



BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a rally at the 'ganatantra mancha' in front of the party central office in the city yesterday. — Star photo



Leaders of the Officials Coordination Council of the Republic and Bangladesh Sachibalay Karmachari Sanjukta Parishad joined the Janatar Mancha in front of the Jatiya Press Club to express solidarity with Mayor Hanif's movement. — Star photo

Khaleda

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"Since the BNP believes that the people are the source of power, it has always been with the people on the streets," Khaleda Zia said adding, "I hope people will once again vote the BNP to power."

Criticising the "opposition's politics of destruction" Khaleda Zia said, "We have repaired a destroyed economy. What we have done for national development in the last five years, others could not do it in 20 years."

The former Prime Minister urged the people to help maintain law and order in the face of what she called provocation by other political parties.

Prof Ba'druddoza Chowdhury, vice-president of BNP, strongly criticised the Secretariat officials and employees who had stopped work demanding formation of a caretaker government and said, "With these people running the administration, an impartial election is impossible."

He demanded their removal from service within 72 hours "in the interest of impartiality of the administration and holding of a fair poll."

The rally was also addressed by, among others, BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder, Fazlur Rahman Patal and JCD leader Nasiruddin Pintu.

CCC Mayor urges people to maintain peace

CHITTAGONG, Mar 30: The Mayor of Chittagong, A B M Mohiuddin Chowdhury, has called upon all to maintain peace and discipline in the port city, reports UNB.

"Don't take law in your own hands and hand over to police if anyone is found committing anti-social acts," he said in a statement today after the dissolution of Parliament was announced.

In his statement, the mayor, an Awami League leader, paid homage to those killed in the anti-government movement. He also expressed sympathy for all those affected in the movement.

Meanwhile, paramilitary BDR and extra police forces have been deployed at various points in the city today to protect both public and private property, district administration sources said.

Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) sources said police were also deployed at the residences of top BNP leaders

in the city. A CMP press release advised those who are feeling insecure or apprehending disruption of peace to dial 624100, 220691 and 225106 or get in touch with the local thanas.

Talking to UNB tonight, CMP Commissioner Osman Ali Khan said measures have been taken for a foolproof security.

The CMP Commissioner also called upon the city dwellers not to do anything that might disturb peace in the port city.

Our Staff Correspondent from Chittagong adds: Sporadic gunshots and blasts of cocktails rocked the port city this evening following the dissolution of the 6th Parliament.

Hundreds of opposition activists expressed jubilation and brought out processions in the city as part of their celebrations in the victory in the anti-government movement.

Opposition sources said they would also organise big processions in the port city at 10 am tomorrow.

Meanwhile, life was almost normal in the city today, the 3rd day after resumption of the non-cooperation movement.

All kinds of vehicles were seen plying in the city as well as in the long-distance routes. The Chittagong port also functioned normally today.

But in a few government offices there was no work due to absence of employees.

In the evening, a victory rally was held at 'Bir Janatar Mancha' erected by Nagorik Committee at the New Market crossing.

Awami League leaders, including Mayor A B M Mohiuddin Chowdhury, Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser, Pulm Dey, engineer Mosharrif Hossain and Nurul Islam BSC addressed the rally. City AL president M A Mannan presided.

Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami also held separate victory rallies at 'Ershad Mancha' and 'Caretaker Mancha' respectively at K C Dey Road and Laldighi Maidan.

Ershad urges political parties to press for his release

Jatiya Party chairman and former president Hussain Muhammad Ershad has said the people had reposed their faith in him by electing him in five seats in 1991, reports BSS.

A lawyer of the former president, Advocate Yusuf Hossain Humayun, yesterday quoted Ershad as having told him during a meeting that the people have proved again his (Ershad's) innocence by resisting the farcical election on February 15.

"Injustice was done to Jatiya Party in 1991 during the election by violating commitment to the people," said the statement by Ershad.

He called upon the political parties in the on-going movement to press for his release in the interest of free and fair elections.

Two murdered, 20 hurt in city incidents

By DMCH Correspondent

Two persons were murdered and 20 others injured in separate clashes in the city yesterday. A young man also succumbed to his injuries at the PG Hospital.

Bashir Miah, 30, was killed in a crossfire during an armed clash between two rival groups of fruits sellers in Badamtoli area under Kotwali thana yesterday afternoon, police and hospital sources said.

2 killed, 15 hurt as rivals clash in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Mar 30: Two persons were killed and 15 others injured in a clash between two rival groups in Bahubal thana under Habiganj district yesterday.

Of the injured, one was admitted to the Sylhet M A G Osmani Medical College Hospital. The others were sent to the Bahubal hospital.

The clash first erupted following an exchange of hot words between Abdul Mannaf, ex-UP member and one Nandu Miah on Thursday, when five persons were injured. They had enmity over a Jal Mahal.

Yesterday, the two groups used lethal weapons. One Faro Miah, 30, died on the spot and 15 others were injured in the 2-hour clash. Later, Kanchon Miah, 35, succumbed to his injuries in the hospital.

Gunshots rock JU campus

From JU Correspondent

Several rounds of gunshots rocked the Jahangirnagar University campus last night. A heavy contingent of police was later deployed on the campus.

The origins of the shots, which were heard around 11 pm, could not be ascertained till the writing of this report late last night. Police were found patrolling the campus.

Earlier, a JCD activist was admitted to the JU medical centre with self-inflicted bullet injuries as Chhatra Dal members at various JU halls prepared themselves for possible attacks by Islamic Chhatra Shibir and Jatiya Chhatra Samaj following the Prime Minister's resignation yesterday.

Muradul Haque, a third year student of the English Department, shot himself in the leg while toying with a gun.

Maneka to contest polls on Janata Dal ticket

NEW DELHI, Mar 30: Ms Maneka Gandhi, daughter-in-law of assassinated Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, will contest the Lok Sabha polls on Janata Dal (JD) ticket from Pilibhit in Uttar Pradesh (UP), reports BSS.

Earlier, she had left Samajwadi Janata Party to rejoin JD which she had left in 1991.

Two killed

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BDR. Three persons — Babu of Bodu group — and Rahmatullah and Sentu of Hasan group, were arrested from the spot.

In the second incident, a Sramik League leader was stabbed in Hajiganj area.

The victim, Akbar Ali, General Secretary of Narayanganj District Sramik League, was leading a workers' procession to 'janatar mancha' when he was attacked allegedly by BNP pickets at Khalpur railgate. He was admitted to a local clinic.

Uneasy calm on DU campus

An uneasy calm was prevailing on the Dhaka University campus yesterday amidst tension as a large number of armed outsiders were seen roaming around different residential halls, reports UNB.

Campus sources said many new faces with firearms in hand or in their waists have positioned themselves at the hall gates along with the dominating student groups of the respective halls.

An armed student group of Zahurul Haque Hall, has reportedly pledged support to the Jatiya Chhatra Samaj, the student front of Jatiya Party. The two armed groups were seen guarding the hall together.

The sources said that in a bid to strengthen their power base, the group might capture the adjoining Salimullah Hall, now dominated by the pro-Awami League Chhatra League.

Chhatra League sources said they were aware of the intention of their rivals and would defend their position.

Meanwhile several rounds of gunshots were heard from the TSC area at around 7:30 pm, but there was no report of any injury.

Gulf newspapers criticise aid plan for Palestinians

DUBAI, Mar 30: Gulf newspapers today criticised a US-sponsored emergency aid plan for the Palestinians because it keeps Israel's closure of the Palestinian territories in place, reports AFP.

"Though it looks positive, the plan ignored the importance of lifting the closure which has turned the Palestinian territories into a big jail," the Qatari daily Al-Sharq said.

"It is a sedative to divert people's attention from the real causes of the Palestinians' suffering, which is the closure of the territories," said the United Arab Emirates daily Al-Bayan.

US Secretary of State Warren Christopher on Thursday announced a six-point plan that calls for a job-creation programme and partial reopening of the borders between Israel and the Palestinian autonomous territories.

The closure, which keeps Palestinians away from jobs in Israel, was imposed in late February after the start of an Islamic suicide bombing campaign in the Jewish state that claimed more than 60 lives.

Janatar mancha

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national anthem. One-minute silence was also observed in memory of those killed during the anti-government movement.

Awami League activists arranged sporadic processions around the Mancha. The processionists carried national flag and portraits of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina.

In the morning, the liaison committee of government officials and employees held a rally at the Janatar Mancha expressing solidarity with the movement for ouster of the 'illegal' government.

JS dissolved

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power through 'farcical polls' and an 'illegal parliament'.

The BNP had insisted that it had conducted the polls for the sake of constitutional continuity while party chief Begum Zia after the elections stated that the new parliament would pass a caretaker bill in its first session and quit.

JKLF

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"Tragedy and continue its freedom struggle until India is shunted out of Kashmir."

Police in Srinagar said Siddiqui and 20 other militants were killed in a gun battle with Indian troops near the holiest mosque in the Kashmir summer capital.

A JKLF commander in Srinagar said Siddiqui was killed when Indian troops attacked the organization's head quarters near the Hazratbal mosque.

India, Russia to set up hotline

NEW DELHI, Mar 30: India and Russia today signed three agreements, including one for setting up a hotline between the prime minister's office here and the Kremlin, even as they pledged to combat fundamentalism, terrorism and extremist violence, reports PTI.

The agreements were signed soon after the delegation level talks between visiting Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov and External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee. The two ministers initiated the agreement on the hotline communication facility.

The other two agreements covered Indo-Russian scientific and technical cooperation till the year 2000 and cultural cooperation for 1996-98.

Primakov, who is the first Russian Foreign Minister for visit India after the disintegration of the erstwhile Soviet Union, called on President Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma here. The leaders stressed the need for greater cooperation to tackle fundamentalism and terrorism.

Besides bilateral issues, matters relating to the Afghan problem and threats posed to the security and territorial integrity of the region by terrorism figured during Primakov's talks with Pranab Mukherjee.

Non-cooperation

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ple to extend all cooperation to the caretaker government in discharging its duties.

Jamaat decided to observe March 31 as a day of gratitude and asked all partymen and workers to join the rally and procession to be organised on the occasion.

The last day yesterday of the non-cooperation programme passed off amid sporadic incidents of bomb blasts injuring at least 10 persons including Jatiya Party Secretary General Anwar Hossain Manju, party leader Zafar Imam and OC of Lalbagh thana Akhtaruzaman in the city. They were injured along with two other party activists when a bomb was hurled at a Jatiya Party procession at Lalbagh.

In another incident two persons, Zahir, 25, and Abul Kalam, 45, were injured when a petrol bomb was hurled at a bus at Azampur bus stand at Uttara at around 7 pm. Another person, Habib, was injured in a bomb blast at Farmgate at noon. The injured persons were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said medical sources.

Gunshots were fired in the Dhaka University (DU) area in the afternoon creating panic, residents there said.

Surgeons unblocked a heart valve by passing a wire through the mother and into the baby's heart during the three-hour operation at the Birmingham Women's Hospital.

The mother Michelle Evans was six months pregnant at the time and three months later the baby boy, Bluejay Keatley, was born alive and well.

The operations was carried out two years ago but doctors did not previously release information about it because of uncertainty about the extent to which it helped the baby's condition.

Bluejay still has heart disease and has had to undergo a series of heart operations since birth. But his parents are convinced the operation saved his life and doctors say his illness might have been more severe otherwise.

Young man beaten to death in Feni

FENI, Mar 30: A young man was beaten to death by unknown assailants at Daulatpur village in Sonagazi thana early today, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Noor Mohammad, 30. Police and hospital sources said, 10 miscreants kidnaped Noor Mohammad from his village home on Friday midnight and confined him in a room of Sheikh Shahidul Islam College. He was beaten seriously during his confinement.

Two youngmen took injured Noor Mohammad to Sonagazi thana health complex at 7 this morning, but the on-duty doctor declared him dead.

Getting information from the hospital sources, police rushed to the hospital and arrested Azizul Karim, 25, one of the two youngmen.

Awami League-backed Jubo League claimed Noor Mohammad as their activist and blamed BNP for the killing.

Noor Mohammad was the number-one accused of a murder case in Sonagazi thana. The body was sent to sadar hospital for autopsy. A case was filed with Sonagazi thana.

JCD activist shot dead in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Mar 30: A Jatiyaatabadi Chhatra Dal activist was shot dead reportedly by opposition activists during a protest rally at Muladi today.

Tuhin Mahmud was chased and gunned down by the activists when he arrived at the rally organised by the three main opposition parties to protest yesterday's killing of AL worker Sohel.

Meanwhile, thousands of people attended Sohel's namaz-e-janaza at Barisal town today.

Yeltsin unveils peace plan for Chechnya today

MOSCOW, Mar 30: Russian President Boris Yeltsin announced today he was completing a treaty on power-sharing between Moscow and Chechnya but excluded the separatist rebels from a dialogue on the north Caucasus republic's status, reports AFP.

In an open letter published in the Komsomolskaya Pravda daily, Yeltsin said he was ready for a "dialogue" to define a "special status" for Chechnya based on the power-sharing treaty.

But Yeltsin, who is set to unveil a peace plan for Chechnya tomorrow, appeared to rule out negotiations with the separatists loyal to independence leader Dzhokhar Dudayev, whom he described as "terrorists" and "illegal armed groups."

BTV wakes up

From Staff Correspondent

Suddenly BTV news appeared interesting last night. After years of government control, and total dominance of government and ruling party news, there was a sudden breath of freedom which made the news programmes of the near abandoned BTV suddenly an event worth watching. Like a giant waking up from a long sleep, BTV suddenly appears to have realised that a great mass movement had occurred.

Last evening it gave news of all the political parties holding rallies and demonstrations. In fact, it was the BTV news that gave the latest comments of the Chief Advisor, the former Prime Minister and the former Leader of the Opposition after the swearing-in ceremony at Bangabhaban.

It is quite possible that BTV and Radio Bangladesh will be operating in comparative freedom under the caretaker government. But the main problem of lack of autonomy of the state-controlled media still remains with us. We raise once again the demand of making appropriate laws that will free the state-funded media from government control. Can the caretaker government act in this regard?

Raushan, Manju

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many crude bombs from nearby lanes and rooftops of some buildings, party sources said.

During the attack, a procession of Jubo Sanghati was coming from Lalbagh to join the meeting, which was intercepted by police near the Central Jail.

A clash ensued in the area when the processionists and the party activists from the meeting venue tried to resist the attackers. The violence lasted about half an hour.

Police fired teargas shells and rubber bullets to disperse the crowd. The party activists said their activists Ibrahim Manjan Bhuiyan, and Mohiuddin were also injured.

Jatiya Party leaders held BNP activists responsible for the attack.

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