took definite initiative for the betterment of the people and overall national development, she reminded.

A four-day programme organised by the cultural affairs ministry on the occasion begins today at the Shilpakala Academy in the city.

Tornado

From Page 1 Col 8

The tornado, with a speed upto 120 km per hour and lasting for about an hour, blew away more than 1000 kutcha and tin-shed houses. A high school and a madrasha were also badly damaged in the tor-

Besides, a large number of trees and electric poles were uprooted.

The loss from the calamity. according to preliminary assessment, is about Taka 10 lakh, the sources said.

The bodies were sent to the thana hospital for post-mortem while the injured were admitted to Purbodhala hospital immediately after the calamity. Five of them were transferred to the Mymensingh Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

Deputy Commissioner Dewan Afsaruddin today went to the tornado-hit areas to assess the extent of damage. He told local journalists that necessary steps would be taken for helping the tornado-affected people after getting the fullpicture of losses.

The calamity left a trail of widespread devastation rendering hundreds of people homeless. They were seen staying under the open sky.

Local people told the BSS correspondent that the tornado was so severe that several houses and even some tubewells were blown far away.

Bodies recovered

15 bodies were recovered

From Page 1 Col 7 Police said that most of the

from Kalatoli to Heemchhari beach near Cox's Bazar town. Five of the victims were buried early today, officials

The nationality of the drowned fishermen could not be ascertained but officials believed that they were Thai fishermen whose boats were wrecked in the cyclone.

Cox's Bazar district authorities until Friday recovered 28 bodies of foreign nationals killed in fishing boat capsizes in the Bay. The bodies were rescued from the Bay in Cox's Bazar Sadar and Teknasthanas. The cyclone, which mauled

ports said.

the southern Cox's Bazar district and Bandarban, killed 165 people including 86 Rohingya refugees, earlier renoted.

Exporters' Association (BGM-

EA), said. The total order could run up to US dollar 56 million, he indicated. The BGMEA organised the Bangladesh Apparel and Tex-

tile Exposition (BATEXPO) '94 at the Sonargaon Hotel to display the country's readymade garments products to foreign buyers. Some 86 foreign buyers participated in the exposition. Besides, 258 local representa-

visited the three-day BATEXPO - the only international fair of its kind organised in the coun-**BGMEA** vice president SM Fazlul Haq. Treasurer Jinnat Ali Mia, Director General of the EPB Mazharul Haq and

other leaders of the BGMEA

tives of foreign buying houses

'Monstrosity' From Page 1 Col 3 Saifur Rahman has said.

were present.

Speaking at a pre-budget dialogue at the NEC auditorium in the city yesterday, he said "It is a monstrosity of thinking that every five years a caretaker government will conduct elections replacing democratic government.

Opposition parties and groups in Parliament have taken a unanimous stand on the issue of a caretaker government and stayed away from the current session of Parliament to press home their demand.

'You should go back to Parliament and discuss how to improve the election process," the finance minister urged the Opposition. "This parliament was elected for five years ... it should and must stay to institutionalise the democratic

process," he said. The finance minister had invited a number of opposition members of parliament, among others, to participate in yes terday's dialogue. But none of them except Shahjahan Siraj turned up, supposedly in line with the Opposition boycott of the Parliament session and meetings of the standing

committees. Pointing to the absence of the Opposition members, Saifur Rahman said "I invited them. It was not a structured political forum that they

Question papers

needed to keep away."

From Page 1 Col 5 The examination in the subject of English was held today while the Mathematics test will be held on Monday.

Some copies of the leaked questionnaire for English were made available to our correspondent who found that 47 of the objective questions in the leaked papers were similar to those contained in the actual question paper today while all the subjective questions were

the same. The Board authorities were, however, yet to cancel the ex-

aminations. Chairman of the Board Abdul Majid, talking to this correspondent, said a highpowered inquiry would be held soon to identify the persons involved in leaking the ques-

Question papers were also leaked here in 1990 and 1991 and inquiry committees were duly formed but none of them has published any report so far. The Board authorities later transferred the matter to the

Point to ponder

Detective Branch.

From Page 1 Col 5 Prof Mohabbat said the Rules of Business, as they exist today, cannot be acceptable in a democratic system. A new Rules of Business was prepared in draft from as early as November, 1991 which envisaged changes in the role-relationship between the Minister and the Secretary. The minister was made responsible for the performance of his ministry and the secretary was to work under his supervision and control.

"But this draft Rules of Business has not been approved by the Cabinet and not placed before Parliament," he

reports UNB. The 4-day seminar will be-

on its second day on May 10. her during her Japan tour.

May 13.

joined her party at her Minto Road residence yesterday. Kamal for dialogue Namai lui uiaiogue From Page 1 Col 7 some GF leaders' recent join-Opposition in and outside the ing of the AL, he said, "Our

"In the past three years; the cratic forces and we are also government's failures, ineffiliberal about anybody quitting ciency, inability and the pracour party." tice of politicising have been "Those who have failed to nakedly demonstrated. The accept our politics have left us. opposition parties have also We hope they will serve the

> nation from a different platform," he commented. The crowded news conference was also attended by GF central leaders including Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Pankaj Bhattacharjee, Shamsuddoha, MP. Mostafa Mohsin Montu, Matiur Rahman, Maj. Gen. (retd) Khalilur Rahman,

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina addressing a group of people from Sunamganj who

doors are open for the demo-

Hajis asked to

report camp today The Hajj pilgrims selected for performing Hajj under government management this year, but have not yet reported to the temporary Hajj camp at Board Bazar in Gazipur are now being asked to report to the camp by today sharp, an official

handout said yesterday, re-

In case of failure to report,

their reservation in Bangladesh

Biman for performing Hajj this

year will be cancelled, the

ports BSS.

handout added.

Baharuddin Khelon and Ziaul

Int'l forum on pyt investment in power sector begins today

— Star photo

A five-day international forum on private investment in the power sector of Bangladesh-will begin at the Sheraton Hotel today (Sunday).

President Abdur Rahman

Biswas will inaugurate the fo-The forum will be attended by high officials of the ministries of Energy, Finance. Planning, Commerce and Industries and the USAID, the US Embassy in Dhaka, the World Bank, the Asian Deve-

lopment Bank, the embassies

of Denmark, Norway, Finland,

Kuwait, The Netherlands.

Japan, Canada, Saudi Arabia,

France, UK, Sweden and other countries. Delegates from India, Pakistan, Indonesia and the

Philippines will also attend the workshop. Some trainers and experts from the United States will also participate in the forum which has been jointly organised by the Ministry of Energy and the USAID. The Rural Electrification Board will coordinate the work of the fo-



LGRD and Cooperatives Abdus Salam Talukder, Dhaka Mayor Md. Hanif, Rajshahi Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu and Khulna Mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman seen at a reception for the Mayors hosted by the City Corporation Employees' Joint Federation at the Nagar Bhaban yesterday.