

Time to be vocal against hartal, says PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday accused the Opposition of resorting to programmes of hartals and sieges to disrupt the socio-economic development of the country, reports UNB.

She asked if the Opposition's hartal, gherao and siege programmes will bring welfare to the people, and said: "Time has come to be vocal against these activities."

Begum Zia was addressing some 2,000 people from Kishoreganj, including leaders and workers of the Awami League, JSD and Jamaat-e-Islami, who came to her Hare Road office last night to join the BNP.

BNP Secretary General and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdus Salam Talukder, Deputy Minister for Shipping A B M Zahidul Huq, Mohammad Akhtaruzzaman MP and local leaders Engineer Mohammad

Yusuf, Habibur Rahman Dayal and Syed Aminul Huq also spoke on the occasion.

The Prime Minister alleged that the Opposition did not want the BNP to implement any development work and the country to become self-reliant.

The Opposition had always tried and were still trying to confuse the people, she said. "But they are not getting any support."

Begum Zia expressed her confidence that the people, who are witnessing the development work of the present government, would not give any credence to the Opposition claims.

She called upon the newcomers to strengthen the BNP for successful implementation of the government's programmes aimed at welfare of the people and overall progress of the country.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a large number of leaders and workers of different political parties from Kishoreganj district, who joined the BNP, at Hare Road Office in the city yesterday. BNP Secretary General and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdus Salam Talukder is seen on her right. — PID photo

Padajatra

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crossing at 3 pm.

The next common programme of the opposition parties is a countrywide rail and road blockade on November 29.

The opposition parties have been boycotting the Jatiya Sangsad since last March and holding hartals and street protests frequently to press their demand, which the government had termed unconstitutional.

Sheikh Hasina, in a statement last night, urged the people to participate in today's Padajatra and the November 29 rail-road blockade with a view to forcing the present government to resign and accept the demand for a caretaker administration.

In her statement, the Opposition leader alleged that the "national demand for a caretaker administration for holding free and fair polls was being ignored by the 'corrupt and terrorist' BNP government. 'Lust for power of an individual and petty party interests have pushed the nation towards a deep crisis,' she said.

The AL chief urged the BNP government to respect the people's will by accepting the demand for holding the next general elections, due in early 1996, under a caretaker administration.

New govt unlikely in Nepal before Tuesday

KATMANDU, Nov 26: A new government is unlikely in Nepal before Tuesday as the governing Nepali Congress party, which finished behind the communists in the national elections, is still exploring the possibility to form a coalition government, reports AP.

The communists have emerged as the single largest group in a hung Parliament and are tipped to form the next government.

But the policy-making body of the Congress met in Kathmandu for 90 minutes on Saturday to discuss ways to remain in power. But they failed to reach a consensus and decided to extend the meeting by a day, said Tara Nath Rana Bhatt, a party spokesman.

The Congress party's efforts to retain power, however, suffered a setback when the pro-monarchy National Democratic Party, which holds the balance of power in the Parliament, spurned its coalition offer on Friday. The Democratic Party decided to sit in the opposition.

In the November 15 voting, the Communists won 88 seats in the 205-member House of Representatives and the Con-

gress won 83 seats. Twenty crucial seats went to the Democratic Party. The rest were won by small parties and independents.

A party that forms a government must win a vote of confidence in Parliament within 30 days of being appointed by the King to retain power in the remote Himalayan land.

On Saturday, Manmohan Adhikary, the communist nominee for prime minister, met with party's newly-elected lawmakers in Kathmandu.

Adhikary, 72, staked his claim to form a minority government during a meeting with the King on Thursday. The King is yet to formally invite any of the parties to form a government.

King Birendra's family ran a feudal Hindu kingdom in Nepal, bordering China and India, for hundreds of years until it became a constitutional monarchy in 1991 after a democratic revolution.

Dissension within the Congress led to the downfall of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala's government in July this year, requiring elections 18 months ahead of schedule.

Accord with Yangon to prevent drug trafficking likely

Bangladesh and Myanmar are expected to sign an agreement on prevention of drug trafficking shortly, reports UNB.

The proposed accord will be initiated during Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury's upcoming visit to Myanmar, official sources here said yesterday.

Matin is scheduled to pay a four-day official visit to Yangon, beginning December 1.

During his stay in Yangon, the Home Minister is likely to discuss with his Myanmar counterpart bilateral matters including curbing transborder crime and smuggling.

Expediting the ongoing Rohingya refugee repatriation will also figure high in the talks.

Nearly a quarter million Myanmar Muslims had fled to Bangladesh in early 1991 in the face of persecution, of whom about 1,12,000 have so far voluntarily returned to their homes.

The two ministers will also discuss expansion of cooperation between the two close neighbours in the fields of trade and other economic co-operations.

200 huts

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had once leased out the land to the residents but later cancelled the arrangement.

A case was registered with the Motijheel police accusing nine slum people of being involved in the incident of fire.

The loss due to the fire could not be known immediately. None was reported injured in the incident.

Airhostesses

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Aviation sources said that the pilot had nothing to do with the situation when an aircraft fell into an airport.

"Modern science is still unable to detect airpockets and wind shear," a senior official of the Biman told The Daily Star. He recalled that a Biman flight from Qatar escaped narrowly from an air pocket during its return to Dhaka.

He said that an aircraft usually survived such situation if it flew at a high altitude.

Dr Milton

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University in the morning. It will also hold a discussion meeting at the Milton square in front of the TSC at 4 pm.

The meeting will be participated among others by Advocate Shamsul Huq Chowdhury, Nirmol Sen, Syed Shamsul Huq, Amir Hossain Anu, Selina Akhter, Fazlul Huq Milon and Enamul Huq Shamim. The meeting will be followed by a cultural function and a drama, 'Court Marshal'.

The Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) will hold a discussion meeting near the grave of Dr Milton at 10.30 am today. BMA President Prof M A Majed will preside.

The BMA will also hold a milad mahfil at the same venue at 1 pm.

The Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO), pro JSD (Inu) Chhatra League and the Samajtantrik Chhatra Front will place wreaths at the grave and the Memorial of Milton in the morning. The student bodies will also hold rallies on the DU campus.

Salam Talukdar

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sition Abdus Samad Azad on the failed Commonwealth-brokered dialogue made at a press conference on November 24.

Salam Talukdar, who was a negotiator from the government side, alleged that the deputy opposition leader had propagated "unrealistic, untrue and motivated theory and information" in the name of giving details on the dialogue.

"They were not even a bit flexible although the government gave enough concession in the interest of the country and democracy," he said holding the Opposition's obstinacy responsible for failure of the dialogue.

He further said that Samad Azad had acted against what he called political culture by describing Commonwealth envoy Sir Ninian's proposal as the third proposal of the BNP.

The BNP leader, however, said that his party had agreed to accept Sir Ninian's proposal but the Opposition didn't.

He warned that the Opposition would be held responsible for any anarchic situation due to the failure of the dialogue.

Criticising the Opposition for their prolonged boycott of Parliament, he said as members of Parliament "our main duties are to make laws, discuss the budget and take decisions on local, national and international problems."

Talukdar pointed out that the Opposition had refrained from carrying out their responsibilities towards the electorate.

The Midnight File

Two killed in Lahore mosque explosion

ISLAMABAD, Nov 26: Two men were killed and seven wounded today when a bomb exploded inside a mosque at prayer time, the national news agency reported. Police in the eastern city of Lahore, the site of the blast, did not say who was responsible for the attack, the Associated Press of Pakistan reported. No additional details were immediately available.

Hamas holds peace rally in Gaza

GAZA, Nov 26: Thousands of supporters of the militant Hamas group held a peaceful rally in a tense Gaza City today, eight days after clashes between the group and Palestinian police in which 12 people died. Organisers said about 20,000 people participated in the rally, a memorial service for Hamas activist Imad Akel who was slain by Israeli soldiers. Palestinian police were not in evidence, witnesses said, reports Reuter.

Chechen rebels take control of Grozny

MOSCOW, Nov 26: Moscow-backed rebels in Russia's breakaway region of Chechnya said today they had seized the stronghold of President Dzhokhar Dudayev and taken control of the regional capital Grozny. Itar-Tass news agency said, reports Reuter.

Tass quoted the opposition Provisional Council as saying the presidential palace was taken after a day of heavy fighting and that forces loyal to Dudayev were retreating to the town's suburbs. No independent confirmation was immediately available.

The council officials said fighting ceased in Grozny after the palace was seized at 4.30 pm (1330 GMT). But Interfax news agency quoted Dudayev's military aide as saying govern-

ment troops were counter-attacking.

Tass quoted the opposition as saying Dudayev was not in the palace and his whereabouts were unknown. But they said his residence, guarded by tanks, was still not in their control.

The Provisional Council, set up earlier in August to topple Dudayev, launched an attack on Grozny on Friday. In the course of the fighting both sides used heavy artillery and armour.

Interfax quoted Sergei Nosovets, a senior official in Russian President Boris Yeltsin's press office, as saying council leader Umar Avturkhanov appeared on Grozny television on Saturday to claim victory.

News Analysis

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dialogue between the exporters and government officials to remove the existing bottlenecks.

The Commerce Ministry is yet to adequately identify the underlying factors behind the recent downward trend. Moreover, hardly any steps have been taken to back up the government's ambitious export-led growth strategy announced in the export policy of 1992.

"Not much has been done from the government's side to boost exports since the announcement of the export policy," pointed out a leading exporter. "The government is just paying lip service."

The government is yet to initiate any significant measures to diversify the export base. Presently it is dominated by two items — ready-made garments (RMG) and jute, which together account for nearly three-quarters of the gross export value.

Whatever diversification has come about in recent years was primarily done under private sector initiative, observers pointed out.

The most significant aspect of the current trend of decline in exports is that the earnings from industrial commodities fell by 7.2 per cent while that of primary commodities marked an increase by 2.53 per cent.

During July and August, export earnings from the garment sector dropped by 24.11 per cent, raw jute by 43.15 per cent and tea by a whopping 57.78 per cent. Only the frozen food, jute goods and leather exports did unexpectedly better and that, too, perhaps due to the initiatives of the exporters themselves.

Given this scenario, the observers noted, even a revised target of 3.1 billion dollars would be difficult to achieve during the remaining months of the current fiscal emphasis.

EU arms ban on Syria goes tomorrow

BRUSSELS, Nov 26: European Union foreign ministers will lift an eight-year-old embargo on sales of arms to Syria on Monday, following an improvement in relations, reports Reuter.

"The embargo will end," an EU diplomat said on Friday.

The decision is due to be taken when ministers from the 12-nation bloc meet a Syrian government delegation on Monday evening after a regular EU session.

The ban was imposed in 1986 after allegations of Syrian involvement in a thwarted attempt to smuggle explosives onto an El Al airliner.

Other sanctions, such as bans on low-level diplomatic meetings, have been gradually lifted between 1987 and 1990, when Syria sided with the west in the Gulf war.

The arms embargo is the last remaining irritant to our relations," an EU official said.

Accreditation policy

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the former information minister, during whose tenure many of the media bodies were split into various groups. The editors contacted felt that this policy is counter-productive and, therefore, should be set aside and a new one formulated after discussions with the widest possible circle of media people.

Accreditation of a full-time working journalist is a functional necessity and is required for discharge of his professional duties, particularly when he has to meet ministers and officials of various government departments.

Besides, in no way the circulation of a newspaper could be the basis for determining the number of journalists to be given accreditation. This is more true for English language newspapers which generally have comparatively less circulation than the Bengali news-

papers. However, the strength of correspondents and the requirements for access to news of English newspapers is comparable to the Bengali newspapers belonging to Category A.

Information Secretary Dr Ekram Hossain, who contacted said the decision to formulate a new accreditation policy was taken with a good intention and was not intended to curtail the rights of journalists involved in the actual work of news gathering. He pointed out that there had been instances in the past when many journalists who were 'inactive' were issued accreditation cards.

Dr Ekram said it was possible that mistakes have been made in formulating the policy and assured "it can always be reviewed."

The Information Secretary also said that editors could come forward with suggestions.

20,000 Somalis flee to Ethiopia

ADDIS ABABA, Nov 26: Renewed fighting between factions in northern Somalia has driven 20,000 people across the border to a camp in Ethiopia, reports AP.

The northern region succeeded in May 1991 and its people escaped the clan fighting and war-induced famine that devastated the rest of Somalia.

But fighting has erupted in recent months as the government of Mohamed Ibrahim Egal tries to consolidate power.

GCO demands reduction of newsprint price

By DU Correspondent
The Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO) gheraoed the BCIC building in the city yesterday morning demanding reduction of the price of papers.

The GCO leaders in a rally during the gherao programme alleged that a section of 'unscrupulous' officials and businessmen were involved in what they said, a deep conspiracy to ruin the newspaper industry by creating artificial crisis of newsprint and whiteprint paper.

Bihac situation grave

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but there were no huts. It was the fourth time in a week that warplanes had taken to the skies to search for Serb targets.

NATO planes also flew over the Mostar area of southwestern Bosnia Friday in a show of support for peacekeepers there. The planes were only asked to fly low, sources said, after Serbs shelled Bosnian government positions north of Mostar.

Bosnian radio said peacekeepers at a UN checkpoint in the area had to take shelter and that several people were injured when a Serb round hit a passenger bus travelling the main road from the coast.

Meanwhile, three US ships with 2,000 marines aboard left France for the Adriatic Sea Friday as a precaution to provide helicopter support for rescuing any downed NATO pilots over the former Yugoslavia.

The Bihac pocket encompasses 2,000 square kilometers (772 square miles) of territory in northwest Bosnia. The UN "safe area" of Bihac is roughly 32 square miles within that. Some 1,200 Bangladeshi UN peacekeepers are posted there to protect the mostly Muslim civilians, estimated at more than 50,000.

Serb forces have seized up to 30 per cent of the "safe area" to the south, southeast and southwest of town.

Lt Col Jan-Dirk von Merveidt, a UN military spokesman in Sarajevo, called the situation Saturday in Bihac "grave."

"Flames could be seen in the area of Vedro Polje and people were seen fleeing from that village" Friday night, he said.

By Saturday morning, the village, 2 to 3 kilometers west of Bihac town, was "in Serb hands," Ivanko said. He did not know the fate of its inhabitants.

A Bosnian army spokesman in Bihac, who would identify himself only as Sandi, said the

town was under "intensified artillery attack" Saturday afternoon from Serb positions, to the south and west.

"Shells are landing everywhere at the moment," he said in a telephone interview with the Association Press. "There is a sense of panic among the population, and an atmosphere of helplessness."

Overnight and early Saturday, at least 31 artillery shells landed near the front-line south of the city centre, Ivanko said.

On Friday, Bosnian Serb leaders demanded the government army's surrender. Reacting to the dispatch of US Marines, Milan Martić, leader of rebel Serbs in Croatia, warned "It would be another grave American mistake."

Krishibid Instt resents donors' prescription

By Staff Correspondent
The Krishibid Institution has expressed concern at the conditionalities imposed by the donor agencies on agricultural credits and grants.

The central executive committee of the institution at a meeting Friday alleged that some of the conditionalities were jeopardising the development and growth of agriculture.

The meeting also said that often the decisions regarding aid for the agriculture sector are made on the basis of discussions between the representatives of government and the donors. Agriculture experts are not consulted for any aid negotiation, it added.

The institution asked the government to study the technical aspects and long term productivity of the projects and their social consequences before accepting any loan or grant.



A traffic police crane hauling away a wrongly parked minibus from the Viswa Road near the city's busy Syedabad bus terminal yesterday. — Star photo

Computer breakdown at Sylhet airport

From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, Nov 26: Passengers of both domestic and international flights are suffering as the computer system of Sylhet Biman office is out of order for the last eight days.

Passengers coming home from abroad on short trips here are the worst sufferers.

When contacted, a Biman official said, a fault in the microwave channels of T&T is the cause of the problem, but a T&T official said, the microwave system was alright but the fault might have been caused due to the conversion of the system into the digital.

Meanwhile, a good number of passengers had to cancel their bookings.

Moni's membership

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the personal hearing were not satisfactory. So your membership is being suspended temporarily.

"Final decision will be taken after assessing your future activities," said the letter Moni received in the evening.

In a press statement in the first week of this month, Moni had said that the BNP should take up the challenge of the Opposition's demand for a caretaker government.

In his reply to the show cause notice, Moni defended himself by saying that nearly 40 ruling party MPs shared his view. He, however, could not name those like-minded colleagues while appearing in person before the standing committee, where he stuck to his position.

500 arms stolen in Egypt

CAIRO, Nov 26: Five hundred automatic rifles and revolvers were stolen from an arms store belonging to the security forces in southern Egypt, and only about 100 have been recovered, police said today, reports AFP.



Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasreen, flanked by two bodyguards, is greeted upon arrival at a Fnac store in Paris where she came to present her book "Lajja" Friday. Some 1200 French policemen were mobilised for her protection, including 45 from the RAID elite unit, ensuring tight security during her 10-day visit to France. — AFP photo