



The Daily Star



REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XIV No. 55

DHAKA SATURDAY MARCH 13, 2004

TO
People's Right to Know

www.thedailystar.net

FALGUN 30, 1410 BS

MUHAMMAD 21, 1425 HJRI

16 PAGES PRICE: Tk 7.00

S Korean president Roh impeached

Prime minister takes over as interim head of state



Roh Moo-Hyun

AFP, Seoul

South Korea's President Roh Moo-Hyun was suspended from office Friday in an unprecedented parliamentary impeachment vote that triggered panic in financial markets and deepened political turmoil ahead of next month's general elections.

Opposition lawmakers secured 193 votes to two to suspend Roh over violations of election rules, corruption and incompetence, the parliamentary speaker announced.

It is the first time in South Korea's

history that a leader has been impeached.

Roh, 57, was immediately suspended from office and Prime Minister Goh Kun took over as interim president.

The focus now switches to the Constitutional Court which will have the final word on the impeachment saga.

The nine justices of the court must rule within six months by a majority of at least six on whether to uphold the impeachment vote. There was no immediate indication of when the court may convene.

Roh, who has lurched from one crisis to another during his 13 months in power, said he expected to be restored to office by the legal ruling.

"I expect the Constitutional Court to make a legal judgement which will be different from a political one," he said in his first reaction to the vote. "I expect that the final decision will be different."

"I hope that within a few months, I will be able to carry on my job as president. I will neither get frustrated nor give up."

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Fresh bomb attacks on Mannan's Ctg plants

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Industrial units owned by Major (Rtd) Abdul Mannan, member secretary of the alternative political stream convening committee, in Chittagong came under repeated bomb attacks yesterday evening for the second consecutive day.

Meanwhile, the alternative political stream last night formed a seven-member legal committee headed by Zakir Hossain, senior advocate of the Supreme Court, in Dhaka to take legal actions against such attacks and assaults on the stream, its leaders, activists and supporters.

Witnesses and police said, unidentified youths threw three bombs at Sun Pak Zone by CDA Access Road in two phases and at Yeakub Garments at Hallishahar,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

JCD out to 'punish' B Chy, his men

It's our decision, says GS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A top leader of ruling BNP's student chapter yesterday vowed to "punish" former president Badruddoza Chowdhury for launching an alternative political platform and branded him as a "traitor", a day after a mob pelted him with stones and bricks.

"We have a party decision to resist Badruddoza and his supporters wherever we find them," Azizul Bari Helal, general secretary of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), told The Daily Star by phone yesterday evening.

Asked to comment on JCD activists' alleged roles in Thursday's series of attacks on Badruddoza and his supporters, Helal said, "Our supporters were out in the streets and did what was necessary."

The attacks on the key figures of

the new platform and their adherents injured over 300 people and ruined a rally at Muktangan, where Badruddoza was due to launch the alternative platform for politics.

Asked to confirm the identity of some alleged attackers whose photographs were published in national dailies yesterday, Helal ducked the point but said: "We have handed them (Badruddoza and his supporters) a minor punishment."

Vows Helal: "Be sure, the JCD will spare none of them and make sure they are duly punished for betraying with Ziaur Rahman (founder of the BNP)." "The JCD will not compromise on dealing with national traitors."

On the apparent failure of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) to make sure Muktangan is free for Badruddoza to hold his rally, as it

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Young woman gang-raped, burnt to death at Pallabi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapists allegedly abducted a young woman, gang-raped and then burnt her to death at Pallabi in the city Thursday night.

Police recovered the charred body of the victim, Fatema Khatun Kohinor, 25, from the first floor of an abandoned poultry farm at House 18, Road 1, Block D, Section 12 of Pallabi, Mirpur yesterday morning.

Fatema, daughter of a retired railway employee, went out of their Pallabi residence at House 7, Line 20, Block D, Section 12 at around 3:15pm Thursday for tutoring at a nearby house, said Aftab Uddin, her elder brother.

As she did not return home

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Youths attack Adab meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Armed youths stormed the venue of the Annual General Meeting of Adab, an association of NGOs, at Nilkhet yesterday, foiled the meet and damaged a number of vehicles there.

Witnesses said a group of about 25 youths equipped with sticks and rods came from the direction of Dhaka University (DU) at about 1:15pm and went on a rampage forcing the Adab authorities to postpone the AGM.

The attackers assaulted some Adab employees, damaged two cars, 13 motorbikes, furniture, placards and banners at the meeting venue at the ICMA building.

Adab officials alleged they had earlier informed Dhaka Metropolitan Police and Dhanmondi police about their scheduled AGM but police deployed at the venue remained inactive.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

B Chy announces mass hunger strike March 20

Human chains in front of missions abroad Mar 29

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The new convening committee of Badruddoza Chowdhury's alternative political stream yesterday announced a series of programmes, including a mass hunger strike on March 20, protesting an attack on the former president and his supporters and what he said was misuse of the government.

The programmes were laid out at the maiden meeting of the 12-member committee at its Baridhara office with its convenor Badruddoza in the chair, a day after a mob pelted key figures and supporters of the new political platform with stones

and bricks injuring over 300 people.

Badruddoza's son Mahi B Chowdhury, who resigned from parliament and the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party in protest at what he called a serious failure of the coalition government, informed newsmen about the programmes, emerging from the meeting that staggered past eight last night.

The programmes include prayers in mosques on March 19 seeking an end to crime and corruption, observance of another prayer day in temples, churches and pagodas on March 21 and protest rallies and human chains in front of

Bangladesh missions abroad on March 29.

Hunger strikers will hold their programme in front of the National Press Club from 10:00am to sundown.

Flanked by two other committee members, retired army major MA Mannan and Feroz M Hasan, Mahi said the government showed the most undemocratic attitude, unleashing attacks on them on Thursday.

He said Bangladeshis living in Australia, Japan, Italy, South Korea, the UK and many other countries expressed concern to committee members at the government acts by phone.



PHOTO: STAR

The new committee of the alternative political stream holds its first meeting at KC Memorial Clinic at Baridhara yesterday, a day after the platform's launch.

11 personalities call for national unity to salvage democracy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eleven personalities of politics and civil society issued a joint statement yesterday calling upon all to build a national unity to salvage people and democracy from the danger of confrontational politics.

In a statement, they said instead of being silent spectators to the unrest and political conflicts all professionals, social forces and

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Positive Bangladesh
See our special story titled 'the strength within' on page 12.

Tigers show grit in defeat

CRICINFO, Harare

Zimbabwe captain Heath Streak produced a sterling all-round performance to secure a 14-run victory and pull home side level in the five-match one-day international series yesterday. But it was another plucky display from Bangladesh, who proved that their eight-run win in Wednesday's match - their first in five years - was no fluke.

Without Streak's contribution, Bangladesh might even have been celebrating their maiden series victory, after the first two matches were washed out in Bulawayo.

He came to the crease with Zimbabwe reeling at 79-5, and contributed 45 in a sixth-wicket

partnership of 76 with Sean Ervine, who top-scored with a determined 50. Streak then followed up with 4-30 in ten overs, as the tourists were bowled out for 228 in the final over of the match.

Zimbabwe must have feared a repeat of Wednesday's reverse when they collapsed after winning the toss and choosing to bat on what appeared to be a reasonable pitch.

Of the top five, only Barney Rogers (26) made more than 10, as Tareq Aziz and Tapash Baisya continued their incisive new-ball partnership. But after Ervine and Streak had arrested the slide, Dion Ebrahim (33) and Andy Blignaut provided some much-needed acceleration in

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Indo-Pak ODI clash today

AFP, Karachi

When India and Pakistan open their one-day match in Karachi this weekend as part of India's first full tour of Pakistan in more than 14 years, the focus will be more on security than the pitch action.

The first of five one-day matches will be played at the National Stadium in the violence-hit southern port city Karachi on Saturday.

Around 5,500 policemen and 1,500 paramilitary troops have been deployed in and around the stadium and from airport to hotel and all 14 gates at the stadium will be under control of senior police officials.

An evacuation plan has already been rehearsed for the match - a landmark in thawing relations between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan.

Bangladesh Television and satellite channel TEN Sports will telecast the match at 10.30am.

Dhaka risks Dutch grant to ship out toxic fertiliser

REAZ AHMAD

Bangladesh risks retaining a 13-year-old stock of highly toxic fertiliser if it misses the March 15 deadline in signing an agreement for US\$ 1.4 million grant the Dutch government offered for shipment of the toxic consignment to the Netherlands for its safe destruction.

Officials said yesterday shipment of 2,764 tonnes of toxic fertiliser, stocked at two government silos since 1991, now hangs in the balance due to a tangle over payment of income tax by two Dutch technicians to be paid from the grant money during their stay in Bangladesh for safe handling of the toxic fertiliser.

The National Board of Revenue

(NBR) has not approved income tax exemption to the Dutch technicians scheduled to stay in Bangladesh for a maximum of 45 days.

The Dutch government through its embassy in Dhaka has asked the Economic Relations Division (ERD) to expedite the process of signing the grant agreement.

Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) imported 6,300 tonnes of zinc oxy-sulfate from Stollar Chemical Company of the United States under an Asian Development Bank (ADB) credit in 1991. Of the consignment, 3,536 tonnes were marketed but the government later found the fertiliser was toxic with abnormally high concentration of lead-cadmium.

The rest 2,764 tonnes remain

stocked at two BADC godowns in Chittagong and Khulna since then.

A public sector Dutch company - AVR Industrial Waste BV - through its local agent Kamico Bangladesh Ltd, signed a contract with the BADC on January 7 last year to transport the toxic fertiliser to Rotterdam Port in the Netherlands for safe destruction.

Since November 17 last year, the company brought in two containers full of toxic matter handling equipment and the United Nations-approved special hazard-free packaging bags and gloves to do the job. It also procured permission from all ports on the way to Rotterdam from Chittagong and Mongla ports for passing through them carrying toxic materials.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Thousands protest against Iraqi constitution

AFP, Baghdad

Thousands of Iraqis protested in the centre of Baghdad against a new interim constitution yesterday, while their religious leaders refrained from calling for a mass rebellion.

"No, no to the basic law," the crowd chanted, waving banners that read: "We do not want an American constitution."

"Yes for the unity of Iraq," they shouted at the peaceful rally in Feras Square.

Shiite clerics at weekly prayers also denounced the constitution, which Iraq's US-picked Governing Council signed at the start of the week.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7



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