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# 18-PARTY RALLY AT SUHRAWARDY UDYAN BNP agrees finally, tension eases

AL drops rally plan in Dhaka;  
more opposition men arrested;  
violence in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After a daylong drama, the BNP-led opposition alliance last night decided to hold today's rally at Suhrawardy Udyan in keeping with the DMP permission.

The opposition, however, demanded the government ensure security of rally goers and the venue and urged the ruling Awami League not to go ahead with its plan to take positions at different points across the capital.

Tension ran high as the opposition yesterday evening announced it would organise the programme in Nayapaltan area, while the Dhaka Metropolitan Police said they would allow it only at Suhrawardy Udyan.

"The opposition has to stage the rally at Suhrawardy Udyan. There is no scope for holding it elsewhere," DMP Deputy Commissioner (public relations) Masudur Rahman told The Daily Star around 9:15pm yesterday.

After the opposition agreed with the DMP, Awami League Organising Secretary AFM Bahauddin Nasim last night said the ruling party would not go for any counter programme.

But leaders and activists at AL offices will stay alert to any subversive activities by Jamaat-Shibir men, he added.

BNP insiders say the party high-ups till 9:30pm were seriously considering the Nayapaltan venue.

But around 10:20pm, BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul MORE ON PAGE 3

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Border Guard Bangladesh personnel patrol Manik Mia Avenue last night to ensure public safety ahead of the opposition rally today. Calm descended on the busy capital last night, with some fearing violence centering on the rally.

## People's nerves on edge

WASIM BIN HABIB

Rafiq Mia was losing his patience. Clutching the handles of his rickshaw, he was looking for passengers at Panthapath intersection. Whenever anyone came close, his eyes sparkled at the prospect of a trip and he promptly uttered, "Where will you go?"

As this correspondent approached him, wanting to go to Russell Square, he did not seem to think twice.

"Get on, sir," he readily said. "I haven't had any passenger for a long time. Perhaps people are afraid and do not want to step out of home."

Asked why people were afraid, he looked back and replied, "Don't you know? Awami League and BNP face off tomorrow [today]. God knows what will happen."

The concern that he voiced yesterday is not only his. The city dwellers are suffering from nerves over a confrontation between the ruling Awami League and the main opposition BNP in the capital today, as both the camps have been holding fast to their positions on the polls-time government.

Thursdays are usually the busiest, with the city streets going chock-full of cars as people move out home to get things done before the two-day weekend. But yesterday was quite different.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

## Stay alert

PM asks MPs,  
party men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina last night directed lawmakers of Dhaka city constituencies and leaders of different Awami League bodies to remain highly

SEE PAGE 17 COL 3

## Ball is now in your court

Khaleda tells govt; declares  
it illegal from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday said the Awami League-led grand alliance government will be illegal from today as "its tenure expired" yesterday.

"After tomorrow [Oct 25] ... in fact from today, you are no more a legal government. Your tenure expires actually today. From tomorrow, this government will be illegal. It is our duty as citizens of the country to wage a movement against the illegal government," she said.

Khaleda was addressing a rally organised by Shikhhak-Karmachari Oikya Jote (Skoj), a pro-BNP teachers' platform, at the Jatiya Press Club.

The BNP chief also said her party has done everything including rolling out a proposal on polls-time government, but the government is now dilly-dallying to meet the demand for a non-partisan caretaker administration to oversee the general election.

"You [govt] have long been asking us to place a proposal [on polls-time government] in parliament. We have done all these, and nothing is

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

## Jamaat has plan of its own

RASHIDUL HASAN

It will be all hands on deck for Jamaat and Shibir today with the organisations calling in support from nearby districts to the capital to back BNP in today's opposition rally.

Sources said pro-Jamaat student body Islami Chhatra Shibir also has plans for taking over dormitories of several educational institutions that are now dominated by pro-ruling party Chhatra League.

The educational institutions include public universities like Rajshahi, Jagannath, Sylhet, Chittagong and Jahangirnagar. As per the plan, leaders and activists of Shibir have gathered in student messes near those

SEE PAGE 17 COL 4

## Shooting ordered if attacked

Home acts on terror alert

SHARIFUL ISLAM and M RAHMAN

Law enforcers have been ordered to shoot if they come under attack in the course of today's opposition rally in the capital and elsewhere, Rab and home ministry officials said yesterday.

Already, law enforcers across the country have been kept on alert, following intelligence reports that Jamaat-Shibir activists may attack lawmen and key installations and snap rail and road communications.

Alongside several thousand policemen, members of Rab, Border Guard and Ansar have been deployed to ensure foolproof security of the secretariat and other important government offices, rail and road bridges, power stations, fuel pumps and other strategic points across the country.

"We've intelligence that Jamaat-Shibir activists might attack law enforcers as they did in the past. Law enforcers have been ordered to open fire if attacked," said an additional secretary of the home ministry, requesting anonymity.

Contacted, Lt Col Ziaul Ahsan, intelligence wing director of Rab, said: "I've ordered my force to shoot if they come under attack."

According to an official of the Special Branch of police, Shibir men were plotting to uproot rail tracks and dig holes and fell trees on highways to cut off Dhaka from the rest of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



In the fullness  
of melody. . .

Manna Dey (1919-2013)

SYED BADRUL AHSAN

The *adda* at Coffee House truly, decisively came to an end with Manna Dey's passing yesterday. Six years more and he would have qualified as a centenarian.

And yet it is safe to suggest that Manna Dey lived a full life and now that he passes into the ages, he joins all those other singing luminaries whose lives drew to an end before his.

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

I HAVEN'T FINISHED YET ... Young Bangladesh batsman Mominul Haque may be short in stature, but his unbeaten 126 on the fourth day of the Mirpur Test against New Zealand yesterday dead-lifted the Tigers from a precarious situation to a position of strength. Here the pocket dynamo works the ball on the on-side for his back-to-back hundred. The home side, with a lead of 114 runs, resume the final day today at 269-3 for a final push to enforce a positive result.

AL 5, BNP 4, JP 1

## Polls-time cabinet by vote percentage

HASAN JAHIID TUSHER

The ruling Awami League wants the cabinet seats of its proposed all-party election-time government to be shared on the basis of percentage of votes the political parties got in the last parliamentary election, not the number of their lawmakers.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina plans to form the interim government with a 10-member cabinet. Of them, five would come from the AL, four from the BNP and one from the Jatiya Party, said AL insiders.

The number of cabinet members might be increased through discussions if the BNP agrees to join it, said the sources.

Election Commission statistics show the AL bagged 49 percent votes, the BNP 33.2 percent votes and HM Ershad's Jatiya Party 7 percent votes in the last national polls.

Hasina recently discussed the issue with some of her close associates after announcing the proposal for an all-party polls-time government, which she finalised without discussing at any party forums, said AL insiders.

The prime minister told her close associates that if the interim cabinet seats are distributed based on the numbers of lawmakers the political parties have in parliament, the BNP would have a very low representation in the polls-time government.

"She wants to have the cabinet seats distributed on the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## More foreign pressure likely for dialogue

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The international community is likely to mount pressure on the major political parties to engage in a dialogue to reach a consensus on election-time government.

Foreign and UN missions in Dhaka have apprehensions of confrontation and violence if the parties fail to agree a way forward on the issue, said diplomatic sources.

Foreign nations and donor agencies do not want to see any more uncertainty and street violence ahead of the general election after every five years. They want that the elections would be free, fair, transparent, credible and inclusive.

Diplomats said though both the chiefs of the ruling Awami League and main opposition BNP

SEE PAGE 17 COL 4