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3-day non-cooperation programme begins

By Staff Correspondent

An Opposition-called 3-day non-cooperation programme against the government for cancellation of the February 15 polls and fresh election under a caretaker government begins at 6 am today.

Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami, the three major opposition parties which had boycotted the "one-party farcical polls" announced the 3-day programme on February 16.

The parties had also called upon the President to dismiss the "illegal" government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to pave the way for holding fresh election under a neutral caretaker government.

Under the programme, the Opposition called for country-wide suspension of rail-road-air and waterway communication, closure of courts, educa-

tional institutions, banks and insurance companies, the Secretariat and offices of other government, semi-government and autonomous organisations and the Chittagong and Chalna ports.

Rickshaws will remain outside the purview of the programme.

Awami League brought out a torch procession in the city yesterday while Jatiya Party and Jamaat brought out separate processions in support of their non-cooperation programme.

The Awami League in a press release called upon government employees not to attend offices.

AL chief Sheikh Hasina in a statement yesterday called upon the people to make the non-cooperation programme a "total success." She also reiter-

ated her call to the President to dismiss the "illegal" government of Begum Khaleda Zia for holding a fresh election under a caretaker government.

UNB adds: Three major opposition parties will "gherao" the Sangsad Bhaban the day the "illegal parliament" will be called into session.

This was decided at a meeting of the liaison committee of Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami at the residence of AL leader Abdus Samad Azad on Thursday.

Any attempt to form a parliament with the "vote dacoits" would be resisted even at the cost of blood, said Opposition's spokesman Mohammad Nasim after the meeting yesterday.

He told newsmen that the meeting had resolved not to allow the "illegal parliament" See Page 12 Col 4

Press Note

Govt warns of action against unlawful acts

The government has taken adequate security measures for smooth movement of all types of vehicles, reports BSS.

The Home Ministry in a Press Note issued here last night held out the assurance that owners of vehicles would be given due compensation if they suffered any damage while plying their vehicles in the interest of maintaining normal life.

The affected the owners have been advised to contact the Additional Secretary, Ministry of Home, if their vehicles are affected.

The government hoped that people would maintain normal life rejecting all sorts of illegal activities.

The Press Note said the government has been observing that some political parties were including in illegal activ-

See Page 12 Col 8



Three children paying homage to Ekushey martyrs at the Central Shaheed Minar on Wednesday. More photographs on page 9. — Star photo

Eid-ul-Fitr celebrated

By Staff Correspondent

Eid-ul-Fitr, the greatest Muslim festival, was celebrated in the country on Wednesday.

After a month-long fasting, the Muslims across the country prayed for peace, progress and prosperity of the country as well as welfare and solidarity of the Muslim Ummah at the Eid prayers.

In the capital, the main Eid congregation was held at the National Eidgah.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas offered his Eid prayers at the National Eidgah. Ministers, Supreme Court Judges, Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation, high officials and diplomats also said their prayers there.

Four Eid congregations were held at the Baitul Mukarram Mosque.

The congregations ended with special munazat for the emancipation of mankind in the world and the world hereafter.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Begum Biswas hosted a reception at Bang-

See Page 12 Col 8

US sees 'serious flaws' in polls

By Staff Correspondent

The US State Department has said the February 15 polls in Bangladesh had "serious flaws" as a result of actions by supporters of both the opposition and the ruling parties and "it does not appear to have resolved the political impasse."

The State Department also called upon the government and the Opposition to avoid the path of violence and to renew their efforts to find a common ground.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns was replying to question by a Bangladesh correspondent based in Washington during a briefing on February 20. The text of the briefing was made available to The Daily Star yesterday.

Responding to questions if the US government thought that the recent election in Bangladesh was fair and democratic, Nicholas Burns replied:

"By all accounts, last week's elections in Bangladesh left a lot to be desired, in this sense.

There are reports from a variety of sources which indicate the elections had serious flaws in administration as a result of actions by supporters of both the Opposition and the ruling parties," said Burns.

"Most important, however, it does not appear to us that the election resolved the underlying political impasse that has bedeviled Bangladesh in recent years."

The US State Department spokesman added, "We hope that Bangladeshis, the citizens of the country, and all their leaders will renew their efforts to find common ground. We continue to call upon the government and the Opposition — all parties — to avoid violence."

See Page 12 col 7

BNP to 'resist' Opposition

By Nazmul Ashraf

Opposition activists trying to damage vehicles and other property and obstructing normal life would be dealt with a heavy hand, an influential minister told The Daily Star yesterday.

Members of the law enforcing agencies have been instructed to resist the Opposition activists," said Housing and Public Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia. "Stern legal action would be taken against all sorts of disruptive activities."

"Citizens of the country have the right to move freely and it's the duty of the government to maintain peace and protect life and properties of the people," said Rafiq, also a standing committee member of the ruling BNP.

Another influential leader of the ruling party talking to this correspondent on condition of anonymity said the decision to take tough measures has been taken in line with the Prime Minister's pre-election warning against unlawful activities See Page 12 col 5

Hawala case: 14 chargesheeted

Court asks CBI to file report on Rao

NEW DELHI, Feb 23: An Indian court today ordered federal detectives to report on charges that Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao had accepted bribes from the chief suspect in the country's worst corruption scandal, report AFP.

The Delhi High Court ordered the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to file a report on allegations that Rao had accepted money to buy support during a crucial Opposition-sponsored vote of no-confidence in Parliament in 1993.

The case, filed by activist Ravinder Kumar, alleged that Rao had paid huge amounts of money to opposition MPs who voted in favour of his Congress government on September 28, 1993.

The government survived by a slender margin of 14 votes

with 265 lawmakers voting against the motion and 251 voting for Rao's ouster.

Kumar, a leader of the Rashtriya Juti Morcha group, said the Prime Minister had deposited 96,774 dollars in the account of Opposition MP Suraj Mandal, who opposed the motion along with others.

Opposition parties have accused the beleaguered Rao of accepting at least 3.5 million dollars from the prime suspect in the scandal, a businessman named Surinder Jain. The Congress Party has denied the charges.

Jain, in a statement to the CBI said he had agreed to pay 30 million rupees... these payments were required for the purpose of engineering defections of some MPs in support of the Congress Party which was being planned by

See Page 12 col 6

Nation recalls martyrs of Language Movement

By Staff Correspondent

The nation paid glowing tributes to the memory of the martyrs of the great Language Movement on Wednesday with a renewed pledge to materialise their dreams by establishing a happy and prosperous society.

This year, the immortal Ekushey coincided with the holy Eid-ul-Fitr, the greatest religious festival of Muslims.

Hundreds of thousands of people from all walks of life gathered at the shaheed minars across the country as clocks ticked zero hour on Wednesday and placed wreaths to pay homage to the memory of those who had sacrificed their lives this day 44 years ago to uphold the dignity of the mother tongue.

On this day in 1952, Salimullah, Jinnah and Barkatullah embraced martyrdom for establishing Bangla as the state language See Page 12 Col 1



Eid congregation at the National Eidgah in the city on Wednesday. — Star photo/

Cold claims 21 in Hong Kong

HONG KONG, Feb 23: A winter snap in sub-tropical Hong Kong, the coldest in half a century, has killed at least 21 people, prompting the government to distribute blankets for the needy. The government appealed to the public to keep an eye on elderly people who might be in danger. Hong Kong radio said 21 people had died so far after the chilliest weather in 46 years, reports Reuter.

Verma new CM of Delhi

NEW DELHI, Feb 23: Sahib Singh Verma, the Education and Development Minister, will be the new chief minister of Delhi. The decision to appoint Verma was taken late tonight by the BJP central leadership after a meeting of the parliamentary board chaired by the party president L. K. Advani, reports PTI.

30 die in Brazilian bus plunge

RIO DE JANEIRO, Feb 23: At least 30 people were killed and 15 injured when a bus plunged 65 feet off a main road near the Brazilian city of Belo Horizonte early on Wednesday, officials said. The bus was carrying holidaymakers back from the coast after four days of carnival celebrations, a police-woman said, reports Reuter.

Quake kills 4 in Peru

CHIMBOTE (Peru), Feb 23: An undersea earthquake unleashed 10-meter tsunamis on Peru's northern coast, killing four fishermen and leaving another 10 missing, authorities said. A series of huge waves pounded the shoreline for 20 minutes early Wednesday wiping out 95 per cent of all fishing vessels, destroying some 10 beach front homes and leaving four fishermen dead in this port city 440 kilometers north of Lima. Another 10 fishermen were missing and presumed drowned at sea, civilian defense authorities said, reports AFP.

Bodos kill 8 immigrants

NEW DELHI, Feb 23: Bodo tribal militants shot dead at least eight immigrant labourers and wounded two in the northeastern Indian state of Assam, the United News of India (UNI) said today, reports Reuter.



Azhar deserts wife for film actress

NEW DELHI, Feb 23: India's World Cup captain Mohammad Azharuddin today confirmed newspaper reports here that he had separated from his wife Naureen and two kids to live with Hindi film actress Sangeeta Bhatnagar, reports AFP.

The 32-year-old Azharuddin said he had moved out of his home in Hyderabad to Bombay where Bhatnagar lives but pleaded with the media not to give it too much coverage.

"(The divorce) happened some time ago. But don't give it too much importance. What is of greater importance to my

World champs firm to bounce back



GUJRANWALA, Pakistan, Feb 23: Pakistan launch their campaign to retain the World Cup tomorrow confident they have the mental approach and playing strength to bounce back from a poor run in one-day matches, reports Reuter.

"We are eagerly looking forward to getting down to business," said Pakistan captain Wasim Akram, setting his sights on emulating the feat of his idol Imran Khan who led the team to World Cup glory in Australia four years ago.

"We know our track record in the past five months has not been that encouraging, but this time we are mentally better prepared and the team is also strong and experienced."

Pakistan, who play their first Group B match against the United Arab Emirates, have lost six of their last 11 one-day internationals at home and abroad since last September.

While other Cup teams have played as many as three matches, the Pakistanis will be making a belated entry 10 days into the tournament because of Ramadan, the Muslim holy

month of fasting which ended on Tuesday.

Pakistan have also not played any competitive cricket since returning home from the tour of Australia and New Zealand in late December.

Akram insists this could be to Pakistan's advantage because they have had more time to prepare for the tournament and are fresh for the battle ahead.

"This has been a long break but we've been training hard for the tournament and the players are simply raring to go

BTV and Star Sports will telecast today's match live commencing at 10 am (BST).

into the contest," he said. "Others may have grown a bit stale but we'll be making fresh start."

Veteran batsman Javed Miandad is set to become the only cricketer to play in all six World Cups since the premier limited overs tournament began in 1975.

At 39 he is the second oldest player in the competition after 47-year-old Roland Clarke of the Netherlands, but Miandad remains a batsman who can destroy and attack and turn a match within the See Page 12 col 7

IMPORTANT NOTICE

TO ALL PARENTS AND STUDENTS

OF AMA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY BANGLADESH (AIUB)

AMA COMPUTER COLLEGE OF THE PHILIPPINES (AMACCP) warns the public not to be misled by unilateral announcements that AIUB shall open its first semester classes. In view of AMACCP's withdrawal as a major partner, AIUB's operation by any party is without AMACCP's consent and support. AMACCP shall not be responsible for any loss, damage or inconvenience that may be caused to anyone who may be prejudiced for disregarding AMACCP's series of advisories and notices.

The conflict between the two major partners of AIUB is now subject of resolutions by the Honourable Office of the Prime Minister and Courts of Law. Pending resolution of the petition and cases:

1. The university will cease to be known as AMA as AMA Computer College of the Philippines owns the proprietary right over the name.
2. AMACCP will withdraw the course syllabi and other course materials from the university.
3. The withdrawal of AMACCP automatically terminates the accreditation of AIUB with the American League of Colleges and Universities. The termination also withdraws all privileges for reciprocal credits with the United States.
4. AMACCP has moved for the dissolution of the partnership. Hence, it will likewise dissolve AIUB as the ownership will now be in question.
5. The university will be prevented from recruiting faculty members from AMACCP.

As previously advised, THERE IS NO ON-GOING TALK/NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THE PARTIES.

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