

# Khaleda's challenge to opponents None can prove theft of relief during BNP rule

Sylhet, June 3: Former Prime Minister and BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia today threw a challenge to her political opponents saying that nobody could prove that her government had misappropriated a single drop of relief materials, reports UNB.

She said that the BNP, during its five-year rule, shattered had tried to consolidate the country's economy by utilising domestic resources, combating a series of natural disasters.

Addressing a mammoth election project meeting at the Registry Maidan here, she said her government successfully faced the situation without any foreign assistance. "We needed foreign assistance only in 1991 when BNP just came to power after nine years of autocratic rule."

Our Staff Correspondent reports: Begum Zia said, if voted to power the BNP will establish local bodies like Thana Development Council and Zila Parishad to involve the local people in development activities and other decision making matters. Khaleda Zia also announced that, if voted to power, BNP would introduce a special pension scheme for the elderly people.

The BNP chairperson introduced former finance minister M Saifur Rahman, Ilyas Ali, Shafi Ahmed Chowdhury, Abdul Mattin Chowdhury and Dr Syed Mokbul Hossain, all party nominees for the six constituencies in the district.

Saifur Rahman is contesting in Sylhet-1 (Sadar and Companyganj thanas), Sylhet-4 (Jaintapur and Gowainghat thanas) and Moulvibazar-3 (Moulvibazar sadar and Rajnagar) seats.

# Jatrabari bus fire Another accused held

Police yesterday arrested one more accused in the horrific Jatribari bus fire incident in the city in which 12 people were burnt to death on December 4 last year.

Police identified the arrested person as Abed but said the man was member of a notorious gang of criminals who change their names frequently at their convenience.

With the arrest of Abed, the number of arrest in the case rose to eight yesterday. Police arrested another accused, Sentu, last week and six others earlier.

Police said Sentu has confessed his involvement in the incident. Sentu's confession will help the investigations, police said adding he (Sentu) also has marks of injury from the incident.

According to confessions made by some of the arrested persons, the bus was stopped by a gang of at least two dozen people and petrol was sprayed inside before hurling bombs in it. One of their accomplices was also killed in the incident, police said.

The Daily Star, in its issue of December 6 last year had reported quoting two victims of the incident that they felt liquid substance in their bodies before the bus caught fire.

The two victims, Nurul Alam and Nuruzzaman, were fatally injured and had died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The investigation officer of the case talking to The Daily Star yesterday said "the bus was put on fire by the gang to secure the release of one of their accomplices from jail."

Without giving details, the IO said that the gang was very notorious and known in the area for their criminal activities.

Police officials, however, said that the report of the forensic department was not helpful in finding any clue to the incident. The report, submitted to police in February, could not identify the cause of the fire.

Sources in the forensic department had told the Daily Star earlier that it was not possible to find evidence in such incidents where "high speed water" was used to put out the fire.

"The roof of the bus was blown off due to the internal pressure when the bus was set ablaze," pointed out an expert, adding "the cause of fire could be due to existence of petroleum either in liquid form or in gaseous form."

He, however, ruled out the possibility of that the fire was caused due to burst of its engine.

**Baby beaten to death**  
By DMCH Correspondent

A baby was beaten to death allegedly by his mother at Monipurpara in the city yesterday.

The unidentified mother aged about 30, also reportedly tried to commit suicide by hitting her head against a wall after she saw that her husband had married another woman, police said quoting locals.

Police recovered the body of the two-year-old child from a lane at Monipurpara and found the mother tied with an electric pole yesterday afternoon. It was learnt that local people assaulted the woman for killing the child.

Tejgaon police rescued the woman and sent her to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in a critical condition. She was under treatment at the hospital till last night. The body of the child was sent to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

Police were investigating the incident and trying to get the identity of the woman.

**Hasina's next campaign tour**  
Awami League President Sheikh Hasina as part of her hectic electioneering tour will visit greater Comilla and Sylhet districts on June 7 and 8, reports UNB.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

# BNP tells press Over 100 workers killed during caretaker rule

Over 100 BNP workers were killed by terrorists at different parts of the country till Sunday after the establishment of the caretaker government, BNP spokesman Anwar Zahid said yesterday, reports BSS.

Briefing the newsmen, Zahid, member of BNP election coordination committee said a BNP worker was also killed in Sandwip on Sunday.

Anwar Zahid alleged that the administration was working against the BNP and police was behaving as a "tips group".

He said that police had beaten severely and teargassed the workers of BNP in Mirpur thana in the capital yesterday and arrested 12 BNP activists including JCD leader Saifur Rahman Newton. He also alleged that 35 persons were injured during the police action.

He demanded immediate release of the arrested BNP activists and removal of officer-in-charge of Mirpur thana Malek and assistant police commissioner Kohinor.

Referring to killings of BNP workers he said the party had always protested such terrorist acts but did not go for any action like meetings and processions which could create tension in the minds of the people. He, however, said that a protest meeting organised by Mirpur and Pallabi thana BNP would be held today at 5:00pm in front of Mirpur stadium.

Pointing to the anti-terrorism day to be observed by the Awami League on June 5 the BNP spokesman said this indicates "an ominous sign" and urged the caretaker government to act according "if it is neutral at all".

**C'wealth team to observe polls**  
A team of 12 Commonwealth observers, together with a supporting team from the Commonwealth Secretariat, will be present in Bangladesh during the parliamentary elections which is to be held on June 12, reports BSS.

According to a press release in Dhaka yesterday the Commonwealth was responding to an invitation from the government of Bangladesh for a Commonwealth group to observe the parliamentary election.

A planning mission from the Commonwealth Secretariat which visited Bangladesh in May established that there was widespread support among the major political parties for a Commonwealth presence during the election.

The Commonwealth team for Bangladesh will be led by Tan Sri Dr Mohd Ghazali Shafile, former minister of foreign affairs of Malaysia. The other observers are: Errol W Bethel, parliamentary commissioner, the Bahamas, Justin McClair, chief election officer, St Lucia, Reuben T Kaiulo Mbe, electoral commissioner, Papua New Guinea, Haulda Stanley Kibacha MP Tanzania, Ms Alice Killam, Electoral officer, Canada, Ms Lindiwe Maseko MP South Africa, Dilan Perera MP Sri Lanka, Johannah-Joy Phumaphi MP, Botswana, Dr Kanwisher Soim NP Singapore, Lord Faverley, member, House of Lords, Britain, and Trevor Willson, assistant electoral commissioner, Australia.

Justice Latifur Rahman of the Appellate Division upon an application of Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday in his chamber advanced the date of hearing.

Earlier on May 30 Justice Latifur Rahman at his residence upon a petition of Salman Rahman passed a provisional order staying the HC judgement till June 2 and fixed the matter for hearing on that day in the full bench of the Appellate Division.

As the copy of the HC judgement was not available the Appellate Division fixed June 6 for hearing of the petition and also extended the stay of the judgement till that day. But a copy of the judgement could be collected earlier, the hearing would be advanced, ordered the court.

**CA reviews law & order**  
Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman reviewed the law and order in the country at a meeting with the senior officials of the ministry of Home Affairs at his office in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

The progress of the nationwide illegal arrias recovery drive and some recent untoward incidents resulting in killing of some persons figured in the discussion.

**BBC bulletin**  
Family members allowed to meet Nasim  
Star Report

The family members of former army chief Lt Gen ASM Nasim and Myensinging area commander Maj Gen Aijuddin were allowed to meet them, according to the BBC news bulletin last night.

The two senior officers along with other five army officers are under arrest and an investigation is going on in this regard.

Mother of Gen (ret'd) Nasim and daughter of Gen (ret'd) Aijuddin demanded a fair investigation against those officers.

The family members of Gen (ret'd) Nasim met him on last Tuesday while the wife of Gen (ret'd) Aijuddin met him yesterday.

Arifa Zebin, daughter of Gen (ret'd) Aijuddin, told the BBC that investigation was being conducted against her father in secret and interrogation was going on almost every day.

She demanded an open trial and allowing her father opportunity of self defence.

Mother of Gen (ret'd) Nasim in a statement demanded formation of a high-level enquiry committee comprising justices of the Supreme Court.

A five member military enquiry committee has been set up to probe the incidents in the army.

**City AL meet today**  
An emergency meeting of the office-bearers of the Dhaka City Awami League and presidents and general secretaries of thana Awami League will be held at 10 am today at the Awami League office at Bangabandhu Avenue, a party press release said. Member secretary of city election steering committee, Akhtarul Alam has requested the concerned people to remain present in the meeting, reports BSS.

**AL tells press**  
Certain quarters trying to create uneasy situation  
Bangladesh Awami League's central election steering committee yesterday expressed concern at the increased terrorism ahead of the June 12 general election in the country, reports BSS.

Briefing newsmen co-chairperson of the committee, SAMS Kibria, alleged that certain quarters had been trying to create an uneasy situation affecting the election atmosphere through a planned way. He said several Awami League leaders were killed during the last few days by what he added, the armed activists of the BNP at different places in the country.

Kibria said that apart from the killing of an Awami League leader and Ward Commissioner Shahabuddin, the armed activists of the BNP killed a 70-year-old freedom fighter and Awami League worker at Singair in Manikganj on Saturday last.

He further alleged that the armed BNP workers had killed a freedom fighter and Awami League worker Abdul Halim village Chair/Sakindia in Pabna district and the same day they injured seriously another Awami League worker Obaidullah of village Char Chaitan in Pabna.

Kibria said that the BNP terrorists killed a businessman and local Awami League leader Haji Nurul Islam in Gazipur.

Kibria said that armed terrorists of the BNP had attacked the residence of Awami League leader Abul Kalam Azad in Sandwip where, he added, one terror was arrested with arms.

Kibria said there could not be a proper election if terrorism was continued.

He urged the caretaker government to arrest the terrorists immediately to ensure a congenial atmosphere for election.

# Elect AL to rid country of all ills: Hasina

CHITTAGONG, June 3: President of the Bangladesh Awami League Sheikh Hasina today urged the people to vote for the Awami League in the June 12 polls to help the party rid the country of all ills and irregularities accumulated over the last 20 years, reports BSS.

Sheikh Hasina was addressing a series of large public meetings at several constituencies of Feni, Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tracts as part of her party's election campaign. She addressed over two dozens of massive public meetings and several wayside meetings from 10 am to 10 pm.

"Give us at least one more chance this time by casting your vote for the Awami League candidates who are always your tested friends," she said adding that the boat, the symbol of the Awami League, had earned for the country independence following the 1970 general elections.

Addressing a massive public meeting at "Alankar Cinema Hall square" in the city, Sheikh Hasina said there was a conspiracy now being hatched to foil the coming polls.

She said BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia being sure of her party's total collapse in the coming polls had started giving imbalanced speeches. "She has also taken a killer as her ally," she said when talking about Col (Ret'd) Abdur Rashid, a self-confessed killer of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Mayor of Chittagong City Corporation Alhaj ABM Mahiuddin Chowdhury and other district leaders received the party chief as she arrived the meeting venue.

Addressing a meeting at Boalkhali under Chittagong district, Sheikh Hasina referred to a candidate of BNP and said, the party to save himself. He used to be a stooge of Ershad and now he is working as the same for Begum Zia," she said.

The Awami League chief in this respect referred to Begum Zia's threats to the officials and employees of the republic and said such threats would not be tolerated.

The Awami League chief introduced her party candidates to the jubilant crowds at all the meetings. They were Zainal Abedin Hazari, Engr Mosharrar Hussain, Abul Kashem, Dr Afzarul Amin, Nurul Islam BSC, Moslemuddin Ahmed, Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser, Bir Bahadur and Dipankar Talukder.

When Sheikh Hasina was addressing a meeting at Mirsarai, the jubilant crowd cried out in chorus that they would not allow their thana to become a part of Feni. While talking to BSS, some people said that BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia, who is also a candidate in this constituency under Chittagong district, declared that Mirsarai would be integrated into Feni.

**A survey of profiles**  
Most candidates belong to higher social strata  
By Staff Correspondent

Most of the candidates in the June 12 parliamentary election are from the higher strata of the society, according to a survey of the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC).

The PPRC survey of the profiles of candidates in the parliamentary elections found that 70 per cent of the Awami League candidates come from socially better-off groups while the percentage for BNP candidates is 79 and for Jatya Party 68 per cent.

The use of mastatans in the elections have also increased significantly. Thirty-four per cent of all candidates in the coming polls are perceived as protectors of mastatans. In 1991 the percentage was 21.

Eighteen per cent of the AL candidates were perceived as protector of mastatans in 1991 which has increased to 34 per cent in 1996. For BNP the percentages are 11 and 49 and for JP 56 and 36 respectively, the survey said.

The survey also revealed that most of the candidates are businessmen and live in the urban areas. Thirty-five per cent of the nominees have residence in the capital city. The percentage of farmers and small traders among the nominees are very poor, 3 and 4 per cent respectively, it said.

Regarding the educational qualifications of the nominees, 40 per cent of the candidates in the 1996 election are graduates. Only four per cent of the candidates have school-level education, the survey added.

The age compositions of the majority of the candidates are from the middle age groups (41 to 50). Only 12 per cent of the candidates are aged below 40 years.

**Hearing of Salman's petition tomorrow**  
By SC Correspondent

The hearing of Salman F Rahman's petition for stay of the High Court judgement has been advanced to June 5 from June 6 as the certified copy of the judgement was available earlier.

Justice Latifur Rahman of the Appellate Division upon an application of Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday in his chamber advanced the date of hearing.

Earlier on May 30 Justice Latifur Rahman at his residence upon a petition of Salman Rahman passed a provisional order staying the HC judgement till June 2 and fixed the matter for hearing on that day in the full bench of the Appellate Division.

As the copy of the HC judgement was not available the Appellate Division fixed June 6 for hearing of the petition and also extended the stay of the judgement till that day. But a copy of the judgement could be collected earlier, the hearing would be advanced, ordered the court.

**Dutch-Bangla Bank launched**  
By Staff Correspondent

A new joint-venture commercial bank has been launched in the city.

The "Dutch-Bangla Bank" Limited, the first European joint-venture bank in the country with a paid up capital of Tk 20 crore, started its operation through a simple function in the city yesterday.

Of the total equity of the bank, 60 per cent is owned by the Bangladesh entrepreneurs and 30 per cent by the Netherlands Development Finance Corporation (FMO) and the rest 10 per cent of the shares would be offered to the public, said AHM Shawkat Ali Choudhury, Managing Director of the bank.

Talking to The Daily Star, the MD of the bank hoped that the bank could introduce to its customer some new services. He also expected that the bank might open branches in Chittagong and Narayanganj in the future.

ABM Amro Bank, one of the largest bank in the world, would extend technical assistance to the new bank.

**BBC bulletin**  
Family members allowed to meet Nasim  
Star Report

The family members of former army chief Lt Gen ASM Nasim and Myensinging area commander Maj Gen Aijuddin were allowed to meet them, according to the BBC news bulletin last night.

The two senior officers along with other five army officers are under arrest and an investigation is going on in this regard.

Mother of Gen (ret'd) Nasim and daughter of Gen (ret'd) Aijuddin demanded a fair investigation against those officers.

The family members of Gen (ret'd) Nasim met him on last Tuesday while the wife of Gen (ret'd) Aijuddin met him yesterday.

Arifa Zebin, daughter of Gen (ret'd) Aijuddin, told the BBC that investigation was being conducted against her father in secret and interrogation was going on almost every day.

She demanded an open trial and allowing her father opportunity of self defence.

Mother of Gen (ret'd) Nasim in a statement demanded formation of a high-level enquiry committee comprising justices of the Supreme Court.

A five member military enquiry committee has been set up to probe the incidents in the army.

### Hostess

Keeps food warm in 3 heat resistant glass dishes

Let's make things better

Transcom Electronics Limited

Official license of Philips Electronics N.V. for lighting products, radio and TV sets  
Dhaka: 81/306-9, 81/625-9, 889993  
Ctg.-501082, 503578, Khulna: 20304, Bogra: 6215

# The Midnight File

## India's new govt to hike defence budget

NEW DELHI, June 3: India's new Defence Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav took office today pledging to hike the defence budget. "Our government will spend every single penny of available resources to upgrade the capability of the armed forces," Yadav, a leader of the Samajwadi (socialist) Party, told reporters here, says AFP.

# NCST meet to be held in Jan every year

Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman yesterday hoped that the next elected government would take steps for implementing the decisions of National Council for Science and Technology to keep the country abreast with modern knowhow, reports UNB.

He was presiding over the Prisoners

From Page 1  
The prisoners who had already served half of their jail terms on that date shall be eligible for release. Besides prisoners with half of their terms over in future, after the announcement, will also be eligible for remission of their sentences.

Cases of prisoners aged over 60 and below 16 will also be considered. Those above 60 may be released if they are considered physically infirm or mentally incapacitated, sources concerned pointed out.

The final decision on their release will be given by boards consisting of the deputy commissioners, Civil Surgeons, DIGs of Prisons and Jail Superintendents, an official said.

Remission of sentence will also be applicable to those who are currently in jail convicted by a lower court but have preferred appeal in a higher court.

The release of prisoners is expected to begin any day now and there is no need to seek permission from the higher authorities. The jail authorities will begin the exercise strictly following the government guidelines, a source explained.

Jail sources noted that such remission of sentences was done in case of several thousand prisoners during the rule of jailed former President Ershad in 1988 and that of interim president Justice Shahabuddin in 1991.

**Attack on Jamaat procession in Khulna: 10 hurt**  
From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, June 3: At least ten persons were injured when a procession of the Jamaat-e-Islami was attacked at Chuknagar bazar under Dumuria thana of Khulna district on Sunday night.

The attackers ransacked the shop of Baharul Islam, a leader of Jamaat's Chuknagar unit.

Police and eye witnesses said, the attackers belong to the BNP.

The Dumuria unit of the BNP in a statement said the attackers were all non-political persons opposing any was Mehfil at Chuknagar bazar violating the election code of conduct.

**JCD leader held in Khulna**  
From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, June 3: Police arrested the president of the city college unit of JCD Sunday night.

According to police, Mehdi Hasan Mintu is one of the accused named in the FIR of the 'Kashem Pathan Murder Case'.

Shibir leader Abul Kashem Pathan was gunned down at the college campus last year.

Police also recovered a big dagger from the JCD leader who is also wanted in several other cases.

**Biswas: Close harmony**  
From Page 1

The highest importance to the holding of a free and fair election in Bangladesh.

President Biswas said the Election Commission, the non-party caretaker government and all other relevant authorities were working in close harmony for making the coming general election free, fair, transparent and meaningful.

"We all are determined to have a peaceful and impartial election for strengthening the democratic process in this country," he told the Americans when they called on the President yesterday afternoon.

The Election Commission has also taken positive steps for making the job of the international election observers easier, he said.

There is, said the President, great enthusiasm among the people and members of the political parties about the smooth and peaceful election.

"By the grace of Almighty Allah, the election will be held fairly and impartially."

He also mentioned that the EC had made massive preparations for the purpose.

The US Congressman expressed satisfaction at the arrangements that have been made and congenial atmosphere prevailing for a smooth and fair election in the country at the moment.

Bill Richardson praised the role of President Biswas, the caretaker government and the Election Commission in creating such a congenial atmosphere for a smooth and peaceful election.

The other member of NDI spoke, Peter Manikas, also took on the occasion.

Among others, Secretary to the President Nooruddin Almasood, Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan, Military Secretary to the President Maj Gen Ruhul Alam Chowdhury and US Ambassador David N

Merrill were present.

Richardson also paid a courtesy call on Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman at his office yesterday afternoon.

Preparations for the forthcoming parliamentary elections came up in their discussion. Richardson praised the role of the caretaker government for creating a positive atmosphere for the coming parliamentary elections. He also said that he saw a lot of enthusiasm in the electioneering here.

The Chief Adviser said that all necessary steps had been taken to ensure a free, fair and impartial election.

US Ambassador David N Merrill accompanied the delegation.

**Mir Shawkat**  
From Page 1

fied the killers. Several teams have already been sent out of Dhaka to nab the culprits, said a police official in Mohammadpur thana.

Police yesterday interrogated another 15 persons of the locality including some family members of Shahabuddin besides the five persons already in police remand.

Dr arrested persons are likely to be produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court this morning after the end of three days remand. Police might pray for further remand for interrogation, sources added.

Taken aback by the gruesome killing, the eldest brother of the slain commissioner quoted Shahabuddin as saying "I have never harmed anyone, so why should I be killed?"

Shahabuddin's brother told this correspondent that he (Shahabuddin) had received an anonymous phone call on Wednesday night. The caller had threatened to kill him. Shahabuddin's brother said.

# Richardson: Fair election

From Page 1  
his two day stay he had held frank discussions with the President, the Chief Advisor, the Chief Election Commissioner and the Foreign Secretary. He also stated that he had met top leaders of four major parties.

He said it was his feeling that the major parties recognised the need for restraining their supporters for the national good and conveyed their commitment to ensure a peaceful and secure environment for voters on election day. He pointed out that the presence of impartial international and domestic monitors can be a very important means of enhancing the public's confidence in the electoral system.

Responding to questions Richardson said he was pleased at the stable political situation now prevailing and was hopeful that the stable situation would continue till June 12.

Asked repeatedly if he had discussed trial of the retired army chief with the President or officials, Richardson replied: "This is a Bangladeshi agenda. This is a Bangladeshi agenda."

Pressed further regarding the court of enquiry and the nature of trial or whether its report should be held up till the holding of the coming polls, Richardson replied, "That's a matter that has to be dealt with by the courts here. It's absolutely an internal Bangladeshi matter."

Responding to another question whether there should be strong armies in a democracy, the US Congressman, who is also a member of the House Committee on Intelligence, replied, "Look at the US. Look at other democracies. Strong democracies have strong armies too."

When asked if letters sent

to the President, the Chief Advisor, the Chief Election Commissioner and the Foreign Secretary. He also stated that he had met top leaders of four major parties.

He said it was his feeling that the major parties recognised the need for restraining their supporters for the national good and conveyed their commitment to ensure a peaceful and secure environment for voters on election day. He pointed out that the presence of impartial international and domestic monitors can be a very important means of enhancing the public's confidence in the electoral system.

Responding to questions Richardson said he was pleased at the stable political situation now prevailing and was hopeful that the stable situation would continue till June 12.

Asked repeatedly if he had discussed trial of the retired army chief with the President or officials, Richardson replied: "This is a Bangladeshi agenda. This is a Bangladeshi agenda."

Pressed further regarding the court of enquiry and the nature of trial or whether its report should be held up till the holding of the coming polls, Richardson replied, "That's a matter that has to be dealt with by the courts here. It's absolutely an internal Bangladeshi matter."

Responding to another question whether there should be strong armies in a democracy, the US Congressman, who is also a member of the House Committee on Intelligence, replied, "Look at the US. Look at other democracies. Strong democracies have strong armies too."

When asked if letters sent

to the President, the Chief Advisor, the Chief Election Commissioner and the Foreign Secretary. He also stated that he had met top leaders of four major parties.

He said it was his feeling that the major parties recognised the need for restraining their supporters for the national good and conveyed their commitment to ensure a peaceful and secure environment for voters on election day. He pointed out that the presence of impartial international and domestic monitors can be a very important means of enhancing the public's confidence in the electoral system.

Responding to questions Richardson said he was pleased at the stable political situation now prevailing and was hopeful that the stable situation would continue till June 12.

Asked repeatedly if he had discussed trial of the retired army chief with the President or officials, Richardson replied: "This is a Bangladeshi agenda. This is a Bangladeshi agenda."

Pressed further regarding the court of enquiry and the nature of trial or whether its report should be held up till the holding of the coming polls, Richardson replied, "That's a matter that has to be dealt with by the courts here. It's absolutely an internal Bangladeshi matter."

Responding to another question whether there should be strong armies in a democracy, the US Congressman, who is also a member of the House Committee on Intelligence, replied, "Look at the US. Look at other democracies. Strong democracies have strong armies too."

When asked if letters sent

to the President, the Chief Advisor, the Chief Election Commissioner and the Foreign Secretary. He also stated that he had met top leaders of four major parties.