

DOWN TO EARTH

Problems of City Sanitation

By ASM Nurunnabi

To every citizen of the city, it is clear that there has been no singular improvement in the look of the city which continues to wear an appearance of decay. With the recent change of the head of municipal corporation, hopes were raised about some notable improvement in municipal services. Such hopes mostly appear to have been belied. It is true that with the rapid growth of population, the growth of city areas has been consistently faster than development of infrastructural services. As a result, large sections of the urban population get no benefit from municipal services in such a situation, the more neglected areas are, among others, health, sanitation, urban sewerage and waste management.

The elementary step in city sanitation is proper clearance of garbage. Except for the environs of the few big VIP roads and the sides and areas close to such roads, almost all other places in both old and new Dhaka, present sights of uncleaned garbage on the sides of roads inspire of some recent inconsistent attempts for their clearance.

The slums and semi-slums which have increased in size and number over the years contribute substantially to the deterioration of the over-all sanitation of the city. In the Dhaka city, only half of its population can afford the facility of sanitary toilets. Its floating population, slum dwellers and other poor classes of people are beyond the pale of this facility. In the city, only 15 to 18 per cent of its areas come under the purview of the WASA sewerage system. Poverty and lack of awareness among the people are the main causes of

the deplorable sanitary situation in the city.

The National Sanitation Week was recently observed in the city under the joint auspices of the UNICEF and the Public Health Engineering Department and inaugurated by the Prime Minister. During the week, emphasis was laid on the need for increasing awareness among the people in the matter of sanitation and personal hygiene. Since 1962, under the auspices of the UNICEF, a project has been under implementation for production and distribution of slab toilet facility at a low cost.

The project covers the whole country, but it is a pity that even at a low cost, most poor people in the villages could not afford the facility. It is, however, felt that with the co-operation of NGOs, City Corporation and other public welfare organisations, such low-cost toilet facility can be installed in the city slums, thereby contributing substantially to the improvement of sanitary situation in the city.

An important aspect of public sanitation is represented by public toilets. In this area, serious problems exist. For want of adequate facilities in this behalf, a large number of pedestrians in the city are subjected to serious inconvenience everyday. According to City Municipal sources, the total number of people using city roads is no less than 20 lakh. For the needs of such a large number of road users, the total number of existing public toilets in the city is only 51. As a result of grossly inadequate number of public toilets, the pedestrians are compelled to answer their need in any open space and in its absence near

the fringes of footpaths, presenting unseemly sights.

In the stadium areas, some public toilet arrangements are available on making a small payment for their use. There is a vast multitude of floating population in the city. From such people we can hardly expect payment for the use of such toilet facilities. The important thing is that it is not only necessary to make adequate provision for public toilets in the city but also to ensure their cleanliness and maintenance in the interest of proper sanitary condition.

Associated with the problems of public sanitation are those of sewerage and drainage. Some of the underground sewers, particularly in old Dhaka, date back to the twenties. Their replacement in many areas is long overdue, since leakage or any breakdown is fraught with a serious threat to public health. The surface drains of the city also present no better picture. The extent of environmental pollution resulting from lack of satisfactory system reaches unbearable proportions when there are heavy showers.

It is learnt from City Corporation sources that the work of a Japan-aided project on solid waste management would begin soon to improve the city's garbage disposal system. The World Bank Mission in Dhaka has recently stressed the need for co-ordinated efforts among City Corporation, private sector and NGOs to keep the city clean. It was held that private sector participation can strengthen municipal activities here as in many other countries, particularly in the areas of waste recycling and efficient scavenging management.

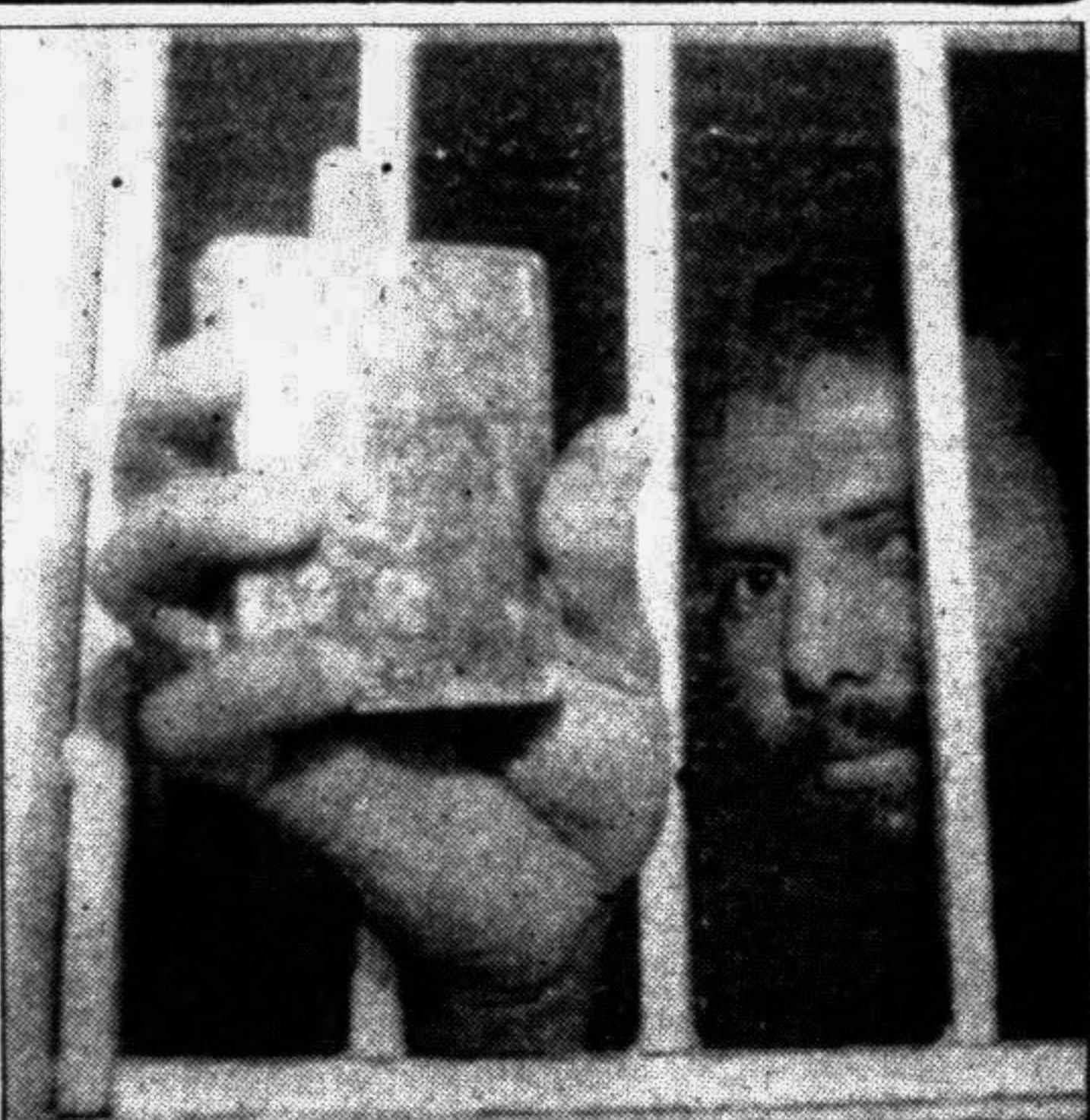
Rabin opposes death penalty to Hamas activist

JERUSALEM, Nov 25: Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said today he opposed the death sentence that an Israeli military court gave a Palestinian guerilla for a bus bombing that killed six people, reports Reuters.

"In principle I believe it would be a blunder to carry out a death sentence," Rabin told Israeli radio in his first comment on the sentence given said Badarneh, 24, on Thursday for the April bombing in Hadera, northern Israel.

"To this day Israel has not put a single Palestinian terrorist to death, and I think this was correct," he said. Legal experts predicted the sentence would be overturned on an automatic appeal to a higher court.

Were the sentence upheld, Badarneh of the Islamic Hamas movement would be only the second person, executed by Israel. Israel hanged Adolf Eichmann, an overseer of the Nazi holocaust, in 1962.



Palestinian Said Badarneh of the Islamic extremist group Hamas, shows a copy of Quran Thursday in an Israeli military court in Jenin, in the West Bank region of Israel. Badarneh, was sentenced to death for his involvement in bombing at the Hadera bus station that killed five Israelis in April. — AFP photo

PID office to be set up in Sylhet: Saifur

SYLHET, Nov 25: Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman has said that a divisional office of the Press Information Department (PID) would be set up in the newly created divisional headquarters at Sylhet to help flourish newspaper industry in this area very soon, reports BSS.

The finance minister said this while speaking at a meeting with the chief guest organised by the 'Sylhet Division Editors' Council' and 'Sylhet Division Newspapers' Association here last night.

Saifur Rahman said a cameraman would be posted at Sylhet and there would also be a teachers' training college in the city soon.

The finance minister said after the announcement by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia regarding creation of an administrative division at Sylhet, gazette notification in this regard is a mere formality now.

No one should have any doubt or confusion in this connection, he said adding that the newly announced division headquarters would enjoy all the facilities like other divisional headquarters of the country.

The function was also addressed by the President of Jatiya Press Club Hasan Shahriar, BNP central organising secretary Abul Haris Chowdhury and publisher of The Daily Star A S Mahmud.

Nepali CP to form govt

From Page 1 Col 7

Representatives and the Congress won 83. Twenty crucial seats went to the Democratic Party. The rest went to small parties and independents.

Earlier Friday, the leaders of the swing party said their first choice was to join a broad-based consensus government.

"We are in favour of an all-party government since there is no clear verdict in favour of any political party," said Prakash Chander Lohani.

"We would be willing to join such a government because that is the mandate. This is what we have told all who have approached us," he said before Friday's decisive meeting.

Adhikary, the communist nominee for prime minister, told The Associated Press Thursday that his first priority would be "to make the constitution and the democratic system strong."

Adhikary, who spent 15 years in Nepal jails for anti-monarchy activity, said he would appoint a judicial commission to investigate alleged human rights abuses during the three years of Congress government and under Birendra's rule.

He also toned down the anti-India rhetoric that marked the communists' election campaign, promising that New Delhi would be the first stop on his traveling itinerary.

"Our relations will be most friendly with both India and China. I can assure you that we will do nothing to impair our relations with India," he said.

Polls in Karnataka

From Page 1 Col 7

to the 224-seat Karnataka legislature during 10 hours of polling across almost half of the coastal state, officials said Friday.

A total of 1,188 candidates were in the fray Saturday, officials said in this Karnataka capital, nearly 800 kilometres southeast of Bombay.

The other half of Karnataka will go to the polls on December 1 along with parts of adjoining Andhra Pradesh, the premier's home state. The final round of balloting in Andhra Pradesh will take place on December 5.

Liberian peace talks collapse

ACCRA, Nov 25: Talks to end Liberia's five-year civil war collapsed when the seven warring factions could not agree on how to share power and West African mediators walked out in disgust, reports AP.

The talks continued today but without West African foreign ministers and an official of the Economic Community of West African States.

"We are stuck," the community's secretary-general, Edouard Benjamin, said as he left Thursday night. The organisation has led the international effort to bring peace to Liberia.

As their leaders met in Ghana, guerillas inside Liberia intensified fighting at the Firestone rubber plantation near Kakata, a town 50 kilometres northeast of Monrovia.

Opposition

From Page 1 Col 3

to give a complete reply after getting a report from his envoy Sir Ninian Stephen, Kibria pointed out.

The opposition leaders are likely to discuss the contents of Chief Emeke's statement today.

The decision of the meeting may be faxed to the Commonwealth Secretary General.

The time of the opposition meeting was not fixed because Sheikh Hasina did not return from Gopalganj till late yesterday.

Kibria said the dialogue can only be resumed if the ruling party agreed to the basic principle of the Opposition demand.

We will not deviate from the basic principles. The principles are not negotiable," Kibria told The Daily Star last night.

He said he had no knowledge of any fresh move from the Commonwealth Secretary General.

The former foreign secretary-turned politician said, "We (the Opposition) would not like anybody to sit for judgement on the political matters of our country," he said. "But we welcome facilitators to end the impasse."

UNB adds: Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim yesterday ruled out the possibility of any further dialogue until the ruling BNP accepts the concept of non-party neutral caretaker government.

"There is no scope of holding a meaningless and unnecessary dialogue. A dialogue can only take place if BNP changes its position and accepts the concept of non-party caretaker government."

Nasim who was a negotiator from the opposition side in the abortive Commonwealth-brokered dialogue said there will be no compromise on the single demand for non-partisan caretaker government.

He said the opposition will not also allow the government to buy time and warned that greater action programme would be declared to realise the demand.

The caretaker movement cannot be suppressed by any means, he said, adding the government would face the same fate of past autocracy, if it tries to foil the current movement by repressive steps.

On the question of resignation, he said, the opposition has already taken the decision and it will be implemented at an appropriate time.

Nasim, the Organising Secretary of Awami League, called for observing the opposition programmes including rail-road blockade on November 29 and 48-hour hartal on December 7-8.

Moudud contradicts

From Page 1 Col 2

not correct. It will also not be correct to say that Sir Ninian maintained strict neutrality in his pre-departure press statement," Moudud Ahmed said responding to Emeke's comments at a news conference in Islamabad.

The JP leader told UNB that "Sir Ninian's statement gave an impression that he was trying to support the proposal of the government." Therefore, Moudud said, the Opposition's reaction to Sir Ninian's statement was fully justified.

Emeka reportedly said in Islamabad Thursday that his envoy had not been partisan in mediating an end to Bangladesh's political crisis. He also expressed his desire to revive the failed dialogue provided he is invited by the government and the Opposition.

Asked about Emeke's possible visit to Dhaka and revival of the dialogue, Moudud said, "We have not received any message of that kind... Once he (Emeka) gets an invitation, only then the Opposition can think of it."

About the reported desire for fresh dialogue of the ruling party leaders, Moudud said the initiative must come from the government and it will have to come with a clear intention of forming a non-partisan neutral caretaker government. "Only then such dialogue can be meaningful."

On the question of the Opposition move for en masse resignation, the JP leader said, "We have not yet fixed the date for resignation, but it will be done soon."

Visit successful

From Page 1 Col 5

vate sectors of the two countries would take effective steps towards further expanding and diversifying cooperation in the fields of trade, industry and manpower.

He said two sides had extensive discussions to further strengthen the SAARC and added that the Bangladesh Prime Minister, current Chairperson of the seven-nation regional forum, had talks with President Gayoom on the need for developing close ties between the SAARC and other regional bodies including the ASEAN and the European Union.

The two leaders discussed many other issues of common concern including the global trouble spots, Rahman said.



A light drizzle over the city forced these slum dwellers and their children to seek warmth of quilt and shawl for most of the day. — Star photo

7 protesters killed in Kerala police firing

CALICUT, India, Nov 25: Police in southern India shot dead seven people today when they fired on protesting communist students who turned violent, officials said, reports Reuters.

"Seven people were killed," senior official Amitabh Kant told reporters in Calicut, a district in Kerala state adjoining Cannanore where the shooting took place.

Police said they fired at the crowd after protesters attacked the car of a visiting state minister.

Around 100 people were injured in the demonstration by the youth and student wings of the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPM), part of a widespread action against the Kerala Government's education policy.

Communist-led opposition parties have called a statewide general strike for Saturday. Kant said this had forced the government to cancel the second days' play in a cricket match in Calicut pitting the touring West Indies team against India's national champions, Bombay.

The match began today. A decision on whether play would resume on Sunday would be taken late on Saturday, Kant said.

"The players' safety has to be assured," he said. "We are not taking chances."

The Press Trust of India (PTI) said police arrested 12 students for burning an effigy of the Chief Minister, K Karunakaran, and tear-gassed picketing students in the state capital, Trivandrum, some 400 km from Cannanore.

Students torched a mail van in the port town of Cochin in central Kerala as students erupted in a backlash of violence after the police firing. Citizens staged protest marches to police stations in several other towns, PTI said.

Victim of wrong diagnosis

From Page 1 Col 8

has been tested in a latest method and it is sure that he has HIV."

However, on Wednesday last another report in the national daily concerned said that Habibur Rahman was not an AIDS patient.

Habibur Rahman said that because of illness he was admitted to Dhaka General Hospital at New Swamibagh on his return to the city from Hong Kong late last month. He alleged that a doctor at the hospital had an altercation with him and at one point the doctor said, "you have brought home a deadly disease from abroad."

The next day, according to Habibur, a nurse told him that he was carrying HIV.

Afterwards, the doctor concerned sent his blood samples to the diagnostic centre with the consequent suffering for him, he said.

Habibur said he was later taken to the Infectious Diseases Hospital where blood tests showed that he was not an AIDS patient. Then the National AIDS Committee and the IPGMR also found similar test results.

He demanded compensation from the diagnostic centre and the doctor concerned at the General Hospital within 24 hours.

When contacted over telephone late last night, a senior member of the National AIDS Committee told The Daily Star that pathological laboratories have been instructed not to disclose the report to the patient concerned if one is tested HIV positive. The laboratories should first inform to the AIDS Committee, he added, requesting anonymity.

He said the case of Habibur Rahman was published in a newspaper before it was referred to the AIDS Committee.

Habibur was tested negative in different tests, he confirmed.

Bosnian troops flee

From Page 1 Col 4

who visited the centre of the town in northwest Bosnia.

The United Nations said a ceasefire went into effect earlier in the day. Fighting, continued afterwards but there were conflicting reports of its level.

The United Nations said shelling had resumed in the afternoon after the defending Bosnian government troops opened fire on Serb forces.

"The town centre was quiet but extremely tense. There was practically no one in the streets, but no sign either of people fleeing the town," Monique Tuffelli, a worker for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, told Reuters by telephone.

"People are extremely desperate, crying openly, they are extremely emotional," she said.

In Sarajevo, Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic said Serb forces had resumed attacks on Bihać.

"They are attacking Bihać again. The shelling has intensified," he told Reuters. "They are attacking by all means and we are resisting."

A reporter at the government-controlled television station in Bihać told Reuters by telephone that shells were falling on the town centre.

"I can't talk. We have to go to the shelters. There is panic in the town. They are shelling the very centre with all sorts of heavy artillery and mortars. We heard they have pierced the defence lines," reporter Aida Skopljak said.

"That was not the case when I was there," Tuffelli

Dhaka in touch

From Page 1 Col 3

Rahman said in Dhaka yesterday, reports BSS.

He said that Bangladesh contingent went to Bosnia on a difficult peace-keeping mission and added that it is aware of the hazards of such an otherwise noble mission.

The Foreign Minister said Bangladesh peace keepers are performing their task under severe adverse conditions and this has earned laurels for the country.

He said the government is in constant touch with the United Nations and sparing no efforts for ensuring supply and other essentials for the troops there.

"We are also in constant touch with the commander of our troops and other relevant people," Mostafiz said.

The Midnight File

Bomb scare on Emirates flight

COLOMBO, Nov 25: More than 200 passengers were evacuated from an Emirates Airline flight at Colombo airport Friday after intelligence reports said a bomb was aboard, officials said. Air Force security men used sniffer dogs, but failed to locate any explosives on the Airbus A300, which was on a stopover from Dubai to Singapore, said an airport official, speaking on condition of anonymity, reports AP.

US seeks better ties with Myanmar

WASHINGTON, Nov 25: Seeking to end a diplomatic stalemate, the United States is talking with the military rulers of Myanmar, a major source of heroin for 600,000 American users. US-Myanmar relations have been at an impasse since the SLORC, or State Law and Order Restoration Committee, took power in 1988 amid worldwide criticism of its stifling the Southeast Asian country's democracy movement and abusing human rights on a massive scale, reports AP.

10 die as rival guerillas clash in Sidon

SIDON, Nov 25: Yasser Arafat's loyalists dislodged dissidents from most of Lebanon's largest refugee camp in street battles that left 10 people dead and 14 wounded today, reports AP.

At least three-quarters of the teeming shanty town of Ein el-Hilweh on the outskirts of Sidon, a port in south Lebanon, was overrun by Arafat's forces during seven hours of combat, some of it house-to-house, police said.

A lull descended on the camp as mediators declared a ceasefire was reached for noon prayers. But dozens of Islamic fundamentalists were seen coming out of mosques armed with machine guns and shoulder-fired rocket launchers to join the dissidents, who counter attacked at 12:30 pm.

Falls of black smoke were soon billowing from the camp. Staccato bursts of machine-gun fire and grenade blasts echoed from the camp when the fighting erupted at 3 am. It raged for nine hours.

Police said thousands of Sidon residents shaken out of bed scurried to basements, thinking Israel had landed troops to crush radical guerillas in the camp, home for 60,000 Palestinians.

Newsprint import

From Page 1 Col 5

through.

PTI report from Calcutta: Zahiruddin Khan today stressed the need for expansion of two-way trade between India and Bangladesh to narrow the present trade gap between the countries.

Zahiruddin said that exports from India to Bangladesh was to the tune of 500 million dollar last year, according to an official estimate. Unofficial sources, however, put the figure at 1.5 billion dollars.

Addressing the members of Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and Industry here, Khan said with the implementation of free market economy and liberalisation policies by both India and Bangladesh, there had been a positive opportunity for the both the countries to increase trade and business. "What we require now is investment inflow into our country not investment outflow," he said.

Urging the Indian industrialists to come forward for massive investment in Bangladesh, Khan said that the present government would offer several facilities for setting up their units there. Besides, 30 per cent of the products of these units would be permitted to be diverted to the Indian market, the Bangladesh minister said.

Hartal at Bogra

From Page 1 Col 5

Satmaitha in the town in the evening. Four people were injured in the action.

Addressing the meeting, the Jamaat leader warned that his party would launch an agitation if the Opposition demand for a caretaker government to conduct elections was not met.

Party's district Ameer Golam Rabbani presided over the meeting, also addressed by Jamaat leaders Abbas Ali Khan, Abdus Sobhan MP, Mujibur Rahman, Abdul Kader Molla, Latifur Rahman MP, Shahiduzzaman MP, Nasiruddin MP and Abdul Rahman Fakir.

Hasina

From Page 1 Col 4

Criticising nearly four years' rule of the BNP, the Opposition leader said the present government has totally failed in every sector. Its only success has been institutionalising corruption, she said.

She accused the BNP government of turning the country into a market of Indian commodities. "The BNP has closed hundreds of mills and factories in the Indian interest, leaving thousands of workers unemployed," she said.

The Prime Minister and most of her ministers have been amassing illegal wealth when the people in northern districts are facing hardship due to drought and famine-like situation.

She demanded that assets of the BNP ministers before and after they were inducted into the cabinet be made public.

Hasina expressed her solidarity with the local demand for Padma Bridge and declaring Faridpur as an administrative division. She also demanded a Girls' Cadet College in Faridpur.

About her party programmes, Hasina said if the Awami League is voted to power, it will introduce district and thana councils to be run by the people's elected representatives for welfare of the common people.

"If the people elect us, we shall eliminate illiteracy within 10 years and strengthen rural economy by setting up agro-based industries," Hasina told the meeting.

The meeting, presided over by Mosharraf Hossain, MP, was also addressed by Abdur Razzaque MP, Sajeda Chowdhury MP, Amir Hossain MP, former MP Imamuddin Ahmed and local leader Habibul Hasan and Khandker Mosharraf Hossain.

Earlier, some 5,000 people from different parties led by District JP leader Mesbahur Rahman and Kajuri UP Chairman Khandker Nurul Hossain joined the AL expressing allegiance to the leadership of Hasina.

About the garage problem, the Pro-Vic said that there was not enough space on the campus for a bus-shed. Besides, a huge amount of money would also be needed to construct a shed.

"Session jam is also another cause of heavy rush in the buses", the Pro-Vic said.

On an average, the students' buses make 10 trips each in the nine routes everyday. The nine routes in which the university buses ply are: DU campus to Gazipur (route name Khanika), Narayanganj (Ananda), Adamjee (Moltee), Postagola (Ullash), Kamalapur (Kinchi), Rampura (Srabon), Mohammapur (Taranga), Mirpur (Chaitale) and Kachukhet (Baishakh).