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Huda sacked

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday sacked her information minister Barrister Nazmul Huda for going against the party line on the caretaker government issue in a recent newspaper interview.

Begum Zia Friday night asked Huda to resign, a PM's Office source said.

Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam has been given the additional charge of the Information Ministry.

Article 58 (2) of the Constitution empowers the Prime Minister to ask any minister to quit at any time. Should a minister refuse to comply, the PM may then advise the President to dismiss the recalcitrant minister.

A brief official handout said Nazmul Huda tendered his resignation to the Prime Minister.



Nazmul Huda

In an interview published in a Bengali daily Friday, Huda surprised everyone by proposing a formula for an interim government with the Chief Justice as caretaker prime minister and four Appellate Division Judges as ministers following the expiry of the tenure of the present Parliament.

The proposal, which Huda insisted was his very own, not too dissimilar to that of the combined opposition parties who have been demanding a caretaker government to supervise general elections, an idea rejected outright so far by the ruling BNP.

Huda's interview, originally given to the Daily Ittefaq but subsequently withdrawn late Wednesday night, was published in the Inquilab Friday. See Page 12 Col 7

Huda defends his position

By Staff Correspondent

Barrister Nazmul Huda, dropped from the cabinet yesterday, said he still believes his formula for an interim government can resolve the present political impasse and save the country from impending chaos and bloodshed.

"I think this is the best formula to avoid a civil war in the country," Huda told The Daily Star yesterday evening at his Dhanmondi residence.

When pressed by this correspondent to explain what he exactly meant by 'civil war', Huda avoided a clearcut answer, saying only that the Opposition was increasingly adopting a confrontational course.

"I apprehended such consequences. That's why my opinion appears contrary to that of my party," the controversial former information minister said.

In an interview published in a Bengali daily Friday, Huda suggested that an interim government be formed once the tenure of the present Parliament expires, with the chief justice as prime minister and four judges of the Appellate Division as ministers to conduct the next general elections and at least two subsequent ones.

"It would have been better if I could discuss the formula with the Prime Minister but I could not do so," he said. "That was my mistake," he sighed, regretfully.

Claiming himself to be one of the nine 'founding members' of the BNP, Huda said he is still a follower of late President Ziaur Rahman. See Page 12 Col 1

Huda embarrassed party: Talukder

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP Secretary General, Abdus Salam Talukder, yesterday said that the action against former information minister Barrister Nazmul Huda was taken because he violated the party discipline.

"The Prime Minister asked Huda to resign as he spoke against the party policy," Talukder said adding "his so-called interview embarrassed the party."

Until the other day, Barrister Huda had repeatedly said that the idea of a caretaker government was unconstitutional but suddenly he made a proposal in line with the opposition, Talukder pointed out.

"Now he is saying he did it for the greater interest of the nation. Is his party BNP not working for the nation," he asked. See Page 12 Col 8



Egyptians walk through the rubble next to the Temple of Seti in the King's Valley yesterday after torrential rains overflowed several Pharaonic sites in Luxor area, including the tomb of Tutankhamun and the Temple of Seti. In the Asyut region the floods and fires of the last days have left about 550 people dead and thousands homeless. — AFP photo

BNP Chief Whip criticises MP's statement

By Staff Correspondent

Chief Whip of Parliament and ruling BNP leader Khondaker Delwar Hossain yesterday accused party MP Major (Retd) Akhtaruzzaman of violating basic parliamentary norms.

Akhtaruzzaman, in a statement issued to a leading vernacular daily Friday, alleged that cabinet ministers often made 'untrue' statements in Parliament.

The member from Katiadi, Kishoreganj also maintained that under a certain provision of the Constitution (Article 70), party MPs were not free to express their personal opinions in Parliament.

Akhtaruzzaman further said, 'irresponsible behaviour' of the Opposition and 'obstinacy' of the ruling party were responsible for the present political crisis in the country. See Page 12 Col 1

Opposition leaders say Inner contradiction of BNP exposed

Opposition leaders yesterday said the dismissal of Information Minister Nazmul Huda had exposed the inner contradiction of the ruling party on the question of a neutral caretaker government, reports UNB.

In initial reactions, Moudud Ahmed of Jatiya Party, NDP leader Salaududdin Qader Chowdhury and Suranjit Sengupta of Awami League appreciated Huda's statement about an interim government to be headed by the Chief Justice.

"His resignation has exposed the weakness of the government and will further deepen the crisis within the government," the JP leader said. He maintained that there was still time for the BNP to change its stance. See Page 12 Col 8

gratulated Huda for his courageous stand and admired his interview for which "he has been victimised."

He said he believed that a large number of BNP MPs and a sizeable number of ministers held the same view as that of Huda.

Huda's formula is negotiable, but his overall approach has been very positive and close to the demand of the opposition," Moudud said.

"His resignation has exposed the weakness of the government and will further deepen the crisis within the government," the JP leader said. See Page 12 Col 8

Serb, Muslim forces battle for another town

SARAJEVO, Nov 5: Bosnian Serb and Muslim forces battled for the northwestern town of Bosanska Krupa today and UN peacekeepers said government troops were preparing to expand their successful offensive in central Bosnia, reports Reuter.

The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) said Bosanska Krupa, on the edge of the Muslim-held Bihac pocket was being fiercely defended by units of the Bosnian Serb Army (BSA).

The BSA is putting up a stiff fight, said UN spokesman Major Herve Gourmelon. "We think there must be a lot of casualties and the town will not be easy for the Bosnian government army to capture."

Peacekeepers believed the BSA still held the eastern bank of the Una river around Bosanska Krupa whose civilian population has been evacuated to safety.

Muslim troops have been trying to capture the town since launching an autumn offensive 10 days ago that has rocked the BSA by driving Serb forces onto the retreat in northwest and central Bosnia and southwest of Sarajevo. Although the BSA claimed to have retaken some lost ground in a counter-attack, the UN said the only evidence of this was in some fighting south of the Bihac pocket.

UN spokesmen said they expected fresh Muslim-led offensives in central Bosnia to build on the capture of Kupres. The town of Donji Vakuf, slightly north of Kupres was the next possible target.

Cemerska Planina north of Sarajevo was also thought to be vulnerable to Muslim attack.

According to the UN, the Muslims were meeting little resistance southwest of Sarajevo in their attempts to advance on the town of Trnovo and to cut a vital supply road between Serb territory in east and southeast Bosnia.

"We understand that (the Muslims) are now certainly able to put direct fire on to the town or the road but we don't have details of that," UN spokesman Tim Spicer said. "There is a report that five (Serb) tanks were captured in the fighting but that it unconfirmed."

The UN reports of Serb setbacks were denied by the BSA's own version of events which claimed the Muslims were being driven back in the Trnovo area and that territory was being recaptured in the northwest.

The BSA has ordered a general mobilisation across the 70 per cent of Bosnia under its control in an attempt to stem the biggest Muslim battlefield successes of the 31-month war.

JCD-BCL clash 2 colleges closed for a week

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, Nov 5: The Mominunnesa Government Girls' College has been closed until November 12 following a clash between the supporters of the Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and the Bangladesh Chhatra League (S-P).

According to college sources, the clash ensued when the JCD activists detained the Principal in her room today demanding shifting of the election date of the college students union scheduled for November 27.

The principal was detained for about seven and a half hours beginning 11 am today. The clash continued for several hours.

See Page 12 Col 7

JP holds meeting in Sirajganj defying Sec 144

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Nov 5: The Jatiya Party Belkuchi thana unit held its scheduled meeting this afternoon in violation of Section 144.

Section 144 was imposed in and around the Alhaj Siddique High School* in Belkuchi from 2 pm today when a faction of the party called a protest rally at the same venue.

The scheduled meeting was, however, held uninterrupted and Acting Chairman of the JP, Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, addressed the meeting.

Former Minister Begum Razia Fazl also addressed the meeting along with other local JP leaders.

Addressing the meeting, Mizan Chowdhury said the present government has completely failed to fulfil its pre-election commitments although it has been claiming that 80 per cent of its pledges were fulfilled.

Criticising the government's economic policies, he said when India is setting up new jute mills following increased demand of jute goods in the international market. See Page 12 Col 1

Pak troops crack down on Malakand rebels, kill 11

PESHAWAR, Nov 5: At least 11 people were killed and more than 20 injured as troops today launched an operation against activists demanding Islamic laws in northern Pakistan, witnesses said, reports AFP.

No official casualty figures were immediately available, but state-run television said the election commission today postponed by elections scheduled in the area for Sunday until November 14 at the request of the local administration.

Residents in the troubled northern town of Mingora said at least three paramilitary soldiers were also killed as troops arriving in trucks and armoured personnel carriers try to force their way towards the town against blockades set up along their route by armed tribal supporters.

Thousands of people supporting the militant Tazmeem Nifaz-e-Shariat Mohammadi (TNSM) squatted on the roads blocking traffic, residents said. They said gunbattles had erupted in several places on a 10 kilometer stretch between Mingora and Odigram towns.

Eight TNSM workers died in the first clash near Odigram while 20 others including nine paramilitary soldiers were injured elsewhere.

The operation came three days after the TNSM seized dozens of senior government functionaries at gun point Wednesday and Thursday to press their demand for the enforcement of Islamic laws in the area.

Officials said the troops were rushed to the region, where protests have been raging for three days after TNSM militants besieged several towns in the picturesque Swat valley and Malakand regions to push their demand.

Troops have also mounted an operation to restore control of Saidu Sharif airport seized by TNSM zealots Wednesday. Fighting was continuing around the airport Saturday, but witnesses said there was little resistance and siege could be over by late Saturday.

Opposition to review situation today

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of the opposition parties in Parliament meet this morning to review the latest political situation and decide their next course of action.

Meanwhile, Parliament members belonging to the Jatiya Party (JP) yesterday signed their resignation letters and submitted those to the acting leader of the JP parliamentary party Moudud Ahmed.

The resignation letters were signed after a meeting of the JP parliamentary Party held yesterday afternoon with Moudud Ahmed in the chair. The meeting, however, did not fix any date for submitting the resignation letters to the Prime Minister. See Page 12 Col 7

Tk 5 lakh mugged in Dilkusha CA

By Staff Correspondent

Muggers armed with knives snatched more than five lakh Taka from an accountant in the capital's busy Dilkusha commercial area yesterday.

A driver was stabbed in the incident and the muggers also set off crude bombs before leaving the spot.

Witnesses said at about 1 pm three unidentified youngmen attacked one Mizanur Rahman, accountant of the B&H Travels Limited, immediately after he came down from his office with a briefcase containing Taka five lakh 29 thousand.

The muggers, who were waiting in an autorickshaw, attacked Mizan while he was getting on a car to go to the City Bank at Nawabpur Road for depositing the money.

The muggers took away the briefcase brandishing daggers at Mizan and stabbed him. The driver of the car, in the back for trying to resist. See Page 12 Col 8

PM may visit Maldives Nov 22

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is likely to pay a two-day official visit to the Maldives from November 22, official sources in Dhaka said yesterday, reports UNB.

During the visit, Begum Zia will have wide ranging talks with President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, covering bilateral matters as well as regional and international issues of common concern, besides the progress of the SAARC.

Her 35-member entourage will include Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, Additional Foreign Secretary Anwarul Masud, Director General (SAARC) at the Foreign Ministry Ashfaqul Rahman.

Begum Zia, the current Chairperson of the SAARC, visited Bhutan last month. She is expected to visit India and Pakistan by the year end.



American Ambassador David N Merrill and his wife accompanied Mayor Mohammad Hanif on a tour of the old part of the city on a horse driven carriage yesterday. — Star photo

Trial of Taslima to begin Dec 10

By Court Correspondent

A plea of not guilty was entered on behalf of Taslima Nasreen as the Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate yesterday set December 10 for the commencement of the trial of the controversial writer.

Taslima has been charged under Section 295A of the Penal Code for hurting the "religious sentiments of the Muslims of Bangladesh."

The ruling by the Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate A K M Kamaluddin came after two days of hearing to decide whether there was a prima facie case against the writer.

The magistrate after going through the documents and arguments of the two sides, said he was convinced that there was a basis to arraign Taslima Nasreen.

The order was read out in the presence of her lawyers. Taslima left the country for Europe last August 9. Earlier, the court rejected a defence application seeking a discharge. See Page 12 Col 2

ঢাকা আন্তর্জাতিক বাণিজ্য মেলা '৯৫ সচিবালয়

রত্নানী উন্নয়ন ব্যুরো

১২২-১২৪, মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা ঢাকা।

ষ্টল/প্যাভিলিয়ন বরাদ্দ

বাণিজ্য মন্ত্রণালয় ও রত্নানী উন্নয়ন ব্যুরোর উদ্যোগে ঢাকার শেরে-বাংলা নগরস্থিত প্রাচীন কমিশনের দক্ষিণ-পশ্চিম পার্শ্বে ১৯৯৫ সালের জানুয়ারী ৭-২১ সময়কালে ঢাকা আন্তর্জাতিক বাণিজ্য মেলা '৯৫ অনুষ্ঠিত হইবে।

- ২। বিভিন্ন সেটের কর্পোরেশন, পণ্য উৎপাদন ও রত্নানীকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হইতে এ মেলায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য দরবার আহবান করা যাইতেছে।
- ৩। আগ্রহী অংশগ্রহণকারীদের আবেদন পত্র ১৫-১১-৯৪ তারিখ পর্যন্ত গ্রহণ করা হইবে।
- ৪। মেলায় প্যাভিলিয়ন/ষ্টল বরাদ্দের নির্ধারিত আবেদন পত্রের ফর্ম এবং অন্যান্য তথ্যাদির জন্য অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে ঢাকা আন্তর্জাতিক বাণিজ্য মেলা '৯৫ সচিবালয়, রত্নানী উন্নয়ন ব্যুরোর সদর দপ্তরে যোগাযোগ করিবার জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাইতেছে।

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