



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a public meeting at Maheshkhali in Cox's Bazar district yesterday. — PID photo

BNP tested friend: PM

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foreign aid after independence.

"You have to be careful," she told the people and said her government sincerely wants to end the politics of loot.

Presided over the thana BNP president Abul Kalam Azad, the meeting was also addressed by Communications Minister Col (ret'd) Oli Ahmad, Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman, PM's special envoy Morshed Khan, State Minister for Land Kabir Hossain, State Minister for Planning Dr Moyeen Khan, DUCSU VP Amanullah Aman MP and Rozy Kabir MP.

The Prime Minister dug into the past of her opponents, saying those who are talking of voting right today had snatched ballot boxes during their regime to declare their candidates elected.

Those who had established one-party rule during their period now talk tall of democracy," she said, without naming the Awami League.

Begum Zia also reminded that freedom of speech was curbed by closing down most newspapers and special forces were raised to gag those who rose against them.

The Prime Minister said the opposition parties, seeing the programmes being carried out by the government, have been puzzled and were trying to hinder the efforts.

Begum Zia reiterated her party's pledge to carry forward the development programmes, ensure national progress and strengthen the democratic process.

She called upon the people

to extend more support for implementation of the government's programmes. "Bangladesh is not only a country of calamities... It is also a country of progress and probabilities," she told the people of the coastal thana.

Referring to the problems of the islanders, the Prime Minister assured that bridges over the Chaukhali and Sangu rivers would be constructed soon. Ferry service between Maheshkhali and Badarkhali will commence immediately and plans will also be taken to build a bridge.

She also assured necessary steps for saving the Adhinath temple on the off-shore island.

On arrival at the island, the Prime Minister unveiled the foundation plaque of Shrimp Landing and Service Centre planned to maintain quality of shrimp produced in the maritime area before reaching processing units.

Earlier, on the second day of her two-day trip to Cox's Bazar district, Begum Zia laid the foundation of the local Shilpakala Academy complex which will have an eye and a children's hospital near the tourist beach.

She also inaugurated a Diabetic Hospital in the town set up by Cox's Bazar Foundation.

The Prime Minister on her way to Moheshkhali island stopped over at Sonadia, another potential tourist island in the Bay just six miles off Cox's Bazar. She talked to a section of the 1500 population living mainly on fishing on the 4.63 square-mile land.

5 killed in separate incidents

By DMCH Correspondent

Five persons were died and one was injured in separate incidents in and around the city yesterday.

A pedestrian was killed when a speeding truck ran over him at Gabtali bus stand at midnight yesterday.

The victim Mohammad Shafi, 20, was seriously injured and sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he succumbed to his injuries at about 11:30 am yesterday.

A young man drowned at a ditch at East Nandapara under Sabujbagh Police Station last night.

The victim who could not be immediately identified was in his thirties. Police recovered the body at 11:30 yesterday morning and sent it to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

One Mohammad Babir, 22, was injured in a bomb explosion at Mirpur at 3 pm yesterday.

Sutrapur hartal

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elections under a neutral caretaker government.

Mohammad Ashraf Uddin, Joint Secretary of Ward 76 unit of Juba League, was chopped to death by an armed group at Sharat Gupta road in Sutrapur thana Sutrapur night.

Addressing the press conference at the Awami League central office, Mantu said, "We do not believe in the politics of killing and terrorism."

He said, "when the head of government instigated the so-called students for terrorism we apprehended that the government will follow the heinous path to protect the chair, and our apprehension was not wrong."

"And the terrorist group of the BNP killed our honest active dedicated worker just a day after the Victory Day," Mantu told newsmen.

He also demanded arrest of Makbul Islam Tipu and his brother Apu for their alleged involvement in the killing and informed that case was fled against Babu, Islam, Shabuddin, Shajahan and Shakil in connection with the killing.

Habib alleged when he was playing carom at a club of the Awami Shechasebi Dal (pro-Awami League voluntary organisation) at 3 pm a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activist, Mhanan threw a hand bomb causing the injuries on his person.

Habib who received injuries in his face, chest and hands was admitted to the DMCH.

UNB adds: Three members of a family were killed when a truck hit an auto-rickshaw near Baorbil on the outskirts of the city on the Dhaka-Mawa road yesterday, family sources said.

Nasima Begum, 22, her brother Zahidul Huq, 15, and son Al Amin, 5, met with the accident in the morning when they were returning home from Zia International Airport by the auto-rickshaw after seeing off Amir Hossain.

Nasima's husband Amir Hossain of Bagpur village in Keraniganj thana left for Saudi Arabia on the day.

The bodies were sent to Mittford Hospital for autopsy.

Fresh formula

Speaker said, "If it comes to a final shape, I will meet her."

An opposition source said that the new formula may be discussed at the joint meeting of the opposition parties scheduled today at 6 pm at the Sangsad Bhaban.

But the source, a senior leader of the AL, was not so optimistic that the opposition parties would accept the formula. The issue of a non-party national government was also in the mind of the two sides, he said.

A ruling party source said that the matter would be discussed at the BNP standing committee meeting likely to be held today or tomorrow.

The source, a minister, said that they tried to convince the major opposition parties to be 'flexible about the chief of an interim government.'

Fast-unto-death threatened for Khaleda-Hasina dialogue

A human rights group will go on fast-unto-death on December 27 if the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition do not sit for talks to resolve the lingering political crisis, reports UNB.

Bangladesh Human Rights Commission announced its die-in programme at a press conference held at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

"You, the two leaders, sit for a dialogue and solve the problem. It is our sincere belief that you will be able to save the countrymen from the prevailing situation through your patriotism, political wisdom and sacrifice," the Commission said in an appeal to Begum Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina.

Honorary Executive Director of the Commission KM Haq Kaiser read out the statement at the news conference, attended by its President Kazi Abdur Rezzak, UNB Chairman and Adviser of the Commission Amanullah Khan, Vice President Azharul Kabir and Advocate Nasreen Ahmed.

They noted with concern that democracy may be at stake and human rights infringed if the prevailing situation continues to prevail upon the volatile political arena. "A poor country like ours cannot afford reel under unending crisis," the statement said urging the two leading ladies to end their standoff on the issue of caretaker government.

One killed in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Dec 19: A young man was chopped to death in Sylhet town this afternoon.

The victim, Tajul Islam, 22, younger brother of the owner of a restaurant at Subidbazar area of Sylhet had an exchange of words with some customers this morning in the restaurant.

At one stage, he manhandled one of the customers. Being agitated on the matter a group of about 7 or 8 persons attacked the restaurant and swooped on Tajul about 4 pm.

They chopped him severely with a sharp weapon. Tajul died in the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital immediately after admission.

A case has been registered with the Kotwali police but no arrest has yet been made, police informed.



Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina at the Bangladesh Krishak League Conference '94 at Ramna Park in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Hasina reminds govt

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tion leader said that the ruling party had rejected all Opposition-sponsored bills and resolutions on various matters of public interest.

Referring to Opposition walkouts from the House protesting the government's 'anti-people acts', Hasina said, "Walkout is a recognised way of protest in a democratic system but the Leader of the House is not aware of it."

Chaired by the Krishak League president Rahmat Ali, MP, the inaugural session of the conference was also addressed by AL leaders Abdur Razzak, Abdul Jalil, Rashed Mosharrar, Matia Choudhury and Abdul Mannan.

The conference was attended by farmers from across the country.

The AL chief accused the BNP government of establishing a 'one-party' system in the country and thereby pushing the nation towards destruction. "Stability is a must for

economic growth and survival of the peasants on whom the nation's progress is dependent," she said.

Hasina said the BNP government betrayed the peasants by not fulfilling its pre-election pledges for them. This government increased the prices of agricultural inputs and failed to ensure fair prices of agricultural products that had ruined the growers, she added.

Hasina pledged that if voted to power her party would meet the farmers' demands and ensure fair price of their products.

About the demand for polls under a caretaker administration, the AL chief reiterated that such an arrangement would not only ensure proper exercise of the people's franchise but would also end corrupt practices by an elected government and make it really accountable to the electorate. "Introduction of such a system will also empower the voters and make them true source of power," she stressed.

CHT peace talks resume Dec 26

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 19: The postponed peace talks between the Parbatia Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), the parent organisation of the Shantibahini, and the parliamentary sub-committee, is now scheduled to resume on December 26, according to official sources.

The date was refixed in consultation with the leaders of the PCJSS, sources said. The parliamentary sub-committee, headed by Rashed Khan Menon MP and the PCJSS team, led by its president, Shantu Larma, will hold the fourth round of talks at Dudukchhari border village under Panchhari thana of Khagrachhari hill district.

Earlier, the dialogue was scheduled to be held on December 12, but postponed due to preoccupation of the government, sources said.

Meanwhile, the government is expected to review the progress of talks held so far with the Shantibahini leaders at a Hill Tract Council meeting and take further decisions for resolving the long-standing CHT issue.

The ceasefire now holding in the insurgency-torn hill districts will expire on December 31.

BNP nomination seekers asked to collect forms

From Staff Correspondent

Candidates seeking nominations for the by-elections to Sherpur-3, Brahmanbaria-6, Bakerganj-6 and Natore-3 from the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) have been asked to collect forms from the central office of the party, reports BSS.

The forms, which can be obtained on payment of Tk 300, will be available from December 20 to 24 (10 am to 5 pm).

The by-elections to the constituencies will be held on January 25, 1995.

Hartal in Sylhet on Jan 11

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Dec 19: The greater Sylhet Ganadabi Parishad will hold a 'sit-in' on December 24 and observe a half-day hartal on January 11 in the district to press the demand for immediate functioning of the newly formed Sylhet division.

The parishad announced the programme at a meeting held at its office tonight. The speakers at the meeting expressed concern at the 'unusual' delay in starting the functioning of the divisional headquarters.



Stranded Pakistanis brought out a procession in the city yesterday demanding immediate repatriation. — Star photo

Biharis threaten self-immolation in January

The stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh might go for self-immolation in January if their repatriation does not begin as per a Pakistan-Bangladesh joint declaration, reports UNB.

Nasim Khan, Chief, Patrol of the Stranded Pakistanis General Repatriation Committee (SPGRC), told a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday that they were determined to go for extremities like court arrest, self-immolation and crossing international borders to reach Pakistan.

There has been no positive sign of starting repatriation by December as promised by Pakistan Foreign Minister Sardar Aseef Ahmed Ali.

When contacted, Syed Sharfuddin, Counsellor of Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka, however, said there was no such deadline given by the Pak foreign minister for the repatriation of the stranded Pakistanis.

"Flats are completed, but for repatriation finance and other matters are involved," he said, adding "Pakistan government has not changed its position about the repatriation of the stranded Pakistanis from Bangladesh."

ADB for \$350m private sector power plant

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He recalled how Bangladesh undertook three major initiatives at around the time he first came here in November 1991. "When I came here everything was quite new: the new democratic government, the economic reforms was just initiated and there was a new emphasis on private sector-led growth from the public sector-led growth strategy followed earlier. It was a momentous time when Bangladesh wanted to make big changes."

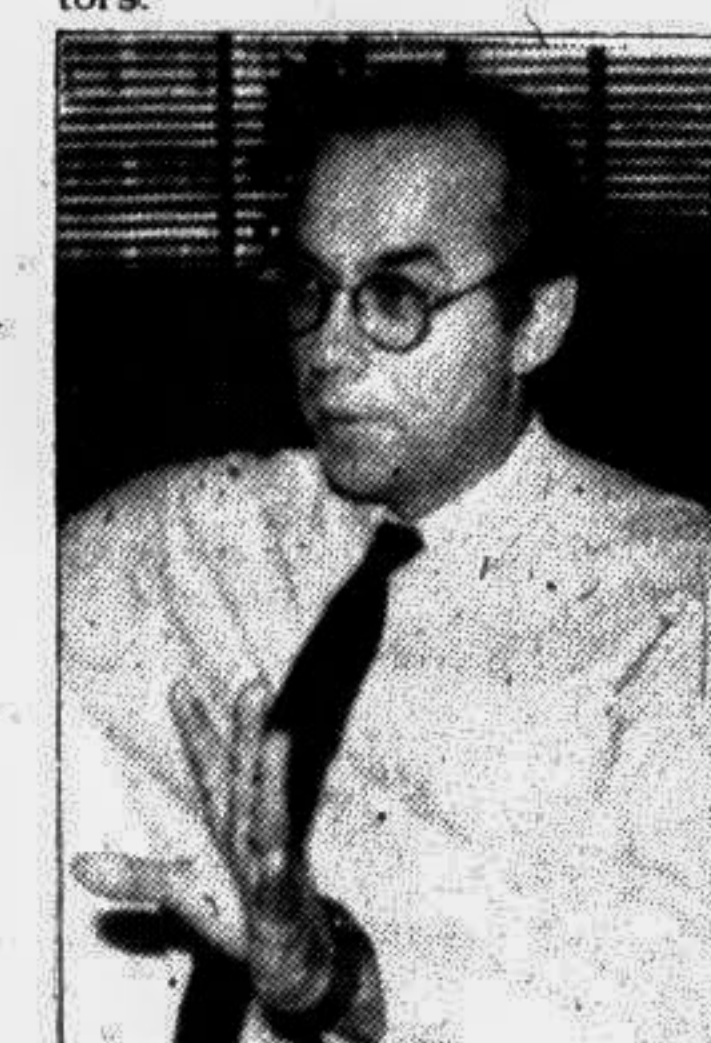
But what has been the achievements in the economic front over the past three years? The results have been mixed with some success and some failures, he said while hastening to add "I think it is important not to see the momentary ups and downs negatively. Achieving macro-economic stability is clearly a success and a major achievement, van der Linden pointed out. "That is why foreign institutional investors are coming to invest in the country's stock market and serious investors are looking to invest in the power sector."

Another positive factor, he said, is that there is a clear recognition of the need to initiate reforms and attempts have been made to undertake reforms in each sector. "However, the reforms initiatives are facing problems in some areas and has achieved success in others."

There has been no opposition to reforms in the railway and the agriculture sectors and there has been good progress in those areas, he noted. And although the overall capacity of both the health and

education sectors have been increased in recent years, he said that both are "still a long way from ensuring quality."

On the other hand, he noted, the reform initiatives in the power sector and the privatisation drive are both facing stiff opposition from vested quarters. "People who have benefitted from the existing system are resisting the reform initiatives in these sectors."



Geert Vander Linden, Citing examples from the East Asian countries, van der Linden suggested organising a constituency for reforms, of people who clearly perceive the benefits and support the reforms and can act as a pressure group.

On the energy sector reforms, the ADB official noted the 'big progress made during the last four months when the cabinet approved the power sector reform programme and the cabinet committee on fi-

nance approved setting up of a 60mw power plant in Mymensingh under the newly formed rural power company with private sector participation. Recent signing of exploration contracts by foreign companies are also positive signals, he said.

Asked if the bottlenecks in project implementation have been removed, van der Linden said: "Some progress has been made but more is needed to be done. The fundamental causes — ownership of projects, quality of designing, slow procurement, delay in appointing consultants and poor project management — that delayed project implementation in the past are still there."

He, however, added that alongwith increased internal resource allocation for the annual development plan, some government agencies are now capable of developing their own projects. "Thus, not only financial dependence is being removed, (foreign) consultant dependence is also being lessened."

The Manila-based ADB is currently funding some 47 investment projects in the country in a wide range of areas including agriculture, communications, energy, education, health, urban development, health, forestry and poverty reduction.

What are the areas the ADB is going to concentrate on in the immediate future? "Poverty reduction should be the overarching objective in all the projects that we do. We are likely to remain involved in the existing sectors and I don't think that we should move into new areas," he responded.

The bank, he said, is going

The Midnight File

Chechens urged to rise against Russians

GROZNY, Russia, Dec 19: The commander of Chechen armed forces urged the people of the Caucasus today to rise against the Russians as Russian forces and Chechen rebels fought fierce battles outside the capital Grozny. Colonel Aslan Maskhadov, who appeared on television in military fatigues, said: "I call on the people of the entire Caucasus region to rise up and repel the aggressor," reports Reuter.

EU FMs' meet to consider World Trade Accord

BRUSSELS, Belgium, Dec 19: European Union foreign ministers tentatively signed off today on the global trade accord, bringing the trading bloc closer to completing ratification by the crucial January 1 deadline. With the United States on board, approval by the 12-nation union will give a boost to efforts to ratify the Uruguay Round agreement, which would reduce barriers to trade worldwide, reports AP.

Carter's statement

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in helping create an atmosphere for negotiations, the would be helpful."

The former US president, on a private visit to try to end the 32-month war, met Karadzic for talks which he said 'will be the key to the success of failure of my Mission.'

Karadzic invited him in an effort to break the deadlock over a big power peace plan seeking to halt the war by dividing Bosnia in two, which Serbs are alone in rejecting.

Carter, who had talks earlier with Bosnian Muslim leaders and Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, said there difficult decisions to take but added: "It may that today is one of the rare chances to let the world know the truth and to explain the commitment of Serbs to a peace agreement."

Bangladeshi troops

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sentative in New York, Ziauddin, who is coordinating peacekeeping operations and direct contact from Bihac with Army Headquarters. Sometimes, ISD calls are also made to local commanders, he added.

It is also reliably learnt that Bangladesh has received a request for deployment of at least one battalion in Rwanda and another in Angola.

Asked why Bangladeshi troops were stationed in major conflict points in Bosnia, instead of peacekeepers of many other countries, the official said troops deployment and movement are under UN control.

Muslims fleeing

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Serb harassment.

"Our soldiers on the ground are in what you could call a stalemate situation," said Capt Frits Olivier, Dutch Defense Ministry spokesman. "Sometimes they are denied freedom of movement, and that's unacceptable to military people."

In the past month, Serb forces have blocked UN convoys and held hundreds of peacekeepers hostage in retaliation for NATO airstrikes. The Serbs have promised to relax some restrictions in response to the peace mission of former US President Jimmy Carter who arrived in Sarajevo on Sunday.

Defence ministers from North Atlantic Treaty Organization nations decided last week to try to beef up the UN Protection Force, UNPROFOR.

Among the possible moves under consideration are changing the rules of engagement that limit the ability of UN troops to fire back when attacked, deploying peacekeepers to more secure positions, extending NATO air cover and creating a fortified supply corridor from Sarajevo to coastal ports.

Any tougher stance would need approval of the United Nations, which has been reluctant to authorize aggressive action for fear of Serb retaliation.

Non-NATO countries with troops on duty with UNPROFOR will join the talks tomorrow.

Actor Raj dead

By Staff Correspondent

Noted film actor, Raj died of brain stroke Monday in the morning at his residence in Dhaka. He was 55.

Raj, who hailed from Perajpur district, left behind his wife, two daughters and two sons. His namaz-e-janaza was held yesterday after Asr prayers at a mosque in Mohammapur.

Sutrapur BNP

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for involvement in the killing was motivated and for deriving narrow political gains.

The statement said late Ashraf was an absconding accused of two murder cases filed with Sutrapur police station. He was also accused in connection with four to five cases under Demra police station which are now under investigation.

Ashraf was also an accused of Hamid murder case, the statement said adding: The allegation brought against BNP leader Mukbul Hossain Tipu and general secretary of Suhrawardy College Students' Union Mazharul Islam Tipu by a newspaper for the killing was baseless.