

'Mass arrests' needed to foil conspiracy: PM

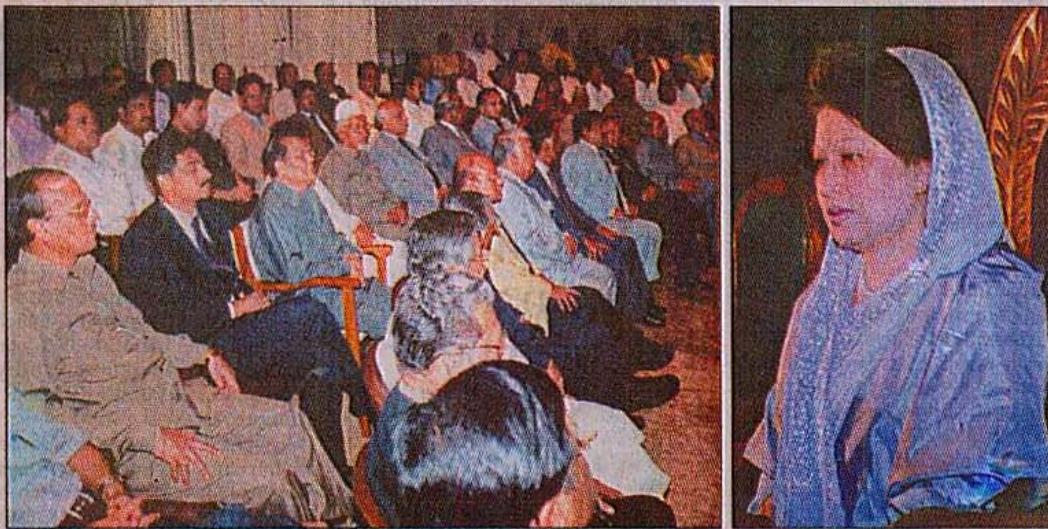
Nobody has been mindlessly harassed, Khaleda says at BNPP meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday defended her government's step of ongoing 'mass arrests', terming them as a necessary measure to foil the conspiracy to unconstitutionally oust an elected government.

"The government has taken necessary steps to ensure security of people's lives and public property as it is the government's responsibility," she told a parliamentary party meeting of the ruling BNP held at

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Prime Minister Khaleda Zia presides over a meeting of the BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party) Parliamentary Party at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

BNP cancels rallies at high command's order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Instructed by the party high command, the city unit of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) yesterday cancelled the rallies and processions scheduled to be held at different venues across the city.

BNP earlier announced to hold rallies and processions at 21 spots across the city every day till April 30 in a bid to undermine the main opposition's April 30 deadline to topple the government.

City BNP's General Secretary Abdus Salam told The Daily Star yesterday that the party high command deemed it imprudent to hold processions and rallies during this particular period of time when the government itself is not allowing the main opposition Awami League to carry out its agitation programmes.

"When we have completed our preparations to hold rallies and processions and central leaders also consented to attend, we had instructions on Saturday night from the party high command to cancel the programmes," he added.

Salam said the state minister for home first requested to refrain from holding any gathering because he feared it may draw a lot of criticism.

However, the city BNP is determined to hold a massive programme ahead of the April 30 deadline, party insiders said.

Govt criticises language of Danish press release

BSS, Dhaka

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday expressed its "indignation" at the language and contents of a press release issued by the Royal Danish Embassy in Dhaka.

The ministry in a press statement said the contents of the Danish press release, issued on April 23, were not based on facts and the foreign minister was constrained to express his indignation at it.

"The contents of the press release contain unfounded assumptions that are also lacking in civility, to say the least," the statement said.

"The ministry would like to emphasise that this is not in keeping with the accepted norms of diplomatic behaviour, and not reflective of the state of bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Denmark, which is based on mutual respect and support," it added.

Rejoinder

The Dhaka University authorities protested against a part of the news item published in The Daily Star on April 24 under the headline 'DU appoints 12 teachers against 8 posts'.

In a rejoinder, issued by Md Ashraf Ali Khan, director of public relations office, yesterday said vice chancellor was wrongly quoted as saying, "Six candidates who were already part-time lecturers in the department and three others were appointed on the basis of unanimous decision of the Syndicate".

It said the number of teachers was four, not six, and they were not part-time teachers but working as lecturers for temporary position. Now these teachers have been appointed to regular positions.

LAW, ORDER DOWNSLIDE

Speaker's ruling catches treasury bench off-guard

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar yesterday issued a ruling to the state minister for home ministry to look into the deteriorating law and order.

To cut Siddiqui's statement short, the Speaker intervened and said, "I got your point, you want to say that the law and order is deteriorating. I am giving a ruling. The minister in charge of the home affairs will take note off."

At that point, Leader of the House Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan exchanged quick glances. The state minister for sports then sought the floor to say the current

situation did not demand any ruling from the Chair.

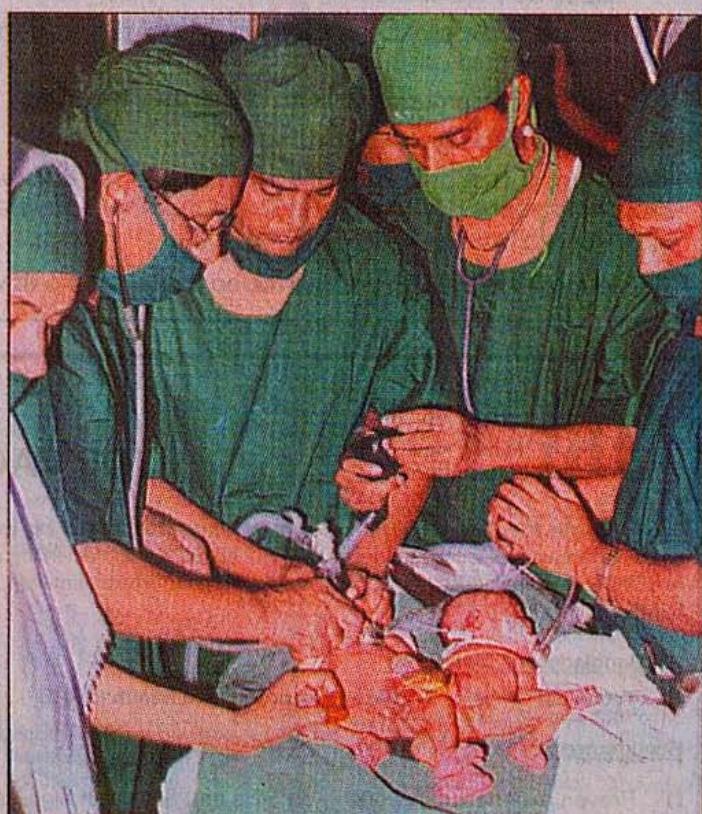
Fazlur said: "The situation has not been created for you (Speaker) to issue a ruling to the home minister, asking him to look into the law and order situation."

He expressed anger at the opposition-set April 30 deadline to oust the government and alleged that thousands of people from across the country were being brought to Dhaka for sabotages. He also accused Proshika, an NGO, of plotting with the Awami League against the elected government.

Fazlur came down heavily on

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Siamese twins separated



A team of pediatric surgeons monitor a pair of Siamese twins before they were successfully separated at the city's Islamic Bank Hospital.

Doctors say one twin has good chance of survival

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Surgeons at the city's Islamic Bank Hospital (IBH) yesterday successfully separated a pair of Siamese twins from Pabna.

The female twins, Halima and Maria, are the third to be separated in Bangladesh.

Born to Shahed Ali and Papiya Khatun Shefali on April 14 at a private clinic in Pabna, the twins were shifted to the IBH on April 18.

Surgeons at the hospital thoroughly examined them before deciding to carry out the operation.

"We are very happy to have separated the babies, but the condition of Maria is critical," Dr Ruhul Amin who led a team of surgeons during the hour-long surgery told The Daily Star.

During the operation, Maria was receiving blood from Halima's blood circulation system while both were joined at the intestine, urinary and faecal systems. After separation,

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Human-to-human Nipah spread not ruled out

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts are yet not sure enough to rule out the likelihood of human to human transmission of Nipah virus, which until March this year has killed 24 people in Faridpur.

"We are not sure of human to human transmission, as last time the experts from the centre for disease control and prevention

(CDC) of Atlanta, USA did not find any evidence of the virus spreading through man-to-man transmission," said Professor Mizanur Rahman, director general of Health Services.

"Detail studies are required and two experts on community and hospital infection controls from the CDC are here to evaluate the samples. Only after they carry out the studies, we can be sure of the mode

of its transmission," Prof Rahman said.

Prof Abdul Kalam Azad, director of Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control & Research (IEDCR), said, "We are worried about the spread, but are now concentrating on massive awareness-raising programme in the areas where people are becoming sick."

Local members of parliament,

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imams, doctors and teachers have been involved in the awareness-raising programme to stop spread of the virus.

He, too, said they were yet to find out the actual mode of transmission of the virus and that the scientists from the CDC would confirm it after investigations in Atlanta.

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