

Grab spade and clean, PM sets the ball rolling

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia set her files aside for a while, grabbed a spade and took to shovelling garbage yesterday. "Make our country a beautiful place to live in," she said as she scooped a pile of garbage from a Karwan Bazar road into a container.

If the country needed anything to spur its citizens into a cleanliness movement, she did it yesterday by kicking off the weeklong country-wide drive.

"Turn it into a social movement," the prime minister said. "We need to unite people to build a beautiful country."

Stressing the need for cleanliness, she urged leaders and activists of the ruling four-party alliance and other political parties and her countrymen to join the drive.

Reminding all that cleanliness is also part of religious faith, Khaleda requested all concerned not to throw garbage everywhere.

Indiscriminate dumping of garbage and disposal of industrial waste, she pointed out, have badly polluted environment of the capital. "Let us make Dhaka a glittering city with a pleasant environment," she said.

Khaleda underscored more effective efforts by the Dhaka City

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



PHOTO: STAR

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia shovels garbage while launching a countrywide cleanliness drive at Karwan Bazar in the city yesterday.

Janatar Mancha More officials may face sedition charges

STAR REPORT

The government is reportedly contemplating filing sedition charges against those retired and serving officials who have been accused of being involved in the anti-BNP Janatar Mancho staged by Awami League in 1996.

A source said that the planned sedition charges against these officials would be brought on the basis of the 'confession' that the government was trying to extract from the arrested former bureaucrat and ex-Awami League state minister Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir.

One such official who was sent into forced retirement after the BNP

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Long-stalled border talks this month Unresolved issues like intrusion, demarcation to be discussed

M ANWARUL HAQ

Dates for the long stalled border talks between Bangladesh and India to discuss outstanding issues over their 4000-kilometre land border at both political and border security level have been finally worked out.

Sources said the meeting between director generals of the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and the Border Security Forces (BSF) is now scheduled in Dhaka from March 23 to 25. A more comprehensive border-level talks under the bigger umbrella of India-Bangladesh Joint Boundary Working Group (JBWG) is due to be held in New Delhi on March 26 and 27.

The dates of the two meetings are learnt to have been fixed after long negotiations between officials

of the two countries.

The new dates for meeting between the two border chiefs have earlier been changed twice although the agenda was fixed. However, there were definite indications yesterday that the current schedule would be maintained.

A 10-member Indian delegation led by BSF chief Gurbachan Jagat is due to arrive in Dhaka on March 22 for the three-day talks. Two officials of the Indian High Commission in Dhaka will join the team.

The Bangladesh side will be led by Director General of BDR Major General Rezzakul Haider at the talks to be held at the BDR Headquarters at Peelkhana. A 20-member team including most of the 12 BDR sector commanders will join the talks.

This would be the first meeting between border chiefs of the two countries after the worst border skirmishes at Boraibari last year which left 16 BSF and 3 BDR men dead following BSF intrusions there.

The border meeting is due to focus on large-scale border violations including intrusions and killings. Foreign Secretary Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury told a press briefing recently that 69 Bangladeshis were killed by the BSF since April last year. There were reports of killing of two more Bangladesh citizens by BSF in Dinajpur yesterday.

The talks will also focus on trans-border crimes like smuggling, cattle

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

26 mayor post runners in Dhaka, 8 in Khulna and 6 in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 40 mayoral and 2047 ward commissioner candidates including those for the reserved seats for women ward commissioners filed nomination papers yesterday for the election of Dhaka, Rajshahi and Khulna city corporations.

According to Election Commission (EC) sources, 26 aspirant contestants filed nomination papers for the post of mayor of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and 1004 for ward commissioner.

In Khulna, eight aspirants filed nomination papers for the post of mayor and 361 for commissioners and in Rajshahi, six for the post of mayor and 324 for ward commissioners.

Besides, for the 30 reserved seats for women ward commissioners in Dhaka, 152 filed nomination papers, 108 in Rajshahi for 10 seats and 88 in Khulna for 10 seats.

The main opposition party Awami League and some smaller parties are keeping off the April 25 electoral race.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

College student shot dead in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A college student was shot dead by unidentified elements at Tolarbagh in the city's Mirpur area yesterday, hospital sources said.

Two young men called Abu Ishak Mithu, 20, out of their residence at BADC staff quarters, took him to a nearby place and shot him in the stomach.

Local people rushed him to the chest diseases hospital where doctors declared him dead.

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy. The motive behind the killing could no be known.

Mithu, son of one Humayun

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

No turnaround in sight Export shortfall may hit \$1billion

MONJUR MAHMUD

The country's export figures are heading southward with little prospects of a thaw in the near future. So far, exports have missed this fiscal's target for seven months by over US\$ 648 million. Exporters fear that the chill would further deepen, widening the gap to over \$ 1 billion.

Worse still, prices are quite bad in the international market on poor demand and as a result, Bangladesh had to export more than it did before to get every single greenback. Export volume was down by 6.99 per cent and price index by 1.34 per cent in the first seven months of this fiscal.

The country could ship out only \$3534.06 million worth of products during July-January period of FY02 against the target of \$4182.50 million. The

earning is also \$321.14 million less than last fiscal's same period.

"We may as well face a negative export growth of around 10 per cent this fiscal on a continued lacklustre performance," Dr Mustafizur Rahman, research director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said. "Alarming is the consistent dip in all major export items for the last six months."

Readymade garment (RMG) exports till January fetched \$1,882.42 million, down by 12.78 per cent from the \$2158.33 million target and also 7.6 per cent less than last fiscal year's corresponding period.

"The situation is quite bad. RMG export may face a seven to eight per cent negative growth. Prices are not good, so is volume. The depression will continue for the next few months," Kutubuddin Ahmed, president of the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

4 new division chiefs of Army

DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

Four out of seven division chiefs of the Bangladesh Army have been appointed as part of the government's on-going reshuffle in the defence forces, sources said.

The appointments of the new area commanders, the retirement of two major generals, and some other postings and transfers have been made in a space of last four days.

A division chief commands an infantry division and is known as the general officer commanding (GOC).

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Discord in AL over quitting parliament right now

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League plans to demonstrate today against a possible move by the government to pass a bill in the parliament for removal of Bangabandhu's portrait from public offices.

Amid strong possibility of the passage of the bill today to lift the obligation of displaying Bangabandhu's portrait, the Awami League MPs adjourned a meeting of the AL Parliamentary Party (ALPP)

yesterday till this afternoon.

Yesterday's ALPP meeting, held for an hour at the party's Dhanmondi office and adjourned at five in the afternoon, will start at 3.00pm today.

The meeting will be held at the office of the Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad.

In the absence of ALPP leader Sheikh Hasina, now away from the capital on a weeklong visit to the southwestern zone, senior party leader Abdus Samad Azad chaired the meeting attended by 33 out of 58

AL lawmakers.

AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman, presidium members Abdus Samad Azad and Abdur Razzak, Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid, AL Organising Secretary Mohammad Nasim and party MP Syed Ashrafur Islam spoke at yesterday's ALPP meeting.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Announcement

Jahangirnagar University admission test results on pages 17 to 19.

INSIDE TODAY

Article 4

Of political legends and Charisma

Column: Just Another View

SH Imam

Supplement 8

One page supplement on the 20th anniversary of RAOWA

Business 6-7

Private agro-based EPZ to be set up in Rajshahi

EU steps up tests of Southeast Asian shrimp, chicken