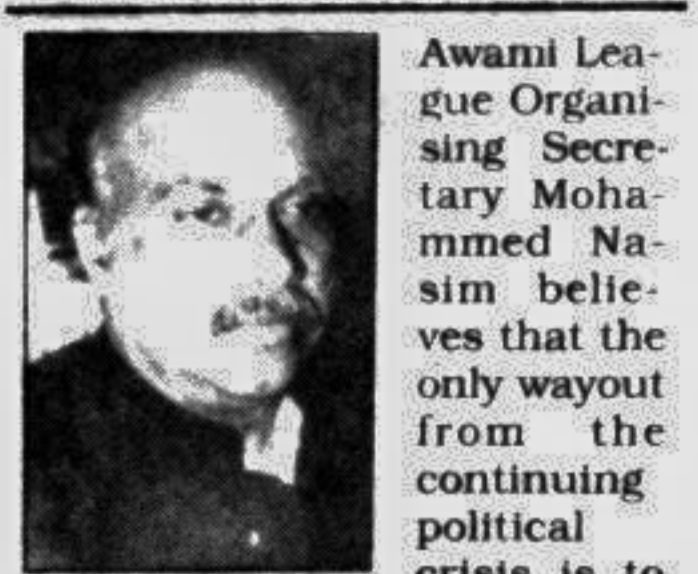


Untying the Gordian Knot of Our Politics

A SERIES OF INTERVIEWS AND ARTICLES ON THE CURRENT POLITICAL CRISIS



Md Nasim
Awami League Organising Secretary Mohammed Nasim believes that the only way out from the continuing political crisis is to dissolve the present Parliament and hold elections immediately under a neutral non-partisan caretaker government. In an interview with The Daily Star, the AL leader blamed the ruling party for the stalemate and said, "the government should immediately come forward to resolve the crisis." He also expressed apprehension that the people may even lose their hard-earned democracy if the stalemate continues. Full text of the interview is on Page 4.

Tomorrow: Interview of Ayesha Khanam, General Secretary, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad and Prof S M Imamu Haq, General Secretary, Dhaka University Teachers' Association.

Inside Today

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A Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) for Dhaka

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Banazir projects Pakistan as a moderate Islamic state

Philippines bans women from going to Singapore as maids Page 5

Business

Regulatory guidelines can help promote growth in stock market, says Bangladesh Bank Governor

Pakistan won't provide subsidy to industrial sector Pages 6, 7

STOCK MARKET

DSE Index	786.42 (+1.04%)
Market capitalisation Tk	43.60 billion
Turnover in volume	119146
Turnover in value Tk	21.98 million

Supplement

Today's issue of The Daily Star contains a two-page supplement on Pakistan Day Pages 8, 9

NEWS BRIEFS

SC Bar Assoc polls Mar 29-30

The annual election of the Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association will be held on March 29 and 30 instead of March 28 and 29 as scheduled earlier due to unavoidable circumstances. The time scheduled, for polling however, will remain unchanged. The casting of vote will take place from 10 am to 5 pm with a lunch break between 1 pm and 2 pm, reports BSS.

BNP Dhaka div confce deferred

The Dhaka divisional council conference-95 of the BNP scheduled to be held on March 29 has been deferred due to unavoidable reason, a party press release said last night. The conference will now be held on April 29, reports BSS.



Agitated farmers assembled in front of the Ghoradara Union Parishad of Jamalpur Sadar Thana, blocking the road to traffic for several hours yesterday. They also gheraoed the UP chairman and a thana magistrate, demanding fertiliser at fair price. — Star photo

Opposition's rail, road barricade today

By Staff Correspondent

Three major opposition parties — the Awami League, the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami — are enforcing an 8-hour (6 am-2 pm) barricade on roads, rail and waterways across the country today.

The opposition parties had announced the identical programme to protest the price hike of the essentials and to press the demands including dissolution of parliament, resignation of the BNP government and next general elections under a non-party caretaker administration.

Their next programmes include Dhaka Siege on March 28.

The three parties organised rallies and processions in the city and in other parts of the country yesterday to drum up support for today's programme.

Meanwhile, AL chief Sheikh Hasina in a press statement last night called upon the party workers and the people in general to intensify the current agitation by making today's eight-hour barricade programme a success.

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One killed, 5 hurt while making bombs in city

By DMCH Correspondent

One youngman was killed and five others were injured while making bombs in a house at Shymoni in the city early yesterday.

Sources say, the crude bombs went off at about 4:30 am.

The deceased was about 25. He died after he was taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital in a serious condition.

The injured admitted to the DMCH were identified as Sohel, 17, Shohag, 15, and Masud, 18. Two others — Jallil, 22, and Jaman, 21, were released after first aid.

The injured persons are under police surveillance. The Mohammadpur police have arrested them.

The police also recovered raw materials used for manufacturing the bombs.

Fertiliser crisis Hasina gives 7-day ultimatum to govt

By Staff Correspondent

BOGRA, Mar 22: Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina gave the government 7 days for adequate supply of fertiliser to the farmers failing which they would mass into the capital and gherao the Secretariat on March 28, reports UNB.

Hasina issued the ultimatum from Mahimaganj in Gaibandha district she visited today to console the families of the two farmers killed on Tuesday in police firing during an agitation for fertiliser and also those injured in the violence.

She also called for a half-day hartal tomorrow in greater Rangpur to protest the staggering fertiliser crisis and the police action on farmers.

Meanwhile, a half-day hartal was observed at Mahimaganj today in protest against the killing of two farmers — Tuku and Badal.

Addressing a meeting at the Mahimaganj Alia Madrasah ground, the Awami League President flayed the government for killing farmers agitating against fertiliser crisis across the country.

She held the government responsible for the current fertiliser scandal and alleged that BNP ministers, MPs and leaders got dealership of rice and fertiliser and were selling those at higher prices.

"Either give fertiliser to the farmers or quit," she told the government. "Killing and repression on farmers will not be tolerated any more," she warned.

She called for giving a fit reply to the government for hatching 'conspiracy' over fertiliser and rice.

The Awami League chief donated Tk 10,000 to the families of Tuku and Badal, killed Tuesday.

Govt, WB differ over poverty situation

Star Report

How high is the incidence of poverty in Bangladesh? By all accounts it is very high. But there seems to be a debate over the actual number of people living below the poverty line in the country. Recent estimates, made separately by the government and a donor agency differ substantially.

Current government estimates place the number of people living below the poverty line in the country at 38 per cent of the population.

On the other hand, a recent World Bank study says that the national poverty incidence is just under 50 per cent.

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) defines the poverty line in terms of a daily intake of 2,122 calories while the 'hard core poor' are identified as those having a daily intake of 1,805 calories or less.

The government's Household Expenditure Surveys of 1985-86, 1988-89 and 1991-92 showed that the percentage of the population living below the poverty line had declined from 52 to 47 per cent during the six-year period.

But the surveys also found that the percentage of 'hard core poor' alarmingly increased from 22 to 28 per cent of the population during the same period.

The survey results also showed that the incidence of poverty only declined marginally from 48 to 47 per cent between 1988-89 survey and the preliminary data of 1991-92 and that there was no change in rural areas.

However, using a different methodology than the one used by the BBS, a recent World Bank study analysing the preliminary data of the 1991-92 survey suggested that the poverty incidence did not decrease.

The government's House-

Prices of rice, fertiliser coming down swiftly, says Salam

By Staff Correspondent

BNP secretary general Abdus Salam Talukder said in Dhaka yesterday that the prices of rice and fertiliser, that shot up in different areas of the country due to creation of artificial crisis, were coming down swiftly as a result of prompt measures taken by the government, reports BSS.

In a statement he said that prices of rice and fertiliser would have come down still further had the concerned trading circle and the opposition parties extended their co-operation the way the people of the country have been giving.

Salam urged the opposition parties not to create impediments in the transportation and distribution of rice and fertiliser in the interest of the people and the overwhelming majority of our agriculturists.

The opposition parties had their full right to oppose the government politically, but they had no moral right to create impediments.

See Page 12 Col 6

Chandrika's Dhaka visit programme

By Staff Correspondent

Sri Lankan president Mrs Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga arrives in Dhaka Tuesday on a three-day state visit to Bangladesh, reports BSS.

Foreign Office sources said that the visit by the Sri Lankan leader at the invitation of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is expected to further cement the existing very friendly and cordial ties between the two South Asian countries.

Mrs Chandrika and Begum Zia are expected to have formal talks, covering the entire gamut of bilateral relations as well as South Asian and international issues of common concern at the International Conference Centre the next day morning.

The formal talks between the two leaders will be preceded by a tete-a-tete between them which will take place at the Prime Minister's office.

Begum Khaleda Zia visited Sri Lanka in January.

See Page 12 Col 7

NGOs threaten govt with legal action

Star Report

The Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) yesterday threatened the government with legal action following a ban on holding a rally of the poor in the capital.

Officials of the NGO Affairs Bureau said they were informed that the NGOs would "be constrained to take legal action" if the earlier letter from the Bureau was not withdrawn within 24 hours.

The Bureau letter to the Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB), the apex body of some 700 NGOs on Saturday said the government was unwilling to permit a poor's rally.

Following the government

See Page 12 Col 7

Hunger strike near Jamuna Fertiliser

Fresh firing kills one more in Gaibandha

By Staff Correspondent

One person was killed and seven others injured when police opened fire as farmers attacked a fertiliser warehouse in Gaibandha town yesterday.

Our correspondent reported from Gaibandha that Abdul Momen, a student of Gaibandha College, died on the spot while seven others received bullet wounds in police firing.

Quoting doctors at the Sadar hospital, our Gaibandha correspondent said that three among the seven injured were sent to the Rangpur Medical College Hospital in a critical state.

The rest of the injured were admitted at the Gaibandha Sadar Hospital.

Two people were shot dead and 30 others injured in police firing on the agitating farmers at Mahimaganj of Gaibandha district Tuesday.

Witnesses said thousands of farmers from the adjoining villages began to throng the local stadium since morning after the district authorities announced that fertiliser would be distributed directly.

The farmers gathered at the stadium to collect their tickets to collect fertiliser from the godown.

However, those who could

See Page 12 Col 1

Police commissioner, magistrates hurt Bomb attack on Khulna Collectorate bldg

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Mar 22: At least 24 people, including the Deputy Commissioner of Khulna Metropolitan Police (MKP) and two female magistrates, were injured in a bomb attack on the Collectorate building during office hours today.

Witnesses said, the Collectorate building came under attack when supporters of the Awami League and the Chhatra League went there to submit a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner protesting the bail of the principal accused in the Ward Commissioner murder case.

Of the injured, four police personnel were admitted to the Khulna Police Hospital. The other injured, including KMP DC Nurul Alam Chowdhury, two first class female magistrates Rukhsana and Maieka Khatrunnesa and some lawyers, were released after first aid.

At least 43 rooms of the Collectorate building were ransacked. There was also an attempt to attack the Court of CMM.

Witnesses said, riot police resorted to baton charge and lobbed tear-gas shells to bring the situation under control.

After having been driven out from the collectorate building premises, the attackers reportedly hurled stones at the Kotwali thana where again police intercepted the unruly people.

The processionists also hurled bombs at the City Corporation building but, no damage was caused. A number of roadside shops and vehicles were also damaged.

The DC, Khulna, Kazi Reazul Huq filed a case with Kotwali thana accusing the Chhatra League of creating a law and order situation and damaging government property.



Looking Back at March towards Independence

On this day in 1971, known as the Pakistan Day, the flag of Pakistan was seen hoisted only in some military cantonments, while the flag of Bangladesh was hoisted atop various government offices including the secretariat. At 7 o'clock in the morning, a large procession with a flag of Bangladesh held aloft moved towards the residence of Sheikh Mujib, who, with the same flag in hand, greeted the procession and delivered an emotionally charged speech before it. A number of political leaders met Sheikh Mujib at his residence, and Mujib kept indicating unambiguously that there was no scope to retreat from the struggle for independence.

More on page 4

Manzur's murder Col Shams likely to be produced in court today

By Staff Correspondent

Lt Col (rtd) Shamsur Rahman is likely to be produced in the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court today after the expiry of his CID remand, court sources said yesterday.

"He may make a confessional statement before the magistrate today," a source handling the legal affairs of the case told The Daily Star.

Col Rahman, one of the three former army officials arrested for alleged involvement in the 1981 murder of Maj Gen Abu Manzur in Chittagong Cantonment, was placed on fresh remand on March 18 for interrogation.

CID source said that until yesterday he was detained at their Malibagh office where senior officials interrogated him.

He may be brought before the CMM today for recording

See Page 12 Col 4