

Khaleda pledges self-reliant economy, independent foreign policy

Playing with students' fate to be allowed no more

By A Staff Reporter

Prime Minister and Chairperson of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) said on Sunday that her party will fulfil all the pledges made to the people and continue to work tirelessly for the continued peace and progress of the country.

Addressing a mammoth rally organised at Manik Miah Avenue in celebration of the BNP's 13th founding anniversary, Begum Zia said that her government will no longer allow playing with the fate of the students and take stern measures to contain violence on the campus.

The Prime Minister urged the people to vote for BNP candidates in the forthcoming parliamentary by-elections and also vote for "yes" symbol in the referendum to

permanently establish the sovereignty of the people.

The rally was also addressed by Law Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz, Education Minister Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, LGRD Minister and Party Secretary General Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder, Irrigation Minister Maj Gen (retd) M. Majid-ul-Huq, Chief Whip Khandker Delwar Hossain, Abdul Matin Chowdhury MP, Minister of State for Labour and Manpower Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah, Minister of State for Mineral Resources Dr Khandker Mosharraf Hossain, BNP candidate for Dhaka-five seat Maj (retd) Qamrul Islam, BNP candidate for Dhaka-nine Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar, General Secretary of Jatiyatabadi Mahila

Dal Begum Sarwari Rahman.

Former Minister Lt Col (retd) Akbar Hossain, MP, City BNP chief Lt Gen (Rtd) Mir Shawkat Ali MP, President of Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal Eskendar Ali, General Secretary of Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal Gayeshwar Roy, Convener of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal Amanullah Aman, MP and Convener of Jatiyatabadi Sechchhasevak Dal Kazi Asaduzzaman.

The huge crowd gave their consent by raising hands when the leaders wanted to know whether they will stand by the side of BNP.

People from all walks of life, particularly the workers of the ruling BNP and its front organisations converged at the venue carrying banners and placards. Many came in processions and brought

with them band parties. The BNP's cultural team presented a number of patriotic songs which were cheered by the people. Women workers of the party also came in good numbers to listen to their leader.

The Prime Minister who in her speech briefly touched most of the problems confronting the nation said that her government had inherited an administration and an economy shattered by the misrule of the past government of Ershad.

She assured the people that they will reintroduce the production-oriented politics of the late President Ziaur Rahman and will give the country a strong administration, a self-reliant economy and an independent foreign policy.

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Playing with students' fate

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The BNP will implement the 19-point programme of the late President Ziaur Rahman, she said.

However, she said, conspirators were active to disrupt progress and foil democracy and the people must remain alert about them.

The Prime Minister recalled the uncompromising stand taken by her party against the autocratic rule of Ershad and said that her party will never compromise with the interest of the people and will work selflessly for them.

The Prime Minister said that her party had already fulfilled certain election pledges within the last five months and will fulfil the rest one by one. In this context, she referred to exemption of agricultural loan with interest up to Tk. five thousand, exemption of land revenue up to 25 bighas of land and raising of age limit for government jobs from 27 years to 30 years.

The government had also implemented the recommendations of the Pay Commission Report and changed the office timing, she said.

Begum Zia said that her party had clearly stated that the elected parliament would decide the form of government for the country. Now, since the parliament elected by the people had unanimously voted for the parliamentary

system, people should now exercise their sovereignty by taking part in the ensuing referendum, she said and added "people is the source of all power. They are the real sovereign body".

Referring to certain comments by some Jatiya Party leaders who expressed the hope that their party (JP) will again be in power after six months, Begum Zia said that the misdeeds of Ershad had landed him in jail. "There is no chance for Ershad to come out of the jail in his life time. Even some of his accomplices may soon be in the company of their leader". She said, "it is Ershad who has left the economy badly shattered and administration in disarray", she added.

The Prime Minister said that her government would solve country's problems in cooperation with the people. In this connection she referred to the recent cyclone and tidal surge and said that the relief operations were smoothly carried out in cooperation of the people, the armed forces and friendly nations. The world showed keen interest in helping a democratically elected government, she said. Steps had now been taken to rehabilitate the affected people comprehensively.

The Prime Minister alleged that certain Opposition parties had been trying to create anarchy on the campus after failing to face the government politically. She urged

them to stop the game. "We will not hesitate to take stern measures against the mischief mongers", she warned.

The Prime Minister said "we want our children should have their education in the country and serve the country. We do not want to drain out our brains".

Amidst thunderous applause the Prime Minister said that her government would soon open doors to the deserving youths for government jobs.

She said that commemorative stamps would be issued for Noor Hossain and Zehad who laid down their lives in the hands of the autocratic ruler during the mass movement.

She said that the Jatiya Mahila Sangstha and Bangladesh Shishu Academy would be reorganised. The activities of these organisations would be geared up by setting up new branches and increasing their activities.

BSS adds: Law Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz called upon the Opposition political parties of show restraint in their political behaviour for smooth functioning of the parliamentary system of democracy.

Referring to the passage of the 12th Constitution Amendment Bill unanimously in the Jatiya Sangsad Mr Hafiz said this would establish accountability of the government to the people.

He called upon the people to

give their verdict in favour of the new system in the September 15 referendum. He said "we will not allow military rule in the country".

Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury said BNP was deeply rooted on the soil of this country. He said it was repeatedly proved that people had faith in the BNP and that's why in the recent free and fair parliamentary elections the people had elected BNP to power.

Mr Abdus Salam Talukdar said though many political parties took to the streets against the autocratic rule, people voted BNP to power because of their confidence in the nationalist forces.

Mr. Majidul Huq called upon the people to elect the BNP candidates in the bye-election on September 11.

Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain urged the opposition parties not to confuse the people in the name of democracy. He said the opposition should work together with the government in some national issues unitedly.

Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah said the BNP government would establish a corruption, exploitation and violence-free society through implementing the 19-point programme of Shaheed Zia.

Dr K. Mosharraf Hossain said President Zia had introduced multi-party democracy in the country while Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia had initiated parliamentary democracy.