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PM proposes ban on student politics, seeks consensus

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has proposed a ban on student politics and law to empower the police to shoot at sight anybody with arms on campus to free educational institutions from terrorism.

"I know it will be a very tough decision to make, but our government is ready to do it provided there is a consensus among the members of parliament, political parties, intellectuals, journalists and all other sections of people," she told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

The Prime Minister also sought a specific statement from the Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia on her proposal.

"Let her come to the House and say if she accepts my proposal about taking instant step against the illegal arms holders on campus and if necessary, shoot at sight."

The PM expressed her strong desire to end the decades-old problem of campus violence while replying to Dr. Rustom Ali Farazi of JP, who referred to President Shahabuddin Ahmed's earlier appeal to political parties to sever relations with their student fronts at universities and other educational institutions.

"I've no objection, if all the parties agree. I'm ready to extent my all-out support to the President if he initiates banning student politics", she said.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed had earlier appealed to political parties on several occasions to stop student politics.

In this context, Hasina reminded that while she was the Leader of the Opposition, she had banned activities of Chhatra League in educational institutions and requested the then PM Khaleda Zia to do the same. "But there was no response from the then prime minister", she regretted.

Begum Zia was, however, absent from the House when the prime minister made the proposal. Other BNP lawmakers, who boycotted the PM's Question Time on the last three occasions, joined it yesterday.

The Prime Minister further said that she was also ready to sit with all the political parties and take any step, whatsoever, to uproot terrorism from the campus.

Claiming that she was never hesitant in taking action against anybody in her won party for involvement in terrorism, the chief of ruling Awami League said that her party had already set example that it did not support or patronise any terrorist.

"We've no student front as per the party constitution ... The AL has no front organisation of students", she said adding. BNP's party constitution endorses student front.

Speaking about action

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President Gayoom arrives today

By Staff Correspondent

President of the Maldives Maumoon Abdul Gayoom arrives in the city tonight on a three-day visit to Bangladesh.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will welcome the visiting dignitary at the Zia International Airport.

The current visit of Gayoom is part of his tour of the South Asian countries as Chairman of the seven-nation SAARC to

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India quits IJO

NEW DELHI, Apr 28: India, the world's largest jute producer, has quit the International Jute Organisation (IJO) because it feels the UN body needs a different strategy to be effective, the Textiles Ministry said today.

"We have given notice of our intention to withdraw from the IJO," Textiles Secretary Shyamal Ghosh told Reuters.

He said 90 days' notice was required to withdraw.

"We have withdrawn because we felt the organisation required a different strategy for making it more effective," Ghosh said.

He said in that context India felt it should have a more proactive role in the organisation.

"However, because of a certain stalemate having developed, we found that it was not conducive for making the organisation more effective," Ghosh said.

The Dhaka-based IJO comprises five producing countries — Bangladesh, India, China, Nepal and Thailand — and 21 consuming nations, mostly in the West.

ADC-South sued 'for torturing' JCD activists

By Court Correspondent

Former BNP minister Rafiqul Islam Mian yesterday filed a case with the CMM's court against the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC)-South, and OC of Ramna thana for "torturing" some arrested university students to obtain confessional statements from them.

The petition said that police baton-charged and tortured Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists while they were observing their political programmes in the city on Sunday.

Police also kept the arrested JCD leader and activists barechested under the sun which was "inhuman, barbarous, and unconstitutional," petitioner said.

Metropolitan magistrate Shahidul Islam fixed April 30 for hearing of the case.

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Gas leakage sealed at Occidental's drilling site

Thousands flee fearing major blow-out near Sylhet town

Star Report

Thousands of people fled for safety yesterday fearing a major blow-out following a leakage of gas from a well being drilled by Occidental near Lakkatura Tea Estate, some four kilometres from Sylhet town.

The Divisional Commissioner told Our Staff Correspondent in Sylhet last night that the gas leakage at two points were sealed at 10:30 pm.

Panic gripped the densely-populated neighbourhood since afternoon after large patches of gas were seen oozing out making loud noise within the vicinity of the Lakkatura Tea Estate. Another tea estate — Malnichhara — is located adjacent to the well, Jalalabad 1.

An evacuation alert for all people residing within one kilometre of the incident was given by the local district administration at 9:15 pm. The evacuation alert was, however, withdrawn following the sealing of the gas leakage, the Divisional Commissioner said.

The spot of the gas leakage is only 250 yards from the Sylhet Osmany Airport road. All traffic through the road was stopped for safety. The last Biman flight from Sylhet to Dhaka was cancelled.

Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet Muhammad Ayub told The Daily Star at 9:30 pm that people were being evacuated to safety. "It is a technical matter. I cannot say anything about the incident," Ayub said.

At 10:40 pm, the Petrobangla Chairman said the situation was brought under control. "Gas has stopped flowing. Everything is under control. There is no danger," Chairman Mosharraf Hossain told The Daily Star, quoting Occidental officials.

Later, Shah Newaz, an assistant manager at Lakkatura Tea Estate, said engineers from

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BNP to support PM's proposal on condition

Opposition BNP yesterday staged a walkout in parliament protesting the Speaker's decision disallowing them to speak on terrorism, reports UNB.

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan wanted floor on a point of order to respond to the Prime Minister's proposal in Parliament for ending campus terrorism.

But Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury rejected Bhuiyan's point of order and switched off his mike after the question hour despite his repeated attempts to raise his point.

The BNP members walked out of the House at about 12:05 pm under the leadership of Mannan Bhuiyan.

Briefing newsmen at the lobby, Bhuiyan said he had sought the floor to speak on the important issue of terrorism raised by the Prime Minister, but they had to walk out as the Speaker did not allow him to speak.

He said the BNP members had been trying for last three days to speak of the incidents in Dhaka University from where, he said, JCD leaders and workers were evicted through terrorism.

Bhuiyan said they also want a terrorism-free campus and are ready to extend allout support to the government on this point. But before doing so, all the evicted students of JCD must be rehabilitated, driving out all terrorists from the campus.

He also demanded the release of all JCD leaders and workers, including Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Anny, arrested on Thursday and Sunday.

The BNP leader criticised the government for stopping the live radio-broadcast of parliamentary proceedings and demanded its resumption as well as live telecast of discussion on issues of national importance in parliament through BTV.

He said the government has stopped the radio-broadcast as important bills on CHT accord will shortly be placed in parliament.

Referring to the Speaker's statement yesterday on running parliament on the basis of the Constitution and Rules of Procedure, Bhuiyan said the Speaker himself is repeatedly violating the rules.

Opposition Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain referring to the Prime Minister's proposal for shoot-at-sight order to the armed terrorists on the campus, said, "it was just a reflection of her mind."

"Sheikh Mujib also gave similar order and killed Siraj Sikder and other political opponents," he added.

Replying to a question, the BNP leader said they would abide by the Constitution and

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A ransacked hostel room of St Francis Xavier's School in the city. —Star photo

Unseat govt, don't wait for next polls : Khaleda

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday renewed her party's stand to wage a tougher movement to unseat the government as the people cannot wait for the next general election, reports UNB.

"People have lost their confidence in this fascist government as it failed to run the country on all fronts. They are in favour of a movement to save the country from further destruction," she said.

The Leader of the Opposition in Parliament was addressing a meeting at Engineers' Institution yesterday evening.

The meeting was organised on the occasion of joining of 200 freedom fighters, leaders and workers of various organisations, including Oikya Prokria and Left Front to BNP.

They formally joined the BNP led by Nayeem Jahangir, former secretary general of Muktijuddha Central Council.

"Country's economy, sovereignty, independence, people's security are not safe in the hands of this government," Begum Zia told the meeting urging all the nationalist forces to wage a united movement against the government.

She alleged that the government's atrocities have crossed its limit, so the people cannot wait until the general election to remove this inept, subservient and anti-people government.

Dwelling on the dismal economic situation of the country, the BNP chief said after destroying mills and factories, business establishments, the backbone of farmers the government is trying to destroy the country's educational institutions at the dictates of its foreign masters.

"The government is hatching a conspiracy to destroy the academic life of thousands of students so that they cannot be

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Mob damages school, 3 churches at Luxmibazar

By Special Correspondent

Police used batons, tear gas and rubber bullets to stave off a mob damaging the St Francis Xavier's School, its dormitory and three churches at Luxmibazar in the old city yesterday.

At least 50 people including three newsmen were injured in the incident.

Trouble began when the school authorities, armed with a court order, tried to demolish a room on their courtyard adjacent to the Luxmibazar Shahi Mosque, police said.

Thousands of people overwhelmed a truck load of police guarding the school. Police was deployed there at the request of school authorities as they started to renovate the school following a court decree on April 22, headmistress of the school Sister Lurdsmary said.

"We did not damage the mosque," she told The Daily Star at 10:20 last night. "School books and notes were strewn all around. We had 46 girls, living in the dormitory. They included six SSC examinees. All have been shifted to a secure place. But I am worried how the SSC examinees would appear in their exams, they have lost all their books and notes."

When workers were clearing the trees to repair the old room adjacent to it, some one said over the mosque loudspeaker that it was being demolished, she said.

She said that the mob had damaged the Church of Holy Cross, the Church of St Thomas and the Baptist Mission.

They also broke the crucifix on the yard of the school, statue of St Francis Xavier and servants quarters. The mob also tried to set on fire the school, she said.

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Classes suspended till May 2

BCL-Shibir gunbattle at CU: 30 injured

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Apr 28: Sporadic clashes between activists of ruling party's student front Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Jamaat-e-Islami's student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir, left about 30 persons including a policeman injured at Chittagong University this morning, police said.

Ten critically injured people including the policeman, Abu Yusuf, were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital while others were treated at the university medical centre.

The university authorities later suspended all classes till May 2 and postponed all examinations till May 6, said a press release.

Police and university officials said the clash broke out when Shibir activists brought out a procession at about 10 am during the student strike on the campus. Shibir called the strike protesting Monday's clash with BCL activists over tearing of posters. About 20 people were injured in Monday's clashes.

They said the clash then spread to different areas on the campus, including six dormitories.

Some rooms of three dormitories were ransacked during the clashes, they added.

Police lobbed teargas shells to disperse the clashing groups. Additional police force, mostly in riot gear, was deployed and the situation came under control after two hours.

But tension remained high on the campus, the university officials said.

BCL and Shibir blamed each other for the clashes marked by gunshots, use of lethal weapons and brick bats.

Police and university sources said the clash started from the university Gate No 1 when a procession of Shibir activists reached there.

Later, Shibir activists staged a demonstration in the city protesting the clashes at the university.

Police this afternoon launched a search operation in the dormitories of the university and recovered some arms.

UNB adds from Chittagong: Witnesses said the clash erupted as supporters of Chhatra League tried to break a student strike called by Shibir.

Shibir activists put the main gate of the university under lock and key blocking entry of students and university buses. Chhatra League workers entered the campus by breaking open the gate, campus sources said.

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DU stalemate

Provosts asked to submit lists of displaced students

By DU Correspondent

The stalemate at the Dhaka University continued yesterday with the activists of opposition BNP-backed Jatiayatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) staying outside the campus for the last six days after being ousted by activists of the ruling party's student front Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL).

The JCD activists were driven out of the campus and all the DU dormitories were cap-

See Page 12 Col 4

Feni AL leader kidnapped, murdered

FENI, Apr 28: A tense situation is prevailing here and at Sonagazi following the killing of a union parishad chairman last night, reports UNB.

Rezaul Karim Razzak, 55, Chairman of Mutiganj UP and a local Awami League leader, was killed by some miscreants in the town.

The terrorists abducted him at about 6 pm from near Daudpur bridge in the town. They also blasted several crackers.

Rezaul, president of Sonagazi Thana Awami League and also president of district UP Chairmen Association, was re-

See Page 12 Col 6

Shahid confesses killing Shazneen, remanded

By Staff Correspondent

Shahidul Islam, accused of murdering Shazneen, confessed to CID late Monday night that he had killed the teenage girl, police said yesterday.

Shahidul alias Shahid, 22, was produced in the CMM's court yesterday afternoon. The court placed him on a five-day remand. Shahid was then brought back to CID custody.

The investigators were yet to find out whether there was any other abettor, CID sources said.

Investigations till yesterday indicated that Shazneen was stabbed to death as she resisted the attacker who tried to physically abuse her.

Youngest daughter of Transcom Ltd's Chairman Latifur Rahman, Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, 15, was abused and stabbed to death in their Gulshan residence at about 10:15 pm Thursday. Shahid was a domestic help at Rahman's residence.

During about two hours' interrogation by a team of senior CID officials at its Malibagh headquarters Monday night, Shahid confessed his involvement in the incident retracting the statements he had given after surrender to Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP)

See Page 12 Col 4

Housewife murdered at Pallabi

By Staff Correspondent

A 30-year-old housewife was murdered allegedly by her nephew in the city's Pallabi area Monday night, police said yesterday.

The dead was identified as Jahura Begum, wife of Khondokar Shah Alam.

• The reason behind the killing could not be known immediately.

Quoting the FIR filed by her husband yesterday, police said Jahura along with their 5-year-old child Tumpa went to the nearby house of her nephew,

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Occidental didn't take DOE permission

Govt mum on extent of damage caused by Magurchhara fire

By Mizan Ali

The US oil company Occidental did not take prior permission from the Department of Environment (DOE) before starting their drilling operation at the Magurchhara site, according to highly placed official sources.

When asked, Nigel Hopkinson who heads the company in Bangladesh, avoided a direct reply in this connection. "We requested for permission before starting the drilling operation but the procedure for permission was not properly defined at that time," he said.

Other companies involved in drilling operations in other areas at that time, however, took clearance from the department, the sources said.

Officials in the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources and in departments concerned, despite repeated requests, refused to give any information regarding the environmental damage or chances of radioactive fall-out at the Magurchhara site due to the blow-out.

The Magurchhara explosion took place in the early hours of June 15 last year. The flames rose up to 800 feet.

A team of officials had visited the site the day after the explosion. In a report submitted to the government on June 19 last year they said, "There is a likelihood of quakes taking within a radius of 2 km around the blow-out site."

The report, a copy of which was obtained by The Daily Star, also said, "The temperature of the area may also mark an increase due to emission of black smoke from the drilling site.

"There is a possibility of acid rain, stagnation of plant's growth, increase of carbondioxide in water and the air in the area.

"Crop production in the area is likely to be adversely affected due to change in the chemical composition of soil and subsurface water in the area."

The report also said there was a possibility of large scale landslide and extinction of certain species of animal and fish and that the ground water level in the area had fallen considerably.

The atmosphere is also being polluted due to the unburned gas in the area which, associated with condensate is mixing up with air, the sources said.

Commenting on the report, Nigel Hopkinson said, "These are not based on any scientific fact or physical evidence taken from the area."

According to officials of the Forestry Department in Sylhet, bodies of eight pythons and a number of wild crabs were found at the Lawachhara forest following the incident.

The forest was being developed as a sanctuary for wild animals like leopard, gibbon monkey, wild rooster, wild titar, fox etc. But these animals deserted the area soon after the explosion at Magurchhara and possibly they fled across the border, the forestry deportment officials said.

Magur fish (cat fish) which was abundant in the Magurchhara stream before the blow-out

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The last giraffe at Dhaka Zoo is dead

By Morshed Ali Khan

The last remaining giraffe at the Dhaka Zoo died under mysterious circumstances early yesterday morning.

The female giraffe aged about 13 years and of Kenyan origin, was 'well and healthy' even on Monday, Zoo officials admitted. They said that the night guards found it lying in its "stall" at around 5 am and informed the Curator.

The Veterinary Surgeon of the Zoo desperately tried to hide the facts from this correspondent..

When the Curator was contacted, he admitted that the giraffe had died.

"We cannot say anything until we receive the viscera re-

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New envoys to Sweden, Maldives

The government appointed Monzurul Alam, Director General in the Foreign Ministry, and Major Gen. Harun Ahmed Chowdhury, Bir Uttom, as ambassadors to Sweden and the Maldives respectively, said a press release of the Foreign Ministry yesterday, reports BSS.

WE MOURN

The Executive Director, Managers & Staff of Eskayef Bangladesh Limited

are deeply shocked at the tragic death of **Shazneen Tasnim Rahman**, the youngest daughter of **Latifur Rahman**, Chairman and Managing Director of Transcom Group and Managing Director of Eskayef Bangladesh Limited.

We pray for eternal peace of the departed soul and express our heartfelt sympathy to Mr. Rahman and members of his bereaved family. May Allah bless him and his family members with enough strength to bear this irreparable loss.

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