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PM meets President again

JS may be dissolved tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia met President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday amid widespread speculation that she had advised him to dissolve the sixth Parliament tomorrow.

The Prime Minister met the President at the Bangabhaban at around 6:00 pm. It was her second meeting with the President in the last three days.

Without elaborating, the President's office said that Begum Zia requested President Biswas to "constitute a non-party caretaker government within the shortest possible time." During her previous meeting on Wednesday last, she had requested the head of state to assent to the caretaker government bill and take initiative for constituting a non-party government.

Sources close to the BNP high command said Begum Zia yesterday had discussions with the President for over an hour on the legal steps for the

Editorial on page 4

resignation of her cabinet and transfer of power to the caretaker government.

"She has advised the President to dissolve Parliament within March 31," a ruling party insider told The Daily Star on the condition of anonymity.

Meanwhile, former Chief Justice Habibur Rahman is learnt to have agreed to head the non-party caretaker government. He was, however, yet to officially communicate his decision to the President.

President Biswas on Thursday last had despatched to Justice Rahman necessary papers along with a copy of the recently passed 13th constitutional amendment.

Under the amendment, seeking general elections under non-party caretaker government, Justice Rahman is constitutionally mandated to head the 11-member interim government.

Earlier, Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, Jatiya Party leader Moudud Ahmed, Jamaat

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'President can't form caretaker govt unless PM resigns'

By Staff Correspondent

The mainstream Opposition yesterday said the President cannot form a caretaker government till Begum Khaleda Zia resigns and the 'illegal parliament' is dissolved.

"The Prime Minister should resign right now and give the President scope to form a caretaker government," Mohammad Nasim told newsmen after a meeting of the liaison committee of Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jameet-e-Islami here.

The meeting termed the PM's call to the President to form a caretaker government "a move to eyewash the people," Nasim, organising secretary of AL said.

The meeting was attended by AL leaders Abdus Samad Azad, Tofael Ahmed, Mohammad Nasim and Mozaffar Hussain Paltu, JP leaders Moudud Ahmed and Anwar Hussain Manju and Jamaat

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Maintain discipline: Hasina

'BNP's delaying-tactics may be a conspiracy'

Star Report

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina said yesterday she sensed 'a conspiracy' against formation of the proposed caretaker government "in the delaying-tactics" of the BNP leadership.

"I sense a conspiracy is being hatched against the formation of a caretaker government by delaying the resignation of (Prime Minister) Begum Khaleda Zia," she said and called upon the people to remain on guard against this and maintain utmost discipline.

Talking to a group of newsmen at her Dhanmondi residence, the AL Chief said the lust for power of one person has put the whole country in a state of uncertainty.

The Jatiya Sangsad passed the Constitution (13th Amendment) Bill, 1996, on Tuesday providing for holding of all future general elections under non-party caretaker government.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas assented to the bill on Thursday.

Hasina said the sooner Begum Zia resigns, the sooner the process of forming a caretaker government and holding fresh elections will start.

She urged the people not to take law in the own hands and organise resistance against violence, extortion and harassment.

"Those who will be doing these should be handed over the nearest police station," she said.

Hasina alleged that the ruling party had engaged 'terrorists' who were attacking those supporting the on-going campaign by the Opposition.

The AL leader admitted that she had telephonic talks with

See Page 8 Col 8

Sit-in outside Secretariat continues

The sit-in demonstration around the "Janatar Manch" outside the Secretariat continued for the 7th day yesterday demanding cancellation of the February 15 elections and immediate resignation of the BNP government, reports UNB.

People from different sections of the society joined the rally around the March in front of the National Press Club in the afternoon. Opposition activists stayed overnight there to mount pressure on the government to accept their demand.

City Mayor Mohammad Hanif had called upon the city dwellers to continue the demonstration until the fall of the "illegal" government.

Pro-Awami League Chhatra League activists took position on the "Manch" in the afternoon and were replaced by Jubo League workers at 7:30 pm.

The Chhatra League rally at the Manch was presided over by its president Enamul Huq Shamim and addressed by its general secretary Ishaq Ali Khan Panna, and Ajoy Kor

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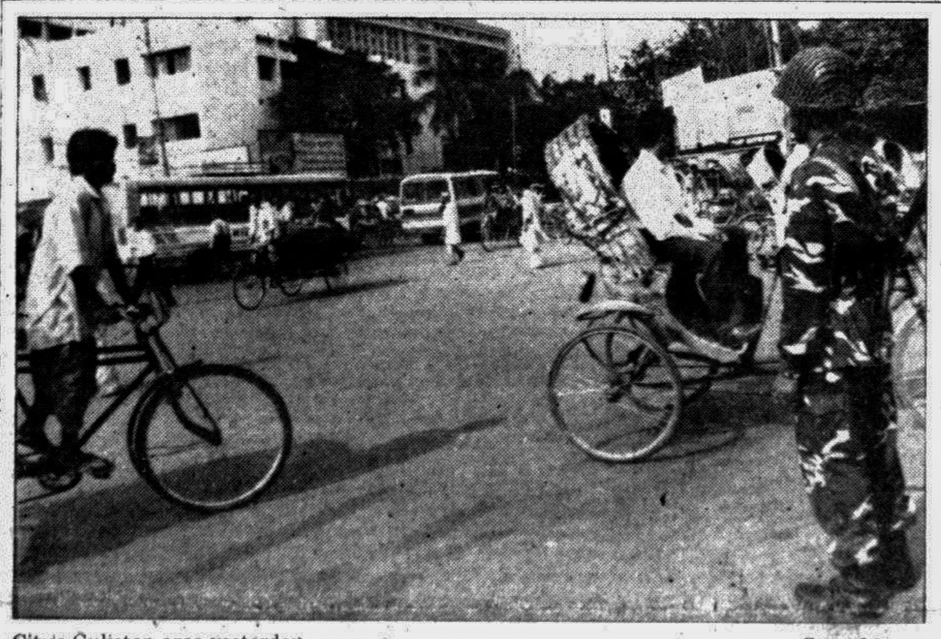

City's Gulistan area yesterday. —Star photo

Non-cooperation continues

By Staff Correspondent

The opposition sponsored non-cooperation programme yesterday passed off by and large peacefully, barring some sporadic incidents of bomb blasts, in the city.

The Awami League, the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami launched the movement on March 9 to press the demands for cancellation of the February 15 polls resignation of the 'illegal' government and fresh elections by May under a neutral caretaker government.

One person hurt in bomb attack on an auto-rickshaw was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, hospital sources said.

Shops and markets were open at Mirpur, Kachukhet, Elephant Road, Farmgate, Mohakhali and some other areas of the city. Some motorised vehicles, including city service mini-buses, tempos and auto-rickshaws, were seen

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35 secys to 'boycott' offices from today

By Staff Correspondent

Thirty-five secretaries who had earlier urged the President to immediately form a caretaker government have decided to 'boycott' their offices from today until their demand was met.

They took the decision at an informal meeting yesterday that also reviewed the latest political situation, meeting sources said.

The meeting also decided that the secretaries would collectively face any move to take punitive measures against any of them, should it happen, the sources further said.

Punitive action may be taken against certain secretaries involved in agitation, some of the secretaries apprehend.

Meanwhile, some unidentified persons fired several shots on the residence of Cabinet Secretary Muhammad Ayubur Rahman at around 1.30 am yesterday, according to family sources.

None was, however, hurt.

Ayubur Rahman led a delegation of the 35 secretaries of different ministries and divisions which met the President on Wednesday, and called for formation of a caretaker government.

Meanwhile, Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Joint Convenor of the Officials Coordination Council of the Republic, and Syed Mohiuddin, President of Bangladesh Sachibalay Karmachari Sanjukta Parishad, in a joint statement yesterday, urged all government officials and employees to join the citizens rally (Janatar Moncha) near the Jatiya Press Club today at 11 am if the caretaker

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BNP raises 'mancha'

By Staff Correspondent

The ruling BNP launches a mass mobilisation programme today and has raised a "mancha" (podium) for this purpose in front of its Naya Paltan head office.

Prime Minister and BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia is likely to address a rally from the podium the day she resigns.

She will announce her resignation at the rally or address the rally immediately after resignation, party sources said last night.

The campaign will continue till the next general elections.

301 Bangladeshi Hajj pilgrims arrive in Jeddah

JEDDAH, Mar 29: The first batch of Hajj pilgrims from Bangladesh arrived here yesterday afternoon, reports BSS.

Bangladesh ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Mir Mohammed Nasir Uddin received 301 pilgrims at the King Abdul Aziz International Airport.

This year, about forty thousand pilgrims from Bangladesh will perform Hajj. Of them, about eight thousand will perform Hajj under government management.

The number of ballotee Hajis last year were only about three thousand.

Officials retired during BNP rule to take up programme

By Staff Correspondent

Some high officials who were retired during BNP government "without showing any reason or giving chance for self-defence" at a meeting here on Thursday decided to take a programme to "Reestablish their just right."

The meeting, attended by 12 "affected" high officials including former secretaries, ambassadors also expressed solidarity with the on-going movement. The meeting was presided over by former secretary Mohammad Foiz Ullah.

The meeting resolved that more than 100 high officials of

See Page 8 Col 2

NEWS BRIEFS

EU summit ends

TURIN, Italy, Mar 29: EU leaders ended a one-day summit here today called to map out the broad outlines for an inter-governmental conference on reforming EU institutions. The 15 heads of state and government ended their discussion on at 2:15 pm (1315 gmt) with the traditional "family photo" on a former test track belonging to Italian car giant Fiat, reports AFP.

1 killed as rivals clash in Chhatak

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Mar 29: One person was killed and 7 others were injured when an armed group attacked a meeting at Jalalichar of Chhatak thana of Sunamganj district Wednesday.

The meeting was arranged to settle a dispute over the possession of a road between two rival groups of villagers. As the meeting also on and, the armed group attacked it with lethal weapons. Akbar Ali died on the spot while other sustained serious wounds.

Floods claims 18 in Indonesia

JAKARTA, Mar 29: At least 18 people were killed and 16 others still were missing in floods triggered by two days of torrential rains in South Sumatra, news reports said Friday. The floods inundated the villages of Tanjung Agung and Galung in Lahat province, the daily Suara Pembaruan reported, says AP.

One killed in road accident

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Mar 29: A 50-year old man was killed and 2 others were injured in a road accident on Sylhet-Tamabil road at Chiknagul yesterday. The accident occurred when a passenger-carrying tempo overtimed as the driver lost his control. Akbar Ali succumbed to his injuries on way to the Sylhet MAG Osmany Medical College Hospital.

Ram Singh quits Rao cabinet to join BJP

NEW DELHI, Mar 29: Col. Ram Singh, Minister of State for Rural Areas and Employment, today resigned from the union council of ministers. Ram Singh has sent in his resignation to Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao by fax this afternoon. According to sources close to him, Ram Singh is joining the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) though he himself was not immediately available for comments, reports PTI.

No share trading for 22 days

By Rafiq Hasan

Uncertainty and fear are mounting among the market operators and investors of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) as the share trading remained suspended for consecutive 22 days, the longest period since its inception.

Trading at the DSE was held only for 34 days this year. For rest of the days, trading could not take place due to hartals and other political programmes and government holidays.

Share traders fear that due to this long shut down, the bourse might plunge into a deep crisis in near future.

Political leaders were urged several times on behalf of the DSE chairman to exempt the share market from their agitation programme and recently some small investors brought out a procession demanding opening of the share market but it all went in vain.

"We can not open the floor unless it is secured," Imtiaz Hossen, Chairman of the DSE told this correspondent.

"If any untoward incident occurs, the news will spread worldwide within few minutes damaging the image of DSE as well as of the country," he pointed out.

Frustration among the local and foreign investors is increasing, he said "It will be very very difficult to overcome the crisis once it is marked as a highly risky area for investment to the foreign and local investors.

The foreign investors who have already withdrawn their money from the DSE will never return if this standstill situation continues, he added.

Mian Abdur Rashid, one of the oldest members of the DSE said "I never saw the floor closed for so long since its inception in 1954. According to him it is a record in the world that a share market remained closed for nearly one month only for political stalemate.

"Trading at many stock exchanges in the world remain suspended for serious reasons like war, natural disaster or civil war but not for power struggle," he observed.

He suggested that the government should take necessary pre-cautionary steps to check

See Page 8 Col 8

One killed, 70 hurt as BNP, Opposition clash in Barisal

From Our Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Mar 29: One person was shot dead and at least 70 others were injured in a fierce gunbattle between the activists of opposition parties and BNP here today.

Witnesses said, Shohel, 23, a worker of Awami League-backed Chhatra League, sustained serious bullet wounds during the gunbattle in Sadar Road area of the town at around 7 pm. He succumbed to his injuries on way to Barisal Medical College Hospital.

Of the injured, 30 were admitted to the hospital.

More than 30 rounds of gun shots were fired and several hand bombs and crackers blasted during the nearly 2 hours long clash.

The clash erupted when JCD activists allegedly pelted brick bats at a procession of opposition parties while it was passing through the BNP office at Sadar Road.

Police lobbed tear gas shells to bring the situation under control but failed as the clash spread fast to nearby areas.

Later, the rival groups attacked and ransacked the offices of their rival political parties. They also ransacked some shops.

Life in Ctg normal

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 29: Life was almost normal in the port city today, the second day after resumption of the non-cooperation movement launched by the Opposition.

All kinds of vehicles plied in the city as these were exempted from the non-cooperation movement. Most of the shops reopened and no untoward incidents were reported. Cargo handling and delivery of goods at the Chittagong port were normal, port sources said.

Meanwhile, the Awami League, the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami belonging to the All-Party Action Committee set up three separate podiums in the city. Within one kilometer distance of each other.

The Awami League set up the 'Bir Janatar Mancha' at the New Market Crossing the Jatiya Party set up the 'Ershad Mancha' at KC Dev road and the Jamaat-e-Islami 'Caretaker Mancha' at Laldighi maidan.

Supporters of three parties thronged their respective *Moncha* premises. Awami League supporters brought out a procession in the city and burnt an effigy of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at New Market.

BSS adds: Speakers at the

See Page 8 Col 7

77 killed in Indonesian department store fire

JAKARTA, Mar 29: At least 77 people were killed in a blaze which burned down a large department store in the city of Bogor, a military source said today, reports AFP.

The fire started on Thursday and took 13 and a half hours to get under control so rescuers could enter.

"The search for more victims is continuing as the bodies are in the building remains said Seargant Dulahir of the military in the city, close to Jakarta.

Dulahir said 77 bodies had so far been found and that 28 people were injured in the fire that destroyed the three-storey Pasar Anyar store in the centre of Bogor.

Budi Sampurna of the Indonesian Red Cross hospital in Bogor said the hospital had received the bodies and 66 sacks of "carred human remains." He said each sack was believed to contain the remains of one body, but would not give a final toll.

The fire broke out on the top floor of Pasar Anyar and was whipped up by strong winds.

Dulahir said the cause of the fire was under investigation.

Reuter says, some 600 Indonesian prisoners burned to death six inmates, including three separatists, at a prison in the north Sumatran city of Medan today.

Prison officials said inmates of the Tanjung Gusta Prison, 1,250 km (780 miles) north-west of Jakarta, locked the six into an empty cell and filled it with burning pillows and mattresses and watched as the six were engulfed in flames.

A prison officials said the inmates had returned to their cells and the situation had been brought under control with the help of hundreds of troops and police.

The separatists were identified by relatives as Iwan Dukun, 44, and Tayib Abdullah, 29, who were serving 13 and 20-year jail sentences respectively. The jail term of the third, Abdul Rachman Samad, 35, was not immediately clear.

Dukun's widow said details of the prison riot were sketchy but added that she had been told by lawyers her husband and five others were locked in a cell that was later setablaze.

"The prison department has not informed me yet about the incident," he said. "What I know is what I have been informed by lawyers from the Indonesia Legal Aid Foundation."

JU decides to change admission rule

By JU Correspondent

Jahangirnagar University (JU) authorities have decided to bring about some changes in the admission rules and procedure from the current session (1995-96), official sources said.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the JU Central Admission Committee recently with the Vice Chancellor Prof Amirul Islam Chowdhury in the chair.

The meeting reviewed the admission procedure and leakage of question papers in the past and decided to make some changes with regard to preparation of question papers and conducting and coordinating the admission test.

According to the new rules, every departments of the university will now prepare its question papers.

An applicant's total marks in the SSC and HSC examinations required to quality of the admission test have also been raised in almost every department.

The admission seekers merit list will be prepared by adding their scores in the written test and four and six per cent of their marks in the SSC and HSC examinations respectively. The written test will be for 100 marks while SSC and HSC scores will be calculated for another 100 marks.

A viva-voce will be held to examine the applicants certificates but there will be no marks for this.

The question papers for each subject will carry 80 marks and compulsory portion of those — on Bengali and English — 20 marks.

Young man shot dead in city

By DMCH Correspondent

A young man was shot dead near his house at East Razabazar in the city yesterday. Three other persons including a minor boy were also died in separate incidents.

Md Ali alias Khokon, 27, a contractor was found dead near his residence at around 11.30 am, police sources said. He had marks of bullet wounds in his abdomen.

The reason behind the

See Page 8 Col 6

25pc Lok Sabha seats crime-prone, says EC

NEW DELHI, Mar 29: India's poll panel today declared that almost a quarter of the 543 constituencies in the world's largest democracy with some 600 million voters were prone to violence and electoral fraud, reports AFP.

The autonomous election commission said 25 per cent of the seats were sensitive and five per cent "supersensitive," an Indian euphemism for a state of lawlessness.

Most of the areas were in the key northern state of Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous province, and adjoining Bihar which is arguably the country's most crime-prone state.

The classifications were made according to previous incidents of violence, electoral fraud and intimidation, they said, adding that additional forces would be deployed in these areas.

India's poll chief TN Seshan has waged a clampdown on electoral fraud, upbraiding even senior politicians for misdemeanours.

Meanwhile, Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's effigy was burned today in a second day of protests against his electoral allegiance with a Tamil party, the Press Trust of India (PTI).

Scores of activists of Rao's Congress (I) Party in the southern state of Tamil Nadu also set fire to pictures of the premier to denounce his decision to join hands once again with the region's ruling Aiadmk Party, the news agency said.

PTI said angry party workers gathered at the Congress office in the Tamil Nadu town of Coimbatore, burnt Rao's effigy and attacked framed photographs of him. Hundreds of party members had burnt campaign posters of Rao in city of Madras on Thursday, in a frenzied reaction to the Congress-Aiadmk pact announced the day before.

The Congress said it planned to revive its decade old alliance with the Aiadmk, severed in 1994, and to contest 29 of Tamil Nadu's parliamentary seats with the Tamil party's backing, leaving the rest to the Aiadmk.

The decision taken by the 74-year-old Rao, who is also the Congress president, angered the party's Tamil Nadu

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