

## 'Mass arrests' needed to foil conspiracy: PM

Nobody has been mindlessly harassed, Khaleda says at BNPPP 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

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia presides over a meeting of the BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party) Parliamentary Party at Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan 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, a move that drew immediate flak from the treasury bench.

The ruling came hard on the heels of an opposition lawmaker's portrayal of a gloomy law and order situation. But it irked the treasury benchers. State Minister for Sports Fazlur Rahman opened by saying that the current situation did not demand such a ruling from the Chair.

As the House resumed session

after a one-month break yesterday afternoon, Kader Siddiqui of the Krishak Samuk Janata League on a point of order described how the law and order has slid over the months.

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 of it."

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

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Vigilantes murder 8 Khulna 'outlaws'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

An angry mob at Krishnanagar village under Sadar thana of Faridpur district lynched eight alleged members of an outlawed outfit early yesterday.

Two more were severely injured and later admitted to the Sadar Hospital. Police recovered three firearms including a light machine gun (LMG) from the outlaws.

Of the lynched, Jhinai (30), Mintoo (30) and Kabir (28), were identified.

Police said the extremists, members of 'Sultan Bahini', entered Krishnanagar with arms at about 7:00am yesterday to carry out a criminal operation. They were coming from Rajbari upazilla.

According to the eyewitnesses, the instant local farmers challenged the extremists crossing a paddy field, they opened fire. At this, hundreds of people from the surrounding areas ringed the extremists and eventually caught them.

One managed to escape.

The bodies have been sent to the morgue of Faridpur hospital.

Deputy Commissioner Jalal Ahmed and Police Super SM Hafizur Rahman visited the spot. Security measures have been stepped up at Krishnanagar village and Faridpur town.

CNG SCAM

Huda faces CNG flak at BNPPP meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Angry protests by junior lawmakers stopped Communications Minister Nazmul Huda from defending his position on import and distribution of CNG-run auto-rickshaws at a BNP parliamentary party meeting yesterday.

When the situation was threatening to go out of control, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, who was presiding over the meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan, asked Huda to end his speech.

BNP lawmaker Monirul Haque Chowdhury raised 'the compressed natural gas-run auto-rickshaw

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

## AL MPs defy cop barricade, submit demand to Sircar

Call for resignation of govt, withdrawal of constitution amendment bill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Main opposition Awami League (AL) lawmakers yesterday handed a five-point charter of demands, including immediate resignation of the government, over to Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar after they marched to parliament defying police hindrance.

The memorandum came five days short of the opposition April 30 deadline for unseating the government.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League (AL) General Secretary (right) and Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar shake hands during a visit by AL lawmakers to submit a memorandum to the Speaker yesterday.

## No bails for detainees before April 30

Over 2,500 more arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 2,500 people were detained across the country yesterday as law-enforcers continued their arresting spree following government directives to intensify the ongoing police drive against Awami League (AL) and NGO workers.

Sources said all district administrations were instructed to ensure that the detainees do not get bail before expiry of the AL's April 30 deadline to unseat the government.

Side by side with the weeklong blanket arrests in Dhaka, police in all districts are also arresting people, mostly young men, from Dhaka-bound passenger buses, trains and launches.

During a 24-hour period ending yesterday evening, police picked up 1206 people from Dhaka, 250 from Barisal, 392 from Rajshahi, 250 from Chittagong city, 74 from Mymensingh, 54 from Jhenidah, 19 from Sylhet and over 300 from Khulna.

Police sources said nearly 15,000 people were picked up from areas under 22 police stations in the capital alone since the drive began on the night of April 18. Of them, 7785 were arrested till yesterday and the rest were released.

Police control room yesterday said over 7000 people were arrested in Dhaka since April 19, although police headquarters (HQ) said the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

SB directs police to report on AL arrests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Special Branch (SB) police circular Saturday directed police to report twice a day on the arrest of the activists of the Awami League and its front organisations.

Police will also have to report on the arrest of the staff of Proshika, a non-government organisation.

The SB circular, first of its kind issued ahead of the AL's April-30 deadline, also attached a draft table for police to fill in with the details of the arrested people.

The table contains separate columns for activists and workers of the AL, Bangladesh Chhatra League, Jubo League, Proshika staff and

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

## Siamese twins separated

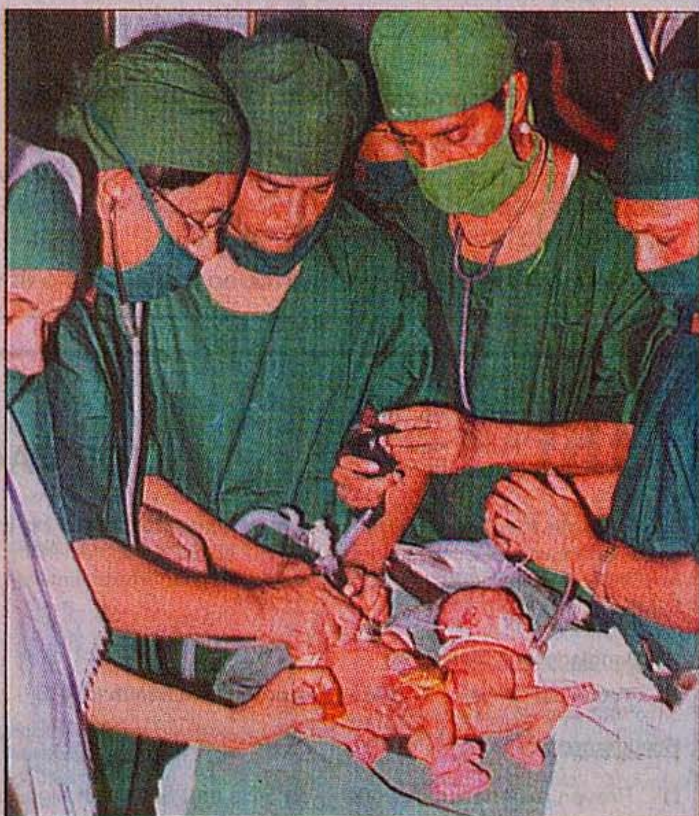


PHOTO: STAR

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,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Hasina asks govt to quit office, hold snap polls

UNB, Munshiganj

Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday renewed her demand for resignation of the government and mid-term polls and cautioned the BNP-led alliance against any conspiracy to cling to power.

"Quit power and free the people from misrule," she said indicating Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and urged the people to get prepared to "oust the autocratic, anti-people government."

Addressing a huge public meeting at Balur Math in the district town, Hasina, who is on a whirlwind tour across the country to gear up

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

### Announcement

The Daily Star will bring out a special four-page colour education supplement on Tuesday, April 27, 2004. The supplement will be an edited transcript of the roundtable organised jointly by The Daily Star and Campaign for Popular Education on April 17, 2004 titled 'The Role of the Private Sector in Local Resource Mobilization for Basic Education.'

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



## My loan

HSBC offers a low cost **Personal Instalment Loan** solution to meet your lifestyle needs backed by local knowledge and global expertise. You can now set your mind at ease by making HSBC a part of your life.

For more information:

Call Dhaka : 011 88LOAN (5626)  
011 88HSBC (4722)  
9143423  
Chittagong : 011 708985-86

www.hsbc.com.bd

or visit any of our Branches or Customer Service Centres.

**HSBC**  
The world's local bank

## 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 Abul 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,

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.

Prof Azad said, since April 16 last,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1