

PM urges Opposition to shun path of subversive acts

UNB, Mymensingh

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday urged the Opposition to shun the path of subversive acts and work unitedly to build Bangladesh as a prosperous country.

"We do not want to lag behind, let us march ahead and ensure welfare of the people and the country," she said addressing a huge public meeting at the Circuit House ground here yesterday afternoon.

Khaleda Zia was bitterly critical of opposition Awami League for abstaining from parliament and obstructing development efforts of the present government.

Presided over by State Minister for Energy A K M Mosharrif Hossain, the rally was also addressed by Health Minister Professor Khandakar Mosharrif Hossain and Prime Minister's Political Secretary Haris Chowdhury.

Local MPs Rasheduzzaman Millat, Nurul Kabir Shaheen, Engineer Mohammad Shamsuddin Ahmed, Khuram Khan Chowdhury, Dr Mohammad Ali, Delwar Hossain

Khan Dulu and other local leaders also spoke on the occasion.

Khaleda said the Mymensingh Power Plant's third phase, 20-bed hospital for char and construction of embankment on the Brahmaputra would be ensured.

Referring to enhancement of power supply in the district, Khaleda Zia recalled that Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman had set up the Rural Electrification Board to supply electricity to rural homes.

The present government's development plan also includes setting up 200 kilometres of power transmission lines in the district. The prime minister lamented that although gas was brought in Mymensingh by BNP government during its 1991-96 rule, the network had not been expanded in the last five years of Awami League rule.

Responding to some local demands, she assured the people that the gas transmission network would be expanded further and Mymensingh Political Institute elevated to a full-fledged engineering college.

The prime minister also said the

ninth division of the army would be upgraded to a full-fledged division.

A large number of people stood on both sides of the road as Khaleda Zia's convoy passed through and chanted pro-BNP slogans.

CIH virus

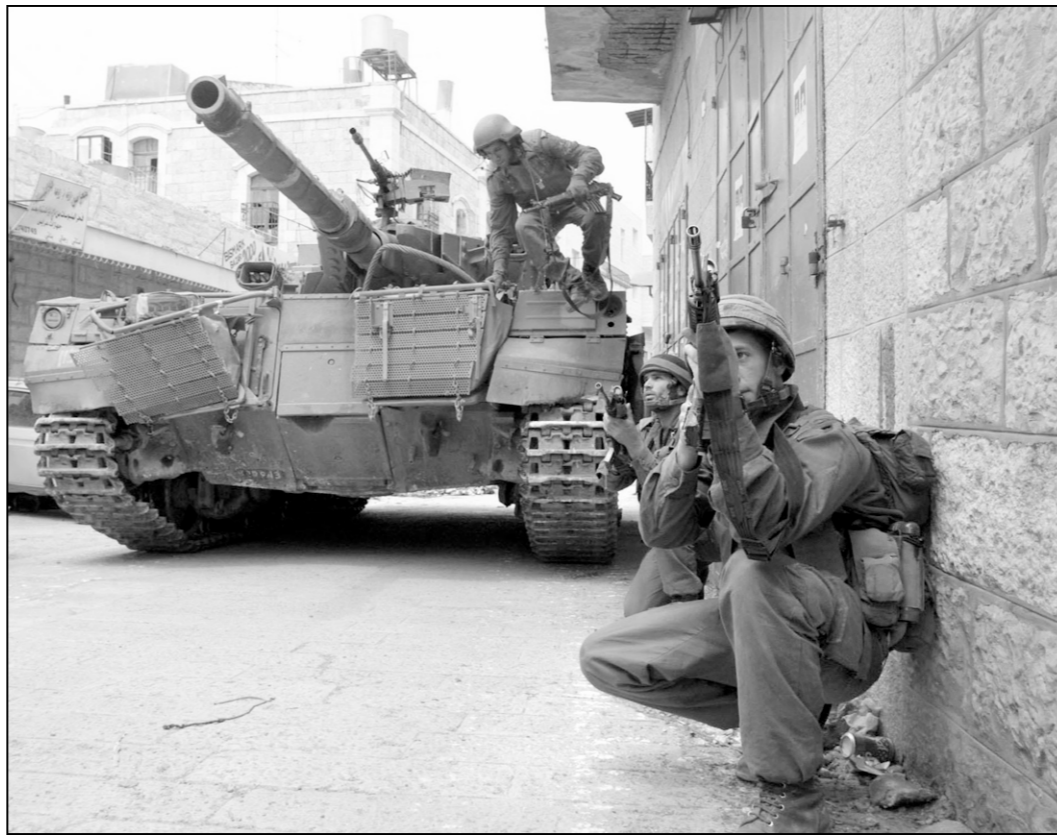
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load free to combat the CIH. The RemoveCIH v1.1 (MS-DOS/Win 9x) anti-virus can fight against the 'CIH v1.2 TTIT virus' that attacks on April 26 every year.

The other anti-virus RemoveCIH v2.0 (MS-DOS/Win 9x) has been developed to eliminate the 'CIH v1.4 TATUNG virus' that could probably attack on the 26th of each month.

The Internet users have already used the anti-virus software and termed them user-friendly.

Mahatab, 22, a fourth year student of computer science at Microland IICE, also developed an anti-virus for another deadly virus 'PE.FunLove.4099 virus' -- a threat to the Internet users.



An Israeli soldier jumps off a tank during a patrol in the West Bank town of Bethlehem yesterday. The standoff between Israeli troops and some 200 Palestinians holed up in the Church of the Nativity continues despite two rounds of negotiations on Tuesday.

Incentive package for rural pry school students

UNB, Dhaka

A new incentive package alternative to the 'food-for-education' for rural primary school students will begin in full swing all over the country from the next fiscal year.

Groundwork, including collection of preliminary data of students, their family income positions and assessment of the money involvement, are going on to restart the programme from July this year.

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman said this at a national seminar on 'Education for All Week-2002', organised by Primary and Mass Education Division at BIAM auditorium here yesterday morning.

Under this new programme, each poor student will get Tk 100 per month and Tk 125 for more than one in a family, in addition to primary education free of cost.

Saifur regretted that the previous government had shelved the government-sponsored food-for-education programme on the plea of fund shortage and termed it as a wasteful exercise.

Since the present government gives topmost priority to the improvement of quality of primary education, the prime minister approved the programme at the very first meeting of ECNEC to ensure school enrolment of all rural children, he said.

School enrolment had increased significantly and dropout rate

dropped drastically in 1995 as the then government introduced 20 kgs of wheat for every poor student per month that cost the government roughly Tk 300 crore a year.

Multilateral agencies, including World Bank and many other donor communities, had opposed the idea but the government went ahead with the programme to serve a twin-goal of education expansion as well as poverty reduction as poor rural parents often prefer sending their children to work rather than to schools.

"We'll expand the programme to each and every school...we'll target all the children who are still out of school," the finance minister said.

Court order on screening of Shahriar's video cassettes April 27

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Fourth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka will pass an order on the petition for screening of the video cassettes seized from Shahriar Kabir in connection with a seditious case on April 27.

Judge Mohammad Habibur Rahman passed the order following a criminal revision, seeking stay on the order passed by the Metropolitan Magistrate Sirajul Haider on March 3.

Both the prosecution and defence sides completed their arguments on the issue yesterday.

The defence lawyers Advocate Zead-Al-Malum and Khondaker Abdul Mannan filed a criminal revision with the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka on March 13.

The magistrate on March 3 assigned two lawyers -- Advocate Zead-Al-Malum and Khondaker Abdul Mannan -- to watch the video cassettes in absence of Shahriar Kabir.

But the defence lawyers submitted the petition, seeking permission for screening of the video cassettes in presence of the lawyers and the accused.

Shahriar Kabir was arrested at Zia International Airport on his return from Kolkata on November 22, last year. Police also seized his passport and some video cassettes.

Later, he was shown arrested under section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC). But a regular case on seditious charge against Shahriar Kabir was filed with the CMM's Court, Dhaka on December 8 last year.

Meanwhile, the Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka on March 28 rejected the petition, seeking return of Shahriar Kabir's passports seized by Special Branch (SB) of police.

Bangladeshi shot dead by BSF in C'nawabganj

UNB, C'nawabganj

Indian border guards shot dead a Bangladeshi national and injured another at frontier village Hosenavita in Bholahat upazila on Tuesday.

Police said the Border Security Force (BSF) of India sprayed bullets on Borjahan, 35, and Rezzak, 38, of frontier village Hashpukur at 5 pm.

Borjahan died on the spot while Rezzak admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital with serious bullet wounds.

The flip side of polls

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the country's municipalities and the Union Parishad amidst boycott and resistance by the then BNP-led opposition. It helped the AL to consolidate its base in the two local bodies covering the country's small towns and villages.

The ruling BNP's attempt to have its nominees elected to the city offices in Dhaka and two other cities should come as no surprise. It appears to be bothered little about the quality of the candidates it has picked to seek the office of ward commissioners for obvious reasons.

Records show that most of the local political activists, who either sought election or got elected to the posts of ward commissioner, are notorious for their criminal records. This, unfortunately, leaves little room for the major parties to opt for people with clean sheets because of the fact that such activists are highly influential in their respective areas.

The main opposition AL is boycotting today's city polls but it preferred not to resist the same unlike the BNP which tried to desist municipality and UP elections. In fact, a good number of the AL men are running for the commissioner posts although their party publicly lent no support to them.

The BNP is eyeing an overwhelming victory in this year's city polls. The absence of the main opposition party and the advantage of being in office are at least two of the factors that are highly likely to hand it a handsome victory. This has

apparently encouraged the ruling party to go for pending elections to the Upazila Parishad understandably to further widen its power base.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in a meet-the-reporters programme on Tuesday disclosed her government's plan to hold the Upazila polls after the city polls. Chief Election Commission MA Syed echoed her plan yesterday.

The AL while in office made several bids to hold the long-overdue Upazila polls, but strong opposition from BNP frustrated the plan.

Now, it is to see how successfully the BNP can reap political mileage out of the local government bodies. However, how well its plan works will largely hinge on how the AL reacts.

Diplomats

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Humayun Kamal, now envoy to China, is likely to become ambassador to South Korea. Incumbent envoy Iftekhar Karim is due to become ambassador to China.

Golam Mohammad, Director General of South East Asia desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has been appointed Consul General in Dubai.

Ashrafud Doulah, High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, is being appointed ambassador to Vietnam.

Ambassador to Egypt Sirajul Islam has been appointed envoy to Japan. The incumbent envoy, Jamil Majid, is returning to the headquarters and is likely to get an important assignment in Dhaka.

M Muniruzzaman, a retired CSP, has been appointed Ambassador to the Philippines.

Sarwar Mollah, who was in the Bangladesh mission in South Africa, is going to Iraq as ambassador. Incumbent envoy Fazlur Rahman has been called back to the headquarters.

Mizarul Quayes has been appointed Director General of Far East desk in the foreign ministry.

Muhammad Faruq who was ambassador to the Philippines has been appointed Director General of General Services in the foreign ministry.

High Commissioner to Canada Sohrab Hossain has returned to the headquarters and has been appointed Director General of West Asia desk.

Envoy to Malaysia Muhammad Kamaluddin is back at the headquarters and is due to be given a responsible position shortly.

Taraj murder Court orders further investigation

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka yesterday ordered further investigation into the sensational Tarajuddin murder case.

Magistrate Kazi Meraj Hossain passed the order following a directive from the First Metropolitan Judge's Court, Dhaka.

Judge Mohammad Rezaul Islam on April 20 stayed the order on reinvestigation into the Taraj murder case, passed by the magistrate Kazi Meraj Hossain. The judge also directed the magistrate to give on the issue order.

The judge's court passed the order upon a criminal revision, seeking stay on the order.

The magistrate court on January 6 instructed CID to reinvestigate the case following a naraji petition against the charge sheet of the case.

Tarajuddin, president of a cooperative society at Narda in the city's Uttara area, was gunned down by an armed gang last year. Victim's brother Nurul Islam filed a murder case with Uttara thana accusing 23 people, including Sajedul Islam alias Dipu Chowdhury, son of former state minister for shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, the following day.

But the officers of the case, submitted a charge sheet to the CMM's Court, Dhaka on July 9 last year against 22 people dropping the names of Dipu Chowdhury and three others from the charge sheet as the allegations brought against them were not proved.

Later, a naraji petition against the charge sheet was filed with the CMM's Court on December 26 last year.

Meanwhile, the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka yesterday rejected the petition, seeking stay on the order passed by the same court on April 20.

The defence lawyers filed the petition, seeking stay on the order as a criminal revision against the order will be filed with the High Court.

Regional leader of Sarbahara Party arrested

UNB, Jessore

Jessore police arrested a leader of an outlawed party from Jughat village of Rupsha thana in Khulna district yesterday.

On information, police went to Rupsha and raided a house at the village and nabbed Doud Hossain alias Doud Mollah, 40, of Bhaina village of Kotwali thana in Jessore.

Police said Doud Mollah, an active member of outlawed Sarbahara party, was wanted in a number of cases, including three murders. He has been hiding in the house for long.

Alleged criminal shot dead in Mohammadpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged criminal was shot dead by his rival in front of Agargaon Islamic Foundation in the city's Mohammadpur area last night.

Rabiul Alam was shot at around 8:45 pm and died on the spot.

The body of the victim was lying on the spot till writing of this report at about 10:00 pm, sources said.

The reason behind the killing could not be known immediately.

When contacted, Mohammadpur police said they had sent a mobile team to the spot.

41 speedy trial courts set up

UNB, Dhaka

The government has constituted speedy trial courts in 41 districts and appointed 41 first class magistrates as judges of the courts.

The courts and magistrates are: Dhaka Division: M Abu Abdullah, Dhaka district (including GRP thana area but excepting metropolitan area), Rashida Ferdoush, Gazipur district (entire), M Masud Karim, Munsiganj district (entire), Saleh Ahmad Mozaffar, Narsingdi district (entire), Muhammad Mosharrif Hossain, Mymensingh district (entire), M Shahed Ali, Tangail District (entire), M Mizanur Rahman, Kishoreganj district (entire), M Mostafa Kamal, Jamalpur district (entire), M Zakir Hossain, Sherpur district (entire), M Delwar Hossain, Netrakona district (entire), M Mahbubur Rahman Faruqui, Faridpur district (entire), Abu Taher Sayeed, Shariatpur district (entire), M Majibur Rahman Talukder, Gopalganj district (entire), M Manzur Hasan Bhuiyan, Rajbari district (entire), M Maniruzzaman, Madaripur district (entire) and M Kamruzzaman, Manikganj district (entire).

Chittagong Division: AK M Noor-Nabi Kabir, Chittagong district (expecting metropolitan area), Mahiuddin Al Faruq, Feni district (entire), A B M Ameen Ullah Nuri, Laxmipur district (entire), Ehsanul Parvez, Cox's Bazar district (entire), M Billal Hossain, Khagrachhari

district (entire), M Delwar Hossain, Rangamati district (entire), Mostafa Kamal Majumder, Noakhali district (entire), M Aminul Islam, Brahmanbaria district (entire), Noor Mohammad Majumder, Comilla district (entire) and M Abul Hasnat Humayun Kabir, Chandpur district (entire).

Rajshahi Division: M Shohel Imam Khan, Rajshahi district (excepting metropolitan area) and Farid Uddin Ahmed, Sirajganj district (entire).

Sylhet Division: M Jahangir Alam, Sylhet district (entire) and M Khalilur Rahman, Sunamganj district (entire).

Khulna Division: M Harun-Ar-Rashid Mollah, Bagerhat district (entire), Muhammad Shamsul Alam, Jessore district (entire), M Ashraf Hossain, Satkhira district (entire), Khan M Nurul Ameen, Magura district (entire), M Azam Khan, Kushtia district (entire) and M Shabirul Islam, Narail district (entire).

Barisal Division: Satyendra Kumar Sarker, Bhola district (entire), M Zahidul Islam, Barguna district (entire), K M Zafrul Ameen, Pirojpur district (entire), M Matur Rahman Barisal district (entire) and M Shahidul Islam, Jhalakathi district (entire).

The government earlier formed 9 such courts -- four in Dhaka, three in Chittagong, and one each in Rajshahi and Khulna metropolitan areas.

City polls today

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to hold elections in a peaceful manner". He however said the government has been trying its best to improve the situation. "But we cannot postpone election only on this excuse".

If violence marks this election, the EC's image will be tarnished, commented the CEC.

He called upon the voters to go to the polling centres so that the 'naughty men' cannot create any trouble.

Since announcement of the election schedule on March 20, there is fear among the city dwellers that there could be violence as a good number of 'listed criminals' are contesting the polls.

To check violence, fraudulence, duplication of voting and such other acts, the government in consultation with the Election Commission deployed over 33,000 security personnel in the three metropolises. They include 1500 army and 1,200 BDR personnel, 11252 policemen and 17,389 Ansars.

The forces would remain deployed till tomorrow evening.

The authorities earlier identified half of the total polling centres as vulnerable.

Twenty-four security personnel comprising 10 policemen with arms, two members of APBN, one Ansar with arms and 11 Ansars with batons will be deployed at each of the vulnerable centres.

Their number will be 22 at each of the rest polling centres, according to EC officials.

In the capital, 90 mobile army teams have been patrolling the streets since April 23. There are also 120 mobile 'striking teams' of BDR on the city streets.

Five companies of army, 10 platoons of BDR, 47 platoons of APBN and 48 mobile police teams will be on patrol duty in Khulna.

In Rajshahi, there will be four companies of army, five platoons of BDR, eight platoons of APBN and 26 police teams.

Forty-five magistrates will hold 'spot trial' of polls-related offences in the three cities. A total of 505 magistrates will be attached with army and BDR teams.

Meanwhile, the cabinet committee on law and order at a meeting yesterday reviewed the latest situation. The meeting was informed that 100 out of 1342 polling stations in

Hasina granted 8 weeks to reply in contempt of court case

BSS, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday granted eight weeks to Sheikh Hasina to reply in a contempt of court case filed against her.

A division bench comprising Justice Syed Amirul Islam and Justice Mirza Hossain Haider passed the order upon a prayer of Barrister Rukan Uddin Mahmud, counsel of Sheikh Hasina.

Advocate Syed Ziaul Hasan filed the contempt of court case against Sheikh Hasina for her reported adverse comment about the judiciary in an interview published by the New York-based Bengali weekly 'Thikana' during her visit to the US last year.

On March 13 this year, the High Court issued a rule asking Sheikh Hasina to show cause why contempt of court proceedings should not be started against her.

Her interview was reproduced by Dhaka newspapers -- Manabjamin, Inqilab, Sangram and Sangbad.

NICVD water pump operator hit by hammer dies at DMCH

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A water pump operator of the National Institute of Cardiovascular Disease (NICVD) who was bludgeoned with a hammer Monday night died yesterday.

Some hooligans hit Abdul Mannan, 35, on the head as he barred them from the water pump house.

After Mannan collapsed on the ground, some other employees took Mannan to the hospital (NICVD) where he died in the early hours.

The body was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy. A case was filed with Teigaon Police Station in this regard.

In another incident, Khilgaon police recovered the body of a young man from inside the compound wall of a four-storey building at East Rampura yesterday morning and sent it to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

The identity of the youth could not be known immediately. Sources in the hospital said that there were marks of injury on his eyes and forehead.

An unnatural death case was filed with Khilgaon Police Station.

Extortionists

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the spot and brought the situation under control.

The gang asked the businessmen to contact their leader to avoid dire consequences, said another source.

The duty officer of Lalbagh Police Station said their officer went to the spot to investigate the incident.

70 hurt

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ted to the Ukhia Upazila Health Complex and Cox's Bazaar Sadar Hospital.

Police arrested six JCD activists including Ukhia Upazila JCD president Abul Hasan Ali. Additional police were deployed at the Kutupalong Refugee Camp.

One killed

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ered two guns and three bullets. The rest escaped.

Binoy died while being taken to local health complex.

Konika Chakma is being interrogated, police said.

Police and sources in the area claimed that the SDG is a PCJSS-backed armed organisation to counter the UPDF, which opposes the CHT peace accord. PCJSS denies this.

Submarine cable

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(C&MA) of this cable would be finalised by December this year.

The consortium would then invite bids to build the SEA-ME-WE4 cable network on turnkey basis. The cable has been targeted to be ready for service no later than March of 2004.

All members of the SEA-ME-WE4 consortium would equally share the cost for the US\$600-700 million transoceanic submarine cable system.

It would cost the BTTB no more than US\$60 million to join this consortium. This cost would cover construction of branching unit in deep water, all the way up to the Chittagong coast.

There the BTTB would build its cable landing station, which would house terminal equipment, power plant, air conditioning system, etc.

It has also been officially confirmed partners of the SEA-ME-WE4 will reimburse the cost when they have access to the BTTB network.

"To be an 'initial party' to this consortium at its early stage would enable the BTTB to work with the global operators of submarine cable business," said a highly placed source of the government.

He said the other members of this consortium would assist the BTTB to prepare the cable landing station's technical specifications and bid evaluation criteria.

Top criminals

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running for ward commissioner, who is accused of nine murders including the murder of SMA Rob.

Another criminal Litu, despite being the chargesheeted accused in the Shamsur Rahman murder case, enjoyed all facilities to campaign with full liberty, voters of his ward said. So is the case with eight other listed criminals who were found moving freely till Tuesday night.

Police was well aware of the matter but they never raided the houses of these ten listed criminals contesting the KCC polls, alleged other ward commissioner candidates and voters.

In fact, police never even tried to nab the listed criminals including the ten notorious ones contesting the election, said political leaders. Voters apprehend violence if these ten fail to win, as they will avenge their defeat in a brutal manner. "Yet, we cannot patronise criminals by electing them as ward commissioners," said many elderly voters who are committed to vote for a good candidate who would be fit for honestly serving the people.