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Hasina's unconditional announcement

AL will never call hartal

In a major political development, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has declared that her party, Awami League, would never call hartal, even if it returned to the opposition, reports UNB.

"My party will never call hartal," she categorically said while exchanging views with editors of national dailies and news agencies at her office yesterday morning.

"I am making this announcement unilaterally both as the Prime Minister and the President of Awami League," Hasina said.

The Prime Minister's unconditional announcement came at the heels of main opposition BNP's 60-hour hartal enforced across the country from November 9.

Justifying the past hartals called by Awami League while in the opposition, Hasina said those hartals were to establish people's rights, but there is no need to call hartal now.

The Prime Minister said, "We do politics for the people and we have no hesitation in taking any decision for the people's welfare," she said.

Hasina made the "no-hartal" announcement when the Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam wanted to know about her position on this point.

She also urged the editors to make the same proposal to the opposition which, she said, is now calling hartals without any issue.

Hasina said her party had called hartal to establish democracy and ensure people's share in the state power. "We have established the truth that the people is the only source of power to change the government through ballot."

She said there was logic in enforcing hartals by Awami League as it fought for the peo-

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Khaleda refrains from giving reaction

Leader of the opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia has refrained from giving immediate reaction to the Prime Minister's announcement to renounce hartal.

"I am not aware of any thing about the statement," Begum Zia said lastnight.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told a meeting with editors of national dailies and news agencies yesterday that Awami League would not resort to hartal when it returns to opposition. She also sought a similar pledge from the opposition.

"I am extremely tired after a day-long work. I cannot say anything now," Begum Zia told UNB when asked for her reaction at her official residence.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiya also reserved his reaction on the Prime Minister's offer for renouncing hartal. "Let us see in tomorrow's newspapers what the Prime Minister proposed."

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US, Iraq back to square one

BAGHDAD, Nov 15: Iraq has rejected US terms for an end to the crisis over UN weapons inspections, as conveyed through UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, diplomats said here today.

They said US President Bill Clinton wanted a clear commitment from Baghdad that it would respect all UN resolutions on disarmament.

He also wants the Iraqi leadership to stop contesting the makeup and competence of the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) in charge of disarming Iraq, the diplomats told AFP.

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 15: UN chief Kofi Annan today welcomed US President Bill Clinton's acceptance of an unconditional Iraqi decision to resume cooperation with UN arms inspectors, Annan's spokesman Fred Eckhard told AFP.

Earlier the White House rejected Iraq's proposal to resume weapons inspections. "It is unacceptable," the US president's national security adviser Sandy Berger said in Washington.

An annex to an Iraqi letter offering compliance with UN resolutions on arms inspections was full of conditions and thus unacceptable, he said.

It is a highly conditioned statement, said Berger, it is not acceptable as we have received it.

Meanwhile, US President Bill Clinton has cancelled his trip to Asia for an economic summit, the White House said, and will remain in Washington to evaluate next steps on the Iraqi crisis.

Vice President Al Gore will substitute for Clinton at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooper-

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Bail petition of Somali citizen rejected

A metropolitan magistrate yesterday rejected the bail petition of Aden Ahmed, a Somalian refugee, who was arrested on Saturday in front of the Cantonment residence of BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia, reports UNB.

The 30-year old Aden was sent to *hajat* in the Dhaka Central Jail.

Moving the bail petition, Advocate KM Zabir submitted that Aden is a refugee registered with the United Nations High Commission for Refugee (UNHCR).

The counsel submitted the identity card of Aden who has been living in Bangladesh since 1992.

Opposing the bail, the court inspector said Aden has been staying here with a fake document. His statement was not satisfactory, he said.

'Arrest of Somali citizen at cantt a conspiracy'

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan termed the arrest of the Somali citizen from in front of Begum Khaleda Zia's Cantonment residence a "conspiracy", reports UNB.

In a statement yesterday, he denounced the government for its alleged complicity and said it is apparent that they had a hand in the "this pre-planned" incident.

The Leader of the Opposition in Parliament has already come under attack several times since the present government assumed power, Bhuiyan said. "But none of the people responsible for such attacks were put on trial till date."

Quoting press reports the BNP leader said the Somali citizen had reached in front of Begum Zia's residence walking through another gate just an hour after he was refused entry through the Banani Gate of the cantonment at 8 am Saturday.

"This clearly indicates that the incident was pre-planned and part of a deep rooted conspiracy," he alleged saying that an unknown foreign citizen coming to Begum Zia's house was not only unusual, but also suspicious since guests of the BNP chairperson have to face interrogation at the check-posts and, in most cases, are refused entry into the cantonment.

Bhuiyan asked the government to ensure security of Be-

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New addl IG, commissioner of DMP

By Staff Correspondent

DMP Commissioner Mahmud Al Farid has been promoted to the rank of Additional Inspector General of Police and posted at the Police Headquarters.

Additional DMP Commissioner Shamsuddin Ahmed has been made the new DMP Commissioner, according to official sources.

The vacant post of Additional DMP Commissioner will be filled up shortly, sources added.

Besides, three other Additional SPs have been promoted to the rank of SP.

All these promotions and transfers were given affect from yesterday, the sources said.

Bakhtiar Alam, Additional SP, Jhenaidah, was promoted to the rank of SP and posted at Barguna, while Mohsin Hussain, Additional SP, Patuakhali, was promoted and transferred as SP Railway, Chittagong.

M Manzur Kader Khan, Additional SP of Special Branch was promoted to the rank of Special Superintendent of Police and posted in the same agency, sources said.

Int'l Financial Organisations (Amend) Bill '98 passed

Parliament yesterday passed "The International Financial Organisations (Amendment) Bill, 1998" by voice vote, reports UNB.

The Bill authorises the government to accept the proposed Third Amendment to the Fund Agreement and to accept any proposal for the increase in the quota of Bangladesh in the IMF.

Piloting the Bill, Finance Minister SAMS Kibria said it was brought for technical correction.

He said the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reviews the quota of its members every five years. Following this amendment, the relevant law will not be required to be amended every year for receiving loan.

AK Khandaker AL candidate for Pabna-2 by-polls

Awami League yesterday nominated former Air Force chief Air Vice Marshal (retd) AK Khandaker to contest the by-election in Pabna-2 (Sujanagar) constituency, scheduled for December 10, reports UNB.

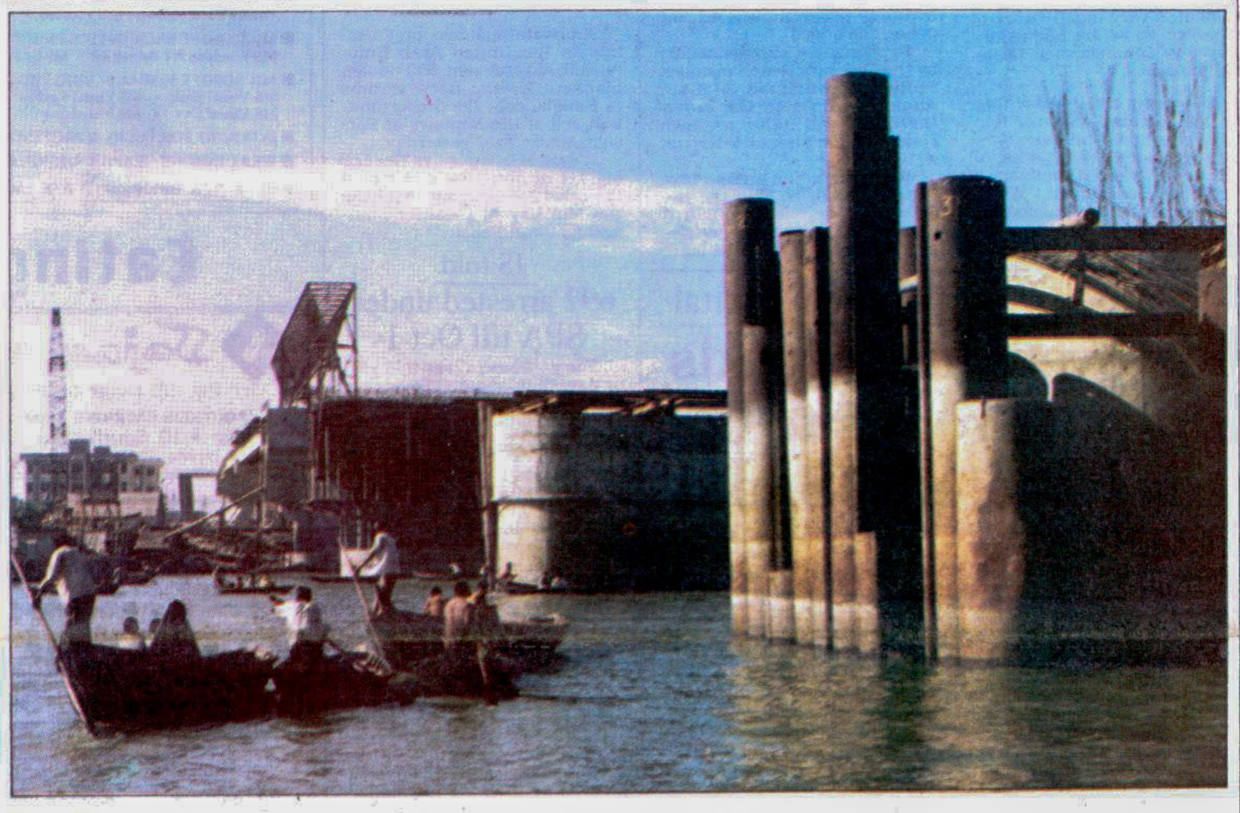
A meeting of the Awami League Parliamentary Board at the Sangsad Bhaban with party President Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair announced the nomination.

AK Khandaker was the Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Mukti Bahini during Liberation War in 1971.

Selim Reza BNP candidate

BNP has nominated Advocate AKM Selim Reza Habib as its candidate for the December 10 by-election to Pabna-2 constituency, reports UNB.

The selection was made at a meeting of BNP Parliamentary Board yesterday with Khaleda Zia in the chair, said a press release.



HALF-DONE, WELL DONE!! For reasons best known to the authorities, the unfinished second Buriganga Bridge designed to link the city with the western side of the river stands in a long -- how long? -- wait. — Star photo

Bangabandhu Murder Case

Four convicts file appeal petitions

By SC Correspondent

The four convicts in the Bangabandhu Murder Case, now in the condemned cell of the Dhaka Central Jail, yesterday filed separate petitions appealing to the High Court against their death sentences.

Dhaka District and Sessions Judge Kazi Golam Rasul sentenced to death 15 of the 19 chargesheeted accused in the Bangabandhu murder case on November 8 last. Four were acquitted.

The judge had ordered execution of the sentence either by a firing squad or by hanging.

Eleven convicts are absconding.

Of the four convicts who appealed yesterday, Bazlul Huda was extradited from Bangkok hours after pronouncement of the judgment.

Khan Saifur Rahman moved appeals for two convicts -- Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Farooqur Rahman and Lt Col (former acting director BNCC) Muhiuddin Ahmed -- while Abdur Rezzak Khan submitted for Lt Col (dismissed) Shahriar Rashid Khan and Abdus Sobhan filed for Maj (retd) Bazlul Huda.

All the appeals were filed separately under Section 410 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).

The lawyers argued in their appeal petitions that the sentence of awarding death penalty by open firing squad was 'illegal, improper and expressive of the biased mind and attitude of the trial court through the entire course of trial'.

The appeal petitions contended that the judgement was passed on basis of the charges framed illegally and not in accordance with law.

"The trial was held in non-compliance of the provisions of Section 94 and 95 of the Army Act as the joint trial of military service men with civilians and/or former military service men cannot be held," the petition filed by Khan Saifur Rahman said.

"From one of the findings of the trial court, it was disclosed that the intention of the occurrence was to overthrow the government and not persons in the

See Page 12 Col 1

2 police officials sent to jail

The two police officials arrested in connection with leaking out secret information were sent to Dhaka Central Jail yesterday, reports UNB.

Magistrate Golam Mostafa rejected their bail prayers when they were produced before the court and ordered that they be sent to jail.

ASP Mokhlesur Rahman and SI Atiquzzaman of Special Branch were brought to the court on completion of their two-day remand.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Rafiqul Islam yesterday told parliament that action had been taken against the two police officials for leaking out of official secrecy.

"Everything will go as per law of the land," the home minister said replying to a question from Sultan Mohammad Monsur MP (AL).

Debate drags on in JS over Khaleda's cantt house

Parliament yesterday witnessed a fresh debate on BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia's cantonment house, the bone of a raging contention, as the ruling party and opposition lawmakers traded acrimonious words on the issue, among others, reports UNB.

The unscheduled debate started when BNP Whip Major (Rtd) Hafizuddin on a point of order rebuked the government for what he said an ill effort to evict Begum Zia from her house inside the garrison.

BNP's another Whip, Mashiur Rahman, stood in support of his colleague to say Begum Zia is not involved in politics in cantonment.

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed fuelled the fumes questioning how Khaleda Zia could keep the house on 2.72 acres of land in Dhaka cantonment, occupied illegally, and indulge in politics.

Major (Rtd) Hafiz claimed that Begum Zia is lawfully residing in her cantonment house. He also refuted the government's allegation that she is doing politics sitting in the Cantonment.

Hafiz alleged that a deliberate move is on to harass Khaleda Zia and her son, Tarek Zia. "A new story has been cooked up to show a link between a Somali citizen and Zia's family," he told the House.

The BNP Whip rejected Works Minister Mohammad Nasim's statement in Parliament, saying the Cantonment house was given to Begum Zia and her sons by the then President, Justice Sattar, and later endorsed by the 1979 Parliament.

Hafiz said since President Zia had no landed property, the cantonment house was given to her as a mark of respect to the slain President.

She has been staying in Cantonment for the last 19 years and is familiar with rules of the Cantonment. She never conducts her party politics from that area, he asserted.

Hafiz said the government was trying to raise a new issue in its bid to divert people's attention from its failures.

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed said the then BNP cabinet had decided to give one house to Begum Zia after President Zia's death.

But she has illegally occupied the cantonment house on 2.72 acres of land in addition to the Gulshan house given by the government, the minister said.

Tofail pointed out that when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina being daughter of Father of the Nation and founding President Mujib had dedicated Bangabandhu's historic Dhanmondi 32 residence and Tungipara house to the people, Begum Zia "grabbed" the cantonment house.

The commerce minister corrected Major Hafiz saying the Dhanmondi 32 residence of Bangabandhu was handed over to his daughter, Sheikh Hasina,

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Tricksters get their lesson

By Nazmul Ashraf

It was an apparent blow to the Treasury Bench members who tried to fox their Opposition colleagues in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

Their trick, employed for the second time in two consecutive working days, did not work as Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid appeared to prefer not to yield to the ill motive -- causing a lack of quorum in the House understandably to force the Chair not to continue the day's businesses.

As they successfully did it on Thursday, the previous working day, most of the members of the ruling Awami League started leaving the House as soon as BNP lawmaker Maj (retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed was given the floor to participate in the regular unscheduled debate at the end of the day's scheduled business at 8.48 pm.

In fact, Thursday's trick by the AL worked in rebutting the BNP members who had staged a walkout earlier to protest Nasim's statements.

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BNP march toward parliament today

By Special Correspondent

BNP and the Seven Party Alliance will stage a march towards parliament this afternoon to protest price hike of essentials, imposition of fresh taxes, rapes at Jahangirnagar University and other issues.

BNP chief Khaleda Zia will briefly address the activists before they set out for the march from Paltan Maidan at 3 p.m. today, explaining the reasons behind the demonstrations. Party MPs and senior leaders will take part in the march, BNP sources said.

The authorities, meanwhile, have taken steps to prevent any untoward incident. The measures include extension of a ban on processions in and around the parliament while in session, in a number of city streets and crossings ahead of the march.

Police high-ups yesterday reviewed the law and order situation and arrangements to face the demonstrators, who they said would be dealt with according to law if they dare to violate the ban.

The demonstrators are likely to face barricades at Bangla Motor crossing where all demonstrators heading towards parliament are usually stopped.

The programme was announced by Khaleda Zia at the November 7 rally at Paltan Maidan which was foiled allegedly by police and Awami League supporters.

After that, BNP and its allies will stage a mass fast on

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Meteorite shower enters atmosphere tonight

People here, like elsewhere in the world, will get a rare opportunity to watch the heavenly display of meteorite shower lighting up the earth's atmosphere at midnights today and tomorrow, reports APB.

They are nothing but shooting stars, or dust and fragments tailing a comet, but common people see such phenomenon as a portent of something ominous to come.

Scientists and astronomers across the globe are anxiously awaiting the bombardment of earth's atmosphere by these heavenly stuff called Leonid meteorite shower tailing the comet Temple-Tuttle, which revolves round the sun every 33 years.

At around midnight , the skies over the country would be aglow with volleys of shooting stars coming down and burning up in the atmosphere for about an hour.

People on the earth have experienced such heavenly occurrence over the ages. There is a recorded evidence of the oldest meteorite shower dating back to 902 AD.

Scientists and enlightened people as well now know that the objects form a celestial body called Leonid causing this shower that last visited the earth 32 years ago. The extraterrestrial dust usually thickens in the month of November in every 33 years.

Scientists call it Leonid because it looks as bright as constellation Leo.

This year Temple Tuttle will come even closer to the earth — nearly 1.1 million kilometres — while moving through its trial.

But NASA scientists are worried about the happening while the whole world is eagerly waiting to have a glimpse of the meteorite shower.

NASA and other research institutions fear that the particles may hit and damage satellites orbiting the earth affecting telecommunications.

Whatever the matter, the meteorite shower offers humankind a unique experience as the century opens the way to a new millennium.

DEAD TO LIFE: The killer cancer being his fault, Abdul Mannan has been refused to be treated at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Doctors there believe his is the case beyond their bounds, although without caring to give it a try. The poor farmer-turned-rickshawpuller, with his helpless wife and child beside him, lies on a pavement near the Bulbul Academy for Fine Arts in the city.
— Star photo by A K M Mohsin

Chetia wants to write biography while in jail

By Our Court Correspondent

Jailed ULFA leader Anup Chetia, who is being tried for other charges in a Special Tribunal, yesterday sought permission to write his biography at the Dhaka Central Jail.

Chetia is serving a six-year term for illegal entry and stay in Bangladesh and possession of forged Bangladeshi passport after the CMM court verdict on October 25.

Yesterday, Chetia was produced in the Special Tribunal of Additional District and Sessions Judge, Shahid Nuruddin, for recording of evidence in connection with the cases filed against him for possession of satellite telephone and foreign currency of 16 countries.

The trial of the cases could not be held as witnesses were not present in the court.

When produced in the court, Chetia submitted a petition to the judge to supply him necessary material for writing his biography while in jail. The court neither rejected the prayer nor passed any order immediately.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Daily Star and Bangladesh Biochemical Society will organise a national symposium to be followed by a Roundtable, on **"Biochemistry and Biotechnology in National Development: Meeting the Challenges of 21st Century".**

Venue : Teachers Students Centre (TSC), Dhaka University.

Time : 9 am to 7 pm (Day long)

Date : Today (Monday), 16th November '98.

Eminent biotechnologists and Biochemists of the country will participate in the symposium, including the Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University, Agricultural University, Bangabandhu Medical University, Islamic University etc.

All members of Biochemical Society, teachers and students of Universities are especially invited to join the symposium.

Members of the public are also invited to attend.