

Govt has failed to run state affairs: Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the fact that the BNP-Jamaat government had completely failed to run the state affairs was evident from the ever worsening law and order.

"The government has totally failed ... the administration collapsed," she told reporters after distributing warm clothes among the victims of post-election violence who took shelter at the Awami League central office.

Some 400-500 men and women, mostly party's election agents and workers, allegedly the victims of torture by the BNP-Jamaat terrorists after the October 1 election, have been staying at the AL office for nearly one-and-a-half month.

"We're trying to help these innocent people in distress, they left their homes after losing everything due to terrorism ... they can't go back fearing further persecution," Hasina said.

She deplored that "terrorism, killing, looting and rape still continued." Today, a College Principal was shot dead in Chittagong. This is very unfortunate," she said.

The Awami League president

said lakhs of her party workers were displaced, hundreds killed and women raped. But police did not accept cases due to telephonic advice from the ministers and BNP leaders, she alleged.

Hasina said: "Had the BNP-led coalition won the October election genuinely, they would not have gone for such vendetta. Since they manipulated the electoral verdict, they have resorted to persecution to silence the voice of the people."

In reply to a question, the opposition leader said that after the Eid-ul-Fitr, she was going to hold a national convention on the BNP-Jamaat "atrocities" on innocent people, Awami League workers and minorities across the country.

To another query, she said the government might not have the courage to admit the reality, but people and press are not blind of the "vile" character of the BNP-Jamaat coalition regime.

Earlier, the Awami League chief distributed warm clothes, saree and lungi among the 342 victims staying at the party central office. Awami league leaders Sajeda Chowdhury, Abdul Mannan, ex-MP Haji Selim and Sechhasebak League leader Bahauddin Nasim were present.

13 injured as JCD, BCL clash at IU

IU CORRESPONDENT

At least 13 students of the Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall of the Islamic University were injured yesterday, one of them seriously, after a clash between activists of JCD and BCL.

The clash erupted following an altercation between JCD activist Lucky and Shohagi, reportedly a BCL activist. Lucky slapped Shohagi while she was returning home with her husband. Shohagi later returned to the hall with her friends and attacked Lucky and other JCD activists. The clash lasted an hour leaving Mona, Shohagi, Luna, Kaniz, Kochi, Munni, Barsha, Lucky, Ripa and four others injured.

The injured students were taken to the IU medical centre where Mona's condition was deteriorated to be critical. She was later taken to Kushtia General Hospital.

The provost of the hall was on leave at the time of the incident. Witnesses said that the clash was a sequel to previous enmity between Lucky and Shohagi.

Morshed Khan

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ber of parliament for the second consecutive term from the Chittagong-10 constituency in the last parliament election. He had served the previous BNP government as the special envoy of the prime minister. During that time, he headed a committee for making comprehensive reform recommendations to infuse dynamism in the foreign ministry.

He graduated in Technology and Agriculture from Tokyo University while he had his post-graduation in Industry Management from Sofia University.

He was the chairman of Bangladesh Association of Banks from 1994 to 1996 and honorary consul general of the Philippines in Bangladesh from 1968 to 1981. He also served as a member of the Administrative Board of ILO.

Morshed Khan also held the position of president of Bangladesh Chamber and Industries, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

During the tenure of the previous BNP government, he was a member of the parliamentary standing committee on the foreign ministry. He also visited a number of countries with various important responsibilities.

A member of the BNP advisory committee, Khan placed wreaths at the mazar of late President Ziaur Rahman after being sworn in as a minister.

He is married with one son and four daughters.

Gulshan lake

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tions in front of the RAJUK building from tomorrow.

Presided over by Prof. Abdullah Abu Syeed, the rally was, among others, addressed by BEM General Secretary Dr. Abu Nasir Khan, Prof. Shahrier Kabir of Independent University, Saiful Islam and MA Feroj.

Abdullah Abu Syeed said the city dwellers would eventually start dying like these fishes from pollution unless it is checked immediately.

Prof. Kabir identified a newly constructed sewerage near Road No. 11 at Baridhara as the main cause of pollution in the lake.

Members of the Gulshan Matsya Shikari Samity, the Hunger Project, SEED, Proshika, Sundar Jiban, Institute for Environment and Development, Islami Relief, Manabik Shahajia Sangstha and local people also participated in the rally.

Ramadan

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Chowdhury yesterday greeted the nation at the start of Ramadan hoping that the teachings of the holy month would be reflected in everybody's life.

"The Ramadan teaches us to exercise restraint and encourage all to seek attachment with Allah. I hope the teachings will be reflected in our work," he said on the eve of the holy Ramadan.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday greeted the countrymen on the eve of holy Ramadan urging all to practice patience, restraint and sense of proportion.

"The main teaching of the Ramadan is to exercise restraint warding off luxury, anger, indiscipline and conflict", she said in a message on the occasion.

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina has called for maintaining peace and harmony shunning the path of conflicts, terrorism and anarchy on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan.

"Being imbued with the spirit of sacrifice and restraint of Ramadan, we will have to engage ourselves for the wellbeing of mankind and continue to work for building world an abode of peace," she said in a message yesterday.

Kibria: Assess gas reserve

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in revenue at certain points of time while he was the finance minister, attributing it to the Asian economic crises and the 1998 flooding.

Another former finance minister, Abul Mal Abdul Muhit, also spoke briefly at the press conference, also attended by Saber Hossain Chowdhury, political secretary to AL President Sheikh Hasina.

Both Kibria and Muhit apprehended bad times for the economy in days to come mainly because of global economic recession after the September 11 attack in the US. They suggested that the new finance minister had better take the challenge ahead instead of finding fault with his predecessor.

Referring to Saifur's remarks on the issue of gas, Kibria said production sharing contracts (PSCs) were signed during the regimes of both the BNP and AL governments. He said the signing of the PSCs had nothing to do with the export of gas as those were meant for gas exploration.

"We have always been saying that gas can be exported if the proven reserve meets domestic requirements for 50 years. But Saifur is confusing the issue. They (present government) should make it clear whether they have already decided to export gas. But, I think the decision must be made on the basis of a national consensus," Kibria said.

Refuting the remarks by the finance minister, prime minister and immediate-past president that the last AL government left the economy in a poor state, Kibria produced a load of financial data and frequently

quoted from the World Bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) reports.

He criticised Prime Minister Khaleda Zia for her statement that revenue receipts fell during the AL period. "Begum Zia (and also Justice Shahabuddin who has very quickly lost the respect of the nation for his unfortunate remarks in the speech he delivered in the parliament) may not remember the Asian economic crises during 1997-98 and the devastating deluge... we managed the macro-economy through the crisis while maintaining a high growth rate."

"Revenue performance improved notably during FY2001. Revenue collection in this fiscal year displays a clear break from past trends, especially from the sluggish performance of the last two years," he quoted an ADB report as saying.

Kibria conceded that the foreign exchange reserve fell from US\$ 2039 million, when his party rode to power, to 1324 million dollars, when it left office. However, he blamed the forex reserve plunge on repayment of the IMF loan, which the previous BNP government had taken, and also on payment of roughly US\$ 1 billion in food import bill after the 1998 deluge.

He noted that during his previous stint in the finance ministry, Saifur had failed to stop rapid reserve depletion when the foreign exchange reserve plunged from US\$ 3070 million to US\$ 2039 million within a span of nine months in the 1994-95 fiscal.

Kibria also presented comparative pictures of agricultural growth, a key economic indicator for

Bangladesh, during the previous regimes of the BNP and AL. He noted that the country attained food autarky during the AL's time when there was negative growth in the farm sector during 1993-94 and 1994-95 fiscals.

He came down heavily on Saifur for the latter's observation that the AL success in agriculture was weather-induced. "Has he (Saifur) forgotten the fact that the worst deluge of the century stalked us in 1998?"

"Mr. Saifur Rahman would be better off if he focussed on the tasks ahead instead of engaging in diatribes against the government of Sheikh Hasina that outperformed all the previous governments in many fields, most certainly in macroeconomic management," Kibria observed.

He was also willing to offer his suggestion to meet future challenges in the economic sector should the new finance minister ask for it.

AMA Muhit, who lost to Saifur Rahman in the Sylhet-1 constituency in the just-held parliamentary polls, feared economic crises in near future against the backdrop of a global recession.

Pointing out that half a million garment workers have already lost their jobs in the country, Muhit said such job slashing would have far-reaching and multifaceted fallout on the economy. He also said that the government may be required to brace for some austerity measures in future.

Nurses' strike at BSMMU today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nurses of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital (BSMMUH) will observe a daylong strike at the hospital today, sources said.

The nurses will abstain from work in protest against the alleged wrong treatment of a nurse at the hospital leading to her death on Thursday.

Nahar, a senior staff nurse of the Gynaecology department of the hospital died at the hospital following an operation during childbirth.

Leaders of Sarkari Karmochari Samonny Parishad (SKSP) of the hospital alleged that Nahar died from complications arising out of the operation performed by Associate Professor Saleha Begum Chowdhury. They demanded a judicial inquiry into the death and punishment of those responsible.

The employees of the hospital and leaders of SKSP brought out a procession on the hospital premises in protest yesterday.

2 businessmen

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Thursday. They suspected that he was taken to Dhakkinkan and gunned down.

The reason behind the killing could not be known. The victim's brother Israfil filed a murder case with Uttara police station.

Police sent the body to DMCH morgue for autopsy. None was arrested in this regard till last night.

Meanwhile, the ringleader of a local gang, shot during a clash with his rivals on Tuesday night, succumbed to his injuries at the Suhrawardy Hospital yesterday morning.

Kala Rashid was shot in the chest during a clash with Arshad Chuya Selim group at Geneva Camp in Mohammadpur on Tuesday night. The critically injured Rashid was admitted to the hospital where he died at 10:30 am.

His body was sent to DMCH morgue for autopsy. A case was filed with Uttara police station in this regard.

DU halls

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that hall if they have no permission to reside there.

Besides, resident students who are staying in other halls instead of their own halls, will also be considered as outsider, according to the decision of the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, the new Vice Chancellor sought cooperation of the provosts to oust the terrorists from the halls and root out terrorism from the campus.

He called on all concerned to perform their duties with fairness and neutrality irrespective of their party affiliation to ensure peaceful co-existence of the activists of rival student organisations in the halls.

The meeting also held detailed discussions on the law and order situation now prevailing on campus.

Newly appointed Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof. Z N Tahmidia Begum and Proctor Prof. Nazrul Islam were present.

Dacoity at Uttara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dacoits looted money in cash, gold ornaments and other valuables from the house of a family planning officer at Faidabad in the city's Uttara area yesterday.

Police quoting family sources said the robbers numbering seven to eight entered the house of Mustafizur Rahman at about 5am after cutting the window grill.

They confined the inmates of the house in a room at gunpoint and looted Tk. 10, 000 in cash and gold ornaments and other valuables worth about Tk. 1.50 lakh.

A case was filed with Uttara police station in this regard.

Clarification

Information Minister Moyeen Khan said in the Jatiya Sangsad on November 14 that "proper steps" would be taken against Ekushey Television after disposal of the case against it in court. But it was printed in The Daily Star on November 15 that "steps" would be taken against ETV. We regret the inadvertent mistake.

AL needs immediate overhauling

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The leaders felt that apart from "rigging" in the polls and "biased" attitude of the caretaker administration, rivalry in the party rank and file and reluctance in party activities are largely responsible for the polls debacle.

The tour programme followed a series of soul-searching meetings at central level in Dhaka to find what went wrong in the party that caused the debacle.

Central leaders and most of the newly elected party lawmakers, split in 15 teams, began the tour programme on November 5. They held public meetings, workers' rallies and undertook mass contact programmes at district and Upazila levels.

Party insiders think that the process to reorganise the party would begin right now, slowly but steadily. It will get momentum after the month of Ramadan, they said.

The leaders are thinking of holding a special council session early next year to discuss reorganisation of the party.

Discontent among party leaders at different levels surfaced when

unpleasant incidents took place in presence of central leaders in different districts during the tour programme, the central leaders said.

Sheikh Hasina faced unpleasant situations during her tour of six southwestern districts included Gopalganj, Narail and Barguna. She was elected from Gopalganj-3, Narail-1 and 2 and Barguna-3 in the October 1 polls.

The AL president had to intervene when party workers started shouting at each other at a workers' rally at Barisal circuit house on November 10. Rival groups were blaming each other for the polls debacle, particularly in the southern districts.

Party workers in Barisal also chanted slogans against former chief whip in parliament Abul Hasnat Abdullah, a cousin of the AL president.

AL general secretary also faced an awkward situation while attending another workers' rally in Magura on November 11. Senior party leaders intervened in presence of Ziaur Rahman to calm down rival party workers.

Bangladesh 57 for 1

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of wicketkeeper Andrew Flower. He scored eight runs in his 17-minute innings.

Middle-order turned opener Al-Shahriar looked impressive with the bat for the first time in the series. After being pushed up the order, he scored only 12 runs (5 and 7) in the first Test in Dhaka last week.

The stroke-maker was batting on 25 while in-form Habibul Bashar was on 21 when the stumps were taken off for the day.

Earlier, Zimbabwe piled on runs as their star performer Andrew Flower scored his 12th century (114 not out) and Craig Wishart notched his maiden hundred, also 114.

Opener Trevor Gripper (112) was the other centurion in the Zimbabwe innings on Thursday.

Flower, currently rated number one batsman in the world, had to take a break of nearly two hours when he cut his chin following a collision with Bangladesh spinner Enamul Hoque in the post lunch session. Having his chin sewed up with four stitches, Flower returned to

the crease shortly after tea and turned his 70 into a hundred, playing only 134 balls.

On the other hand, 27-year-old Wishart made no mistake this time after running himself out twice in nineties (93 against West Indies in Harare and 94 against Bangladesh in the Dhaka Test) this year. The aggressive lower middle-order batsman hammered 11 boundaries and a six off 126 balls to reach the elusive mark.

Wishart made the most of the left-off at mid wicket by Javed Omar when he was on 58 and never faltered again before pulling Ashrafu into the hands of Sharif in deep mid wicket.

Number eight Douglas Marillier was the other notable run-getter for the tourists with 52.

Young right-arm seamer Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza and veteran spinner Emanul even shared four wickets among themselves.

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Kandahar bombed

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killed," said General Mohammad Daud.

The governor of Kunduz called for a two-day grace period before the Northern Alliance attacks the city so inhabitants can flee, according to Daud.

"At the end of two days, we will attack. We want to enter Kunduz before winter," he added, saying fighting would not stop for the start of holy month of Ramadan this weekend.

Reuters says, as the need to fill a power vacuum in the capital Kabul took on new urgency at the start of the Muslim fasting month, Afghan tribal leaders spoke of popular uprisings in the south and plans to advance on Kandahar.

The United States, which has rejected calls for a military pause during Ramadan, said time was running out for Saudi-born bin Laden, his Taliban protectors and his al-Qaeda network.

"We are tightening the noose, it's a matter of time," Army General Tommy Franks, head of US Central Command, told a Pentagon news conference with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

Iran radio, monitored in London, reported that bin Laden has probably fled from Afghanistan across the border into Pakistan.

The White House, which stepped up a charm offensive to defuse criticism of Ramadan air attacks, sent out a statement from President Bush saluting Islam and playing up the US humanitarian efforts in Afghanistan.

"As the new month signals the holy month of Ramadan, I extend warm greetings to Muslims throughout the United States and around the world," Bush said. He did not mention the military campaign.

Hunt for Laden

US special forces have been on the ground in Afghanistan directing

themselves governor of the key eastern city of Jalalabad.

"Certainly there is a grave problem among Afghanistan's ethnic groups and this has not been solved," said Musa Arifi, the Peshawar representative of Hezb-I-Wahdat, the party representing the Hazara minority in central Afghanistan.

He said Hazara troops were heading to Kabul to protect the Hazara population in the west of the capital, an admission that they do not trust the troops of Burhanuddin Rabbani's Jamiat-I-Islami that moved in on Tuesday although both are members of the Northern Alliance that united to rout the Taliban.

"Because of past experience, people in west Kabul have concerns about their fate. They want to actively take part in the new setup," said Arifi. "We want a good share in the setup; without that, Hazara people will not trust it."

Arifi was one of several Afghans in this frontier city who met James Dobbins, the US envoy making his first trip to the region in his new role of helping Afghans to form a stable government.

"He preferred to listen our point of view. He did not have any specific proposal," Arifi said of his meeting with US envoy. He quoted Dobbins as saying that Washington wanted the establishment of a broad-based government in Kabul and elimination of terrorism from Afghanistan.

Power struggle

But many of the people Dobbins might have expected to see had decamped the previous afternoon to Jalalabad, just over the Khyber Pass, to engage in a power struggle for control of the provincial capital that had been a Taliban stronghold.

"Frankly it's not a very impressive group of leaders here," said a foreigner among the large community of diplomats and charities trying

Principal murdered

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ing of black flags at all educational institutions, wearing of black badge and a rally at the Lal Dighi Maidan on Friday next.

Speakers at the rally said tougher programmes will be announced if the killers are not arrested by the deadline.

Police and witnesses said the gunmen entered the principal's residence on the plea that they had information that Fatikchhari upazila Chhatra League General Secretary Tayebur Rahman, leader of the infamous Tayeb Bahini, was at the house. They asked the principal's wife who was reading newspaper to tell him to come out and talk to them.

As the principal came and said he knew nothing about Tayebur, they fired two shots in his forehead killing him on the spot.

Chittagong City Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury also visited the victim's residence in the afternoon.

Sources said Gopal Krishna Muhuri who was principal of the college since 89 recently got two years' extension of his service. This created grouping among teachers and a row between them and the college governing body. The grouping and the row might also be reasons behind the killing, they suspect.

The Chittagong unit of Ganatantrik Biplobi Jote in a press statement claimed that political reasons were behind the killing. The Jote demanded immediate arrest of the killers.

UNB adds: The body of slain Gopal Chandra was lying on the Sofa. When the IGP wanted to cover the body with cloth, Muhuri's bereaved wife strongly opposed it saying she would like to show the people how the country is now being run and what is the law and order situation.

Gopal Chandra joined the college in 1964. Extension of his service angered a vested group.

The home minister faced violent demonstrations when he, accompanied by the labour minister went to the victims house. Police charged

Bhashani

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ing that Bhashani's lifelong selfless efforts was towards establishing democratic rights of the people and a progressive society by bringing an end to all social disparities. These are examples to be followed by everyone, he said.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in her message paid glowing tributes to the leader and said that Moulana Bhashani was one of the organisers of the movement for liberation.

The life and ideals of Bhashani will remain a source of inspiration for the people forever, she said, and prayed for the eternal peace of his soul.

BSS adds: Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina in a message said Moulana Bhashani was uncompromising in his struggle for realising the rights of the deprived and the downtrodden. Meanwhile, to observe the day, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) will place wreaths at the mazar of Bhashani at Sontosh, Tangail today, a party press release said.

The party will organise a discussion at Sontosh at 12 noon today. BNP secretary general and LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan will address the discussion as chief guest.

Bangladesh Awami Party (Bhashani) will place wreaths at the mazar of Moulana Bhashani and offer feteha there at 11am today. The party will arrange a discussion at the mazar premises at 12 noon today.

Besides, newspapers will publish special articles and the electronic media will put on special programmes on the life and activities of Moulana Bhashani.

In Washington, a US official said Osama bin Laden's military chief was believed to have been killed in an American airstrike. The military chief, Mohammed Atef, was a close confidant of bin Laden, and his daughter was married to bin Laden's son. US officials suspect him of involvement in the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon as well as the bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998.

air strikes and hunting for bin Laden.

One US official said the Northern Alliance had captured top Taliban leaders, who could have information on the whereabouts of bin Laden.

The captives, the official added, did not include bin Laden or Mullah Omar, who said through a spokesman on Thursday that the Taliban would regroup and fight on.

"The situation in Afghanistan is part of a big plan including the destruction of the United States," Mullah Omar told BBC radio in comments relayed by the spokesman. He said the Taliban still controlled four of Afghanistan's 29 provinces.

The same Taliban spokesman said bin Laden would fight to the death rather than surrender.

Iran Radio quoted an informed source as saying bin Laden had probably fled for his life across the Afghan border near Tirah, southwest of Peshawar in Pakistan.

"Osama bin Laden has most likely abandoned Afghanistan for the Manatqi-e Azad (free areas) of Pakistan to save his life," it quoted the source as saying.

Rumsfeld said bin Laden would be relentlessly pursued. "I think we will find him (bin Laden), either there or in some other country," he added.

Pakistan, which has faced pressure from Muslim radicals at home over its support for the US-led war, has put tanks on its border to stop Taliban or bin Laden fighters crossing.

Vice-President Dick Cheney said the United States would go after al Qaeda cells beyond the borders of Afghanistan.

Old suspicions

Meanwhile, in an ominous sign for prospects of a smooth transition to a post-Taliban administration in Afghanistan, Afghan politicians yesterday were already voicing old suspicions.

And two competitors proclaimed

to help Afghanistan.

Representatives of both Yunis Khalis, whose men took part in the revolt to drive out the Taliban, and Haji Qadeer, brother of Abdul Haq, a famous