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Three dissidents to form new party

Cong faces fresh split

NEW DELHI, May 21: India's Congress party, which ruled the country for most of its 52 years of independence, is heading for a fresh split, reports agencies.

Congress was deep in crisis today as Sonia Gandhi refused to indicate if she would withdraw her dramatic decision to resign as party president.

Meanwhile a new viable alternative front comprising people and parties having Congress line of thinking will emerge within a week.

Pawar said the process of formation of the front would begin after discussions with his other expelled colleagues P A Sangma and Tarig Anwar at New Delhi.

"I am very much relieved by the decision of the CWC to expel

me. This indicates where the party is heading for," the Congress leader said in Pune.

Firing yet another salvo at Sonia, he said a person of foreign origin cannot have the same national spirit as that of one who is an Indian by birth even if he becomes the prime minister.

"Hence a person born in a foreign country cannot understand the pain, sufferings and anguish of an Indian," Pawar said.

"There will be a split in the party, certainly there will be a split," Tarig Anwar told Reuters in an interview.

The last major split in the Congress was two decades ago when several party heavyweights collectively opposed then-party chief Indira Gandhi in June 1975, at the end of her two-year emergency rule, during which she suspended civil rights.

"We have got some indication that some more will join the differences in the working committee and note of dissent is an indication that difference of opinion is there already," he said.

"I am very much relieved by the decision of the CWC to expel

the party leaders from the working committee and note of dissent is an indication that difference of opinion is there already," he said.

"We are also in favour of a summit, but time is yet to come for that. Let's mobilise people's support first and intensify the current anti-government agitation. We want to hold the summit before the final stage of the movement," said a policymaker in BNP.

"What will we do by holding the summit now? Will the Awami League government be toppled after the summit? We will hold the summit when we can be sure about fall of Hasina government," he added.

JP Presidium member Firoz Rashid said BNP had called an emergency meeting of the liaison committee after the ban was imposed on May 13. The component parties held separate lengthy meetings and then the liaison committee finalised a series of action programmes including siege of the capital on May 17 and a 3-day hartal from May 18.

"But without informing any one, BNP sat with the government and almost signed a bond which is rare in the political history of Bangladesh. Through this negotiation, BNP violated its political commitment," he said.

"We are not against negotiation, but it was the duty of BNP to take all of us to the negotiation table because the four parties had similar road march programmes," Firoz Rashid, who had attended the liaison committee meeting, said.

But a senior BNP leader, who played a vital role in the talks with the government said: "The negotiation rather helped the opposition to observe the road march programme peacefully." The government was defeated in the negotiation because it was compelled to lift the ban, he said.

Firoz Rashid said BNP leader Anwar Zahid had phoned him Thursday morning to hold a liaison committee in the afternoon, but he refused to sit till BNP gave a satisfactory reply on its negotiation with the government. "I also talked with Jamaat and IOJ leaders and they also agreed with us," Firoz Rashid said.

But when contacted, Anwar Zahid denied having talks with Firoz Rashid. "There was also no contact with JP on Thursday," he said. Zahid is BNP's representative in the liaison committee.

Rashid said, "We believe, programmes like road march

have great impact. But it will not be possible to oust the Awami League government even through one thousand road marches or processions. It will not be possible to defeat the AL in election if we don't have election alliance," Firoz Rashid said.

A senior leader of Jamaat said that BNP informed them about talks with the government at the last moment when it was "tough" for anyone to give opinion.

"It would have been better and wise for BNP if the had taken us to the negotiation table," Jamaat's representative in the liaison committee ATM Azharul Islam said. The parties will soon meet and discussed the matter, he added.

IOJ leaders also shared Jamaat's view and hoped BNP would not repeat the mistake in future.

Drug shortage

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cillin. Contraceptives include various types of pills and condoms.

To avoid delays in releasing funds, the World Bank suggested the government ensure that fully developed operational plans are in place by June 15 and are approved by the National Steering Committee and other bodies.

Regarding the annual programme performance, the report said: "Several Health and Population Sector Programme (HPS) initiatives, aimed at improving service quality and addressing long standing gaps in such areas as maternal and child health, were affected because of delays in supplies and procuring drugs, and contracting NGOs and technical experts for implementation of these activities."

When contacted, a senior official of the health directorate, however, claimed that the existing stock of vaccines is sufficient to cover the vaccination programme of the government.

"We don't see any shortfall in vaccine supply from the health centres. The existing supply in the store is sufficient to meet the demands for at least until year end," said the official.

He, however, did not comment on the stock position of the drugs.

Regarding signing of the MoU with Unicef and UNDP, the official said it is in the process of signing in a day or two.

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Bangladesh bowled with a purpose and plan for a change. The opening bowlers were impressive with their line and length and had the batsmen struggling for the better part of the first 15 overs. But Ridley Jacobs, Sherwin Campbell and Jimmy Adams are hardened pros, they had sailed this route before. In the end it was a case of what is, what was and what must be. West Indies—by 7 wickets.

West Indies are a pale shadow of what they once were. Sadly, we are watching the demise of one of the great powers of world cricket. Judging by the present scenario of cricket in the West Indies, a revival does not seem to be on the cards. Judging by what we saw in Dublin, judging by what we might have achieved perhaps, let's hope for the improbable. Well, why not? This could be the time for the changing of the guard.

From Our Correspondent RAJSHAHI, May 21: A young man hailing from Kamalpur under Boalia thana died today allegedly after taking spurious liquor.

Masud, 20, son of Abu Bakar Siddique became unconscious after taking the liquor last night. He was rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital where he died this noon.

Editor : Mahfuz Anam

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A colourful procession was brought out in the city yesterday marking the birth centenary of national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam.

— Star photo

BNP's allies unhappy

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Liquor poisoning kills one

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, May 21: A young man hailing from Kamalpur under Boalia thana died today allegedly after taking spurious liquor.

Masud, 20, son of Abu Bakar Siddique became unconscious after taking the liquor last night. He was rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital where he died this noon.

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