

BUY NOW PAY LATER

Whirlpool
HOME APPLIANCES USA

Gas Cooker

Transcom Electronics Limited
Authorized distributor in Bangladesh for Whirlpool Appliances, USA

The Daily Star

VOL. X NO. 32 REGD. NO. DA 781

www.dailystarnews.com

DHAKA MONDAY FEBRUARY 14, 2000

3rd Millennium

FALGOON 2, 1406 BS

ZILQAD 7, 1420 HIJRI

16 PAGES PRICE : TAKA 6.00

Public Safety Bill President to act in time as per constitutional provision

President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday said that as regards the Public Safety Bill, he would act as per constitutional provision within the stipulated 15 days time, reports UNB.

He reaffirmed his stand on the highly contentious Bill when one faction of the Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists urged him to extend moral support to the Bill while another faction not to assent to it.

Leaders of the two factions separately called on the President at Bangabhaban and conveyed their respective opinion on the Public Safety Bill.

President gave the journalists a patient hearing and discussed with them various aspects of the Bill.

A 16-member delegation of BFDJ led by its president Abul Kalam Azad, advocated that the Public Safety Bill was intended to effectively deal with the extortionists, terrorists, tender-mongers and other anti-social elements with a view to ensuring peace and safety of public life and property.

The President may extend moral support to the democratic government in its endeavour of ensuring a society free from terrorism, the delegation said, and requested him to assent to the Bill for combat.

See page 11 col 5

4 members of CU liaison body quit

From CU Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 13: Four members of the newly formed eight-member Chittagong University Liaison Committee resigned today.

They are Prof Abdul Hakim, Prof Shamsuddin, Prof Abul Mansur and Prof Abu Zafar Ahmed.

The CU authorities formed the liaison committee on February 3 to help solve the crisis of the university.

The committee has been given responsibility for holding talks with the agitating student bodies on reopening of the university.

Shibir-led All-Party Student Alliance (APSA) continued their strike for the 14th day today.

APSA enforced strike for an indefinite period on February 1 demanding removal of VC, Proctor and Provosts of all halls of the university, release of 54 Shibir activists and arrest of the killers of two Shibir activists who were killed in a gunfight with BCL on the campus on December 19.

Meanwhile, at least 200 general students under the banner of 'General Students Council (GSC)' today laid a siege to the Central Railway Building (CRB) and submitted a memorandum to the General Manager (GM) of Bangladesh Railway (East) demanding immediate resumption of the university shuttle train service.

They urged the authorities concerned to resume shuttle train service by February 15.

Inside Today

Article

Kashmir: Spiralling Out of Control?

Column: Perspectives
by Brig (Rtd) M Abdul
Hafiz
Page 4

Focus

Letter from America: A
sampling of American
sense of humour; and
Healthcare market:
What role for govern-
ment?
Page 5

Business

US again calls for
worker rights
Fischer takes IMF
reins as Camdessus
quits today
DSE, CSE price
quotations
Pages 6, 7 & 8

Prayer Timings

February 14

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5:45	6:15
Zohr	12:45	1:20
Asr	4:30	4:45
Maghrib	5:58	6:00
Esha	7:30	8:00

Source: Islamic Foundation

President urged again not to assent to the Bill

Opposition holds joint rally in city



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Jatiya Party Chairman H M Ershad waving from the dais at Paltan Maidan prior to their joint rally (top) and Khaleda leading a mass procession after the rally. — Star photo

By Staff Correspondent

Chiefs of the four component parties of the BNP-led opposition alliance have reiterated their appeal to President Shahabuddin Ahmed not to assent to the "repressive and black" Public Safety Bill.

They also demanded of the government to withdraw the Bill, dissolve the Jatiya Sangsad and hand over power to a caretaker government immediately.

Addressing a mammoth joint public meeting from a single dais at Paltan Maidan in the city yesterday, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Jatiya Party Chairman H M Ershad, Jamaat-e-Islami Amier Golam Azam and Islami Oikya Jote chief Azizul Haq also called upon the people to join the ongoing one-point movement and launch an all out agitation to dislodge the Awami League government.

The four top leaders of the alliance components for the first time addressed a joint public meeting and led a mass procession after the meeting.

The alliance organised the meeting to press its demand for resignation of the government and cancellation of the controversial Public Safety Bill.

Tens of thousands of people and supporters of the four parties attended the meeting, turning Paltan Maidan and its adjoining areas into a human sea. The meeting was peaceful and disciplined, but police foiled the procession.

Addressing the meeting, BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia said President Shahabuddin Ahmed is the President of the country and its people, and not of Awami League.

"Our earnest request to you (President) is that do not put your signature on this black and repressive Bill. You should not assent to this Bill in any case... Please do not stigmatise your hand by signing this black Bill. You should not allow the government to chain the nation."

Khaleda Zia said the government has passed this Bill with the motive of clinging to power by repressing the people, foiling the current movement and fulfilling the commitments given to India earlier.

She said there are other motives also. These include resorting to repression on opposition activists, arresting opposition

See Page 12 Col 4

JS body on Kibria's remark 'Undesired interference'

By M Shamsur Rahman

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance Ministry blasted the finance minister after his meeting yesterday for comments he made in a letter that challenged its jurisdiction over bank loan defaulters.

The committee stated in a press release that S.A.M.S. Kibria's letter tarnished its image and was an "act of negligence to parliamentary democracy, especially to committee management."

MP Ali Ashraf, chairman of the standing committee, said the letter was an "undesired interference" into the committee's affairs.

Kibria was invited to attend the meeting but could not due to prior engagements.

Meanwhile, the prime minister has been informed about the problem and a report on Faruk Rahman, the central figure in the debate, has been sent to her office.

The conflict began after a

committee meeting on January 23 that discussed the case Faruk Rahman, one of the country's leading loan defaulters. Rahman wanted to know why Sonali Bank wouldn't give him more loans.

The committee suggested that Sonali should implement its earlier proposal and ask the central bank to reconsider its decision to refuse the loan application, which would be tantamount to breaking the country's banking laws.

Kibria consulted with the attorney general and wrote to the committee on February 6. He reminded the committee it didn't have the right to hear applications submitted by banking clients.

However, the committee reiterated yesterday that the Rahman Group made the required down-payment at the Sonali Bank's behest, but the central bank delayed the case

See Page 12 Col 7

Violence in city 50 hurt, dozens of vehicles damaged

By Special Correspondent

At least 50 people were injured, three vehicles torched and dozens of other vehicles were damaged during clashes between police and opposition supporters in the city yesterday evening.

The clashes took place when the "mass procession" of the BNP-led four-party alliance, following the joint public meeting at Paltan Maidan, was marching through Kakrail-Shantinagar area. Its tail section was still near the Zero Point.

The alliance blamed police for triggering the clashes in a pre-planned manner with Detective Branch plainclothes men taking the lead in foiling the massive demonstration.

Police denied the charges and accused BNP supporters of hurling stones at a shopping complex in the area, owned by

See page 11 col 4

PM defends passage of the Bill

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday defended the passage of the Public Safety Bill saying it would protect human rights, safety and security of the commonman especially the rural people, reports BSS.

"Many laws were enacted in the past but none had the provision to award punishment for abusing the law. But PSA has the provision to book anybody for abusing it and harassing citizens," she said this while talking to the leaders of Bogra Press Club at her office.

The Prime Minister said the rural people will be benefited immediately after the enforcement of the law as six special tribunals would be constituted in the divisional headquarters under the PSA which will gradually be extended to district level.

The Prime Minister told journalist leaders, "We did not impose any restriction on freedom of the press and make telephone calls at the dead of night to suppress any truth. We believe in complete freedom of expression and gave the newspapers full liberty to express their opinion freely."

She said that since the journalist community was enjoying total freedom it had responsibility to uphold the truth properly and objectively.

See page 11 col 7

Twelve-hour hartal tomorrow, 36-hr from Wednesday

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance has called a 48-hour countrywide 'blockade hartal' — 12-hour from 6 am tomorrow (Tuesday) and 36-hour from 6 am on Wednesday — to protest enactment of what it said "black and repressive" Public Safety Bill and attack on its mass procession yesterday.

BNP chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia first called a 36-hour 'blockade hartal' beginning at 6 am Wednesday demanding withdrawal of the Public Safety Bill.

But the leaders of the alliance called a 12-hour hartal on Tuesday which will be followed by a 36-hour hartal from Wednesday at a press briefing after the joint mass procession of the BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote simultaneously came under "police and terrorists" attack.

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in presence of secretaries general of other component parties of the alliance announced the hartal programme.

Earlier, announcing the 36-

hour 'blockade hartal,' Khaleda Zia said everything will be closed during the hartal. Rail, launch, bus, truck and all kinds of vehicles will not ply on the roads and the rivers.

She urged the people to make the hartal a success.

Khaleda Zia also asked the police and civil administration to behave neutrally and refrain from pleasing the AL government.

Later briefing newsmen at 29 Minto Road in the evening, Mannan Bhuiyan said the government provoked the opposition to call hartal by taking "anti-people and anti-state" steps, like signing of the Ganges Water Treaty, the CHT Accord and enactment of the 'black' Public Safety Bill.

Describing the attack on opposition's mass procession, he said the Awami League terrorists under police protection launched armed attack on BNP's procession from Karnaphuli Garden City.

He said the terrorists opened indiscriminate firing targeting BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia. But she narrowly escaped. He

See page 11 col 6

Sylhet: First day of hartal passes off peacefully

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Feb 13: The first day of five-day hartal in Sylhet passed off peacefully today.

The All-Party (Opposition) Action Committee enforced the hartal to press for immediate withdrawal of names of different halls and buildings of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology.

The other demands of the action committee include, re-naming of the halls and buildings after the companions (saints) of Hajrat Shahjalal (RA), trial of the killers of the Shibir activists who was shot dead in BDR firing during agitation on December 25, removal of VC Habibur Rahman and Dr Jafar Iqbal and withdrawal of the cases filed against the opposition activists.

Vehicles, including the rickshaws were off the streets while inter-district bus service remained suspended during the hartal.

The trains, including the inter-city ones ran behind the schedule and Biman flights were operated with fewer number of domestic passengers.

All business establishments and educational institutions were closed. Attendance in gov-

See page 11 col 7

Sumon murder

Complaint case
to be filed with
CMM's court today

By Staff Correspondent

A complaint case in connection with the killing of Ahmed Hossain Sumon will be filed with the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate today, family sources said yesterday.

Sumon was shot dead allegedly by the DB men. The 24 police personnel involved in the pre-dawn raid at Sumon's residence at Karimullah Bagh will be charged with the murder, family members added.

The complaint case will be filed today in presence of Abdur Rezaq Khan, president of the Dhaka Bar Council and lawyer for the victim's family told The Daily Star last night.

Earlier, the Shyamprap police refused to register the FIR by victim's family in connection with the killing on grounds that the DB had already filed a case in this regard.

The OC of Shyamprap Police Station, when contacted, said none was arrested in connection with the killing yet. The family also blamed involvement of some local influential persons.

The DB men accompanied by masked local miscreants, raided Sumon's residence at Karimullah Bagh at 3:30 am on Wednesday, the family members alleged.

Sumon, 23, his elder brother, Shamim Hossain, and niece Tuli, 10, were shot during the DB raid.

Blast at BNP office Victim's body handed over to Anjuman

Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) authorities yesterday handed over the body of the victim who died in a bomb explosion in BNP's central office to the Anjuman-e-Mafidul Islam for burial, reports BSS.

The DMCH authorities kept the body for proper identification of the victim who was initially identified by police as Ismail Babu. Police later identified him as Faida Babu, a resident of Moghbazar wireless colony slum but none of his relatives came to identify him till yesterday noon.

The ill-fated young man was buried at Azimpur graveyard in the afternoon.



BNP activists damaging a police van at Kakrail crossing in the city. — Star photo

Residential areas in city swamped by businesses

Commercial developers bear the brunt

By Morshed Ali Khan

Dhaka's residential areas are being swamped by businesses, making it difficult for commercial developers who follow the city's zoning guidelines to attract tenants.

"About 50 per cent of our modern offices could not be rented, despite repeated advertisements in the national newspapers," said an official with a top developer in Panthopath.

The Dhaka Master Plan permits mixed commercial and residential zones. However, the absence of any government policy or guidelines has changed the character of residential areas and resulted in huge losses for commercial developers.

Developers, town planners and architects said businesses started to violate the city's zoning regulations during the economic boom in the 1980s. A scarcity of office space in commercial areas forced businesses to move into the residential areas.

The rapid growth of the garment industry also swamped residential areas. A town planner said the government should have designated the 600 acre Tejgaon Industrial Area for garment factories when it converted it into a commercial area last year.

People with offices in residential areas said high rent, traffic jams and parking shortages were big problems in areas

designated for commercial use. "You will find a lot of 'buying houses' in Dhanmondi, Gulshan, Banani and Uttara," said a businessman from Gulshan. "They are entertaining foreign buyers who want to be away from hustle and bustle of commercial areas."

Badrul Huda, an architect and developer, said the office space and commercial blocks available on Panthopath Road alone would be sufficient to house all the businesses currently located in Dhanmondi.

In the last ten years developers have built so many office buildings in the city that there should be no reason why residential areas should be burdened.

See page 11 col 4

Noor-e-Alam tells special court Shikdar ordered killing of Khalid Hossain

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Feb 13: Noor-e-Alam, Chief bodyguard of Ershad Shikdar told a special court today that Jubo League leader Khalid Hossain was murdered at the instruction of Shikdar.

"I am one of the eye witnesses but not a participant," he was quoted as telling the court as government approver.

Khalid was murdered by Shikdar and his men at Skid Ghat on the night of May 16 last year, he disclosed.

Earlier in the morning, 18 out of 28 accused in the Khalid murder case were produced in the special court. Ten accused are still absconding.

Noor-e-Alam said in his deposition that Ershad Shikdar called businessman Syed Monir

Hossain at the Skid Ghat over telephone to resolve a dispute over lease of Jalikhana ferryghat. Syed Monir went to the Skid Ghat in his private car along with six others, while four more accompanied him in two motor bikes.

Noor-e-Alam said Shikdar ordered his armed cadres to "finish" Syed Monir and all his associates. In the armed attack Shikdar himself was directly involved. Khalid later succumbed to his injuries in the General Hospital, while several others including Syed Monir were seriously injured, he said.

"Each and every limb of Khalid's body was crushed by hitting with hammer by Shikdar himself," he said.

See page 11 col 7

Our New Address

Address : The Daily Star
19, Karwan Bazar
(2nd & 3rd floors)

Dhaka-1215

Phones : 8124944, 8124955,
8124966

Fax : 8125155