



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia talking to participants in the tenth founding anniversary celebrations of the Bangladesh Buddhist Federation and National Buddhist Conference in the city yesterday. — PID photo

**PM: Buddhists**

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Chivara Dana (offering of yellow robes to monks) ceremony and 10th anniversary of the Bangladesh Foundation of Buddhist Federation and National Buddhist Conference at the International Buddhist Monastery in the capital in the evening.

She told the function that her government had taken all necessary measures so the people of all faiths could contribute to the country's development activities equally.

"We believe in religious harmony. We are equally respectful of all religions," Begum Zia said, adding "Bangladesh is a shining example of religious harmony in the world, where all can practise their respective religious rites freely."

Referring to her government steps taken for the welfare of Buddhists, she said the government had undertaken various welfare-oriented measures, including financial assistance and rehabilitation of Buddhist institutions and establishment of religious library in different parts of the country.

Presided over by Sangharaj Shilalankar Mahathero, head of the supreme Sangha council, the function was also addressed by President of the Bangladesh Buddhist Federation M L Barua and General Secretary Engineer D B Chowdhury Barua, and Chairman of the Kathina Civara Dana celebration committee M P Barua.

**Prospects of dialogue**

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of the party are completely against accepting the Opposition's 'unconstitutional' demands.

The BNP's central secretariat held a meeting yesterday with its chief party Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukdar in the chair.

Nearly 40 secretaries and joint secretaries, out of 80, were present.

Most of those who took part in the discussions reportedly blamed the party high command for giving 'too much importance' to the Opposition in the name of dialogue.

They said the ruling party had already given enough concessions to the Opposition by suggesting a plan for a multi-party interim government by coopting Opposition members in the proposed mini cabinet.

Meeting sources said mid-level leaders advised the high command sticks to its present stand of insisting on Prime Minister Begum Zia heading any interim government before the next general elections.

They also reportedly promised to resume their activities with zeal in their respective areas.

Salam Talukdar will inform today's standing committee meeting of the sentiment of the central secretariat.

On the other hand, the opposition parties have already announced fresh agitation programmes. They have called for consecutive dawn-to-dusk hartals on Saturday and Sunday.

day, which some of the opposition leaders said are designed to put pressure on the government at the negotiating table.

The three major opposition parties which have long been boycotting Parliament sessions demanding a non-party, caretaker government to supervise general elections, announced identical action programmes, albeit from separate platforms.

In reply to the ruling party's formula, the Opposition now says that the Chief Justice should be the head of any caretaker government to be formed after necessary constitutional amendments.

Meanwhile, ruling party leaders have charged that the Opposition's street agitation had slowed down the process of the dialogue.

In addition to the combined opposition strategy, the Awami League, the Jamaat and the Jatiya Party are also organising their own programmes to strengthen their respective party positions.

The AL chief and leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina will start a tour of North Bengal from November 14 as part of her party's organisational programme.

During her three-day tour the AL chief will address a number of public meetings in Bogra, Rangpur and Gaibandha.

Both the ruling party and the Opposition are learnt to be carefully weighing their options should the dialogue fail.

**Huda reaffirms loyalty**

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last night. He said he firmly supports the party stand regarding the caretaker government issue.

The comments for which I have been charged were completely my personal views," he repeated.

"My views do not contradict my party's stand because I only placed them as food for thought," he said, adding: "My party's line on the issue is that everything should be done under the provisions of the Constitution. I fully support this. My suggestions, though beyond the Constitutional provisions, could be implemented only after the full five-year tenure of the present parliament."

Huda's plan, as expressed through a controversial newspaper interview, suggested an interim government be formed with the Chief Justice as prime minister and the four Appellate Division judges as ministers.

Published in a Bengali daily last Friday, the interview took everyone on both sides of the political divide by surprise.

The startling new plan proffered by a cabinet minister brought considerable embarrassment for the ruling party and consequently Huda was promptly dropped from Begum

Zia's nearly four-year old cabinet the following day.

Huda, along with two other apparently disgruntled MPs — Akhteruzzaman and Nurul Islam Monil — have been summoned by the party's policy-making body to explain the reasons for their dissenting press statements which openly opposed party policy.

Said the former information minister, "In fact, I can challenge the integrity and loyalty of those very leaders who have questioned my intentions."

He said, "Late President Ziaur Rahman was my leader. So is present party chief Begum Khaleda Zia now. And I never deviated from the party line."

He alleged that certain quarters were active to drive a wedge between him and the party chief, as well as corner him inside the BNP.

"But I will prove that my loyalty is complete and it is deeper than those of many others," he added.

"I will finally seek a fair judgement from the Almighty Allah," Huda said philosophically.

He also contradicted a number of press reports about his unceremonious exit from the cabinet by claiming, "I have resigned. I was not sacked."

**British investors' team**

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of Commerce and Industry and the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The delegation includes representatives from internationally reputed firms like Bedford Trucks, British Gas, Midland Electricity, a power generating company, Lasso Plc, a leading oil and gas exploration company, Mott MacDonald International, one of the world's largest consulting firms, Norwest Holst Intl Ltd, the largest British construction firm, and Smith New Court, a well-known investment firm.

Cairn Energy Plc represented in the delegation, along with Holland Sea Search is expected to sign a PSC with Bangladesh oil, gas and mineral corporation to explore oil and gas in the southeast part of the country. Earlier this year, the company signed another PSC for off-shore exploration near Cox's Bazar.

Sources say British Gas had also signed a memorandum of understanding to explore oil in Bangladesh while Lasso Plc has also shown keen interest.

Smith New Court and another investment firm represented in the delegation, Global Emerging Markets, both have substantial involvement in the Dhaka Stock Exchange.

Smith New Court has invested 140 million US dollars worth of portfolio investment funds in DSE stocks while global emerging markets also has considerable investment.

A joint venture proposal by Norwest Holst to construct a bridge over the Meghna river at Bhatral at a projected cost of about 30 million pound sterling is also expected to be discussed.

Some 45 British companies have so far invested an estimated 100 million pound sterling in Bangladesh and several have increased investments in recent years.

Bangladesh enjoys a substantial surplus in trade with the UK. The country's exports to the Kingdom amounted to 140 million pound sterling while imports totalled 54 million.

Bangladesh is also the second largest recipient of the British development aid. Aid from UK was to the tune of 55 million pound sterling in 1993-94.



Awami League President Sheikh Hasina addressing a discussion meeting organised on the occasion of Noor Hossain Day at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday. — Star photo

**LDF repeats demand for accepting its formula**

By Staff Correspondent

The Left Democratic Front (LDF) yesterday repeated its demand for three consecutive future general elections to be held under caretaker administrations.

At a post-hartal rally in the city, LDF coordinator Bimal Biswas, explaining the Front's formula, said the President will form an advisory council with neutral and non-party persons soon after the dissolution of Parliament, constitute an Election Commission and order it to hold the elections independently.

For this, he demanded the Constitution be amended to incorporate a clause in Article 123 providing for the proposed caretaker government, headed by the President himself, which will only run the routine affairs of the state.

The persons in the interim government should be allowed to contest the polls, he suggested.

The LDF leader demanded repeal of all black laws, a ban on the use of religion for political gain and ensuring the independence of the judiciary.

The LDF, an alliance of eight left-leaning political parties, also repeated its demands for amending the People's Representation Act for enhancing the power of the Election Commission, barring the killers and collaborators of 1971 from participating in the elections, enforcing the election code of conduct and allowing all candidates to use the state-run media for

election campaign. The LDF rally blamed the bigger parties like the BNP, the Awami League, the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami for creating the present political impasse and criticised 'interference' by foreigners in the country's internal affairs.

"The LDF is opposed to any kind of power sharing and anti-constitutional measures," said the declaration adopted at the rally.

It said, the World Bank and the IMF were interfering in the affairs of the national economy, the law and order situation had seriously deteriorated and communalism and fundamentalism were growing in the country.

"It seems there is no government in the country," the declaration commented.

Speakers at the rally, held at the Purana Paltan crossing, also declared fresh programmes for realising the LDF's seven-point demand including a caretaker government.

The programmes are: Rallies and processions in the capital from November 15 to 20, demonstrations at the thana headquarters on November 21 and rallies and demonstrations in the district headquarters, including Dhaka.

LDF leaders, including Rashid Khan Menon, MP, Haider Akbar Khan Rono, Hasanul Haq Inu, Khalequzzaman, Nirmal Sen, Manzurul Ahsan Khan, AFM Mahbulul Haq, Dilip Barua and Naim Jahangir were present on the occasion.

**50 hurt during hartal**

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Besides, several people were injured in sporadic hand bomb explosions.

Thirteen people were injured in Narayanganj, where a bomb was thrown at an LDF rally.

In the capital all vehicles stayed off the streets except some double-deckers of the BRTC which operated in some routes under police escort.

Rickshaws, however, moved freely in many streets.

In some areas, some picketers were rescuing rickshaw-pullers from the overenthusiastic street urchins who always play a significant role in every hartal.

All business centres, markets and educational institutions remained closed.

Life in the city, however, became normal from noon onwards, two hours ahead of the scheduled duration of the hartal. However, the LDF organisers of the hartal, claimed complete success of their first strike call since the alliance came in to being early this year.

Supporters of the Left Front brought out processions in support of their seven demands.

According to reports received from our correspondents, the hartal was observed peacefully in Khulna, Faridpur, Narayanganj, Sylhet and other parts of the country.

Vehicles stayed off the streets, business centres and shops were closed, but production remained uninterrupted in most of the industrial areas in Dhaka, Khulna and Narayanganj.

Inter-city buses did not move during the hartal hours but train and launch services were more or less normal.

Our Chittagong correspondent says: Normal life was partially disrupted in the port city because of the half-day hartal called by the LDF.

No untoward incident was reported during the hartal period. Except rickshaws, other vehicles stayed off the roads while shops and markets were almost shut. Offices, mills and factories operated with thin attendance.

Cargo handling at Chittagong port was normal but delivery of goods to and from the port was suspended. Police contingents were deployed at important points of the city

**Victory for Kumaratunga**

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United National Party, had about 38 per cent. Official results were expected later Thursday.

Winning 62 per cent of the vote, Mrs Kumaratunga scored the largest victory margin since Sri Lanka adopted a presidential system in 1982.

Palitha Pelpola, Mrs Dissanayake's political secretary, conceded defeat. "We believe Mrs Kumaratunga has won," she said.

Mrs Kumaratunga won heavily in war-weary eastern Sri Lanka, where Tamils and Muslims are in the majority. Her margin was 10-1 in Batticaloa, the eastern capital.

Mrs Kumaratunga would be Sri Lanka's first woman president, succeeding Dingiri Banda Wijetunge of the United National Party. As prime minister, she promised to abolish the executive presidency and transfer powers to the parliament and the Prime Minister.

Mrs Kumaratunga's party won parliamentary elections three months ago after promising to open talks with Tamil rebels. That victory ended 17 years of rule by the United National Party.

The peace talks were suspended after her main opponent, Gamini Dissanayake was killed along with 56 other people at an October 24 election rally by a suicide bomber believed to be a Tamil rebel.

Dissanayake's widow, Srimala, replaced him, but she failed to generate a wide sympathy vote and many party officials refused to campaign for her.

Mrs Kumaratunga had said a victory in the presidential election would be a mandate to push ahead with the talks.

Tens of thousands of police and soldiers were stationed throughout Sri Lanka, and police reported about 100 fights between rival groups outside polling stations. Two people were killed, authorities said.

To prevent further fighting, the defence ministry imposed a nationwide curfew effective Wednesday night and Thursday.

**The Midnight File**

**King Hussein in Israel**

TZEMACH (Israel), Nov 10: King Hussein of Jordan, the ink barely dry on his peace treaty with Israel, arrived in the Jewish state for the first time openly today after decades of secret meetings. Israel radio said the King flew in aboard a Jordanian army helicopter to exchange copies with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of the ratified treaty formally ending 46 years of hostility, reports Reuter.

**Walesa fires defence minister**

WARSAW, Nov 10: President Lech Walesa recalled his defence minister Thursday at the motion of Prime Minister Waldemar Pawlak. The dismissal of Defence Minister Piotr Kolodziejczyk follows a conflict between the civilian minister and the military over reforms and control of the army, reports AP.

**Asia Foundation chief due tomorrow**

The President of the Asia Foundation Dr William P Fuller, arrives in the city on Saturday on a three-day visit to Bangladesh, reports BSS.

His trip coincides with the foundation's 40th anniversary, an Asia Foundation press release said.

The foundation opened its office in Dhaka in 1954, making Bangladesh one of its oldest programmes.

Dr Fuller has been president of the Asia Foundation since 1989. Before joining the foundation, he was deputy assistant administrator of the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

Under the aerial attack by Serb forces of Crina goes on at the Muslim enclave of Bihać in the north west of Bosnia, the members of the Bangladesh army contingent are discharging their regular duties under the United Nations Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) there.

The authorities concerned here are maintaining constant communications with the contingent deployed in Bosnia Herzegovina.

**Taslima calls for more democracy in Bangladesh**

PRAGUE, Czech Republic, Nov 10: Bangladesh writer, Taslima Nasreen called for a concerted effort to counter escalating violence against writers and journalists around the world, reports AP.

Nasreen, recently fled her homeland for exile in Sweden. She called for more democracy in Bangladesh and urged writers to unite in defence of free speech.

"Words can be dangerous, words have strength to fight all kinds of darkness," Nasreen told reporters.

Over 400 writers from 87 states, including Arthur Miller of the United States and German author Guenter Grass are attending a meeting of PEN International called to defend tolerance and writers' freedom.

She singled out China, Peru, Syria and Turkey as the most dangerous areas. "We see writers persecuted for religious reasons, killed by drug cartels... and Sarajevo is its own kind of prison," Ackerman said, alluding to the plight of writers in the besieged Bosnian capital.

The 61st World Congress of PEN International is the first held in a formerly Communist country. It was opened by Czech President Vaclav Havel, a former playwright who was jailed for his writings under the Communist regime.

Under the House contract, Republicans will act within 100 days to bring to the House floor measures to require a balanced budget, to revise the Crime Bill passed in the recent session, provide a 500 dollars per child tax credit for families, repeal tax increases on social security and raise social security earnings limits, restore defence spending and limit the number of terms members of Congress can serve.

AP adds: A solemn President Clinton said Wednesday he accepted a share of the blame for the Democrats' loss of both houses of Congress in the midterm elections and asked Republican leaders for a fresh bipartisan start.

Saddened yet defiant, Clinton said he would oppose any proposals that would stall the economic recovery and "take us back to the policies that failed us before" — referring to Republicans' efforts to revive President Reagan's economic policies. And he said he would strongly object if Republicans tried to repeal the assault weapons ban or the Brady Bill handgun control law.

**Republicans**

From Page 1 Col 4

Arkansas will be taking over the banking committees.

Senator Alfonse D'Amato of New York is in line for the Senate committee and James Leach of Iowa is expected to take over the House panel. Both pressed investigations into White House handling of Whitewater issues at hearings earlier this year.

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**Discussion Meeting with Prospective Bidders**

In order to improve the management of Commercial Operation and to increase the collection of revenue, Bangladesh Power Development Board has floated tender in different Daily Newspapers in the recent past to perform the work of Meter Reading, Bill Preparation, Bill Distribution and related work on contract basis for some of the town areas.

A meeting has been arranged on 27.11.94 at 10.00 A M in the Conference Room of BPDB with the prospective bidders in order to discuss the scope of the above work and other detailed conditions. The representatives of all the interested firms (maximum 2 persons) are requested to attend the meeting.

A document has been prepared describing the scope of work & other proposed terms and conditions. Interested firm may purchase a copy of the same from the office of the undersigned on payment of Tk 100.00 (Taka one hundred) in the shape of Bank Draft/Pay Order in favour of Deputy Director (Accounts), COOAC, BPDB, Dhaka.

Biddut/Jan/574 (2)94-95  
D-1143

**Secretary,  
Bangladesh Power Dev. Board**