

## Seminar on mass movement told Civic community must continue efforts to attain objectives

Speakers at a seminar in Dhaka yesterday observed that through the recent mass movement, the elementary grounds for the effective reflection of the commoner's wills and urges in democracy and development have been prepared but doors of these two great opportunities are yet to be unlocked, reports BSS.

The dynamic efforts of the civic community have to continue in order not only to sustain the primary achievements but also to attain the great prospects the mass movement has brought before the nation, they added.

The seminar on "Democracy and Development in the Perspective of Recent Mass Movement" was organised by the Association of the Development Agencies of Bangladesh (ADAB) at the auditorium of the Academy for Planning and Development.

Former chairperson of the ADAB Kushi Kabir presided over the seminar while country's eminent economist Prof. Atiur Rahman presented the key-note paper on the subject.

Executive Director of the Association of Land Development and Land Reform Shamsul Huda, Prof. Lutfor Rahman of Bangladesh Agriculture University, Prof. A.J.M. Faruque of Dhaka University, Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) General Secretary Azizul Islam Bhuiyan, Bangladesh College

University Teachers Association General Secretary Mohammad Shajahan, Bangladesh Primary Teachers Association Vice-President Sufia Khatun, Bangladesh Mukti Joddha Sangsad executive member Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, leader of Bangladesh Nari Adhikar Andolan Rokeya Kabir and Trinamul Janasangathan leader Belal Hossain took part in the discussions.

The speakers said that the recent movement has brought about a great change in the politics of the country but not in the lot of the common people.

While terming democracy as an indispensable element for development, the speakers said that transition to democracy is dependent on various basic ingredients like civic engagement, political equality and a sense of decency, tolerance and trust.

Referring to various mass movements of the past, the speakers observed that through each movement some kind of aspirations and hopes had been generated among those who had actively taken part in the movement. But each time the people were disappointed as their expectations were not materialised in their true sense.

They said that in the absence of an institutional process of handing power and be-

cause of the failure to establish a real transparent and accountable administration all the past movements of the people for restoration of democracy could not attain success.

Turning to the present day responsibility of the civic society, the speakers said that quick and firm action should be taken to establish peace and justice in society through perfect implementation of law and administration.

They further said that the caretaker government should be given all kinds of cooperation by all democracy-loving parties and people for freeing the country from illegal arms and terrorism.

They said that in the interest of restoring confidence among the people the official media should be made autonomous and be used as the right places for expansion and culture of true democratic values.

They said that for building up a true people's welfare administration efforts should be made so that the pro-liberation forces could win in the forthcoming polls. Effective resistance should be made against 'black money', 'black persons' and 'black arguments' so that the hopes and aspirations of the general masses could be reflected in the outcome of the coming elections.



Chief Justice ATM Afzal (R) administering the oath of office to Abidur Rahman (L) and Moshtaq Ahmed Chowdhury (C) as election commissioners at his office yesterday.

—PID photo

## Body to rationalise rural bank losses

By Staff Correspondent

Commercial banks involved in rural banking should find out ways and strategies to make the village-banking system economically viable said a senior Bangladesh Bank official yesterday.

"The government has formed a committee to rationalise the losses the bank branches in rural areas are incurring," said Mahbubur Rahman Khan, Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Bank, while inaugurating a seminar on "Inter-linkage between banks, NGOs and informal credit sources for rural development" in Bangladesh.

Organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM) at its conference room, the central bank official told the seminar that the bank branches incurring losses in the rural areas might be closed soon.

Citing a dismal picture of the rural economy, he said despite the dominance of the rural sector in the national economy, the recovery rate of agricultural credits are very poor — 20 per cent during the 1994-95 period.

Although the percentage of rural bank branches have increased substantially from 48 per cent in 1974-75 to 63 per cent in 1993-94, the rural banking sector has also grown with some shortcomings, Khan noted.

"Low rates of recovery coupled with high transaction costs have turned many rural bank branches economically nonviable," Khan pointed out.

However, the central bank official suggested for adopting strategies to make the rural bank branches more viable. "Linkage between banks, NGOs and the informal credit sector will not only reduce the loan default and transaction costs, but also will increase the number of beneficiaries," Khan added.

Earlier, in his address of welcome, BIBM Director General A.H.M. Nurul Islam Choudhury emphasized on integration of the rural financial market. "The more a financial market is integrated and inter-linked among its various segments, the better is its saving and investment process," Choudhury said.

## New election commissioners take oath

Former Secretary Abidur Rahman and retired district judge Moshtaq Ahmed Chowdhury took oath of office as the Election Commissioners yesterday, reports UNB.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas appointed them as the Election Commissioners on Monday.

Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena and Secretary of the Election Commission Secretariat Muhammad Faizur Razzak were present at the oath-taking ceremony.

## BCL activist shot on DU campus

By DU Correspondent

An activist of Bangladesh Chhatra League, Masum, was shot by some unidentified armed youths yesterday evening at the Milan Chatter near the TSC of Dhaka University.

The victim, a final year student of economics department and a resident of Zahurul Haq Hall was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital with bullet injury in the thigh.

Sources on the campus claimed that the incident was a sequel to intra-party feud in the Awami League-backed Chhatra League.

## Illegal arms factory found in Cox's Bazar

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, April 16: Cox's Bazar Sadar thana police have unearthed an illegal arms manufacturing factory in deep forest under Islampur Union.

They also recovered 8 locally-made gun, 9 sawed-off rifles, huge amount of ammunition and some equipment from the factory, police sources said.

The manufacturers of illegal arms fled into deep forest when police entered the area. None was arrested in this regard.

Meanwhile, Cox's Bazar district police recovered a total of 94 illegal arms, 30 crackers and 65 bullets during last 15 days.

They also arrested 456 persons from 7 thanas for alleged involvement in manufacturing illegal arms.

## BNP rally in city

From Page 1

She reiterated her allegations that the political opponents of her party were "conspiring to sell out the national independence and sovereignty to their foreign masters." Their recent movement was directed to that end, she alleged.

There are some people who live and work in this country but deposit money in another country. Keeping such people on this soil, there would be no development of Bangladesh.

Listing development works during the tenure of her government, Begum Zia said, "Bangladesh could be compared with Malaysia, Korea and Singapore if the process of development was allowed to continue uninterrupted."

Regarding her government's steps for the civil servants, the former prime minister claimed that maximum number of officials and employees were promoted and they enjoyed various benefits during her regime. She asked the government servants not to be misled by the "vested quarters." She also thanked them for cooperating with her government in implementing different development projects.

In his speech, BNP vice-president Prof. A.Q.M. Badruddoza Chowdhury also demanded the next polls by May 30 and said people will launch agitation if it is not held by that deadline. He also accused the three parties (AL, JP and Jamaat) of conspiring against polls in May. They have united to combat the BNP as their total strength is less than that of the BNP.

Secretary general of the party, Abdus Salam Talukdar, told the meeting that conspiracy was on to delay holding of the polls to see results of polls in another country.

Demanding the polls in May, Talukdar said, "People will gherao the office of the Chief Adviser if the elections are delayed in the name of preparing voters' list."

The BNP leader further said, "(If returned to power) we must take action against those government officials who sided with a political party and revolted against a legitimate government."

She said while the number of voters was supposed to increase by at least 50 lakh now over that in 1991, the number had dropped by 60 lakh. "Many minority community and tribal voters could not get enlisted," alleged Hasina.

She also demanded a probe into what she said misuse of Tk 265 crore on voters' list head and added that the list prepared during BNP rule could in no way be a flawless one.

About illegal arms, Hasina alleged that the former BNP government had given 20,000 arms to activists of the party's front organisations and those were being used in criminal cases like theft, dacoity and murder and suppressing political opponents.

Demanding cancellation of licences of those arms, Hasina called for expediting the recovery of illegal arms for the sake of a sound law and order in the country.

She also demanded immediate removal of all "political appointees from courts, banks, insurance companies and autonomous bodies and cancellation of all contractual appointments at home and abroad."

Pledging to bring transparency and accountability in the running of the state apparatus, if voted to power, the AL president said recruitment, promotion, tenure and security of the employees of the Republic would be determined in accordance with articles 133, 134, 135 and 136 of the

## Hasina: Simplify process

From Page 1

To simplify the process, she demanded dropping of various conditions and preparing a simple form on the basis of which, she said, teachers of primary and high schools and field level government employees could work for modifying the voters' list.

She said while the number of voters was supposed to increase by at least 50 lakh now over that in 1991, the number had dropped by 60 lakh. "Many minority community and tribal voters could not get enlisted," alleged Hasina.

She also demanded a probe into what she said misuse of Tk 265 crore on voters' list head and added that the list prepared during BNP rule could in no way be a flawless one.

About illegal arms, Hasina alleged that the former BNP government had given 20,000 arms to activists of the party's front organisations and those were being used in criminal cases like theft, dacoity and murder and suppressing political opponents.

Demanding cancellation of licences of those arms, Hasina called for expediting the recovery of illegal arms for the sake of a sound law and order in the country.

She also demanded immediate removal of all "political appointees from courts, banks, insurance companies and autonomous bodies and cancellation of all contractual appointments at home and abroad."

Pledging to bring transparency and accountability in the running of the state apparatus, if voted to power, the AL president said recruitment, promotion, tenure and security of the employees of the Republic would be determined in accordance with articles 133, 134, 135 and 136 of the

## The Midnight File

### Lebanon won't accept US proposal

BEIRUT, April 16: Lebanon's Prime Minister Rafik Al-Hariri said today it was difficult for Beirut to accept the terms of a US proposal to end an Israeli blitz against Hizbollah guerrillas. "Our first impression is that there is a difficulty in accepting it (the proposal) in its current form," Hariri said, according to a report by Lebanon's official national news agency, says Reuter.

## Immunization drive: First phase ends

From Page 1

Mothers, even fathers and grandparents, with children in their laps crowded different points of the city to vaccinate their next generation against the crippling polio disease yesterday, the first day of the National Immunisation Days, reports UNB.

Children under the age of five were seen at the vaccination centres at Mitali Club in Khilgaon, Sramajibi Hospital, Purana Paltan slum, Kamalapur railway station and Ward Commissioner's Office at Arambagh.

A total of 900 centres were set up in the capital to immunise seven million children as part of the countrywide NIDs.

Organisers opened some 12 lakh centres across the country to vaccinate about 20 million children during the second NIDs, a 3-year global programme to eradicate polio by the year 2000. Over 13 million children of the same age group are also to be supplemented with vitamin A today (Tuesday) and on May 16.

Some 10 mobile teams, however, were given the responsibility to motivate the guardians and to cover the floating children of the metropolitan city.

Even the children, moving in or out of the capital, were also not left out of the programme. At Kamalapur station, Rotary Club of Dhaka Metropolitan vaccinated 350 children who travelled by trains up to 3 pm.

The Dhaka City Mayor who visited the Sramajibi Hospital hoped that Bangladesh would be able to eradicate the crippling polio disease by successfully implementing the immunisation programme.

Members of the Scouts and Girls Guide, volunteers from NGOs like World Vision, BRAC and ASA, and nurses of the Sramajibi Hospital helped the health workers in the vaccination programme.

I'm sure we will be able to build a happy, disease-free country for the next generation," said Mayor Mohammad Hanif, who also visited other city centres to see the progress of the drive.

Science Faculties had commenced on July 15 and were scheduled to be over by March 14 this year. Examinations under these faculties were scheduled to begin from April 20. But those will not be held in time.

Prof. Emajuddin Ahmed, Vice-Chancellor of the University, told the correspondent that he was trying to reduce the possible session jam. When asked, he said that it was not possible to increase the number of classes due to shortage of classrooms. Asked whether the DU authorities were thinking of reducing the 32-day summer vacation starting from May 30, the VC said that it needed approval of the Syndicate. He said that they would consider the matter if needed.

Classes in the university began on April 6 after a long unscheduled vacation.

## Boat Purchase Case Mizan concerned at filing of appeal to HC

From Page 1

Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, acting chairman of the Jatiya Party, yesterday expressed concern at the filing of appeal in the High Court by the state to enhance the period of punishment of the former president Ershad in the Japanese boat purchase case, reports BSS.

"When people were expecting justice and neutral conduct from the caretaker government with regard to Ershad, this appeal has surprised and amazed the nation," Chowdhury said in a statement. He said the JP was deeply concerned at the filing of the appeal by the caretaker government to raise the period of conviction of Ershad in a constitutional case by the fallen BNP government to take reprisal.

Chowdhury said that the Jatiya Party has always maintained that Ershad is a victim of "BNP's vindictive politics" and has been subjected to "inhuman behaviour and cruelty" by the BNP regime through filing of a series of false and conspiratorial court cases against him. He demanded an end to this situation from the caretaker government. The nation expected a judicious and neutral outlook on the question of Ershad and not the continuation of the previous regime, he said and alleged that it seemed the ghost of BNP regime has descended on the caretaker government.

He said all political parties will have to cooperate for holding a fair and neutral election under the caretaker government.

Begum Nurjahan Morshed, Advocate Zahurul Islam, Dr. Abdul Hakim, Enayetur Rahman, Jamil Chowdhury and Ramesh Moitra also spoke at the meeting while party general secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik presented the annual report.

Dr. Kamal suggested that the caretaker government and the Election Commission monitor the daily events and take necessary steps to create an atmosphere for holding free and fair election.

Terming the general elections in 1986, 1988 and 1996 as farcical, the Gono Forum president said the country had to sacrifice a lot for those elections.

"A fair and free election is essential for saving democracy and in the greater interest of the 12 crore people," Dr. Kamal said.

## Shipping lines

From Page 1

and the rush of container vessels has also decreased," he CPA chairman said.

He informed that only three ships were berthed at the outer anchorage today while 20 to 30 ships waited there earlier.

For that reason the delegation was sent directly to Singapore to convince the foreign shipping line operators about the prevailing situation at the Chittagong port, the acting chairman said.

He hoped that the congestion surcharge might be withdrawn by these organisations in consideration of present situation.

The foreign shipping lines increased the surcharge on all container vessels from April 8 from 50 US dollars to 200 dollars per container.

## Textbooks

From Page 1

The association will supply the list of such stalls to the Education Ministry which will be communicated to the respective district administration.

These decisions were taken at a meeting held at the Education Ministry to ensure marketing of textbooks at fair price. Adviser in charge of the Ministry of Education Mohammad Shamsul Hoque presided over the meeting.

The meeting expressed resentment at the inadequate supply of textbooks in the market, resulting in the price spiral.

The meeting was informed by TBPSA that due to political turmoil, the printing and marketing of textbooks were hampered for delayed supply of paper. The association also said that the situation had improved and the price would stabilise soon.

The meeting formed an enquiry committee with Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Education Shahidul Alam as chairman to probe the delay in marketing the textbooks and their sale at higher prices. The committee will submit its report to the Education Ministry.

President of Bangladesh Computer Society Mostafa Zabar was critical of the T&T Board authorities for not responding to the demand for installation of high-speed data transfer system, V-Sat, Internet and other facilities.

## Changes at DC level

From Page 1

was made DC of Narsingdi, DC of Lalmonirhat, Kazi Farid Ahmed made DC to Rajshahi, DC Kushiia Md Nazrul Islam made DC, Chittagong, DC of Magura A.K.M. Musa was made DC of Nawabganj.

Director of Land Administration Training Centre Md Sekander Ali Mandal was made DC of Lalmonirhat, Iftekhar Ahmed of DLRC of Barisal made DC of Khulna, Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Industries K.M. Abul Ahsan made DC of Natore, A.M.M. Farhad Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Industries made DC of Kishoreganj, Director of the Bureau of Disaster Management A.F.M. Sirajul Haque made DC of Kushiia and Abdul Mannan, Deputy Secretary of the Finance Ministry, was made DC of Bholia.

Besides, deputy secretary of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Md Shahjahan Siddique, Bir Bikram, was

## Pabna BCL chief, 24 other students arrested

PABNA, April 16: Police arrested 25 student leader and workers on various charges from different parts of the district today, reports UNB.

Gulam Farooq, district unit president of the Chhatra League, was among those arrested during separate drives.

Police said the arrested student activists belonged to the BNP-backed Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), pro-Awami League Chhatra League and Jatiya Party-supported Jatiya Chhatra Sanjal.

The Awami League and its front organisations in an instant protest, brought out a procession in the town.

## Mujibnagar Day

From Page 1

The government in exile was sworn in at Meherpur on this day in the presence of international media. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who was being held in a Pakistani prison at the time, was named the President and Supreme Commander of the Liberation forces while Syed Nazrul Islam was made the acting President.

Tajuddin Ahmed was named the war-time Prime Minister, a post he held till Sheikh Mujibur Rahman took over in early 1972.

The other members of the provisional cabinet were Captain Mansur Ali, AFM Qamruzzaman, Khandaker Mush-taq Ahmed, and Colonel MAG Osmany, the Commander in Chief of the Liberation Forces.

A memorial has been erected at the site of the ceremony in the war-time capital. Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, in a statement on the occasion, noted with deep grief that the "anti-Liberation forces had distorted the history of liberation by taking over the state power after the killing of the Father of the Nation in 1975."

"On this day our pledge will be to advance the struggle for building an exploitation free Sonar Bangla as cherished by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman," she said.

Highlighting the significance of the day, Sheikh Hasina said that the historic Charter of Liberation was adopted at Mujibnagar on April 17 in 1971 on the context of the March 26 declaration of inde-

pendence and later on the War of Liberation was directed on the basis of that charter.

Various organisations have taken up elaborate programmes to observe the day in a befitting manner.

To mark the day Awami League will hoist the National Flag and party flag at the party office and Bangabandhu Bhaban at six in the morning, place wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu at 7:30 am and hold a discussion at Bangabandhu Avenue at 4 pm. AL president Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to chair the discussion.

Meanwhile, the AL also formed a Mujibnagar Day Observance Preparation Committee with its presidium member Qamruzzaman as its chairman, Meherpur district unit president Md Hishabuddin and general secretary Md Ismail Hussain as convener and member secretary respectively, says a party press release.

Bangladesh Mujibnagar Karmachari Kalyan Sangsad will also hold a discussion at 4 pm today at Hotel Rajmoni Isha Khan in the city. Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Mohammad Hanif is scheduled to attend it as the chief guest.

Society for Parliamentary Democracy has urged the authorities concerned to put up special programmes on radio and television highlighting the historic significance of the day.

The Supreme Court Lawyers' Unit of Bangabandhu Parishad will hold a discussion on the historic 'Mujibnagar Day' today at the auditorium of the Supreme Court Lawyers' Association at 4 pm.

## 3 killed, 5 hurt in city incidents

By Staff Correspondent

Three persons were killed and five others injured in separate incidents of violence in the city yesterday.

One Shaharul Miah, 26, was killed when a speeding truck collided with a tempo on Biswa Road in Shabujbari area in the city at around 4:45 pm, police said.

One Robulul Islam, 40, was killed in another road accident at Uttara at around noon. He died on the spot, medical sources said.

Police recovered body of one Monwara Begum, 35, from a slum in Mohammadpur area in the city yesterday. Monwara was poisoned to death, according to medical sources.

In another incident Kabir Hossain, 32, and his wife Sulekha, 25, were stabbed by a group of muggers near their house at Monipurpara in the city at around 6:30 am yesterday. They were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

One Akkas Khan, 25, received bullet injuries in a clash between two local groups in Rayerbazar area yesterday morning. Medical sources said Akkas was admitted to the DMCH.

One Joyanal, 25, sustained bullet injuries at Moghbazar while Shamim, 16, received wounds by splinters of crude bombs at Nawabganj in the afternoon.

## Extended meet of BNP EC today

By Staff Correspondent

BNP will hold an extended meeting of its National Executive Committee at the auditorium of the Institution of Engineers in the city today.

The meeting, scheduled to begin at 9 in the morning, will be attended by the central leaders, presidents and secretaries of the party's district and thana units and former BNP MPs of the sixth parliament.

Party chief Begum Khaleda Zia will be in the chair.

The extended meeting, being held ahead of the parliamentary elections, is expected to discuss the party's manifesto and preparations, nominations and organisational matters including intra-party issues, party sources said.

Central leadership would also listen to the party leaders and workers at the grassroots level, they added.

## 2 killed, 15 hurt in Ctg road accident

CHITTAGONG, April 16: Two persons were killed and 15 others injured when a Chittagong-bound passenger bus fell into a roadside ditch near Indrapool under Patiya thana on Chittagong-Cox's Bazar road, about 20 km off here today, reports BSS.

Police and eyewitnesses said the accident occurred when the passenger bus from Cox's Bazar reached Kanchipara, suddenly the driver lost control over the steering wheel and the bus fell into the ditch killing two passengers and injuring 15 others.

Of the victims one, who could not be identified immediately, died on the spot while Lokman, 27, helper of the bus succumbed to his injuries at a local hospital.

## 30 soldiers killed in Colombia

BOGOTA, April 16: At least 30 soldiers were killed today by guerrillas in an early-morning ambush in the southern town of Puerres near the Ecuadoran border. Military sources said, reports AFP.