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BNP, allies stage demonstrations in city today

By Staff Correspondent
BNP-led Opposition alliance will stage demonstrations in the city today to protest what it said police action and repression on the opposition activists during Thursday's electricity office gherao programme at Motijheel.

As parts of demonstration, the BNP and its front organisations will bring out a procession from Mukhtang at 4 pm today.

Jammat-e-Islami Bangladesh will hold a protest rally at Purana Paltan crossing at 5 pm while Islamic Oikya Jote will hold its rally at Purana Paltan Mosque area in the afternoon.

Meanwhile, Dhaka city BNP convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka in a press statement has urged the party leaders and workers, and city dwellers to join today's procession.

Another BNP press release said a joint meeting of city BNP and its front organisations will

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Opposition's mass procession now on May 3

By Staff Correspondent
The BNP-led opposition alliance has deferred its country-wide mass procession from April 29 to May 3, according to liaison committee decision, said a press release yesterday.

The programme was announced to protest water and power crises, price hike of essentials, terrorism and deterioration of law and order.

As parts of the programme, BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic Oikya Jote will bring out mass processions in all city, district and thana headquarters on May 3.

BNP sources said party chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia will lead the BNP procession in the city on the day.

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Prayer Timings

April 24

Fajr 4:30 4:35

Zohr 12:45 1:20

Asr 4:45 4:55

Maghrib 6:25 6:30

Esha 7:30 7:35

Source: Islamic Foundation

Manju warns Ershad Stop behaving like a military dictator

The Jatiya Party (JP) yesterday formally split with a special council led by former prime minister Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and Anwar Hossain Manju supported by 14 of the 33 party legislators, report agencies.

The council attended by several thousand JP representatives from across the country distanced themselves from the party's founder, former president Hussain Muhammad Ershad, alleging that he was still "behaving like a military ruler."

"If you (Ershad) still believe that you can continue to behave like a military dictator unopposed, I would like to warn you. We enjoy far more strength than you have," an angry Anwar Hossain Manju told the two-day rally at the Paltan Maidan.

He alleged that the former president usually took decisions in an autocratic manner and now he sided with Khaleda Zia to "save the property, which he grabbed illegally while in power."

In a veiled reference to the opposition movement, he told the delegates and representatives that a quarter is active to change government in an undemocratic way. "Conspiracy is going on to seize power without ballot."

Pointing his finger to the Khaleda-Ershad alliance, Manju said, "You (Ershad) go to Hasina for release and to Khaleda Zia for protecting plundered wealth... we don't do politics of protecting looted wealth."

Manju said politicians in the name of improving the fate of the people and the country indulged in making their own

fortune by plundering national wealth. "They should be punished... corruption spread as the corrupt were not brought to justice."

Referring to a World Bank report on Bangladesh, the Communications Minister rejected it saying that the report did not mention the corruption of ministers, MPs, and presidents. "Report that makes mention of only corruption of policemen or small thieves is not acceptable."

Referring to a statement of Ershad that Manju is not a factor, he said it would be proved in the next election.

The council of the faction came a week after Ershad staged the party's first council since he floated it while in power in 1986.

Mizan Chowdhury said.

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Khagrachhari tense: Sec 144 at 5 places

From Our Correspondent

KHAGRACHHARI, Apr 23: The district administration today imposed Section 144 at five places in the town following yesterday's clash between police and tribesmen.

The places where Section 144 has been imposed are stadium, Swanivar, Changi Square, bus station and Zero Point areas.

At least two activists of Pahari Gano Parishad were killed and 150 others injured when police opened fire to disperse the supporters of the organisation who tried to hold a rally at Khagrachhari stadium defying ban.

Earlier, Gano Parishad, an organisation of tribesmen opposing the CHT Peace Accord convened a rally at the stadium demanding full autonomy of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The ban on holding rallies at the stadium was imposed by the district administration as another group supporting the peace accord convened a rally at the same venue the same time.

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Fire shuts repaired Khulna power plant during trial run

From Staff Correspondent

Khulna, April 23: A 110 MW unit of Khulna Power Station (KPS) at Goalpara has been closed as it caught fire during trial operation after overhaul.

Boilers of the plant caught fire soon after taking load at about 8 pm Thursday. Repair of the fire-damaged equipment was not started till this evening.

Golan Mostafa, Chief Engineer of KPS, said the fire was an accident and the plant "requires a thorough checking and re-checking to see if it is fully serviceable right at this moment."

The damage caused by the fire is yet to be ascertained but an engineer of the plant referring anonymity told The Daily Star that it would be worth over one crore taka. Fire Brigade units from Khalishpur and

Daulatpur put out the fire in about two hours, sources at the plant said.

The plant was overhauled by two Chinese firms--NEIE and GIETC -- at a cost of Tk 15 crore, the work beginning in January. The overhauling which involved some major repair work was scheduled to be completed by March 31.

Sources in the PDB here claimed that before the fire incident, the plant's trial operation had stopped twice on Thursday without power generation because of major mechanical faults that developed allegedly due to use of "substandard materials" in the overhauling. The Chinese contractors were compelled by the PDB appointed consultants to use substandard materials, he claimed.

Arif had close relations with MP Manik, brother claims

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Apr 23: The elder brother of Arif Haider, who was killed in a bomb blast at the house of ruling party MP Mubibur Rahman Manik, has said Arif had close relations with the MP. Babul (killed in the same incident) and Gopal, Juba League activist who is missing since the blast.

Arif's relation with Manik is well known to the people of my area as well as of Chhatak, said Khokan Haider while talking to this correspondent.

Though the MP is not acknowledging the relations with my brother now, there are lot evidences that, the MP even visited our house in the Madina Market area several occasions.

Manik and his associates are responsible for the death of my brother, alleged Khokan. They do not even ask anything about the family now. Rather, some influential people are now threatening us not to talk about these things openly, said Arif's elder brother.

Arif was well known to Manik before the Awami League came to power. He was introduced to Manik by Ward Commissioner and Sylhet District Juba League Joint Convenor Ja-

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Chhatak BNP's 3-day programme demanding arrest of Manik

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Apr 22: The Chhatak thana BNP and its front organisations have announced a 3 day programme yesterday demanding immediate arrest of Mubibur Rahman Manik MP and his associates.

The programmes include agitation and procession at the thana headquarters and handing over a memorandum to the TNO on April 26. Mass contact on April 27 and day-long hunger strike at Chhatak Bus Stand on April 29.

The programmes were announced at a press conference at Sylhet Press Club this afternoon. Former MP Kolinuddin Milon, Central Vice-President of JCD Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury Mizan and President and Secretaries of Chhatak and Doarabazar thana units of BNP and its front organisations were present.

The leaders alleged that after the search of the Army team of explosive experts and press reports, it was clear that the MP's house was a weapons factory. But, the government neither took action against the MP nor any of his associates, they said.

Five killed in Tangail truck plunge

TANGAIL, Apr 23: Five people were killed and 15 others injured today when a truck skidded off Dhaka-Tangail highway and plunged into the roadside ditch at Karatipara, 9 km off the town, reports UNB.

Police said the accident took place when the driver of the cement-laden Tangail-bound truck from Dhaka lost control over the vehicle leaving five people killed on the spot.

Three of the dead were identified as Saiful Islam 20, Babu Mia 25, and Feroj Mia 22 of Kaliahati thana while the identity of two others could not be known.

Of the injured, 13 were rushed to Tangail General Hospital.

Police seized the truck, but the driver managed to flee.

Sonia gets grace period for forming govt

NEW DELHI, Apr 23: Indian President K R Narayanan today gave opposition leader Sonia Gandhi an unexpected breathing space to form a new government after her initial efforts failed to win enough support, reports AFP.

The president's decision extended the period of acute political uncertainty that has gripped India since the collapse of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's coalition government last Saturday.

It also indicated the depth and breadth of feeling against resorting to what would be the country's third general election in as many years.

Sonia met Narayanan this evening and handed him a list

of 233 MPs who had pledged to support her Congress party in forming a government. The figure was 39 short of the required parliamentary majority.

"Since the numbers do not add up to the required strength, I will continue to discuss the matter with my allies," pensive Sonia said.

"I would like to complete the process as soon as possible. I have been told to do so by the president," she added.

The Italian-born Congress president may now be forced to drop her insistence on her party forming its own minority government with the support of outside parties and opt instead for the coalition demanded by

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Rivals murder alleged criminal at Gopibagh

By Staff Correspondent

An alleged criminal, Rabiul Islam Khokon, 35 was killed at Gopibagh in the city yesterday.

Motijheel police said Khokon, son of Haji Chan Miah of R.K Mission Road, was accused in a number of cases including the case in connection with the murder of Aslam, an official of Brothers Union Club.

He was the leader of a gang known as Nasir-Khokon group which is controlling drug trading at Titi Para slum area for last few years, police said.

Talking to this correspondent, some local people claimed that Khokon was killed due to his rivalry with another group in the area, led by one Asif.

Police said Khokon along with an associate, Tapan, was returning home in a rickshaw from Gopibagh graveyard after offering *fateha* at his grandfather's grave following Jumma prayer.

Their rickshaw stopped at

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Relatives of Rabiul Islam Khokon wailing after his killing yesterday. — Star photo

Protection of canals, lakes and parks PM's order 'not enough', Rajuk for enacting law

By Morshed Ali Khan

Minister Sheikh Hasina ordered all departments concerned in April last year not to take up any earth-filling or construction work on open spaces, lakes, low lying areas, canals and playgrounds.

But the Prime Minister's order does not have any legal basis in court, lawyers of different legal bodies say. They are now struggling to save Gulshan and Dhanmondi lakes and similar places under threat.

They say court is prepared to uphold law enacted by the parliament-- not an order-- may it be from the top executive.

Rajuk officials said the Building Construction Act 1952, which was amended in 1990, forbids digging or excavating without permission from the authorities but it does not prohibit filling up of lakes and low lying areas or construction on parks and open spaces.

What has been happening

in Gulshan and other places in the city is that a section of people, after procuring papers for low lying spaces, are 'land-filling' and even constructing. The moment we intervene, they go to court and obtain a stay order against our move," said one official requesting anonymity.

But works ministry sources said the Rajuk proposal is now gathering dust at the ministry while it should have by now been placed in the parliament.

In another move, Rajuk has proposed adding a few more important clauses to the Building Construction Act. The proposal was sent to the ministry on April 6.

In our proposal, we have basically asked for instant power to crack down on illegal constructions, deviations and other irregularities in the sector," explained a Rajuk official. He said under the existing

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GSS crisis deepens

By Staff Correspondent

The crisis in Gono Shahajjo Sangstha deepened as it filed a case against some of its mid-level officials while a large number of workers took to the streets against the management Wednesday.

The workers, organised under the banner of Workers Coordination Council of the GSS, held a rally in front of GSS head office in Dhaka Wednesday morning and another public rally at the Central Shaheed Minar in the afternoon.

They also submitted copies of identical memoranda to the NGO Bureau and Association of the Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB).

The Workers' Council had earlier announced its six-point demands that included removal of its executive director Dr. F R Mahmood Hassan.

The demands also included decentralisation of the GSS administration, reformulation of its service rules to remove the clauses affecting interests of the workers, a comprehensive policy guiding the recruitment and the promotion of the workers on the basis of performance and a neutral investigation into allegation of sexual harassment

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Oust this govt: Khaleda Politicisation has crippled admn

SRINAGAR (Munshiganj), Apr 23: Opposition leader Khaleda Zia here today said the government must be ousted through movement to save the country, reports UNB.

"We have demanded resignation of the government. But it will not quit because of its lust for power," she told a big public meeting at Srinagar Stadium this afternoon.

The BNP chairperson said if Awami League stays in power there would be no existence of Bangladesh.

During its three year rule, she said, this government could give nothing to the people except dead bodies, terrorism, rape, repression on women and children, price hike of essential commodities and hunger.

She said the government that failed to ensure security, food and employment for people have no right to cling to power.

Mentioning a recent killing in the capital, she said killings are now taking place in city

houses, on streets and in villages.

The opposition leader said the administration is not functioning properly due to politicisation by the ruling party. "Many officials do not want to work under party dictates."

Khaleda said police administration also collapsed due to politicisation. "Police are resorting to misdeeds for the politicisation."

Referring to the presence of a BNP MP at an AL meeting at Jhenidah, she said her MP joined the meeting at the request of the home minister but he was assaulted by the ruling party terrorists.

Calling Jhenidah a stronghold of BNP, she said public started leaving the meeting after that incident. But home minister Nasim did not take any action against those who humiliated the BNP MP.

The ruling party is pushing the country towards destruction, she said adding, people are

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ডেসার জরুরি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

লক্ষ্য করা যাচ্ছে যে, কিছু কিছু গ্রাহক সময়মত বিদ্যুৎ বিল পরিশোধ না করার কারণে ডেসার বকেয়ার পরিমাণ উত্তরোত্তর বৃদ্ধি পাচ্ছে। ফলশ্রুতিতে ডেসার আর্থিক অবস্থার অবনতি ঘটছে, যার পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে পরিচালন ও সংরক্ষণসহ বিদ্যুৎ ব্যবস্থার উন্নতির লক্ষ্যে কোন কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করা সম্ভব হচ্ছে না।

এমতাবস্থায়, সম্মানিত গ্রাহকবৃন্দকে অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে যে, তাঁরা যেন তাঁদের নিকট পাওয়া বকেয়ার অর্থ আগামী ৩০শে এপ্রিল ১৯৯৯ইং তারিখের মধ্যে পরিশোধ করেন। অন্যথায় বিধি মোতাবেক খেলাপি গ্রাহকবৃন্দের বিদ্যুৎ সংযোগ বিচ্ছিন্ন করা হবে এবং আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে। বকেয়া সংক্রান্ত তথ্যাদি ডেসার সংশ্লিষ্ট বাণিজ্যিক পরিচালন বিভাগ হতে সংগ্রহ করার জন্য সম্মানিত গ্রাহকবৃন্দকে অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

গ্রাহক সেবার মান উন্নয়নে প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ ঢাকা বিদ্যুৎ বিতরণ কর্তৃপক্ষ (ডেসা)

ফ্রি-১১৮

VGD helps the hardcore poor women in rural areas

By Reaz Ahmad

Poor women in rural Bangladesh are now looking at life in a different way, thanks to vulnerable group development (VGD) programme, the world's largest poverty alleviation venture. The hard-core poor women

in the rural areas have enrolled themselves in various income-generating activities. Geographical diversity makes no difference to Asina of Tangail or Suravi of Bogra. They have found a new meaning

of life. At village Boalzan in Delduar thana of Tangail, Asma runs *Supanya*, a grocery shop she owned a year ago with credit from BRAC while undergoing a training under the VGD programme. Her husband is having problems with his eyesight.

Asma's neighbour, Monwara, who used to live on wheat given under the VGD programme barely three years back, now rears chicks at her courtyard and earns Tk 1,000 a month. She got trained in chick rearing at BRAC under the VGD programme. Monwara's husband is now jobless after his handlooms fell prey to a price crash a few months back.

The World Food Programme provides wheat for the VGD programme while BRAC comes up with the training and credits to the vulnerable ones. But despite the good job by the two organisations, beneficiaries say to a group of visiting newsmen that a 15 per cent interest against any credit is too much for them. They do not like the system of starting the recovery process within 15 days of granting loan.

HOPE FOR BETTER LIFE: Here they learn embroidery at Taherunnesa Mohila Sangsad in Bogra under vulnerable group development (VGD) programme of the WFP.

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Rajuk Commercial Plot Auction Notice

This is for information of all intending persons that most suitable (1) Commercial Plot No 40 in Sector No 3 of Uttara Model Town, Dhaka measuring more or less 10-Katha (2) Commercial Plot No 23 having road facilities on two sides in Sector No 13 of Sonagang Janapath in Uttara Residential Model Town measuring more or less 10-Katha. (3) Commercial Plot No 38-A of Road No 45 in Gulshan (North) measuring more or less 7-Katha. (4) Commercial Plot No 26 of Kabi Faruk Sarani in Nikunja (North) measuring more or less 10-Katha. (5) Commercial Plot No 8 having road facilities on two sides in Sector No 3 of Uttara Residential Model Town more or less 10-Katha. (6) Plot No 11, Road No 2 of Motijheel Extension Commercial Area, Dhaka measuring more or less 10-Katha will allotted 99 years lease on open auction.

Prescribe application form to be obtained with terms and conditions from Sonali Bank, Rajuk Bhaban Branch, Dhaka on payment of Tk 500/= (five hundred) in cash (non-refundable) from 21-4-99 to 2-5-99 during office hours and will be received by the Deputy Director (Estate) from intending persons up to 1:00 PM on 3-5-99.

The auction will be held every day at 11.00 AM on 4-5-99 for the Plot No 40 mentioned at SI No (1), on 5-5-99 for the Plot No 23 mentioned at SI No (2), on 6-5-99 for the Plot No 38-A mentioned at SI No (3), on 9-5-99 for the Plot No 26 mentioned at SI No (4), on 10-5-99 for the Plot No 91 mentioned at SI No (5) and on 11-5-99 for the Plot No 11 mentioned at SI No (6) in the conference room (3rd floor) of Rajuk Bhaban, Dhaka.

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Dhaka

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