

Grand rally vows

FROM PAGE 1
Dal (JSD) and National Awami Party (NAP) committed to free the country including all levels of its government and administration of the extreme communal and militant forces. It also pledged to try the war criminals of 1971 and impose a ban on communal politics.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil read out the 23-point national programme, which vowed to separate the judiciary from the executive, bring the perpetrators of all bomb and grenade blasts to book, hold direct elections to women's reserved seats in parliament and award independence to state-owned radio and television channels.

The opposition combine also promised to hold elections to district and upazila councils within one year into coming to office, present accounts of assets of ministers, lawmakers and politicians, reopen closed mills and factories, set a minimum wage for workers and introduce an employment guarantee scheme.

The common national programme envisages using gas and coal for national energy and ensuring national energy security. It also promises to set up a regulating body to keep essentials' prices within the consumers' reach.

The opposition leaders at the rally declared not to participate in any election without reforms in the caretaker government system and the Election Commission.

The government took every measure to turn Dhaka into a city under siege to keep opposition activists and supporters at bay. The police and ruling alliance cadres intercepted people heading for the rally at different points in and outside the capital while BNP musclemen chased and assaulted scores of others in presence of law enforcers, despite the government claim of a foolproof security to ensure peaceful holding of the rally.

Besides the countrywide transport strike imposed by the BNP-backed transport leaders obstructing people from coming to the city, the river routes were also blocked and BNP cadres reportedly led by Keraniganj police barred boats and other vessels from plying towards Sadarghat.

But, braving the strike, blockages and harassment by the police and ruling alliance cadres, hundreds of thousands of people poured into the biggest opposition rally in recent time chaired by Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and AL President Sheikh Hasina. Traffic movement in the city almost came to a standstill as people joined the rally in waves of processions since noon.

SPEECH OF HASINA
In her speech Hasina asked the government to immediately step down, admitting its failures. She accused the ruling BNP and its partner Jamaat-e-Islami of patronising Islamist militant groups and thereby turning Bangladesh into a failed state.

The AL chief asked her party workers and supporters to identify and resist the militants in their localities.

She blasted the sporadic attacks launched on her party workers in different places to thwart people from coming to the rally. "The government has used the entire state mechanism to obstruct people from joining the rally, but failed," she said, adding, "People of Bangladesh once again proved that they don't know how to bow down to any dictator."

The opposition leader alleged 10,000 leaders and workers of the opposition combine have been arrested. The government also instructed certain transport workers union leaders to go on strike, put barricades on city roads and sealed off every entry point to Dhaka to thwart people from rallying in the capital. She also

accused the government of using Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) to persecute opposition workers.

The AL chief described in detail how the alliance government crippled the economy, made parliament dysfunctional, politicised administration, ruined the judiciary, patronised criminals and their godfathers, and amassed ill-gain wealth.

"The government has proved its inability to govern the country... there is no security of public life and people don't want such failed rulers to continue any more," Hasina claimed. She said, "Under this damned regime, people are living in perpetual panic."

In an oblique reference to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, Hasina said, "Your time is running out... step down right away." The former prime minister accused her arch political rival of harbouring criminals and indulging in nepotism, corruption and politicisation.

She alleged 26,000 people have been killed in the last four years of coalition rule. Even children, women, journalists or the indigenous people have not been spared of therapression, she added.

"People will not tolerate this any more... The days are not far when people will resist the hands dealing blows to opposition leaders and workers," she warned amid cheering of opposition workers and supporters carrying banners and festoons and shouting slogans demanding resignation of the Khaleda Zia's government.

Hasina also called upon the administration, police, Rab and others not to fall prey to the wrath of people by trying to protect what she termed the failed and terrorist government.

On the next general elections, Hasina asked people to be on alert, "Protect your right to vote as the present government is plotting to come back to power through another rigged election." She alleged the ongoing move to prepare a free voter list is a part of the ruling coalition's election doctoring scheme aimed at scrapping opposition supporters from the list.

Painting a gloomy picture of law and order, the opposition leader posed a question to the prime minister, "What had your special forces been doing when 500 bombs were exploded across the country simultaneously or when militants were killing judges?"

She categorically accused Khaleda Zia, her son Tarique Rahman, Jamaat Ameer and Industries Minister Mafizur Rahman Nazami and State Minister for Home Lutfozzaman Babar of being involved in the bomb attacks. "Bomb blasts will end if the police arrest and interrogate these people," she said.

Speaking on the price spiral of essentials, Hasina alleged ruling alliance loyalists earn fast money when people suffer due to price hike. She also wondered how the prime minister's family has become one of the richest families of the country over only a few years, especially when it was told that Ziaur Rahman had left nothing behind for his family.

The AL president alleged the family members of Khaleda Zia have amassed huge illegal wealth through corruption and have smuggled that abroad. But, she declared, "Wherever you deposit that money, we will bring it back."

Describing the success of her 1996-2001 government, Hasina said, "We brought peace and prosperity to the country... It achieved food autarky in our term."

The former prime minister was also critical of the huge expenditures for holding the 13th Saarc Summit and said, "The government has expended crores of taka in

the name of Saarc Summit when people have been dying from starvation." She claimed, "It wanted to hide the country's dismal situation under an artificial make-up."

WHAT OTHER LEADERS SAID
Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain said people want to see a change in the country's present miserable situation and the opposition parties have united to do that.

"We have united to bring the sick politics to an end," he said amid huge claps from the audience, adding, "Now is the time to say goodbye to this government."

"You have failed to deliver in every sector and you should quit immediately," he told the ruling coalition.

Dr Kamal expressed the hope of forming an active parliament and a pro-people government led by the 14-party line-up.

He said the very presence of hundreds of thousands of people in Paltan Maidan proves that the government could not foil the rally despite using all its machinery. "Holding rally is a democratic and constitutional right of people. But you have obstructed people from gathering at the rally," he said accusing the government.

On the opposition's common minimum programme, Kamal Hossain said, "We have issued this with a view to build a nation in line of the spirit of Liberation War and for the welfare of people."

The eminent jurist also came down heavily on the BNP-led alliance government for its various failures and crimes, including unbridled price hike of essentials, politicisation of the administration, corruption in all sectors, sheltering Islamist militants and extra-judicial killings.

Terming the participants of the rally representatives of the country's 14 crore people, Dr Kamal said, "This huge gathering proves that people of Bangladesh can unite against all kinds of repression to realise their just rights."

"Make this unity a force to oust this tyrant government," he urged.

He dedicated the unique programme of the 14-party to Bangabandhu, the four national leaders and the millions of Liberation War martyrs.

In his turn, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon announced that the opposition alliance would not allow any election without reform in the caretaker government and the Election Commission.

He alleged the present government has taken all preparations to return to power through another rigged ballot. "But, people are united and this time they will not give you any chance," he told the ruling coalition.

The left alliance leader pledged to carry out the common minimum programme spelled out from yesterday's rally if the opposition combine goes to power.

Addressing the rally, JSD President Hasanul Haq Inu urged people to join in the upcoming all-out opposition movement to force the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition to step down.

"This autocrat, communal and repressive government has no right to cling to power anymore," he said.

He called on the opposition leaders to turn the present opposition line-up into an electoral alliance to form a national government through the next election.

Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed and Suranjit Sengupta of AL, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik of Gono Forum, Nurul Islam of Gonotantri Party, Dilip Barua of Samyabadi Dal and Amena Ahmed of NAP, among others, also spoke at the rally.

JMB menace continues

FROM PAGE 1
with grenade attacks. The letter triggered panic among local journalists.

Addressed to the president and the secretary of the press club the letter was sent by post and mentioned that the sender had received instruction from his high command also to blow up in seven days the police stations in North Tangail.

After receiving the letter Monday night, journalists of Tangail held an emergency meeting in the press club auditorium.

Superintendent of Police (SP) of Tangail Mirza Abdullah-hel-Baki visited the press club the same night and assured the journalists that necessary security measures would be taken for their safety.

HABIGANJ
In another letter sent to the deputy commissioner (DC) and to the police super of Habiganj on Monday night the JMB threatened to blow up the judge court and the DC office in the district if any harm was done to JMB member Shamim also son of former District Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh Maolana Saidur Rahman, reports BDNEWS.

SP Mili Biswas told BDNEWS that the sender's name was not on the letter. Shamim was arrested from a computer shop at Tinkona Pukur Par area in the district town on September 7.

SIRAJGANJ
Our Sirajganj correspondent reports that the JMB in a letter to Sirajganj Municipality Executive Engineer Salam Mia threatened to kill him along with his family members in a short time.

The sender of the letter introduced him as a regional commander of the banned organisation and asked the engineer not to inform the matter to the police.

The letter accused the engineer of being corrupt and of taking bribes.

Additional police was deployed at the municipality office to ensure security for the panicked officials.

PATUAKHALI
The same militant outfit threatened to kill Upazila Magistrate AKM Mamunur Rashid at Kalapara in Patuakhali, reports BDNEWS.

Meanwhile, Chittagong Metropolitan Sessions Judge AKM Anwar Hossain was provided with police security yesterday as a number of sensational cases are pending in his court.

After the killing of two judges in Jhalakathi on November 14, Judge Anwar Hossain demanded police security, news agency UNB reports.

Savar criminal killed in Rab 'shootout'

UNB, Savar

A listed criminal was killed in a shootout between the members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and his cohorts at Mograkanda village under Savar Police Station early yesterday.

He was identified as Rubel, 36, son of Obaidul Huq Bhuiyan of Kunda village under the police station.

Rab-4 members arrested Rubel at Amin Bazar on Sunday night and took him to their office for interrogation.

According to his statement, the members of the elite force set out for Mograkanda at about 1:30am yesterday to recover illegal arms, taking Rubel with them.

When they reached near poultry farm, Rubel's accomplices opened fire, forcing the law enforcers to retaliate.

Rab sources said Rubel was caught in the crossfire as tried to flee from Rab custody and died on the spot.

Rally rides

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They had cheers written all over their faces. Probably excitement too. They squatted in circles, munching peanuts. There were musical bands with trumpets and drums, they played earlier in the day, but stopped as the rally began.

Such spontaneity in reaching a rally has not been seen in recent past. It also arguably turned out to be one of the largest rallies in recent memory.

Nearly one-kilometre area around the Paltan Maidan, including Bijoynagar, Phulbaria, Gulistan and Motiheel, was crowded with the rally-goers. Many said the gathering would have been much larger if the police had not caused all the harassment.

People started gathering at the Paltan Maidan early in the morning although the rally was scheduled at 3:00pm, passing their time enjoying the cultural programme arranged by the organisers.

Those, who came from different districts by launch and train, had to walk the way from the Sadarghat launch terminal and Kamalapur Railway Station up to the rally venue as buses and other forms of transport were not available due to the strike.

"We came here early direct from Kamalapur as it would not be possible to reach the venue in the afternoon," said Md Arif, who came to Dhaka by train to join the rally.

Hundreds of plainclothes policemen were patrolling around the Paltan venue. The presence of so many police members, however, discouraged many interested ones to go to the Paltan Maidan area, said some people.

"I did not enter the Paltan Maidan as anything might happen anytime. Even the police may pick up anybody from the street, so I just had a look of the gathering and am now going back home," said Saiful Alam, who came to Paltan from Azimpur.

The police were examining everyone before entering the venue, which made the progress of the gathering slow.

5 hurt

FROM PAGE 16
house, Bharoti Khatun of Bairagichar, Ziaur Rahman and Sarwar Hossain of Sardarpura and Alam of the same village. They had been making the bombs, it was alleged.

Police could not arrest any of the injured, as they left the house hurriedly after the incident. The blasts blew up a portion of the roof of the tin-shed house, police said. Splinters were recovered from the spot.

A local source said Ikhtiar Hossain, owner of the house, was a close relative of Jama'at-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) leader Shamsul Haq, who is at present in police custody on charge of August 17 blasts in Kushtia.

Bomb found

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A roadside vendor witnessing the incident informed the locals, police said.

"The incident might be a rehearsal for an attack and we are beefing up security measures around the city," said Rajshahi Metropolitan Police commissioner.

The incident occurred as the 14-party alliance rally was proceeding with the City Awami League President Maksudul Haque Dulu in the chair.

Bihar votes

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Steel Minister Ramvilas Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), which played the spoilsport in February necessitating fresh elections, could pick up only 14 seats - far short of the 29 it bagged eight months ago.

Police halt

FROM PAGE 1
At Shahbag, Matsya Bhaban, High Court and Paltan to delay the opposition leader's motorcade coming from Sudha Sadan in Dhanmondi.

At the Matsya Bhaban intersection, Hasina asked the on duty police officer about the reason for putting barricade. The officer replied that he had orders from the government high-ups.

As Hasina scolded the police officer, he removed the barricade, said Azad.

ME leaders

FROM PAGE 16
The region's leaders "are all concerned and anxious to see Syria cooperate and to see the issue settled diplomatically and not lead to a situation that destabilises possibly Syria and Lebanon," he said. "They are worried if we are leading to another Iraq situation."

Annan said he assured them the UN Security Council wanted only "to get to the truth and ensure that the culprits are brought to justice."

Transport strike

FROM PAGE 1
bid to foil the opposition rally, Communications Minister Nazmul Huda yesterday said the transport strike was nothing but an arranged game of the opposition.

He said the opposition parties had arranged the transport strike fearing poor response from the people to their rally at Paltan Maidan.

"Awami League, being rejected by the people, arranged the 'strike game' to save its face. The game was designed to shift the blame on the government if the opposition rally flopped," the minister told parliament in a statement.

Contradicting Huda, Jatiya Party lawmaker Moshirur Rahman Ranga, also a transport owner, said the transport owners and workers had called the strike to realise their demands including release of workers' leader Mujibur.

After Mujibur, a leader of North Bengal Transport Workers Federation, was arrested on Sunday night, some federation leaders led by its Secretary Habibur Rahman Khan, who happens to be father of a minister, called the nationwide strike from Monday morning apparently to prevent people from converging into the opposition rally.

A first class magistrate at Dinajpur yesterday morning rejected the bail petition of Mujibur in one case and granted him bail in the other two cases, our Dinajpur correspondent reports.

But he was released dramatically after the Court of Additional Sessions Judge SM Rezanur Rahman sat at 6:00pm and granted him bail in the third case.

The lawyers in the district were surprised to see the prompt attempt to grant Mujibur bail after normal working hours of the court. They termed it 'unprecedented'.

When thousands of commuters, office-goers and students experienced unbearable sufferings for the last two days due to the strike, the communications minister showed reluctance to resolve the crisis and blamed the opposition for the strike.

He had a marathon meeting with the pro-government transport leaders at his residence Monday night but he did not give any assurance. At last he assured the transport leaders of releasing Mujibur when the adjourned meeting resumed yesterday afternoon.

Habibur Rahman Khan represented the pro-government transport leaders in the meeting.

In another development, the 14-party opposition combine in Tangail district yesterday declared Habibur Rahman Khan and his son Lutfar Rahman Khan, also state minister for NGO affairs, persone non grata in Tangail.

The decision was announced during a demonstration of the 14-party in Tangail in protest against the government's alleged move to foil the opposition rally.

Meanwhile, thousands of people who needed to travel from one district to other faced tremendous sufferings due to the strike for the second day yesterday.

The absence of public buses including those of the state-run BRTC in and outside the city created havoc for the drivers of taxicabs, CNG-run three-wheelers, microbuses and trucks to cash in on the emergencies of the passengers.

Thousands of people were found waiting for transports at the city's main bus terminals -- Gabtoli, Sayedabad, Mohakhali and Jatrabari. Most of them had to reach their destinations on foot. The drivers of taxicabs and three-wheelers charged extra fare.

Sumon, a university student, along with his family members and friends, had to go to Kushtia to attend the marriage ceremony of his sister. Finding no buses, they were compelled to hire a taxicab at Tk 160 for each passenger to go to Aricha.

Rajshahi University graduate Mohsin Hossain Azad came to Dhaka Monday night by a truck for a job interview. He had some emergencies to return home by yesterday, but he could not see any transport. "I have to go by any means -- be it a truck or a tempo."

Md Alam, 20, of Keraniganj was to go to Sirajganj as his sister-in-law died, but he found not a single vehicle that could carry him. "So far there is no indication that the strike is being called off. I fear I would not be able to see the body of my sister-in-law," he said.

This correspondent found Ekrumul Haque, a day labourer hailing from Rangpur, sitting on the footpath in front of Parbat Cinema with bag and baggage. He said he was to go to Rangpur for his mother's sickness, but he found no vehicle.

Jahangirnagar University student Anwar Hossain who came to Dhaka yesterday noon said human hauliers charged high fare to carry passengers to the capital.

Alauddin Hossain along with his family members came to Zia International Airport by a taxicab from Savar to see off his brother who left for Kuwait yesterday. Alauddin said he had

to give Tk 500 in bribe to a police sergeant at Savar for coming to the city.

There were allegations that besides preventing people from coming to the city to attend the opposition rally, the police and BNP activists harassed hundreds of commoners who were to come to the city for regular activities.

Media mauled

FROM PAGE 1
Denying the allegation, he said the incident was "a drama staged ahead of the opposition's grand rally to undermine the government".

Criticising the daily Janakantha bitterly, he said, "The newspaper is acting against the country and is engaged in character assassination of the honest, patriotic and principled politicians. It is in favour of the criminals, and dishonest and irresponsible persons."

He pointed his finger to Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil and said he is one of those who did not have wealth but has now become the owner of a bank. "The Janakantha supports this kind of criminal politicians," Kabir said.

State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Ziaul Haque Zia on a point of order said some newspapers that have started during this BNP government are now acting against the BNP through yellow journalism.

BNP lawmaker Manzur Quader demanded enacting of law against the media, saying, "There is no strong mechanism to rein in the yellow journalism."

"The press council does not have enough power to compel any newspaper to obey its decision," he added.

BNP lawmaker Wadud Bhuiyan on a point of order said some newspapers, including the Janakantha, are engaged in conspiracy against the government and the country. "We are being repressed by them, so enact a law against them," he urged.

Replying to the lawmakers' points of order, the speaker suggested them going to the press council and filing of defamation case for justice.

London

FROM PAGE 16
James Swapan Peris from the Christian community, Ina Humes from the Chittagong Hill Tracts and Prof Salim Malik from the Ahmadiyya community.

Giving examples of violent persecutions against their own communities and inaction about the perpetrators, the speakers demanded immediate action from the Bangladesh government, the press release read.

At the conference, Bangladesh government delegation lead by Bangladesh High Commissioner to UK Sabi Uddin Ahmed and lawmaker Khandakar Mahbubuddin Ahmed, also the chairman of Law and Parliamentary Committee of Bangladesh Parliament, denied all the charges and accused the organisers of acting against the interest of Bangladesh.

The accusing speakers did not substantiate their claim, rather, they tried to intimidate the government spokesmen when they were speaking, Bangladesh Press Information Department said.

Robert Evans, member of European Parliament (MEP), Brad Adams of Human Rights Watch, Abbas Faiz of Amnesty International, Maggie Bowden of Liberation, Prof Werner Menski, Jeremy Corbyn MP and Awami League leader Sabur Hussain Chowdhury also spoke in the programme.

Prof Menski said, 'to say persecution doesn't exist itself is terrorism', and 'disappointed to hear of denial from the Bangladesh Govt representatives'.

There is ample evidence of persecution and harassment and he would raise the matter at House of Commons, Jeremy Corbyn MP said.

"We must keep an eye on Bangladesh due to growing extremism," Charles Tannock MEP said.

Extremists showed their muscles again in August when nearly 500 bombs exploded simultaneously throughout Bangladesh and again in October when there were attempts on the life of judges, Lord Avebury said.

He added that the newly formed Bangladesh International Foundation may conduct an analysis of the political environment in which the 2006 elections will be held by looking at the security of candidates and election workers and the freedom of assembly.

He also suggested that it might send a delegation to Bangladesh.

The foundation will take up the matter with UN Anti Terrorism Committee [formed in pursuance to Security Council (SC) Resolution 1373 in 2001] to get involved as SC Resolution 1373 addresses a number of terrorism related issues that are relevant to the recent developments and the current situation in Bangladesh.

Talks with airlines

FROM PAGE 1
carry any pilgrim from Dhaka to Jeddah at less than \$1,150.

The Biman management is now desperately trying to charter two Boeing 747 to fly at least 30,000 out of more than 45,000 intending pilgrims.

Acting Managing Director of Biman Mahmudur Rahman late last night held a meeting with representatives of eight private airlines authorised by the Civil Aviation authority -- Best Aviation Ltd, South Asian Airlines Ltd, Sky Bangla Airways Ltd, ASTUT International, Air Bangladesh Private Ltd, Air Parabat Ltd, Asian Travel Network and Bismillah Airlines.

They were asked to submit proposals within a day or two offering two wide-bodied aircraft for Biman to charter them at a competitive price on ACMI-basis, which means the parties have to provide aircraft, crew, maintenance and insurance.

In the wake of refusal of the foreign airlines, the state minister held a meeting with the Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (Haab)

yesterday afternoon. He informed Haab that using the 60 flight-slots Biman got from the Saudi government, Biman would try to ferry at least 30,000 pilgrims by chartering two aircraft while the government also appealed to the Saudi authorities for last-minute increase of at least 30 more slots so that Biman could fly the rest 15,000 too.

Contacted over telephone last night, Mahmudur Rahman said "We are now very busy, and in the midst of a serious meeting. I will talk to you later."

Qatar Airways Area Manager in Bangladesh Shamshad Ahsan told this correspondent that the foreign airlines had made it clear to the new state minister that they would not be able to carry pilgrims at a fare of \$1,050.

"If any Bangladeshhi pilgrim still intend to avail our flights at \$1,150, we must be notified by tomorrow (Wednesday). Otherwise, it would be difficult to confirm booking of seats," he said.

23pt common nat'l programme

FROM PAGE 1
chanting of slogans from the audience at the Paltan Maidan rally.

The common minimum national programme is the pledge of the 14-party coalition on what it will do if put in power. As the programme was spelled out, jubilant supporters raised their hands, shouting slogans in support to it. Following is the detail of the common minimum national programme:

1. A secular democratic government will be established through free and fair elections that will be held after bringing reforms in the caretaker system of government and the Election Commission on the basis of the guidelines announced on July 15, 2005. The elections will be free from black money, violence and communalism. People will not accept any election without reforms in the caretaker system of government and the Election Commission.

2. The country will be freed from chauvinist communal forces and militants. Such forces will be removed from all levels of the government and administration. Trials of war criminals will be held and there will be a ban on communal politics. Freedom to practice religion, freedom of expression and freedom of conscience will be ensured. The verdict of the Bangabandhu murder case will be executed. Perpetrators responsible for all grenade and bomb blasts, including the one on August 21, 2004 and the one on the British high commissioner, will be brought to book. All training camps of Jamaat, Shibir and other militants will be identified and eliminated.

3. People are the owners of all resources and power based on this principle supremacy of the constitution will be established in running of the country. Rule of law will be established, all laws contrary to the fundamental rights of the people will be scrapped, steps will be taken to stop extra-judicial killings, and the judiciary will be separated from the executive branch of the government.

4. The Parliament will be the centre of all activities and accountability of the government will be ensured. Elections to district and upazila councils will be held within a year of the formation of the new government. Autonomous local governments will be strengthened and empowered properly.

5. Criminals and their godfathers will be identified and will be brought to book. They will not be accepted as members of any political party and no party can nominate them in the elections. A healthy political environment will be ensured by stopping political corruption and criminalisation.

6. A system will be introduced so that all ministers, lawmakers, politicians and

bureaucrats disclose the accounts of their assets. Their accounts will be monitored in order to ensure that corruption is rooted out from all spheres of the state and the society. The Anti Corruption Commission will be made effective. Those found guilty of corruption, and the loan defaulters will be dealt with an iron hand.

7. Prices of essentials, including of rice, pulse and oil, will be brought back within the people's reach. A price regulating authority will be established. Rationing system will be introduced for the poor and the low-income group. Tariff for utility services will be kept stable. The famine in the northern region and food crisis in other parts of the country will be dealt with. Food security will be ensured for all. War logging, a long-standing problem in the south-western part of the country, will also be dealt with.

8. All closed mills and factories will be reopened. Pragmatic measures will be initiated for protecting garment industries. A national minimum wage will be announced for workers, irrespective of the sector, and an environment conducive to more local and foreign investment will be ensured.

9. A national programme will be initiated for removing poverty. There will be specific allocation in the national budget for poverty alleviation. Slum dwellers, vendors and rickshaw-pullers will be announced for workers, irrespective of the sector, and an environment conducive to more local and foreign investment will be ensured.

10. All able citizens of urban and rural areas will be registered in order to remove unemployment, a pragmatic steps will be taken so that at least one youth from every family comes under the "employment guarantee scheme".

11. Prices of agri-inputs will be lowered and fair prices for agro-products will be ensured. There will be also subsidies in agriculture, employment for agri-workers, effective measures for agri-rehabilitation and land reform.

12. State, social and financial honour for the freedom fighters will be ensured.

13. Gender disparity will be eradicated. The national women development policy of 1997 will be reinstated. Direct elections will be held for reserved women's seats in the parliament, while representation of women at all levels will be ensured.

14. Demands of teachers, engineers, physicians, journalists, lawyers and other professionals will be implemented.

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