

PM tells Daganbhuiyan meeting Opposition disrupts development process

DAGANBHUIYAN, Fenil, Dec 5. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today warned that the Opposition would have to bear the consequences of damages to be done by their agitation programmes, reports UNB.

"They have to be answerable to the people," she said criticising the Opposition programmes like hartals and blockade.

"The Opposition is desperate to disrupt the development process initiated by the government," she alleged and called upon the people to identify those who want to weaken the democratic process and destroy the country.

Begum Zia, on the first day of her two-day tour of Fenil, was addressing a huge public meeting at Daganbhuiyan Kamal Ataturk High School ground this afternoon.

Presided over by local BNP President MA Hossain, the meeting was also addressed by Energy Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman, State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Harun Al-Rashid, State Minister for Textiles Abdul Mannan, Whip Mahbul Alam Tara, Halima Khatoun MP and local BNP leaders.

Focusing on the present political scenario, the Prime Minister said the BNP upholds people's right to food and vote. "We have passed a bill to strengthen the Election Commission which is aimed at ensuring free and fair polls," she told the gathering.

She said the BNP had created a history in the country by passing the bill but lamented that the Opposition did not participate in discussion on the bill.

Begum Zia said it is clear to the people what the Opposition really wants. "They (Opposition) do not want free and fair polls and want to go to power by any means," she alleged.

She again made it clear that the BNP would not concede to any illogical, undemocratic and unconstitutional demand. The Prime Minister declared her government would run the full term according to the mandate given by the people.

"We did not come to power through bullet, nor in the darkness of night. We have the mandate of the people through a free and fair election," she reminded.

The prime minister accused a particular party of shaking hands with the autocratic regime in 1986 in a bid to go to power. "Failing in all their plans they (Opposition) are creating indiscipline," she added.

BSS adds: Earlier, on way of her 12 kilometer journey from Fenil to Daganbhuiyan, thousands of people greeted Begum Zia at various places including Paachgachia, Joy Laskara, Chiloniya and Bakerbar.

The Prime Minister assured the people of expansion of rural electrification and gas supply in the localities, coverage of the NWD telephone network, raising the 31-bed hospital to a 50-bed one and solving other local problems.



President of the Gano Forum Dr Kamal Hossain addressing a public meeting at Purana Paltan in the city yesterday.

Dr Kamal From Page 1 Col 8 come the crisis.

Referring to the Commonwealth-brokered dialogue, he said despite some progress all on a sudden it collapsed but people do not know why it had collapsed.

He said certain elements were active in creating deadlock in Parliament as well as making the dialogue abortive.

On the question of Opposition's planned resignation from Parliament, Dr Kamal said "please don't resign. It will be a big mistake. People have given you the responsibility for five years."

The Gano Forum leader was critical of the Awami League for launching united struggle with the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat. People can not understand how an autocratic party which destroyed electoral system through vote dacoity and another party which opposed the Liberation War and killed people in 1971 could believe in democracy and fair voting.

"As a man of the street and an admirer of the Awami League I think Sheikh Hasina should come out of the grip of the evil forces to salvage democracy," Dr Kamal said.

He urged the Prime Minister to take initiative for resumption of the dialogue and request the Leader of the Opposition to respond to her initiative.

"Don't create a situation like Burundi and Rwanda," he said.

The rally was addressed by Shamsuddin MP, Pankaj Bhattacharya, Major General (ret'd) Khalilur Rahman, Mostafa Mohsin Montu, Advocate Zahurul Islam, Rabeya Seraj and Ziaul Haq Tulu.

Functioning of Sylhet div HQs by Jan 1 demanded

From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, Dec 5: Speakers at a rally held today at power point here have demanded for immediate functioning of the divisional headquarters in Sylhet by January 1 next. Otherwise, fresh agitations would be launched, they added.

The meeting arranged by the Sylhet Division Movement and Development Council, was addressed by Advocate Abed Raja, president central committee of the forum Wayour Rahman Chowdhury, Syed Manjur Uddin Ahmed, AR Rahmani and Dipu Ranjan Chand while Rafiqul Haque presided.

The teachers at a press conference said, the misdeeds of these teachers — Professor A H M Mahbul Alam and Professor Harun Rashid Khan — have tarnished the image of the department and destroyed the career of a number of students of Economics of the university and its affiliated colleges.

The allegations against these teachers include selling of question papers and giving extra grades in return for money.

But Professor Alam and Professor Khan told this correspondent yesterday that the allegations were motivated and part of a conspiracy against them.

At the press conference, the teachers opposed to the two demanded that Professor Alam be dismissed by December 22 and the report of the probe instituted earlier to investigate into the allegations be published immediately.

"They alleged that the university authorities were reluctant in taking action against these two teachers. More than 16 teachers out of around 30 of the department were present at the press conference.

The teachers showed some instances of alleged corruption indulged in by these teachers and some photocopies of letters from students urging the authorities to look into the charges.

The press conference was attended among others by Professor A K Monwaruddin Ahmed, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Professor Ashraf Uddin Chowdhury, Prof Abu Ahmed, Abul Barakat, Dr Nasrin Khandaker, Farah Hasin and Yawar Shams.

Govt prone to using force in resolving problems: Hasina

Awami League president and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the present government are prone to using force in resolving problems that can be solved through discussion, reports UNB.

"No solution will come by applying force... it may be possible to subdue people for a while by muscle power, but impossible to conquer their mind," she told a gathering of former leaders of the Chhatra League at her Minto Road official residence in the evening.

Hasina said the law and order of the country had deteriorated abruptly. The government, she alleged, has increased repression of the people as they lost confidence on it.

"For clinging to power, they (Government) are pushing the country towards anarchy and confrontation, and have increased atrocities," she said.

"We are now very worried about the situation in the country when the head of government delivers speeches instigating the students," Hasina said.

The Awami League chief said her party was struggling to establish the voting right of the people, but the ruling party was looking for opportunities of rigging.

"We want to stop the tug of war for power, and for that we demanded constitutional provisions for a caretaker government for at least three terms to ensure neutrality of the national polls," she said.

Hasina called upon the former leaders of her party's student front to motivate the people about the importance of a caretaker government and to intensify the struggle to save people from the clutches of "This corrupt and inefficient government".

She said the anti-liberation axis, which came to power after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, had tarnished the spirit of the Liberation War. That axis could not offer the people anything but suppression, exploitation and misuse, she alleged.

Earlier, at the beginning of her speech, Hasina recalled the contributions of late Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy to the cause of democracy and paid homage to the late leader.

The gathering was also addressed by central Awami League leaders Abdul Mannan, Amir Hossain Amu, Zillur Rahman, Abdur Razzak MP and Obaidul Kader.

Situation at Aricha worsens

MANIKGANJ, Dec 5: Several thousand people remained stranded at Aricha terminals as police and BIWTC workers frantically kept trying to clear traffic jam following ferry disruption, reports UNB.

The situation worsened today as authorities had to suspend ferry services from Aricha, Nagarbari and Daulatdia

ghats midnight Sunday till 5 am today due to loading and unloading difficulties at the terminals.

Some 2,000 trucks are awaiting to be ferried since midnight Sunday.

The traffic congestion for the last two days was due to disruption of ferry services for nearly 18 hours following a clash between two rival groups of workers on ferry Shah Mok-dum early Sunday morning.

BIWTC sources said traffic load of last night eased and the situation improved by the afternoon after local police had intervened. But only 30 per cent of the stranded traffic was possible to be cleared till time, they said.

Three children died instantaneously and 30 others were injured when a bus rammmed into a road-side shop on the Gopalganj-Takerhat road yesterday.

Two of the deceased were identified as Rabeya, 7, and Najmul, 9.

The other child could not be identified immediately.

Eight out of the injured were admitted to the Gopalganj Sadar hospital in a critical condition.

Suhrawardy's anniversary of death observed

The 31st death anniversary of Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, a champion of democracy, was observed throughout the country yesterday, reports BSS.

Discussions and seminars were organised at different places of the country.

In Dhaka, leaders and workers of different socio-political organisations placed wreaths at his mazar near the old High Court premises. Fateha and prayers were offered there for the peace of the departed soul.

Several newspapers carried special articles on Suhrawardy, recalling his contributions.

Some of the organisations including the Shaheed Suhrawardy Smriti Sangsad, Shaheed Suhrawardy Jatiya Smriti Sangsad, Bangladesh Jatiya Bektitwa Gabesona Kendra, Jatiya Janata Party and the Jatiya Islamic Dal arranged discussions on his life and works.

UNB adds: Meanwhile, leaders of the Awami League yesterday accused the ruling BNP of jeopardising the democratic process.

Addressing a memorial meeting at Bangabandhu Avenue on the occasion of Suhrawardy's death anniversary they said the late leader throughout his life had struggled to establish a democratic dispensation in the society.

Contrary to his ideals, they said, the ruling party has put the democratic process in jeopardy to protect its own interests.

Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman and party leaders Amir Hossain Amu, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury and Abdul Jalil were among those who addressed the meeting.

Senior Awami League leader Abdul Mannan, who presided over the meeting, said establishment of democracy was the dream of Suhrawardy and the AL was striving hard under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina to consolidate democracy in the country.

Clash over relief in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, Dec 5: Seven people were injured, one seriously, in a clash between two groups over relief distribution at Sayedabad union in Sadar thana today, reports UNB.

Fazlul Karim, 26, of Mohonpur village under the thana was admitted to Sirajganj General Hospital in a critical condition while six others were released after first aid.

Police said, the clash erupted when a group of 20 men attacked the Sayedabad Union Parishad office and demanded wheat from the chairman.

Shopowners concerned at hartal call

The Federation of Bangladesh Shopowners' Association (FOBSOA) yesterday said the business community could no longer remain silent as they were incurring financial loss due to the deep economic crisis created by the prolonged political impasse.

"Economic activities in the country are controlled by the business community while the government's economic activities are dependent on foreign loans and grants," leaders of the FOBSOA in a press statement said.

FOBSOA chairman Amir Hossain Khan, senior vice chairman MA Zaman Manju and secretary general SA Kader Kiron welcomed the efforts of the Bangladesh Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) to "resolve the political crisis through dialogue."

The statement said since the business community contributed much to the growth of the economy, the government should welcome the efforts of the FCCCI to resolve the political impasse.

The FOBSOA leaders said, they had earlier requested the political parties to shun agitational programmes.

20 bodies

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Kafi 55, Falzunnisa 95 and Safia Khatun, 14, of Bhairab thana.

The bodies of nine other persons whose identities were not known, were brought to the district headquarters today.

A namaj-e-Janaja was held at the town Jame mosque and later the bodies were buried at the central graveyard by the district administration after Asr prayers.

Meanwhile, a three-member enquiry committee has been formed with the additional district magistrate to investigate into the incident, the deputy commissioner said today.

Rescue operation was continuing till this afternoon.

The Midnight File

Babri Masjid action body takes cautious step

LUCKNOW, Dec 5: The All India Babri Masjid Action Committee has announced that it had nothing to do with the offering of prayers at Ayodhya on December 6 or observe the day as black day. In a statement, the committee convenor, Zafaryab Jelani and the president, Abul Barkat Nazmi, said, "We want that Muslim brothers should offer prayers in their respective mosques and pray for the reconstruction of the mosque in Ayodhya," reports PTI.

US Treasury Secy to resign

WASHINGTON, Dec 5: Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen plans to resign early next year, depriving President Clinton's administration of one of its most respected senior policy-makers, administration officials said Monday. The officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that Bentsen, 73, wanted to return to Texas to go into business. A date has not been decided, the officials said, reports AP.

Resignation of Opposition

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for such an administration would no longer exist," the opposition leader said. "In that case, we would have to press for the immediate ouster of the BNP government," he added.

A legal frame work (LFO) will be an imperative for the Opposition after the resignation, suggesting how to hold the national polls under a non-partisan government. Opposition sources noted.

According to the agreement reached by the Opposition leaders yesterday, the proposed LFO would suggest the President to dissolve the present parliament on the advice of the prime minister, appoint a non-partisan prime minister and a non-party cabinet to conduct the next polls.

Replying to a question, a top AL leader told The Daily Star that intensified agitations against the government would compel the present prime minister to advise the head of state to dissolve the Jatiya Sangsad. We shall neither participate in the general elections under the Khaleda Zia

Dhaka, Colombo
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Director (South Asia and SAARC) MNG De Silva.

Briefing newsmen on the outcome of the talks, Foreign Secretary Osmany described it as fruitful. He said the two foreign ministers, who focussed on the progress in implementation of the decisions of the last SAARC summit in Dhaka, felt the urgency of moving the regional cooperation in the context of SAARC so that the people in the region could be benefited from the collective efforts.

Both sides agreed to activate the South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA). Osmany told reporters.

The two foreign ministers agreed that there should be exchange of visits between private sectors of the two countries to boost business and economic cooperation between the two South Asian countries, Osmany said.

They discussed establishment of direct airlink between Dhaka and Colombo and underlined its importance in boosting cooperation between the two countries, he said.

Kadirgamar will further discuss the matter of airlinks with the State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism when they meet today, he added.

Mostafiz, greeting his Lankan counterpart on his visit to Bangladesh, hoped that the relations between the two countries would continue to grow stronger in days ahead. Kadirgamar reciprocated.

The Sri Lankan Foreign Minister invited his Bangladesh counterpart to visit his country.

The Lankan Foreign Minister yesterday morning visited the national mausoleum at Savar for paying tributes to the martyrs of 1971 Liberation War.

Kadirgamar will address a press conference at the state guest house Padma at 6:15 pm before leaving Dhaka for New Delhi.

Lankan FM

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changed world and expressed her optimism that if all its members work unitedly, many of the problems of the region could be solved.

Describing the traditional ties between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka as very warm, historic and close, she hoped this relationship would further strengthen in the years to come with the expansion of bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

The Prime Minister conveyed her invitation to Sri Lankan President Chandrika to visit Bangladesh.

Begum Zia said she would pay an official visit to Colombo soon and added she was looking forward to meeting the Sri Lankan President.

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister ANM Eusuf, Foreign Secretary MR Osmani, Bangladesh Ambassador to Sri Lanka Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury and Lankan Ambassador in Dhaka CR Jatasinghe were present.

Shortest sitting of JS

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the House witnessed disposal of a crucial call attention notice on the alleged anti-social activities of the Jamaat and Shibir.

Major (Retd) Akhtaruzzaman of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), while calling attention of the Home Minister to the issue, told the House the Jamaat-e-Islami and its student front, the Islami Chhatra Shibir, were involved in attacks on the general students in educational institutions across the country.

He also told the House that the Jamaat had recently changed its colour and is now out, in collaboration with the Awami League (AL), to destabilise the society.

The treasury bench legislator said that the Jamaat-Shibir axis should be resisted at any cost and dealt with severely by the government. Most of the MPs present in the House supported his view by thumping their benches.

Responding to Akhtaruzzaman's contention, Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury told the House that the government was determined to curb anti-social activities with the help of the law enforcing agencies and cooperation from the people.

Jute mills workers on 72-hr strike in Khulna

From Our Correspondent
KHULNA, Dec 5: Over five thousand workers and employees of Sonali, Ajax and Mohsin Jute Mills of Atra-Mirerdanga Industrial Area have gone on a 72-hour strike from 6 am today.

Bangladesh Patkal Sramik-Karmachari Federation called the strike to realise its seven-point demand including implementation of wages commission, release of labour leaders, payment of all arrears bonuses and dearness allowances.

According to sources, the jute mills will incur a loss of Tk 25 lakh and 16 thousand due to the strike everyday.

Ex-Natore chamber president's wife murdered

From Our Correspondent
NATORE, Dec 5: The wife of a noted businessman here was murdered, allegedly by her chauffeur, Sunday night.

Selina Banu, 35, wife of Mosharraf Hossain, ex-president of the Natore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NCCI), and her only son, Olive, 8, were in the house at Mirapara in the town during the incident.

The driver, Shahjahan Ali Babu, 30, was detained by police for interrogation.

According to police, Babu entered the house on the plea of handing over the keys to a micro bus he used to drive.

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Democratic approach best way to tackle insurgency

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman yesterday said a total democratic approach is the best way to tackle and resolve insurgencies, reports UNB.

"It is only a democratic government that can handle such a situation in the best possible manner, and Bangladesh provides a good example," he told a seminar in the morning.

Mostafiz was inaugurating the two-day annual seminar on "Counter Insurgency Operation," organised by Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) at Mirpur.

Commandant of the DSCSC Major General Mostafa Kamaluddin also addressed the function attended by scholars from home and abroad, diplomats and senior military officials.

The three technical sessions on the first day were chaired by Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, Dr Talukder Muniruzzaman of DU's Political Science department and The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam.

Dr. Intiaz Ahmed and Muhammad Shahiduzzaman of the DU, Major General WR Wigeratne of the Sri Lankan Army, Colonel Fred Bryant of the US Army War College, Commandant of Bangladesh Military Academy Brigadier Syed Muhammad Ibrahim and Colonel Shafi Mohammad Me-

hoob presented papers during the sessions.

Dr Ataur Rahman of the DU, Dr Iftekharzaman of BIIS, Dr Shah Jalal of the Jahangirnagar University and Brigadier Imamuzzaman of the Bangladesh Army took part in discussion on different papers presented on the first day.

The seminar will have a total of five technical sessions.

Inaugurating the seminar, the foreign minister, a retired Lieutenant Colonel turned politician, said insurgencies and their specific nature depend, to great extent, on the way they first begin and are subsequently sustained or encouraged.

Factors, both internal and exogenous, to a particular country play an important role in their evolution," Mostafiz said stressing the need for identifying the main causes and the supplementary factors first for handling such insurgencies.

Referring to the crisis in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Mostafiz said the government has taken various political, economic and social measures along with diplomatic initiatives to improve the situation in the hill districts and help the political process.

He mentioned the role of the security forces in maintaining law and order and providing a conducive atmos-

phere to hold dialogues for a peaceful solution to the CHT problem.

The foreign minister said counter-insurgency programmes should have their corresponding diplomatic component where insurgency is fueled or sustained from outside.

"Bangladesh believes that in a regional context all countries should realise that promoting insurgency from outside in another country may be self-defeating in the long run, particularly if it is done with an incitement to violence."

He warned that such culture of violence once nurtured inevitably spills over and impacts on and fuel similar insurgencies in all the contiguous areas.

Mostafiz suggested careful promotion of good neighbourly relations and positive actions taken in this regard.

The retired lieutenant colonel said the nature of counter insurgency operations should be carried out with the ultimate objective to help and benefit the majority who need peace and orderly situation the most.

Bangladesh is firmly wedded to such an approach which, the foreign minister said, deserves resolute support by all of us who value peace, progress and stability for a worthwhile cause.