

Opposition confusing people, says Khaleda

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday spurned Opposition allegations and asserted that her government was continuing to work for fulfilling people's aspirations for a prosperous country, reports UNB.

"The Opposition is confusing the people with misleading statements and hindering the development process initiated by the BNP government," she told some leaders and workers of different political parties of Uttara, Gulshan and Dhaka Cantonment areas who joined the BNP last night at her Hare Road office.

About 5,000 workers and leaders of the Awami League and its front organisations, the Jatiya Party and the JSD joined the BNP expressing their allegiance to the ruling party leadership for its politics of development.

Presided over by Maj (Retd) Kamrul Islam, MP, the function was also addressed by Food Minister and city BNP president Maj Gen (Retd) Mir Shaukat Ali and general secretary Mohammad Salauddin Ahmed MP.

The Prime Minister re-

minded them that the post-liberation government had failed to fulfill the aspirations of the people. "General Zia formed the BNP with a 19-point development programme to meet the people's demand, including the five basic needs," she said.

BCCI executive gets 3-yr jail

LONDON, Aug 3: A senior executive of the collapsed Bank of Credit and Commerce International was ordered imprisoned for three years today despite testimony on his behalf from US authorities, reports AP.

Lawyers from the Federal Reserve in Washington and the New York District Attorney's office said that Imran Imam was instrumental in their investigations.

Imam's revelations led to several prosecutions in the United States and to the recovery of 750 million dollars that will eventually go to help creditors who lost more than 10 billion dollars in the world's biggest banking collapse in July 1991.

Taslima gets bail

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her in court. Making the submission for bail, Barrister Islam quoted the provisions under Section 497 of the CrPC that allowed bail for children, women and the old accused under Section 295 (a).

Attorney General Aminul Haq, appearing for the State, concurred and did not raise any objection to the granting of the bail. The Attorney General also assured the court of providing adequate protection to her.

After the bail order was read out in court, the normally outspoken writer seemed to have restrained her emotions and failed to react visibly as her lawyers and relatives rejoiced around her.

Nasreen was then driven-off in a private car, escorted by a police van, straight to her Shantinagar apartment where her mother has been staying. She was accompanied by her brother Kamaluddin, sister-in-law and another of her lawyers, Barrister Sarah Hossain.

It took nearly half-an-hour for the police and her lawyers to move her from the first-floor court-room to the porch downstairs as a large number of curious onlookers blocked the way. However, no untoward incidents occurred during this period as police tried to disperse the crowd.

Later, Barrister Islam expressed his satisfaction at the outcome of the day's court proceedings.

"This has been a very wonderful precedence as the court exercised its inherent discretion," he told The Daily Star immediately after the order.

Asked how his client was doing, he said she appeared to be very scared, perturbed and was looking frail. "I am really concerned about her health."

When pressed, he claimed he hadn't a clue to her whereabouts until she appeared before the court.

Giving his reactions, Attorney General Aminul Haq

said that he had neither opposed nor supported the bail application.

"I simply stated the law that if section 497 of the CrPC is applicable to all women then it is also applicable to Taslima Nasreen," he added.

Asked by a foreign correspondent if he thought that Nasreen was a law-abiding citizen, the Attorney General said: "I suppose she is a law abiding citizen. She explained why she did not come to court earlier, which was accepted by the court."

The conduct of the crowd in and outside the court room was also lauded by many of the lawyers present on the occasion.

"The behaviour of the crowd was praiseworthy. The people were only curious to see her and she was not threatened in any way. The public behaviour proves that we are not fundamentalists," said a senior lawyer present on the occasion.

While, Taslima Nasreen went into hiding evading arrest, religious leaders held meetings and demonstrations across the country demanding her punishment and also seeking the enactment of a law providing the death penalty for blasphemy.

At the same time, a section of the Western media highlighted her case, prompting some Western countries to mount pressure on the government to safeguard her basic rights, including the right to speak freely. Some countries also indirectly offered her political refuge.

Mild tremor rocks Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 3: A mild tremor rocked the city at 9:01 pm today panicking the residents. But its intensity could not be known immediately. However, police sources said no damage was reported from anywhere.

Indian business team

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response is that Indian businessmen can invest here and take our investment facilities as foreign investors. This will reduce the trade gap."

"Our second proposition is Bangladesh can be used as a distribution point for Indian goods to its north-eastern states. This would also develop our transport business."

During the meeting, the Indian side had raised the transit issue several times, saying this was vital for developing co-operation.

Meanwhile, the joint statement of the meeting said the Indian side had proposed new investments in Bangladesh and invited aggressive marketing efforts of Bangladeshi goods in India.

The proposed Indian investment areas are: Composite textiles, pesticides, power generation, electronic appliances, food and fish processing, shrimp, rubber, leather, cement, sponge iron plant, basic chemicals, etc.

Mahbubur Rahman said, "We also talked about co-operation among the two countries in marketing our common goods like jute and tea in the world market."

The leader of the Indian delegation, PD Patodia said, "We are quite interested to set up joint sector industries here."

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Leaders of the main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party marching to the presidential palace in New Delhi yesterday to hand over a letter to President Shankar Dayal Sharma, protesting the government's denial of responsibility in the country's biggest ever financial scandal. The 1.3 billion dollars bank scam has returned corruption to India's political centrestage.

— AFP photo

US, DPRK may set up liaison offices

TOKYO, Aug 3: North Korea

and the United States might agree to set up liaison offices in each other's country when they resume high-level talks in Geneva Friday on the nuclear standoff, it was reported here Wednesday, reports AFP.

The Japanese economic newspaper Nihon Keizai carried the report citing North Korean diplomatic sources in Washington. But it said the same sources said Pyongyang was opposed to a US-proposed transfer of spent nuclear fuel from North Korea to a third country.

The establishment of liaison offices could be a major step in improving ties between the United States and North Korea which were still locked in Cold War confrontation dating to the 1950-1953 Korean War.

Serbs reject peace plan again

PALE, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Aug 3: Bosnian Serb leaders again rejected an international peace plan on Wednesday, defying their patrons in Serbia and setting the stage for further warfare, reports AP.

The self-styled Bosnian Serb assembly was expected to follow the recommendation of its leaders in a meeting later Wednesday to vote on the proposal to end the war in Bosnia.

A statement issued from the Serbs' self-declared capital in Pale and distributed by the Bosnian Serb news agency SRNA said the plan "has been deliberately compiled in such a way as to be unacceptable for the Serb side."

10 shot in Sylhet clash

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Aug 3: At least ten persons received bullet wounds in a clash between rival groups of youngmen at Kumarpura area of Sylhet town last night.

About 20 rounds of gunshot were fired during the half-an-hour-long encounter.

3 die in Pabna road accidents

PABNA, Aug 3: Three people

were killed in three road accidents in Pabna district today, reports UNB.

Gohar Sarder, 55, died on the spot when a Dhaka-bound coach ran over him on the Pabna-Nagarbari highway at Madhupur at 9:30 am.

An unidentified five-year-old boy died instantly when a truck knocked him down the highway at Ranigram at about 11 am.

Jotsna Khatun, 60, died on way to hospital after she was run over by a truck while crossing road at Kalikapur on the Panba-Ishurdi road at 4 pm.

Three cases were lodged with Pabna Sadar, Sathia and Ishurdi police. The killer trucks and the coach sped away.

Transport strike in Sylhet from today

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Aug 3: Bus, minibuses and microbus owners and transport workers of Sylhet have called a strike for an indefinite period throughout the district from tomorrow.

They have called the strike to press home their demand for punitive measures against the persons who reportedly misbehaved with transport owners and workers during a negotiation meeting at the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Sunamganj on July 30.

An indefinite strike has been continuing on different routes of Sunamganj district since July 27.

Singh threatens to quit

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The committee's December findings criticised several senior ministers. Singh, among those criticised, offered his resignation to Rao at the time only to have it rejected.

The finance minister, architect of India's dramatic economic reforms, was not available for comment on Wednesday.

"If he quits, it will be a disaster for the Congress," a government minister told Reuters.

Singh's Congress party critics say he authored the

in the Lok Sabha (lower house of parliament) on Tuesday before the entire opposition, showing rare unity, walked out.

The rightwing Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) said its leaders planned to meet President Shankar Dayal Sharma today to see if he could persuade Rao to withdraw the action taken report.

Newspapers said Singh's threat to resign followed criticism by deputy Surinder Singh Ahluwalia at Tuesday's Congress party meeting, at which Rao was not present.

"I am ready to quit if it helps save the party and the government," Delhi's Economic Times quoted him as telling the meeting.

The JPC had accused Singh's ministry of mishandling the scandal, in which brokers and bankers were accused of colluding to siphon funds from the inter-bank government securities market to invest on the then-booming Bombay stock exchange.

Delhi's Business Standard newspaper quoted Singh as accusing the JPC of ignoring some important documents he had submitted to defend himself. "I have enough proof of such manipulation," the Standard quoted him as saying.

"I had once submitted my resignation. If any one has the guts to accept it, he should do so now," he said.

The Economic Times said Singh's Congress critics complained to Rao.

"We are doing everything to save him but he seems to be preoccupied with himself," said one unidentified critic. "Does he think that the country will stop running or the IMF will stop funding us if he quits?"

"I would call this a grandfather of all scams," communist lawmaker Indrajit Gupta said

Five Frenchmen gunned down in Algeria

ALGIERS, Aug 3: Gunmen

killed three French guards and two consular agents Wednesday morning, said officials fighting a Muslim fundamentalist insurgency that is increasingly targeting foreigners, reports AP.

The attack raised to 56 the number of foreigners killed since September, when militants began killing expatriates in an effort to topple the military-backed government.

One other person was wounded in the attack that Algerian security forces said occurred in southwest Algiers while the French were returning to their embassy compound.

The group was attacked in Ain Allah, a guarded residential area, said security forces on customary anonymity.

Ctg Drydock builds pulp producing digester

CHITTAGONG, Aug 3: The

State-owned Chittagong Drydock Limited has developed a digester to be used in paper mills for producing pulp from green jute.

A subsidiary of the Bangladesh Steel and Engineering Corporation (BSEC), the Chittagong Drydock built the digester with indigenous raw materials and local expertise and technology, reports UNB.

Chittagong Drydock began to build the digester in March with steel produced by another BSEC subsidiary, Chittagong Steel Mills, and other locally available raw materials.

The BSEC, which runs the state-owned engineering industries, so far received four orders for digesters from the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC). Of this, another digester will be built by Chittagong Drydock while the other two by Khulna Shipyard, also a BSEC subsidiary.

Each locally built digester to cost Tk 1.25 crore while its

import price is around Tk 5 crore.

The four digesters will be used by four BCIC subsidiaries — the Karnaphuli Paper Mills, North Bengal Paper Mills, Khulna Paper Mills and Karnaphuli Rayon Mills.

Industries Minister A M Zahiruddin Khan, who asked the BCIC to find alternative raw materials and patronise the idea of using green jute for producing pulp, will formally hand over the digester to the Karnaphuli Paper Mills tomorrow.

According to the BCIC sources, the paper mills will produce some 25,000 tons of pulp using green jute during the first year of production. The corporation has already started purchasing green jute from the growers.

The globe-shaped five-metre dia digester weighs about 20 tons and has a holding capacity of 65 tons.

Drydock sources said the work on the second digester will be completed in September next.

Khatib refutes allegations

Maulana Obaidul Huq,

Khatib of Baitul Mukarram Mosque, yesterday said a section of newspapers had distorted his speech delivered at a rally at Manik Mia Avenue on July 29, reports UNB.

In a statement issued last night, the Maulana, refuting the allegation of making anti-independence comments on the day said:

"In fact, I told the rally that two independent countries — Pakistan and India — emerged as a result of the Lahore Resolution tabled by the vanguard of Muslim renaissance Sher-e-Bangla A K Fazlul Huq."

"But Pakistan was divided as a result of treachery of the then rulers of Pakistan against the ideals that went into the creation of Pakistan. A section of so-called intellectuals and educationists after 23 years of independence of the country is trying to hand over Bangladesh to India treacherously," Obaidul Huq claimed to have told the rally.

Maulana Huq further said he had stated at the rally that such elements were also hurting the sentiments of Muslims by uttering indecent statements against Islam and Muslims, which would not be tolerated by the 11 crore Muslims of the country.

Clarifying his position, Maulana Obaidul Huq said he had no affiliation with any political party and never indulged in any politics, but admitted his association with the Sammilita Sangram Parishad, formed to press six specific demands, including declaring the Qadianis as non-Muslims.

Youngman stabbed to death in city

By DMCH Correspondent

A youngman, Abdul Gani, was murdered in the city's New Market area yesterday afternoon.

Gani, 25, suffered severe stab wounds and died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) around 4 pm — some 20 minutes after admission.

Police recovered the fatally wounded Gani, from the H-block of the New Super Market near the New Market under Dhanmondi Police Station and sent him to the DMCH.

Police said, Gani used to stay in the marketplace and did not have any local address. He hailed from Madaripur district, police added.

Police believed the murder was a sequel to a rivalry among the bullies of the area. Dhanmondi police interrogated several people yesterday but did not make any arrest.

JCD blames BCL for attack on dean office

By DU Correspondent

The Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) yesterday demanded punishment of the persons involved in the attack on the office of the Law Faculty Dean of the Dhaka University Tuesday.

The JCD leaders held the pro-Awami League Chhatra League (M-L) responsible for the incident.

The rally, held near the Arts Faculty building in the campus, was addressed among others by general secretary Nazimuddin Alam, city JCD chief Abul Khair Bhuiyan and DU unit secretary Monir Hossain with the JCD president Fazlul Huq Milon in the chair.

The leaders criticised the BCL and said they were destroying the congenial academic atmosphere in the Dhaka University. They also accused it of assaulting two teachers and a journalist.

The JCD also brought out a procession on the campus, chanting slogans against terrorism.

Bangla-Pak ties excellent: Mostafiz

Visiting Pakistan Chief

of Army Staff General Abdul Waheed called on Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman at his residence yesterday evening, reports UNB.

They discussed bilateral matters and cooperation between the two countries, said an official handout.

"During their discussion Mostafizur Rahman said Bangladesh and Pakistan enjoy excellent relations based on long historical links."

Imam

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Waliullah that he had been removed.

Immediately, Waliullah attacked secretary Shahabuddin, pushed him into a roadside pond, drew out a knife from his pocket and stabbed Abdul Rab.

Waliullah then took shelter at a nearby house. But the local people traced him and started beating him.

Bandar thana police arrested him and admitted him to the Narayanganj Sadar Hospital in a serious condition.

The Midnight File

US Senate Republican leader opposes Haiti invasion

WASHINGTON, Aug 3: Senate Republican leader Bob Dole said today there was no reason for the United States to invade Haiti and that he planned to ask for a resolution, requiring President Clinton to ask Congress for approval. "Even though the United Nations has approved this, there is not approval in accordance with the War Powers Act of the US Constitution," Dole said on CBS television, reports Reuter.

3 shot dead in Lagos

LAGOS, Aug 3: Police in strike-bound Lagos today shot dead at least three pro-democracy demonstrators demanding the release of presidential claimant Moshood Abiola, witnesses said. Abiola's trial on treason charges, which has plunged Nigeria into turmoil and sparked a general strike, was adjourned in the capital Abuja today until August 16, reports Reuter.

Hasina dubs BNP a 'promise-breaker'

Opposition leader Sheikh

Hasina dubbed the BNP government a "promise-breaker" saying it did not fulfil a single commitment made before the last parliamentary elections, reports UNB.

Addressing a group of workers from different political parties of Jamalpur who joined the Awami League at her 29 Minto Road residence, Hasina said the government had signed agreements with workers, farmers, students and professionals but reneged on those.

Floods in Kushtia

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Aug 3: Some 300 houses have gone under water in four unions of Daulatpur thana yesterday and several thousand acres of crop land have been submerged.

Another 300 houses have been threatened and people of those areas are being evacuated to safer places as river Ganges overflowed its banks recording a rise of over six feet during last 48 hours.

Salam urges Opposition

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ddin Ahmed, the rally was addressed by Public Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Miah, Posts and Telecommunication Minister Tariqul Islam, Information Minister Nazmul Huda, Food Minister Mir Shaukat Ali, vice president of the Dhaka University Central Students' Union (DUCSU) Amanullah Aman MP, DUCSU general secretary Khairul Kabir Khokon, JCD President Fazlul Huq Milon and JCD general secretary Nazimuddin Alam.

The big rally was disrupted in the beginning by a heavy shower but a large number of the JCD activists were seen listening to the speakers despite heavy rainfall. As soon as the downpour ended students who had taken shelter at nearby shops returned to the meeting venue.

Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Miah said Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina did not believe in democratic norms.

"In a democracy, transfer of power takes place through elections, but the AL chief has announced an one-point agitation programme to unseat the BNP government by unconstitutional means," the minister said.

The minister called upon the students to resist any undemocratic move against the democratically elected government.

Telecommunications Minister Tariqul Islam said, "The unholy alliance between the AL, the autocratic Jatiya Party and the killers of the freedom loving people in 1971, the Jamaat-e-Islami, aims at destroying the hard-earned democracy in the country."

Referring to their participation in the 1986 elections during the Ershad regime, the minister said the AL-JP-Jamaat alliance was not a new phenomenon.

He urged the progressive political parties and individuals

to resist the 'evil forces'. Information Minister Nazmul Huda told the rally that the three-party alliances 'misleading demand for a caretaker government was nothing but a conspiracy against democracy.'

"Democracy does not allow for a selected administration to replace an elected government," the Information Minister asserted.

Terming the opposition members' boycott of Parliament as a clear sign of indifference towards the people who had voted them to the Jatiya Sangsad, the Information Minister said the BNP believes in the mandate of the people.

He called upon the student community as well as the democracy-loving people to remain alert against the 'undemocratic tripartite alliance.'

Food Minister Mir Shaukat Ali observed that the JCD alone was enough to combat the opposition parties' 'politics of lies.'

The student leaders severely criticised leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina for her alleged remarks that the JCD activists were 'thieves and dacoits.'

They also alleged that the leaders of the AL and its student and youth wings had indulged in corruption, committed acts of violence and misappropriated public money during the three and a half years of Awami League rule immediately after the country's independence in 1971.

3 doctors

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the Halaughat thana health complex, Mymensingh.

The doctors filed application to the ministry of health and family welfare for their reinstatement in view of the judgement passed by the High Court on January 26 last year (1993) acquitting them of the charges.

The accused filed appeals before the High Court against the judgement of the Additional District and Sessions Judge of Mymensingh, upholding the verdict given by the Assistant Sessions Judge in April, 1990 awarding jail terms and fines for negligence of duty which caused death to a patient brought from Halaughat after a road accident.

The patient was first taken to the Halaughat thana health complex with serious injuries and shifted to the Mymensingh Medical College Hospital where he was allegedly kept without medical aid for a few days. Later in May gangrene set in and one of the patient's legs had to be amputated. He died a few hours after the surgery.

The doctors were dismissed from service under the Public Servants Conviction (Dismissal on conviction) Ordinance of 1985 after the Additional District and Sessions Judge, Mymensingh upheld the Assistant Sessions Judge's verdict.

Oil, gas in Bay

From Page 1 Col 5

government signed a seven-year contract with Cairn plc and Holland Sea Search last May.

Meanwhile, the two companies have also proposed to explore gas and oil in the Chittagong region, identified as Bloc 15, which includes the Semutang gas field.

Petrobrasil is likely to sit with the companies regarding Block 15 in September. The sources informed The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, American oil company Occidental is negotiating with the government regarding the setting up of a 210mw power plant based on natural gas of the Jalalabad gas field in Sylhet.

A concrete decision in this regard may be reached in a future meeting with the representatives of Occidental after September, the sources indicated.