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## Offer of dialogue & resignation 30 days ahead of polls renewed

# Khaleda invites Opposition to face electoral battle

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday renewed her offer to step down from power 30 days ahead of elections and invited the Opposition to face the electoral battle, reports UNB.

"We have trust and confidence in the people, and have agreed to resign 30 days before the elections for the greater interest of democracy... If you have courage, take up the challenge," she told her political adversaries.

Begum Zia made the remarks while wrapping up the day-long Dhaka divisional representatives' conference of the BNP at 30 Hare Road last

night.

In an oblique reference to Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina's demand for the government's resignation 90 days before elections, Begum Zia said: "There is no constitutional obligation to resign either 30 days or 90 days before elections, but we have agreed to resign before 30 days for the greater interest of maintaining the democratic process."

"The BNP chairperson again offered a dialogue with the Opposition to end the crisis which, she said, has been created by them.

"Come, let's move ahead

with democracy. There will be no gain in going back to autocracy," she said.

The Prime Minister expressed her determination to protect, at all cost, the democracy that was earned at the cost of the martyrs' blood.

"The BNP believes in democracy... there is no alternative to election to go to power," she said, and asked her partymen to prepare for the coming elections.

Begum Zia asked them to work unitedly, saying that there was very little time for elections, but she did not mention any possible dates.

"Shun all differences and con-

flict," she urged.

The BNP chairperson told her partymen that the next elections would be very significant and vital for the nation to protect the national independence and sovereignty.

Referring to the present political situation, Begum Zia said the three opposition political parties had joined hands to oust the government. But they have understood that it is not possible to oust the present democratic government by creating indiscipline.

"Now, their main objective is to obstruct the BNP from returning to power," she

### Lesser leaders blame stalwarts

By Staff Correspondent

The grass-roots level leaders of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) yesterday gave vent to some of their grievances against the central leaders, minister and party MPs, alleging that the bigwigs often ignore the lesser leaders and the workers.

"The gap between the leaders and workers has widened and it is still widening," one district unit leader was quoted as saying in presence of party Chairperson Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

He cautioned that if this gap is not narrowed down, the party might suffer a setback in the coming election.

A number of other leaders expressed similar views, seeking the party chief's intervention in such a situation.

More than 6,000 delegates, mostly leaders of district,

## BNP MP's son dies as rivals clash

By Staff Correspondent



The mother of Masud Ahmed, 25, killed yesterday in a clash between rival factions of the BNP in Narsingdi, wails over the lifeless body of her son.

A ruling party MP's son was killed and at least 20 people were injured in clashes between the supporters of two BNP MPs in Narsingdi yesterday.

Masud, 25, son of Shamsuddin Ahmed, MP from Narsingdi-1, was shot dead by a group of armed men.

The killing triggered widespread violence in the area. Armed police reinforcement was called in from Dhaka, according to officials.

Four of the injured, including two policemen were brought to the city and admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. All the four were bullet-hit.

According to witnesses and Narsingdi police, the clash originated from an earlier incident which had taken place yesterday morning. Another son of Shamsuddin Ahmed, along with 10-12 young men had allegedly raided the house

## Road accident in Narsingdi leaves 8 dead

NARSINGDI, Apr 29: At least eight people, including four of a family, were killed and 20 injured in a road accident on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway Friday night, reports UNB.

The accident occurred at about 12:30 am at Narayanpur in Belabo thana when a minibus coming from Sylhet collided head-on with a truck, police and witnesses said.

Five of the dead were identified as Mohon, 48, his wife Rina, 38, elder sister Chhana Begum, 50, and her daughter Tani, 12, and driver of the minibus Masudur Rahman, 38.

They were returning home at Manohordi, from Sylhet after visiting the mazar of Hazrat Shahjalal, family sources said.

The other three victims could not be identified immediately. All of them died on the spot.

Five of the injured were rushed to the Narsingdi sadar hospital in critical condition while several others were admitted to the Bhairab Thana Health Complex.

## 2 N'ganj pro-BNP activists killed in clash with AL

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Apr 29: Two political activists were killed and more than 15 including a woman were injured when supporters of the BNP and the Awami League (AL) clashed at Pagla under Fatullah thana today.

The dead were identified as Humayun Kabir, a student of the Government Tolaram College and an activist of the pro-BNP Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), and Abu Siddiq Bhutto, a worker of Jatiyatabadi Juba Dal, youth front of the BNP.



BNP Chairperson and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressed the Dhaka divisional representatives conference of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in the city yesterday. — PID photo

### '903 industrial units causing pollution'

Speakers at a seminar in the city yesterday emphasised the need for setting up more environmentally sound industries, as well as for strictly enforcing the existing environmental regulations to clean up the environment of the country, reports BSS.

Referring that 903 industrial units have already been identified as causing pollution, they called upon the authorities to conduct an Environmental Impact Analysis (EIA) and immediately install effluent treatment plants in their units to stop pollution.

The speakers were addressing the consultative seminar on Industrial EIAs and environmental clearances in Bangladesh organised by the Industrial EIA Practitioners Association (IEPA) in Dhaka yesterday morning at the WVA auditorium.

The speakers underscored the need for creating environmental awareness and playing the role of a watchdog to help strict enforcement of the existing environmental regulations.

They emphasised that the authorities should make it mandatory for all new private and public sector industries to carry out EIAs before their installation.

### BNP has appointed its own CEC to rig polls: Hasina

COX'S BAZAR, Apr 29: Awami League President Sheikh Hasina today alleged that the ruling party had appointed the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) according to its choice to keep the way open for rigging, reports UNB.

"The ruling party knows that it is not possible for them to win the elections without rigging. So, it has appointed the CEC without consulting the Opposition," she told a public meeting at the Ukhiya High School ground.

"The government often offer dialogue but they do not consult the opposition parties while going for an action," the AL chief said, reacting to the appointment of the new CEC.

Questioning the sincerity of the government's reported offer for dialogue to resolve the political stalemate, Hasina said the Prime Minister was only trying to protect her chair for her own interest.

On the Speaker's ruling, she said: "This government has violated the Constitution by not accepting the resignation letters of the opposition MPs. They did it just to cling to power."

Ukhiya thana Awami League organised the meeting to commemorate the people who died in the April 29 cyclone

### Prayers for rain from May 3

Arrangement has been made to hold Ishitiskhar prayers for rain in view of the countrywide drought and hot-spell which has made normal life unbearable in the country, reports BSS.

The prayers will be held every day at 10 am from May 3 in the National Eidgah under the management of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, an official handout said in Dhaka yesterday.

People of all walks of life have been requested to join the prayers to seek the blessings of the Almighty Allah to get rid of the present situation created by the drought and the hot spell.

### Delay in implementation of projects dismays ADB

By Krishna P Roy

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has expressed its dismay over the delay in implementations of some of the bank-aided projects in the agriculture and rural development sectors.

Reviewing the progress of the projects in the country recently, the ADB asked the government of Bangladesh to expedite the completion of the projects.

There are 13 ADB-funded projects in the agriculture and

### Fire Brigade helps supply water

By Staff Correspondent

As water crisis is mounting in the city, the Fire Brigade has started volunteering to supply water to those areas where crisis is acute.

The Fire Brigade began their services on Friday following a meeting between the Home Minister and the Director General of Fire Service recently.

Sources said the initiative was taken as the Prime Minister verbally asked the

### 7-minute shower in city

By Staff Correspondent

The city dwellers experienced light rains for only seven minutes yesterday after several days of a hot spell.

It started raining at 5.34 pm and continued till 5.41 pm, but was enough to bring some relief to the city dwellers.

The Met Office recorded rain also in Faridpur.

The Met-Office forecast said, rain or thundershower

### IU closed sine die

KUSHTIA, Apr 29: The Islamic University (IU) was today declared closed sine die following Friday's killing of a guardian of an admission seeker on the campus during clashes between rival groups of students, reports UNB.

The university authorities announced the decision amidst mounting tension and asked the students to leave their respective hostels before 5 pm today.

Earlier, 11 students were arrested when police raided the hostels Friday night. All were said to be activists of the Islami Chhatra Shibir.

Police also recovered one pistol, a Chinese axe and three kirich' during the raid.

### 2 Shibir activists hurt in blast

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Apr 29: Two Shibir activists were injured in bomb blasts during a clash with JCD activists at the Dak-bungalow square this evening.

The injured, who were admitted to the Sadar Hospital, later fled, hospital sources said.

According to police, the clash took place when the two rival student organisations brought out processions.

The Shibir brought out a procession to protest arrest of their leaders, while the JCD's rally was against the recent attack on the Speaker's house.

### PCJSS extends ceasefire

KHAGRACHHARI, Apr 29: The Parbatyia Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), the political umbrella of Shan-tibahini, has agreed to extend the duration of ceasefire with the government till May 25. The PCJSS's current ceasefire with the government expires tomorrow. Agreeing today to further extend the ceasefire at the request of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Liaison Committee, the PCJSS demanded unconditional release of 15 of their members within May 15, reports UNB.

### Beijing Food Festival in city

"Beijing Food Festival," a long cherished dream of the connoisseur of authentic Chinese food has finally come to the town. Ambassador of the People's Republic of China in Bangladesh Zhang Xujiang inaugurated the fortnight long festival at the Bithika Restaurant of the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday evening, reports BSS.

## LTTE downs plane: 52 die

COLOMBO, Apr 29: Escalating the 12-year ethnic war, Tamil rebels shot down a military plane with a surface-to-air missile Saturday, killing at least 52 people, including three journalists, the military said, reports AP.

It was the first time rebels fighting for independence in northern Sri Lanka are known to have used anti-aircraft missiles.

It also exposed the vulnerability Sri Lanka's small air force, its only vehicle for getting troops, weapons and supplies to front-line bases on the mostly rebel-held north.

Saturday's crash near an airstrip in northern Sri Lanka was the second such attack in two days.

On Friday, 38 soldiers were killed when their plane crashed and exploded after taking off from the Palali airstrip, a toehold in the rebel-held Jaffna peninsula.

The military had initially refused to blame the rebels for Friday's crash. "It has now been revealed that a similar

missile attack caused the air crash on Friday, 28 April," a military statement issued after Saturday's attack said.

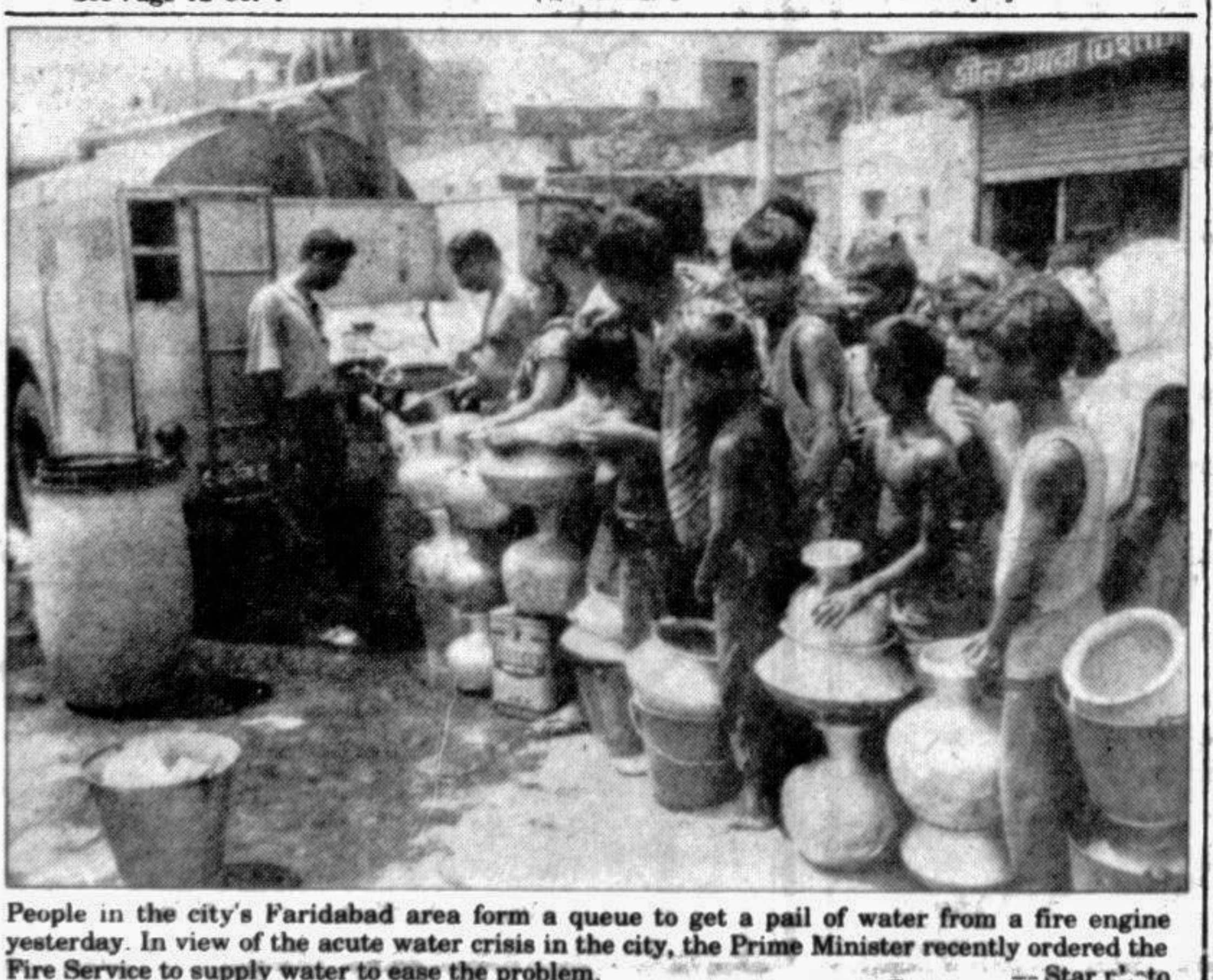
Saturday's crash happened as the twin-engine Avro plane approached the same airstrip, 310 kilometres (190 miles) north of the capital, Colombo. It had taken off from the Anuradhapura military base, 150 kilometres (95 miles) away.

The plane exploded in midair and fell 1.5 kilometres (one mile) inside rebel territory, said Brigadier Sarath Munasinghe, a military spokesman.

"The pilot had shouted 'missile attack' over the radio before he was hit and lost communication," Munasinghe said.

Ground troops were attempting to reach the wreckage, military officials said.

The make and origin of the surface-to-air missiles was not immediately known, but missiles made by China, Russia and the United States are believed to be plentiful in the



People in the city's Faridabad area form a queue to get a pail of water from a fire engine yesterday. In view of the acute water crisis in the city, the Prime Minister recently ordered the Fire Service to supply water to ease the problem. — Star photo

### DU 'Kha' unit admission test on May 26

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka University authorities yesterday announced a fresh date for admission test of the first year honours classes under 'Kha' unit for the session 1994-95.

The test will be held on May 26 from 10 am to 12 noon, says a press release of the university.

The results of the admission test, held on April 21, were cancelled following allegations of leakage of the question papers.

A six-member probe body declared the admission test null and void to 'dispel doubts in public mind and maintain the propriety of the examination although the leakage of questions papers was not clearly evident.'