

AL, BNP start

FROM PAGE 1
success of the present government during the trip. It will also make the grassroots aware of the conspiracies and anti-government propagandas by the BNP-led opposition and will ask them to counter those falsehoods.

Recruitment of new members in the party and renewal of primary membership will also continue during the tour, said Hanif adding that extended meetings of the party would also be held at the districts to ramp up party activities.

Replying to a query, he said party's sub-committees would be formed probably within March.

During the tour programmes, Sajeda will lead a central team for Dhaka, Narayanganj, Munshiganj and Gazipur districts, AL General Secretary Syed Ashraf Islam will lead another team for Tangail, Jamalpur, Sherpur and Myensing districts, Matia Chowdhury for Netrokona, Kishoreganj, Narsingdi and Manikganj, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim for Rajbari, Faridpur, Gopalganj, Madaripur and Shariatpur, Aaur Rahman Khan Kaiser for Chittagong, Cox's Bazaar, Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban, Yusuf Hossain Humayun for Barguna, Patuakhali, Bhola, Barisal, Jhalakathi and Pirojpur.

While Obaidul Quader for Feni, Noakhali and Laxmipur, Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir for Bhramanbaria, Comilla and Chandpur, Kazi Zafarullah for Jessore, Magura, Narail, Khulna, Bagerhat and Satkhira, Rajuddin Ahmed Raju for Joypurhat, Bogra, Naogaon and Natore, Abdul Latif Siddique for Rangpur, Kurigram, Gaibandha and Lalmonirhat, Satischandra Roy for Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Dinajpur and Nilphamari, Mohammad Nasim for Chapainawabganj, Rajshahi, Pabna and Sirajganj, Mahabul Alam Hanif for Meherpur, Kushtia, Chuadanga and Jhenidah and Nurul Islam Nahid for Sunamganj, Sylhet, Moulvibazar and Habiganj.

Talking to The Daily Star AL's deputy office secretary Miral Kanti Das said there could be changes in the teams and schedules of the tour programmes.

KHALEDA OPENS TOUR

MARCH 27
BNP is going to launch a month-long countrywide 'mass communication tour' programme from Chittagong on March 27 to gear up organisational activities aimed at preparing the party for an anti-government movement.

Party Chairperson Khaleda Zia will address a grand rally in the port city as part of the programme announced earlier. She is likely to focus on the latest developments concerning Chittagong Hill Tracts and

2,903 cases

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partial withdrawal of 550 cases.

The law minister said the government has formed two separate committees at district and ministry levels for withdrawal of the cases filed to "harass political leaders."

TRUTH COMMISSION

In response to a query of Jatiya Party lawmaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, the law minister said the now defunct Truth Commission formed by the past caretaker government imposed a fine of Tk 36.99 crore on individuals who applied to the commission.

"Around Tk 34 crore has been recovered from the individuals," Shafique said.

Disorder in JS again

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feet and shouted.

Deputy Speaker Col (ret) Shawkat Ali, who was presiding over the sitting, refused to give the floor to treasury and opposition bench chief whips, who wanted to help in bringing order back.

The disorder ensued when the deputy speaker allocated 20 minutes for Moudud to speak on the thanksgiving motion around 8:15pm. Moudud refused to take part in the discussion saying the opposition chief whip had allocated 30 minutes for him. He sat down without taking part in the discussion.

As Moudud refused to speak, a number of BNP lawmakers including the opposition chief whip protested the chair's decision to give Moudud only 20 minutes.

"I allocated 30 minutes for him [Moudud]. Why have you [deputy speaker] cut it short," Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abidin Faroque said loudly without a microphone.

Opposition MPs were perusing the deputy speaker to give Moudud the 30 minutes while the deputy speaker was repeatedly asking Moudud to begin his speaking. But Moudud and opposition lawmakers were saying, "no".

At that time, the deputy speaker said, "Why are you saying no? It is the speaker who determines the time for a lawmaker's speech."

The situation did not improve rather it deteriorated for three to four minutes.

Awami League presidium

Thousands

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resettlement of affected villagers and compensation for subsidence.

Subsidence at BCMCL project area was first detected in May 2006. The plunging of 646 acres of land affected about 2,600 families.

Sources said the villagers became desperate since January as the BCMCL authorities failed to make any progress on the villagers' demands according to the MoU.

The hunger strikers at the rally demanded that the government consider an increased price of land--at Tk 60 lakh per acre--while deciding about the compensation. They also demanded that BCMCL disclose the survey report on subsidence.

The BCMCL authorities said they have just completed the survey but the price of land was yet to be finalised, as many technical problems are pending. The rehabilitation plan and resettlement framework for the affected families as well as the compensation for land was placed for consideration of the government.

On March 5, BNP announced that a "mass communication tour" would begin this month as part of preparations for a tough movement against the government.

A preparatory meeting to make the Chittagong grand rally a success was held yesterday at the BNP central office at Nayapaltan in the capital with party standing committee member Khandaker Mosharrif Hossain in the chair.

The meeting was attended by the party's Chittagong region leaders Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, M. Moshed Khan, Abdullah Al Noman, Amir Khashru Mahmud Chowdhury and Mir Nasiruddin, central leaders Barkatullah Bulu, Mohammad Shahjahan, Salahuddin Ahmed and Ruhul Kabir Rizvi.

"The (BNP) chairperson will give a 'directional speech' at the Chittagong rally about Chittagong Hill Tracts and Chittagong port as 'conspiracies' are on centring them," Mosharrif told reporters after the meeting.

"It is from Chittagong that our leader (founder of BNP) Ziaur Rahman 'declared independence' in March 1971...At present, an unstable situation is prevailing in Chittagong Hill Tracts," he said.

The next preparatory meeting on Chittagong rally will be held in the port city on Saturday, the BNP leaders said.

Kibria killing

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Rab officials caught Mithu on Sunday midnight from one of his relative's house in Nabiganj upazila of Habiganj district.

On the following day, they handed him over to the Habiganj police and CID quizzed him preliminarily on that night.

During the questioning, the Huji operative admitted his involvement in the grenade attack.

ASP Rafiqul submitted the remand petition while the Habiganj police produced Mithu before the court on Tuesday.

The IO in his petition said, Mizanur Rahman Mithu had admitted his complicity in the sensational killing.

Mithu should be interrogated closely since the name of Badrul Alam Mizan, who is now in jail as an accused in the case, has come out in the statement, the IO said.

The IO also sought remand for former state minister Lutfulzaman Babar in the same case on Tuesday.

The judicial magistrate set March 14 for hearing the remand prayer in presence of Babar.

member Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim pointed at the opposition chief whip and other BNP lawmakers, who were trying to persuade the deputy speaker, and shouted "shut up".

Infuriated by Selim's remark, a number of BNP lawmakers stood on their feet, pointed fingers at Selim and started shouting "youshut up".

A number of Awami League lawmakers also stood up and shouted. Ruling party Chief Whip Abdus Shahid and Whip ASM Firoz calmed their party lawmakers down.

The deputy speaker finally asked Moudud to determine the time he wanted to speak for. The BNP lawmaker said he wanted to speak for 35 minutes.

BNP lawmakers

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dead bodies lies in the grave."

Many treasury bench lawmakers supported the shipping minister by thumping desks.

AL presidium member Selim in last February demanded a DNA test to prove whether Zia's body was inside the coffin, which was buried at Chandrima Udyan in 1981.

Earlier in the afternoon, participating in the thanksgiving motion on the president's address, BNP lawmaker Rehana Akhtar Ranu tried to undermine Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. "I saw a naughty boy has named a public toilet after Bangabandhu."

Treasury bench lawmakers protested at the remark. Shahjahan, too, was taking part in the thanksgiving motion. Infuriated by his remark, the opposition lawmakers stood on their feet and started shouting.

A number of opposition lawmakers threw files and papers and some of them rushed to the place in front of the speaker's podium.

BNP lawmakers, including Moudud Ahmed, tried to draw attention of the chair and demanded the shipping minister's microphone be switched off.

In response, Deputy Speaker Col (ret) Shawkat Ali, who was presiding over the sitting, said how he would switch off Shahjahan Khan's microphone as the minister was still speaking.

"If you have any say, I will hear you," the deputy speaker said.

The agitating lawmakers left parliament at 7:06pm and came

24-hr access

FROM PAGE 1
The premier mentioned that her government is committed to providing better healthcare services across the country, including Dahagram-Angorpota.

In this connection, she told the people of Dahagram-Angorpota that her government has already taken steps to revive 18,000 community clinics across the country.

She said that punitive steps would be taken against the doctors who will not stay in their stations, especially in the rural areas. "But we will also provide lucrative facilities to the doctors who will perform their duties properly at the places like Dahagram-Angorpota."

Hasina assured the people of Dahagram-Angorpota that the Dahagram High School will be nationalised.

Regarding the newly inaugurated National Service Programme, she said that after completing the pilot project, her government would gradually include all areas of the country under the programme.

Referring to her government's initiative to provide better connectivity across the country, she said that the construction of Teesta Bridge is going on and the rail lines of Lalmonirhat will be revived.

Hasina said that during the independence war this area was a 'Free Zone' and headquarters of Sector-6. She mentioned that the government would construct a monument here.

She thanked the doctors, who went there from Dhaka and

Bus strike in city

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city bus services resumed around yesterday noon.

The trouble began Tuesday when two buses of Ashirbad Paribahan were vandalised and the drivers and conductors of the buses were beaten up by a number of people allegedly of Mirpur Bus and Minibus Owners Association. The drivers and helpers had refused to pay toll to the people of the association at Mirpur-1 in the capital.

Shahadat said the extortionists also beat him up and Sharif Uddin Khandaker Masud, managing director of Shatabdi Paribahan, when they rushed to the spot hearing the news.

Following the incident, they stopped bus services across the city demanding action against the "illegal" toll collectors, he added.

Cadres of the association's president Abul Kashem and general secretary Moharaj Hossain have been making threats to bus owners over the last few weeks to pay Tk 70 daily for each bus, he claimed.

Moharaj denying the allegation of illegal toll collection said the realisation of Tk 70 toll is not illegal as their mother organisation Dhaka Sarak Paribahan Samity approved their association on February 18 and designated it to collect the money.

Moharaj said all buses plying the city streets have to pay the amount to the Samity.

China tells US to do more on climate change

AP, Beijing

China told the United States yesterday to make stronger commitments on climate change and provide environmental expertise and financing to developing nations.

China's top climate change negotiator, Xie Zhenhua, acknowledged the current US administration's greater stress on greenhouse gas reductions, but said its pledges thus far fall short of expectations.

"We hope the United States will do more... we hope the United States will not shift the responsibility for taking more active action to other countries," Xie told a news conference on the sidelines of China's annual legislative session.

She said mobile phone operators were asked to follow the new measures, and to monitor their implementation.

Earlier, a 10-member committee headed by the BTRC chairman was formed for recommendations regarding curbing of cellphone crimes. The committee submitted its recommendations to yesterday's meeting.

The meeting was informed that a total of 12 lakh unregistered SIM and RUM cards have so far been blocked.

When his attention was drawn to the fact that there are many unregistered mobile phone users in the country, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner AKM Shahidul Haq told journalists that actions will be taken against mobile phone operators, if unregistered use of their services are detected in criminal offences.

Sahara requested cellphone users to immediately report to nearest police stations if they get any threat or extortion demand over the phone. The mobile phone operators should also be notified, she added.

The home minister warned

Brazil, South Africa, India and China the bloc of large developing nations known as BASIC have called for developed countries to quickly begin handing over an initial \$10 billion pledged at last December's Copenhagen climate change conference to poor countries to help them deal with the effects of global warming.

At Copenhagen, many developed countries had hoped the Kyoto Protocol, which only requires emissions cuts of rich countries, would be replaced with an accord that also makes demands on developing nations.

The new election law was immediately criticised by Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party and by the United States and Britain.

League Deputy Chairman Tin Oo called the law unfair, politically motivated and designed to restrict activities of the party, which has already been battered by arrests and harassment.

"The fact that (party) registration will be allowed only after expulsion of a convicted member is too much. This is politically motivated" toward Suu Kyi, he told reporters.

The junta enacted five election-related laws Monday, two of which have now been made public. Three more are to be unveiled in coming days.

Myanmar election laws that bar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi from standing in polls this year are "disappointing and regrettable," US envoy Kurt Campbell said Wednesday.

"I think it would be fair to say what we have seen so far is disappointing and regrettable," Campbell told a press conference during a visit to Malaysia, part of a tour of Southeast Asia.

Campbell said Suu Kyi should be released from house arrest so she can "play an active role in the political life of the country going forward."

"We've seen the first of five (laws). I think it would be fair to say that what we've seen so far is disappointing and regrettable," Campbell said during a visit to Malaysia.

The registration law says existing political parties have 60 days from Monday to register with an Election Committee whose members are to be appointed by the junta. The

Floodwater contaminates ground water by entering through leaked pipelines, and causes those who consume it to fall ill.

Doctor Shahadat added, "If the water and sanitation system cannot be improved, the number of patients suffering from diarrhoea will greatly increase."

He said that the government must treat the issue of contaminated water most seriously and that it must do all that it can to provide safe drinking water to residents.

Authorities at ICDDR,B said a study conducted in Dhaka's Nodda and Kalachandpur area last year found the presence of cholera in the water, which is potentially fatal.

They recommend that residents boil all water before consuming it and to avoid street foods and juices.

The authorities also suggested giving oral saline to those suffering from diarrhoea and to immediately consult a doctor if someone appears to be severely dehydrated.

Authorities at ICDDR,B said that most patients are coming from the capital's Mirpur and Sabujbag areas and that 65 per cent of patients are children up to five years old.

Anti-drug drive

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that encourages people to take the law into their own hands."

"I shall ask the deputy commissioner whether he made such an announcement and why," he said.

Former inspector general of police SM Shahjahan, also former adviser to a caretaker government, told The Daily Star, "Let alone police, nobody can take the law into his or her own hands, or ask others to do so."

"This is illegal. It is hard to believe that a police officer can make such an announcement," said the former IGP.

Eminent lawyer Shahdeen Malik said, "It is contrary to the basic concept of the rule of law when a responsible police officer utters such words. It clearly shows that they consider themselves above the law."

Witnesses said a contingent of 400 policemen led by Kabir took part in the special drive, especially against drug peddlers.

They paraded the streets in Tejaon and Karwan Bazar from 9:00am to 2:30pm asking people over loudspeakers to be up against criminals.

They halted near Tejaon Railway Line slum in Karwan Bazar, where Kabir gave a speech urging people to resist the drug peddlers in the area.

Kabir asked people in the neighbourhood to flush drug peddlers out. "Bring them on, with limbs broken."

"Please help us identify the criminals. We shall destroy their dens," he said.

However, some slum dwellers told the DC that if they identify the criminals, it might cost their lives.

Slum dweller Mariam Begum told The Daily Star, "Police know the identity of the drug peddlers. But they let them run the illegal trade in exchange for bribe."

Kabir told The Daily Star that they have a list of around 200 people involved in drug peddling in Tejaon and Mohammadpur. Of them, 48 are in Karwan Bazar.

He said in many cases, people respond to their call and help them identify and arrest criminals.

CID asked
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investigation officer of the case, failed to submit the report by yesterday, the scheduled date for submission of the report.

The CID has so far arrested 2,247 soldiers of BDR and civilians including former BNP lawmaker Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu and Awami League leader Torab Ali in connection with the case.

Of the arrestees, 2,161 were earlier placed on remand, and 526 of them had given confessional statements before magistrates. Of them, 177 BDR jawans and civilians had submitted petitions for retraction of their confessional statements.

At least 74 people including 57 army officers were killed in a mutiny of the border guards at their Pikhna headquarters on February 25-26 last year.

Meanwhile, Shahadat Hossain claimed that Mirpur police were working in favour of

the extortionists and arrested the innocent drivers instead of the toll collectors.

Sources in the Mirpur Police Station said police had to record a case against the two drivers in connection with interrupting traffic movement following directives from "higher authorities".

The two drivers were produced before a Dhaka court, which sent them to jail yesterday, they said.

The bus service operators said they do not use the facilities of bus terminals or others offered by Dhaka Sarak Paribahan Samity and this is why they are not willing to pay the toll being collected by Dhaka Sarak Paribahan Samity.

They also submitted a memorandum to the communications minister to realise their demands.

Jamuna water

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and Bongshi will be increased once the project is implemented," he said.

In reply to a query of AL lawmaker Sanjida Khanam, the minister said a project will be prepared this month on the basis of a feasibility study to improve drainage system of Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra (DND) project.

Cellphone crimes

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for Home Shamsul Hoque Tuku, Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder, Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) Chairman Zia Ahmed, mobile phone operators of the country, and senior officials of law enforcing and intelligence agencies were also present.

"Two lakh mobile phone connections have so far been cancelled following allegations of various criminal offences, including extortion, issuance of threats, and other forms of harassment," Sahara told reporters after the meeting.

She said mobile phone operators were asked to follow the new measures, and to monitor their implementation.

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Up to a third of patients being admitted to ICDDR,B are suffering from severe dehydration.

Junta bars Suu Kyi

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house arrest that is to end this November.

The sentence was seen as a way to keep Suu Kyi locked up during the election campaign. Last month, the Supreme Court dismissed her latest appeal for freedom.

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