

Resign to fulfil

FROM PAGE 1
April 30 deadline had created a huge sensation and the government should step down to fulfil people's expectation.

"Instead of quitting power for mid-term election, they are trying to cling to power by hook or by crook," she said.

"If they want to hang on to power by force, the future will be more dangerous," she warned the BNP-Jamaat alliance, which assumed power after a landslide victory in October 2001 general elections.

"The BNP-Jamaat alliance has arms, armed forces and money," Hasina said. "But it will be very difficult for them to tackle the situation if they want to stay in power by using those."

Asked about the April 30 deadline given by Abdul Jalil MP, the Awami League chief said that when Jalil gave the April 30 deadline, "it got huge response from people and every citizen is echoing it."

She said: "In the past, Khaleda Zia and Mannan Bhuiyan gave us several ultimatums for the downfall of our government, but failed to get any public response. What does it mean? It means, people now want the government to quit before April 30 and they've already demonstrated demanding the same."

The former prime minister said when she was in power, Khaleda Zia "threatened 88 times" to topple the Awami League government.

She said Khaleda Zia used to declare, "the government will be toppled by September, by October, after the Eid-ul-Fitr, after the Eid-ul-Azha." But they did not receive any public response, Hasina said, as Awami League properly governed the country.

"Today, our general secretary gave the deadline and it was not even announced by me," the Awami League chief said. "The knees of the government have started trembling with a single announcement."

Asked about the unity of the like-minded parties, she said the doors of Awami League are always open and her party has always made accommodation for others. About unity with Badruddoza Chowdhury and Dr Kamal Hossain, she said Awami League always believes in politics of understanding and accommodation.

About the role of the caretaker government, Hasina said there is need for reforming the provisions relating to the caretaker government to ensure free and fair voting.

She said: "People are fed up, it's clear with the reflection of their minds. Awami League does not believe in undemocratic ways. Rather, we struggled for democracy. If Awami League believed in undemocratic means, the government would have to quit in last October or December."

The opposition leader said people were "not getting anything good from them. People had faith and trust in the past Awami League

government, but now they are passing days amid frustration and panic."

Reaffirming her pledge to unseat the government, Hasina said since the alliance government has "failed completely to govern the country, people must be freed through movement and struggle."

Alleging that the BNP-Jamaat axis has planned to kill 50,000 people across the country, Hasina said: "Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and her son Tarique Rahman made a special and secret list of efficient organisers of the Awami League to kill them one after another. They will begin a genocide to cling to power, but people of the country will not accept this."

During the half an hour-long interview with the reporters, who accompanied her during the tour, the Awami League chief replied to questions on wide-ranging issues, including the arms haul in Chittagong.

Renewing her demand for international probe into the huge arms haul, Hasina said she does not accept the probe committee headed by Home Secretary Omar Farook.

The government was involved in the arms smuggling, she alleged and said: "The mystery would not be unveiled if the home secretary, a leader of the Jamaat-e-Islami, investigated it."

She said the deputy commissioner and the police superintendent of Chittagong, who could give more information, were not included in the probe committee.

It should also be investigated to what extent the home secretary himself was involved with the smuggling, Hasina said. "That's why we asked for international probe into the incident... such inquiries were seen in many countries of the world," she said.

The opposition leader wondered how the trucks entered Chittagong Urea Fertilizer Limited (CUFL) amid tight security.

"We are anxious about the security of the police sergeant who caught the huge arms cache as the home secretary is the chief of the committee. His (sergeant's) security must be ensured," she said.

About the Monday's arms recovery from a nephew of a Jamaat MP in Chittagong, she said. "So, you see who are using the same arms recovered in Chittagong."

Hasina alleged there are 11 secret organisations under the leadership of Jamaat leaders, which are providing training to militants. "But people are not fool. They can realise who could be the probable users of such heavy arms," she said.

Referring to the "attack" on her motorcade on April 2 at Gournadi, the Awami League chief said the attackers tried to kill me and they might continue their bid in future.

HC bans Crown, Hunter

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday declared illegal production, marketing and selling of Crown and Hunter, two brands of beverage produced by Jamuna Group of Industries as it contained liquor.

"Marketing of Crown and Hunter was against the public health and public policy," the court observed while delivering the judgment upon a writ filed by Crown Beverage Limited (CBL) challenging cancellation of registration by Board of Investment (Bo) on March 4.

The court, however, ordered restoration of the CBL registration with direction that it could produce beverage without containing alcohol.

Crown and Hunter contained 0.9 and 4.8 percent alcohol, which is a violation of Pure Food Ordinance.

A division bench comprising Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman and Justice Abdus Salam Mamun, also made the rule absolute with an observation that the impugned order of the Bo cancelling the CBL registration was not proper.

On March 4, the Bo cancelled registration of the CBL that produced Crown energy drink and Hunter malt beverage, on ground that it did not secure permission from Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institution (BSTI) before going into production.

Barrister Rafique UI Huq and Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud appeared for the CBL represented by its Managing Director Shamim Islam, while Additional Attorney General A J Mohammad Ali with his deputies Adilur Rahman Khan and Nayema Haider stood for the government.

Nasim Osman arrested at Benapole

UNB, Benapole

Nasim Osman, brother of Narayananj Awami League leader Shamim Osman, was arrested by Benapole immigration police while going to India yesterday.

Police said Nasim Osman was arrested with his passport, as there was a murder case against him at Narayananj Police Station.

They said Nasim was granted bail in the case, but the court recently cancelled the bail.

Two fall to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A construction worker and a telephone lineman died falling from buildings in the capital yesterday.

Rakib Uddin, a construction worker, slipped off the top floor of a six-storey under-construction building on New Circular Road in Ramna at around 1:30pm when working, said Harun, their supervisor.

Harun took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the doctor declared him dead.

In the other incident in Motijheel, Mohammad Ali, lineman of Maghbazar Telephone Exchange, fell from the cornice of seven-storey Ashik Mansion at 2:45pm when he was fixing a cable.

Sohel, a pedestrian, took him to the DMCH where the doctor declared him dead.

Khaleda, Hasina

FROM PAGE 12
nations that have made basic progress toward democracy by holding credible elections, establishing a multi-party system, building an active civil society and taking such other steps.

For many years, a scholarly debate continues over the compatibility of democratic principles and Islam. After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the debate has intensified, said an NDI website. It added, "A growing number of democratic Muslims around the world are ready to declare an end to the debate. From Morocco to Turkey to Indonesia, these political leaders point to the numerous examples of predominantly Muslim nations and political parties that are striving for and achieving democratic governance as evidence that Islamic culture and religious practice are compatible with democratic principles."

Sources said participants at the congress would strive to set up a platform for designing state and local government structures in accordance with Islamic tenets and democratic principles.

Govt to preserve

FROM PAGE 12
A prime trade centre flourished in Narsingdi that maintained contacts with contemporary South Asian and Roman civilisations through waterways, Mustafizur said.

The archaeologist asked the government to task them with the site's scientific preservation, saying they deserved it since they had the necessary expertise and it was they who had discovered the site and its significance.

The excavators will wrap up their works for this season on April 11 through a closing ceremony, where they will display the artefacts they have collected from the site since beginning of their work in 2000.

Hundreds of visitors, especially school and college students from adjacent upazilas, have been thronging the site hearing the news of the discovery. Yesterday, a JU team of History, Bangla, International Relations and Geography departments visited the site.

Inzi, Farhat

FROM PAGE 1
Test hundred and the first against India in four matches.

Farhat hit 14 boundaries during his 266-minute stay at the crease before he edged Laxmipathy Balaji to wicket-keeper Parthiv Patel.

Inzamam, who made 77 and 0 in the first Test at Multan, was in terrific form, smashing 14 boundaries during the eventful afternoon's session.

India's bowlers showed their displeasure when West Indian umpire Steve Bucknor turned down leg-before appeals against both Youhana and Inzamam off the same bowler, Irfan Pathan.

Youhana was then on 35, while Inzamam was on 65.

Hilsa flock away

FROM PAGE 1
coastguard has been deployed at 15 river points including Monpura, Dhalarchar, Kallarchar and Mowlabirchar to prevent netting of jatka.

"Hilsa catch this year is not too bad. You can get it in the market although the size is very small," said Dr GC Haldar, an expert in hilsa management, while talking to The Daily Star. "We still have a chance to save the fish, but it is essential to keep our rivers healthy," he said, adding that effective moratorium on netting small fish and fish fries is a must.

Adult hilsa coming from the Bay of Bengal into the rivers to spawn are netted during their upstream migration throughout the southern rivers. On the other hand, the fish fry, locally called jatka, are netted in the major nursery grounds in both inland and coastal areas during peak abundance and again during their downstream migration at the Meghna river system.

The fish has been totally wiped out from 1500-2000 km of river including Feni, Matamuhuri, upper Karnaphuli, Dhaleshawari, Kaliganga, Sitalakhya, Dhanu, Chitra and Gorai rivers.

In Padma, Kalinadi, Madhumati, Arialkha, Kumar, Nabaganga, Bhaibrab, Mahananda and Horasagar rivers, the fish is nearly extinct. Even 10-15 years ago, fishermen caught a lot of hilsa in these rivers.

The annual hilsa catch between 1983 to 1999 from both inland and offshore waters averaged 2.03 lakh metric tons worth Tk 2,000-3,000 crore, accounting for up to 30 percent of the total fish production. But harvest from rivers has declined over the years, although total haul has increased due to heavy fishing in the sea, DoF sources said.

Hilsa catch statistics show a 20 percent decline in the haul from rivers over the last 17 years. Sixty years ago, the catch was nearly double the present amount.

Citing a survey, Ataur Rahman, former director general of the DoF, said hilsa landing in Barisal in 1998 was 13,300 tons, but the amount came down to 2682 tons in 2002.

According to the same survey, landing rate in Cox's Bazar shows a more and less similar declining trend -- 8,100 tons in 1998, 5,200 tons in 1999, 5,700 tons in 2000, 5,500 tons in 2001 and 3,800 tons in 2002.

Nowadays, fishermen have modified their conventional fishing grid net by narrowing down the gaps as large fishes are scarce these days, said Ataur Rahman.

DoF sources said the government has recently taken some measures to save the hilsa. The

Youhana survived another close call when television replays showed leg-spinner Anil Kumble's spinning ball catch the edge before lodging in Patel's gloves, but Australian umpire Simon Taufel was unmoved.

As tempered flared on the field, the Indians had another reason to feel frustrated when Bucknor rejected a confident appeal by Balaji for a catch at the wicket off Inzamam.

An unfruffed Inzamam swept Kumble for his 12th boundary to reach his century.

"There was nothing serious on the field, we just talked in between overs," said the Pakistan captain, playing down any animosity between the two sides.

Jubo League leader stabbed to death in Joypurhat

BSS, Joypurhat

Unidentified assailants Monday stabbed to death a local Jubo League leader in Joypurhat.

A gang attacked Shahjahan Ali, 31, general secretary of Sadar upazila unit of the youth front of Awami League, on Joypurhat-Jamalgarh Road when he was returning home at about 9:15pm, police said.

The gang knifed Shahjahan to death and fled the area, they added.

The victim's father lodged a case with Sadar Police Station and accused 12 people of the murder. Police held Dudu Mian, 35, and Rafiq, 34, on charge of the killing.

Vajpayee

FROM PAGE 1
Bangladesh would be sealed.

"Bangladeshis sneaking into India illegally are causing more complication and we are trying to stop it by fencing the border," he said.

"When I met the Bangladesh prime minister, I pointed out the problem, but unfortunately she straightaway denied any large-scale infiltration into our country," Vajpayee said.

"I am ready to help Bangladesh solve their problem so that the problem of illegal migrants in Assam is not compounded," said Vajpayee. The situation in Assam is such that the illegal migrants are threatening the state's indigenous population. We will not allow the Assamese community to be reduced to a minority in their own home," he added.

"Guests are welcome, but they cannot snatch our land and houses," Vajpayee said.

"The IMDT act (passed in parliament in 1993) has succeeded in only deporting 1,500 infiltrators while the truth is that thousands of them are staying in our country illegally and some of them have the right to vote," he said.

Bikalpa Dhara

FROM PAGE 1
criminals". Badruddoza kicked off the programme by tossing shoe at a placard.

Convener of national committee of the Bikalpa Dhara Badruddoza Chowdhury, Member Secretary Major (ret'd) MA Mannan and Member Mahi B Chowdhury spear-headed the procession from a black microbus, escorted by their private security personnel. A large number of police also followed the procession that ended at Mukhtangon.

In a brief speech there, Badruddoza accused Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's government of protecting the corrupt people. "We have held this programme against the corrupt people, not against the government. But the government has proved that it is for the corrupt and corruption by snatching away the effigy from us."

"And for this, major part of today's hatred is against the present government."

"People of Bangladesh are traditionally peace-loving and honest. They hate corruption as well as corrupt people. But Bangladesh has been branded as a corrupt country only for a few corrupt people.

"Let's restore our traditional image by expressing hatred against corruption," he said, urging people to unite under the Bikalpa Dhara umbrella.

Child rape

FROM PAGE 12
MAG Osman Medical College Hospital.

Ibrahim was arrested following a case filed with Kotwali police. The NGO men also brought the girl's mother to the police station. Salam, the other rapist, is still at large.

Myanmar PM

FROM PAGE 12
matters relating to the EPZs and its impact on the economic development of Bangladesh.

Bilateral trade and business relationship between the two developing countries were also discussed.

In this connection, General Nyunt referred to the bridge and road links being built between Bangladesh and Myanmar and said, "This will pave the way for cementing the bilateral trade and business relations".

Brig General Zakir briefed General Nyunt about the package of incentives being offered by BEPZa to the investors.

Later, the Myanmar prime minister went round two factories of the Youngone Corporation of South Korea.

He was highly impressed to see the production-oriented congenial atmosphere prevailing in the zone.

BSS from Chittagong adds: General Nyunt yesterday visited Zia Memorial Museum in the port city and went round different sections of the museum.

He signed the visitors' book mentioning "General Zia was a real friend of Myanmar and I pay respect to his memory"

In the afternoon, General Khin Nyunt left Chittagong for home, ending his three-day visit to Bangladesh. Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan saw off the Myanmar Prime minister at Shah Amanat International Airport.

Heavy fighting

FROM PAGE 1
been killed in yesterday's fighting, but that report could not immediately be confirmed.

The deaths in the past two days brought to at least 614 the number of Americans killed in Iraq since the war began.

The bulk of the coalition force has remained on Fallujah's edge, apparently held at bay by tough resistance from anti-American fighters against Marine forays probing the outskirts.

American commanders have vowed to root out insurgents after last week's slaying and mutilation of four American civilians. Scenes of Iraqis dragging charred bodies through the streets and hanging two of them from a bridge Wednesday raised revulsion in the United States and showed the depth of anti-US sentiment in the city.

The assault on Fallujah, west of Baghdad, coincides with a tougher US stand on the fiercely anti-American al-Sadr, who has built up a private militia, the al-Mahdi Army.

US officials have suggested they will move soon to arrest al-Sadr, who announced Tuesday he left a mosque in the city of Kufa, south of Baghdad, where he has been holed up since Sunday. He is surrounded by militia-men pledging to resist any attempt to

capture him.

Al-Sadr moved to his office in the nearby city of Najaf, in an alley near the city's holiest shrine, according to a top aide, Sheikh Qays al-Khaz'ali.

Asked if al-Sadr would resist if US forces try to arrest him, al-Khaz'ali replied: "God forbid if this happens, al-Sayed will win martyrdom."

Al-Khaz'ali quoted al-Sadr as saying, "My fate will be either assassination or arrested."

Al-Sadr's militiamen clashed with coalition troops Sunday in Baghdad and outside the city of Najaf, to the south, in fierce fighting that killed 61 people, including eight American soldiers. Clashes also broke out Monday in a northern Baghdad neighbourhood.

The deaths of the three US soldiers announced Tuesday occurred in a neighbourhood near the scene of Monday's fighting, but the military did not release details.

In Fallujah, explosions and gunfire were heard from the city through the night Monday and into Tuesday morning, apparently US troops shelling targets and clashing with guerrillas as Marines probed the outskirts with reconnaissance patrols.

2-day AL hartal starts

FROM PAGE 1
by April 30.

The programmes include rallies from April 10 to 22 and processions and street rallies in all city.

wards from April 23 to 26. A joint meeting of the city BNP will be organised on April 27. Processions and rallies will also be organised at every thana in the capital from April 28 to 30.

City BNP General Secretary Abdus Salam announced the programmes yesterday to the reporters at a joint meeting.

BNP Secretary General and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said, "I am not worried about the Awami League's April 30 deadline, it will be faced politically."

City BNP President and Dhaka Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka said the AL is trying to create anarchy. "We will not remain mere spectators in the face of such deadline, which is unacceptable," he said and urged the party activists to face the AL politically.

Awami Sechchasebok League (ASL), a volunteers' front of the main opposition, yesterday also brought out a procession and held a rally in front of the party headquarters on Bangabandhu Avenue to garner support for the shutdown.

Among others, AL leaders Rahmat Ali and Nazma Rahman, ASL leaders Bahauddin Nasim and Pankaj Devnath addressed the rally. The opposition leaders urged people to observe the strike.

Awami Jubo League, youth front of the AL, organised a separate rally there supporting the hartal. Jubo League leaders Fazlul Haq Atiq, Amir Hossain Gazi, Mohiuddin Mohi and Noor Mohammad addressed the rally, among others. Police barred Jubo League activists from taking out a procession at the end of the rally.

The government has deployed about 5,500 law-enforcers comprising police and paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles. Besides, plainclothes police and intelligence men will keep watch on opposition activists during the hartal hours.

JCD leader

FROM PAGE 1
hospital after buying cell phone." His father is under treatment at the DMCH.

The officer-in-charge of Dhanmudi Police Station said, "Our primary investigation reveals that the gang went to snatch telephone sets from the shop and opened fire that resulted in the death of one and injury to another."

New SL PM

FROM PAGE 1
Despite Rajapakse's commitment to continue peace efforts, the tiny Colombo Stock Exchange shed 9.5 percent on Tuesday, the first day of trading following Friday's snap polls.

The Marxist JVP, or the People's Liberation Front which is a dominant force in Kumaratunga's Alliance announced it was taking four key ministries -- agriculture, lands, culture and rural industries.

The full list of cabinet ministers is to be announced Wednesday, officials in Kumaratunga's office said.

Babar

FROM PAGE 1
movements beyond Bangladesh territory and sent it to the Department of Immigration.

"This is not true, home ministry has not made any such list," Babar told Daily Star, adding it is very much unlikely for the home ministry to take such step without apprising me.

He said, "I would have learnt even if any other ministry or government body had initiated such a move."

Inspector Setara Begum, in-charge at Zia International Airport (ZIA) Immigration, told the Daily Star last night, "We have not received any such list from the government so far."

Earlier a newspaper reported the alleged government-move causing sensation ahead of the opposition's much talked about deadline of April 30 for the fall of the government.