



Piles of garbage lie scattered on a road at Madhya Badda in the city, posing health hazards to people.

PHOTO: STAR

Hasina goes to monga-hit districts today

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in the Parliament Sheikh Hasina embarks on a four-day monga-relief mission in the northern districts today.

An official announcement from the Opposition Leader's Office said she would distribute relief among the distressed people in Pirganj upazila of Rangpur on the first day of her visit.

On November 9, she will go to Kurigram and Lalmonirhat to distribute relief materials among the hungry and jobless people.

On November 10, the AL chief will go to Nilphamari to distribute relief and return again to Rangpur.

On November 11, Hasina will return to Dhaka after her 4-day tour.

Hasina warns of tougher movement

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday warned the government of launching a greater anti-government agitation forthwith if her party members are arrested or repressed on the plea of Saarc Summit.

"I protest the government's such provocative decision, arrest and repression... I like to caution the government not to create any situation through arrest or repression so that the opposition parties are forced to announce immediate greater agitation," she said.

In a press statement, Hasina said

the 14 political parties, including Awami League, deferred all their programmes including the November 15 grand rally "for peaceful holding of the Saarc Summit without any hindrance."

"But without any reason," she said, police arrested workers of Awami League and its front organisations and conducted house search in different parts of the city on Sunday.

Hasina alleged that police arrested Ramna Thana AL Vice President Jamal Uddin Ahmed, Hazaribagh Thana AL Joint Secretary Mohaimen Boyan, Lalbagh AL leader Badal, Dhaka City (South) Jubo League leader Amanullah Dulal and

Ward no. 34 Jubo League President Ilias Akand.

Besides, she said, many workers, including six from Motijheel, two from Ramna and two from Kafrul, were also arrested.

"It seems the government is virtually trying to foil the November 22 grand rally by resorting to arrest on the pretext of Saarc Summit," the opposition leaders said.

Demanding immediate release of those arrested, Hasina said: "Otherwise, the government will have to bear all the responsibilities of any consequences."

NON-BALLOTEE HAJJ PILGRIMS Ctg mayor blasts govt

BDNEWS, Chittagong

Chittagong city mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury yesterday criticised the government for skipping the responsibility to over 50,000 non-ballotee Hajj pilgrims.

The fate of thousands of prospective pilgrims now hangs in the balance as the cabinet meeting declined to take any responsibility for them, said Mohiuddin, who has been leading a Mayor Hajj Kafela Travels and Tours since 1995.

"This is injustice and a deep-rooted conspiracy against non-ballotee pilgrims as the civil aviation and religious affairs ministries had left the airfare issue of non-ballotee pilgrims with themselves, whereas the state-run Biman will transport 4,000 ballotee pilgrims at a previously fixed low fare of US \$950 per passenger," the mayor told the BDNEWS.

The cabinet meeting held with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair on November 2 rejected the civil aviation ministry's plea for raising Hajj flight fare.

The meeting ended inconclusively as neither the civil aviation ministry nor the religious affairs ministry would take any responsibility for non-ballotee pilgrims, saying that "they will make their own arrangement in any airlines for their pilgrimage."

The mayor said that as the issue of bargaining the hajj flight fare lies with the non-ballotee pilgrims, the domestic and foreign private airlines would charge high fare and the pilgrims will eventually suffer.

Mohiuddin blamed state ministers

for civil aviation and religious affairs responsible for such dubious decision, saying that their incompetence and lack of vision led to such a decision.

"Why the fare in our country should be raised, whereas the ticket price in other Muslim countries, including Pakistan, Indonesia and Malaysia, remains unchanged," the mayor questioned.

He also called for an investigation into whether a vested quarter in the Biman Bangladesh Airlines is responsible for such a situation.

Mohiuddin Chowdhury urged the government to immediately settle the issue through dialogue with the authorities of various airlines.

Under the auspices of Mayor Hajj Kafela, more than 2,500 pilgrims have performed Hajj since 1995 and nearly 500 pilgrims are expected to perform Hajj this year.

Indian HC visa section closed Nov 9-13

UNB, Dhaka

The visa section of the Indian High Commission (IHC) in Dhaka will remain closed from November 9 to 13, says an IHC announcement.

"No visas will be issued during the period," the Indian mission announced, citing no reasons.

TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN, WOMEN

Regional taskforce a must to implement Saarc convention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A regional workshop ended in the city yesterday with a recommendation to establish a regional taskforce to implement the Saarc Regional Convention on Trafficking to combat commercial and sexual exploitation of women and children in South Asia.

It also suggested formation of a special inter-regional law enforcement agency and tribunal to try the cases in connection with the trafficking to strengthen the prosecution system, protect the victims and witnesses, and take care of the trafficked survivors.

The two-day workshop on 'Improving and developing the strate-

gies for the protection of the trafficked survivors' was organised by Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA) with the support of USAID and Save the Children Sweden and Denmark at the Brac Centre Inn.

Delegates from government, non-government and international organisations from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nepal attended the workshop ahead of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) Summit to be held here on November 12 and 13.

It was observed during the workshop that a large number of trafficked survivors are languishing in the jails of different countries, and the criminals cannot be repatriated, as there is no any extradition treaty or agreement among the Saarc nations.

The workshop also recommended amendment to Saarc Convention on Trafficking, as trafficking for camel jockeys, organised begging and sale of human organs are not included in the convention.

The workshop was also told that

a large number of women and children are trafficked from Bangladesh and Nepal to India, Pakistan and the Middle Eastern countries for forced labour and prostitution.

At a press conference after the workshop, BNWLA Executive Director Advocate Salma Ali said the regional convention on trafficking could not be implemented, as Nepal is yet to ratify it.

"However, Nepal is going to ratify it very soon, and the Saarc should come forward to establish a taskforce to implement the convention properly," she told the journalists.

She alleged that the Saarc nations did not pay due attention to trafficking issue which should be discussed in respective parliaments to create awareness at grassroots level.

"It needs political will," she noted.

Salma Ali regretted that the issue of human trafficking has not been included in the upcoming Saarc summit and urged the governments to take up the issue seriously to

uphold human rights in this region.

She, however, expressed her satisfaction as Bangladesh government has already set up a monitoring cell to look after the trafficking cases at the district and divisional levels under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The workshop laid emphasis on sensitising the border police about the victims, strengthening cooperation in exchanging information, and giving logistic and legal support to them.

"Poverty and familial problems are the root causes of trafficking and these issues should be addressed on an urgent basis," said a draft resolution of the workshop.

Regional Representative of International Organisation for Migration Shahidul Haque, Executive Member of Bangladesh Association for International Recruiting Agencies Abdul Alim, BNWLA former president Advocate Fawzia K Feroze, Prof Rokeya Rahman of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Indian representative Manobendra Mandal and Nepalese representative Basanta Basnet also spoke at the

Khulna BNP factions mark Nov 7 separately

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Despite strict instructions from the central high command, both factions of Khulna BNP failed to unite on the same platform to observe National Revolution and Solidarity Day yesterday.

Both the factions, deeply involved in internal feuds, held separate discussions and milad mahfils at the party office at KD Ghosh Road in the city.

City Mayor-Lobi faction of BNP held a discussion and milad mahfil on behalf of the convening committee of the city BNP at 11:00am.

Presided over by city Convenor Ali Asgar Lobi MP, the discussion was addressed by nine out of 12 members of the newly formed convening committee

including former Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali, City Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman and President of Khulna district BNP Prof Majedul Islam.

All of them in their speeches underscored the need for unity among party leaders and workers in order to uphold the spirit of National Revolution and Solidarity Day.

The discussion was also attended by the leaders and workers of two out of five thana committees.

On the other hand, the faction led by president of the dissolved committee of city BNP M Nurul Islam MP, held a separate discussion and milad mahfil at the same venue at 6:00pm.

Presided over by M Nurul Islam MP, the discussion was addressed by general secretary of the dissolved committee

Nazrul Islam Manju and presidents and general secretaries of three out of five thana committees.

The speakers condemned the dissolution of the city committee without prior consultation with local leaders and approval of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

The city committee formed in last council meeting in 1992 still exists and there is no question of accepting the newly formed convening committee headed by Ali Asgar Lobi MP who is isolated from mass politics, said M Nurul Islam MP, while addressing the discussion.

We belong to real BNP, said Nazrul Islam Manju who also rejected the newly formed convening committee.



PHOTO: STAR

Colonel Taher Sangsad forms a human chain in front of the Supreme Court yesterday demanding that the documents of trial of Taher be made public.

Zia rewarded Col Taher with death penalty

Speakers tell discussion

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said that Colonel Taher, founder of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), set a great example by freeing General Ziaur Rahman from captivity on November 7 in 1975, but Zia rewarded him with death penalty.

They also said that the sepoy under the guidance of Colonel Taher restored discipline and the chain of command in the army on that day and saved the nation from further bloodshed.

The JSD (Inu) organised the discussion at the Colonel Taher Auditorium in the city to mark the day of Sepoy-Janata upsurge.

JSD President Hasanul Haque Inu said Taher was the hero of the

day while Zia was the villain.

He accused Zia of killing hundreds of army jawans and officers in a bid to grab state power.

Though the revolution in 1975 has failed due to betrayal and conspiracies, the event could shake the colonial structure of the state, said Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon as the chief guest.

He urged the people to draw inspiration from the events of November 7, which would help strengthen the 'oust government' movement.

President of Colonel Taher Sangsad Kamal Lohani and JSD leaders Moinuddin Khan Badal, Sharif Nurul Ambia, Shirin Akhtar and Mir Hossain Akhtar also spoke.



PHOTO: STAR

Although road carpeting work is going on, a big pothole on the Airport Road has been left unrepaired, which may cause accidents at anytime.