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BNP takes up fresh protest programmes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday announced a countrywide programme to protest the government notice asking party Chairperson Khaleda Zia to leave her Dhaka cantonment residence, and "cancellation" of parole for her younger son Arafat Rahman Koko.

The party will hold protest rallies in all the seven divisional headquarters on October 20 with the rally in the capital to be held at Muktangan. Similar rallies will be held at the district towns on October 24 and at upazila headquarters on October 27.

Secretary General of the party Khandaker Delwar Hossain announced the programme at a pre-procession rally at Muktangan.

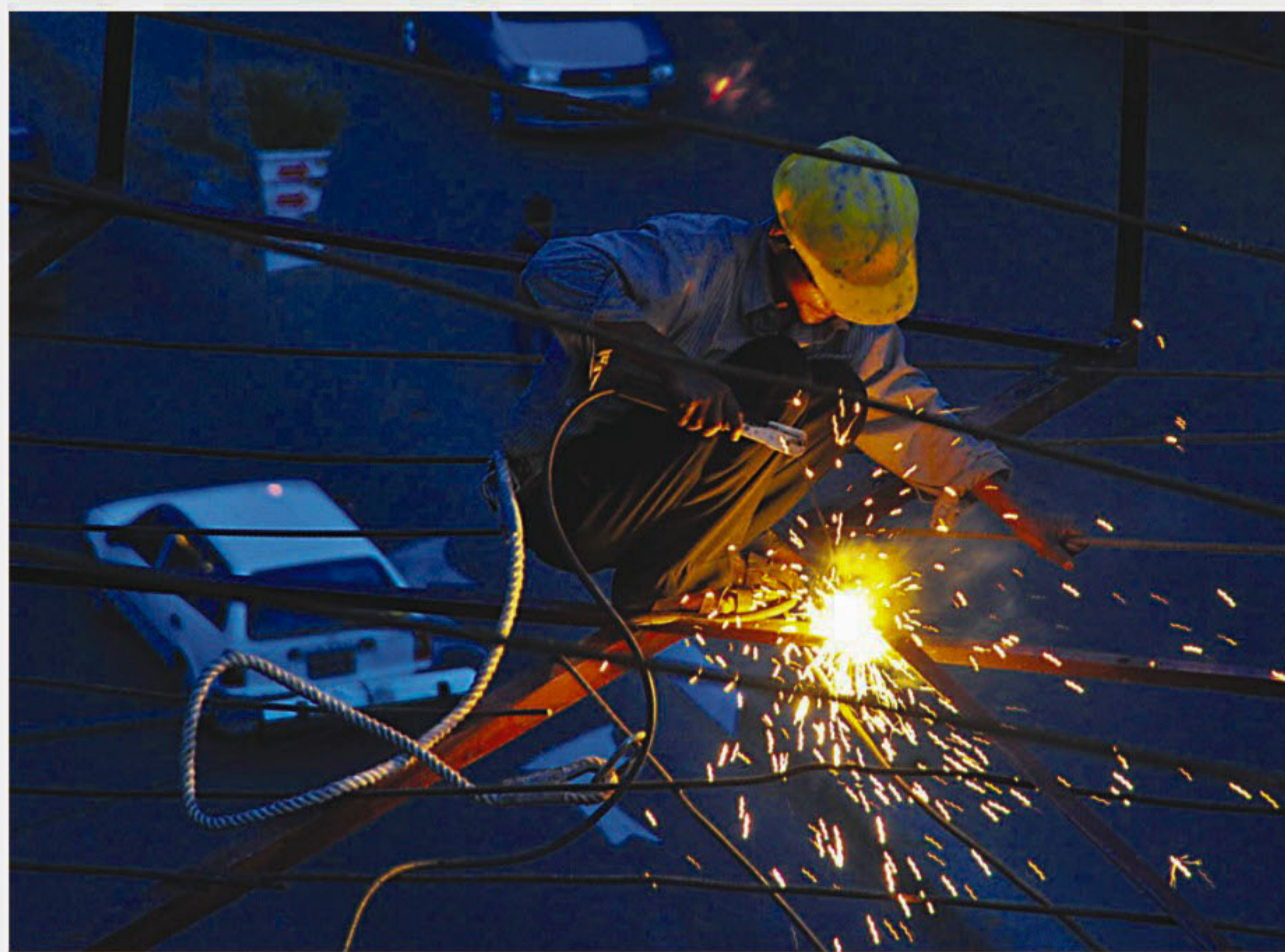
Terming this government "autocratic rulers" Delwar said, "BNP will continue democratic programmes until its fall."

He alleged the government wants to bring back home

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MISFORTUNE-MONGERS

Despite frequent accidents at construction sites, only a piece of rope tied around the waist is all these workers get as fall protection gear. On top of this, they have to share a portion of their wages with the contractor to keep their job for the next day.



KHALEDA'S HOUSE No room for compassion

Says law minister

BSS, Dhaka

The government has no scope to be compassionate regarding BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's cantonment house, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed said yesterday.

His comments come as the opposition leader's lawyers seek to have the government reconsider its decision cancelling allotment of the house on "humanitarian grounds".

"Only those who do not have a shelter deserve such consideration on humanitarian grounds. In Khaleda Zia's case, this will be an unjust enrichment in legal terms," Shafique told BSS.

Earlier, the former premier's lawyer and Supreme Court Bar Association President Khandaker Mahub Hossain said he expects the government to reconsider its earlier decision on "humanitarian grounds".

"I urge Bangabandhu's daughter and Prime Minister

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Grim prospect for govt's gas goals

Most initiatives in the sector old; overcoming the ongoing crisis still depends on chance

SHARIEF KHAN and NAJMUL ALAM NOBIN

The government is making a significant progress in the power sector by taking dozens of new initiatives, but no major headway came in the ailing gas sector as the country has not undertaken new gas exploration work so far.

In the last 22 months, overseer of the country's gas sector Petrobangla just took one new initiative to increase gas production from the existing gas fields on a fast-track basis. The tender for this

fast-track job has yet to be completed.

In contrast, the government has already awarded contracts to generate more than 2,500 megawatt of electricity.

However, during this period, Petrobangla and its subsidiaries, especially Bapex, have been carrying out age-old programmes to increase gas production and explore new energy prospects. These programmes have been moving forward at a snail's pace.

Competent Petrobangla sources say the Awami League government is

unlikely to see the end of gas crisis within its tenure because of slow pace in implementing various plans to increase gas supplies.

But the government aimed at making the sector crisis-free by the end of its tenure.

Unless national exploration company Bapex makes a major gas discovery in Netrokona-Sunamganj early next year, chances of overcoming the gas crisis within 2014 is very slim, even though US

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This CNG filling station on Mirpur Road in the capital lies idle for lack of gas supply. The security guard takes a nap, while vehicles come only to leave the station without any service. The photo was taken at 1:30pm yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

5TH ODI TODAY Tigers look to finish off NZ

SPORTS REPORTER

With the series already in the bag, the Bangladesh cricket team have their eyes firm on making it a clean sweep as they take on New Zealand in the fifth and final one-day international at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

If the Tigers can make it 4-0, it would be their first whitewash against a top-flight Test-playing nation and their seventh overall.

Bangladesh Television SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Mother, son meet tragic fire death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mother died from burns she suffered reportedly trying in vain to save her son who had set himself alight at the capital's South Goran on Friday night.

Locals and relatives said a family feud might have triggered "the suicide".

Aleya Begum, 55, an official of Janata Bank Motijheel branch, breathed her last at Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday around 5:30am and her son Jewel, 35, around 11:30am.

Aleya's husband Abdul Hye, 60, and Jewel's wife Khuku Begum, 28, too received burn

injuries while trying to stop the suicide. The two were also admitted to the burn unit.

Khuku's condition was critical as she sustained 70 percent burns, said hospital sources.

Abdul Hye, however, told reporters at DMCH that the fire had originated from a short circuit at his residence.

Locals quoted the family's domestic help saying Jewel doused fuel on him and set himself ablaze in his bedroom on the first floor of their four-storey building Friday around 8:30pm.

Aleya Begum rushed to the room and embraced her son to smother the flame. Khuku and Abdul Hye came running to help her.

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Durga Puja ends today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The five-day celebration of Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of Hindu, will end today through immersion of the idols of Devi Durga in the water.

Devotees will bid a solemn farewell to their deity Durga and her children Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kartik and Ganesh through immersion after inviting her to return next year.

After worshipping the Mahadashami, the final day of the celebration, at different puja mandaps, devotees will bring out Bijoya Dashami procession carrying Durga and her children to riverbanks in the evening.

In the capital, thousands of devotees are expected to join the traditional procession scheduled at 4:00pm from Palashi intersection near Dhakeshwari Temple, the national temple. The procession will march through different city streets and end at

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Way out of poverty remains far away

The Daily Star-Brac policy dialogue focuses on better education system, cut in income disparity to reduce poverty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Poverty cannot be reduced without improving educational system and minimising income disparity, economists and development workers have observed.

They urged the government to collaborate with non-government organisations to fight poverty.

The observations came yesterday at a policy dialogue titled "Extreme Poverty Reduction: Challenges And Possibilities" jointly organised by Brac and The Daily Star at the latter's conference room.

Sheepa Hafiza, gender justice & diversity and advocacy director of Brac, facilitated the programme while Rabeya Yasmin, associate director of Brac, presented the keynote paper.

Referring to a 2009 planning commission report, Shamsul Alam, member of planning commission, said approximately 20 percent of the country's 160 million people are living in

extreme poverty.

The number of the absolute poor is turning into a huge total with the increasing population.

These people cannot afford food containing 1,805 kilo calories a day and falling short of the daily requirement by 317 kilo calories. Most of them do not have any regular source of income and income-generating asset, he added.

Bangladesh, along with the rest of the world, is observing the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty today.

"Although we've a large population, most of them lack the necessary education and skills for employment," said Shamsul Alam, adding that this is a great problem, as the national economy relies heavily on agriculture, remittance and export of garment products -- all that come from the poor.

Former caretaker government adviser Dr Mirza Azizul Islam, who was the chief guest,

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CHITTAGONG +88 01711726235
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