

'Keep newspaper offices closed on May Day'

BSS, Dhaka

Leaders of Sangbadik Samik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SSKOP) yesterday greeted the journalists, press workers and employees of newspaper industry on the occasion of historic May Day.

In a statement, the leaders also requested the owners and management to keep the newspaper offices closed on May Day.

The leaders hoped that the owners and management will not deprive the journalists, workers and employees of the right to enjoy leave on the May Day.

They further said that the journalists, workers and employees would resist any attempt to bring out newspapers on May Day.

The leaders urged the newspapermen to attend the rally to be held near the Prothom Alo office on April 30.

The statement was signed by SSKOP Leaders Gias Kamal Chowdhury, Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Manjurul Alam, Akhter Ahmed Khan, Elahi Newaz Khan, Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, Omar Faruque, Abdus Shahid, Fazle Imam, Abul Hashem, Afsar Uddin Khan and Motiur Rahman Talukder.

Export

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Chowdhury attended the session as chief guest with Professor Anwarul Azim Arif, vice-chancellor of Premier University, in the chair.

Prothom Alo Editor Motiur Rahman made the address of welcome in the session where the introductory speech was made by CPD Executive Director Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya.

Prof. Ali Rashid of economics department of North South University presented the keynote paper in the session.

Motiur Rahman said the regional consultation meeting aims to review the Policy Brief and make some specific recommendation to formulate policies.

Dr Debapriya said the Policy Brief introduced earlier helped formulate many policies. However, a review of the policies formed is needed as many of them could not be implemented. Besides, constant hammering is also needed, he added.

The Daily Star News Editor Inam Ahmed, speaking on behalf of the one of the organisers, said in view of globalisation and changing world order review of the policies was crucial.

The recommendations and suggestions likely to come out from the consultation meetings would reach the higher level of policy-making bodies to help them take necessary actions, he added.

Prof. Rashid in his keynote paper said despite rapid growth in the export sector that meets the major portion of the import expenditure, limited number of export items and limited market have created concerns about the prospect of the sector. As such, export diversification and expansion of market emerged as the main challenge.

The paper identified poor infrastructure and communication system, port problems, lack of efficiency and poor activities and management crisis in the export-oriented firms as the supply-side constraints that hamper export activities.

The oven and knitwear sector that earns around three-fourths of the export income mostly depends on the markets of the US and European Union countries, which is a weakness of this sector.

A comprehensive measure is yet to be taken to overcome the feared negative impact on export of garments in the USA after the multi-fibre agreement (MFA) and due to US TDA 2002 and NAFTA.

The government is trying to determine proper tactics to face the challenges and the commerce ministry also got a research done in 2002. But coordinated efforts are required to implement the recommendation came out from the research.

Taking part in the discussion on the keynote paper, the speakers observed that there were sound policies and urged for political will to implement those.

They observed the imported goods included mostly luxury items instead of necessary raw materials.

The market was being captured in the name of open market economy while access to foreign markets were being barred through different tariff and non-tariff barriers.

The lengthy procedures and delay in providing gas and electricity connections hamper installation of industrial units and cause the investors to incur loss, they added.

Former Vice-chancellor of Chittagong University Prof. Alamgir Md. Sirajuddin, former president of Bangladesh Economic Council Dr. Moinul Islam, the first secretary of Indian High Commission Swapnan Dasgupta, Chittagong chamber Director Ali Ahmed, BGMEA first Vice-president SM Nurul Haq, former honorary consul Nurul Islam, Prof. Fasilul Alam of Chittagong University and Kaniz Fatema also took part in the discussion.

Outlaw Yusuf's men killed 6 BNP men in Naogaon

Sequel to dispute over khas land, police say

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

A group loyal to outlaw leader Yusuf carried out Friday's murder of six BNP workers in Naidighee village of Atrai upazila in Naogaon, police said following a primary investigation.

Yusuf was also involved in the murders at Naogaon's Atrai and Raninagar upazilas since 1999 and has many hideouts and strongholds in the remote Chalan Beel areas in Natore's Shingra upazila, a senior police official said on Friday.

Police said Yusuf built his stronghold in Naidighee village during Awami League's rule. Awami League leaders Golam Nabi and Abdul Latif benefited from the area's khas land and water reservoirs.

After BNP came to power, the pro-BNP Sattar-Subhan group drove out the Yusuf group and grabbed the properties. But recently, Yusuf struck up a nexus with elements of the local BNP to establish supremacy in the area and killed his opponents in the process.

Meanwhile, Rajshahi range police has taken special security measures at all police stations, camps and outposts in greater Rajshahi region and asked all policemen to watch out for any further attack.

Police arrested five more persons from Naogaon, Natore and Rajshahi

Friday night in addition to the two arrested earlier.

Police also recovered 15 leaflets from the village where the outlaws claimed responsibility for the murders.

"The class enemies were killed for widespread rape of destitute women, looting, dispossessing the poor of their land and ponds and persecuting the landless to grab khas lands," the leaflets read.

Sources said that on Thursday afternoon, Muniary UP member Shukkor Ali Shah who was killed in the attack had informed Digheerpar police camp in-charge SI Rezaul Islam that he feared an attack on the village by the outlaws on the following night.

Shah had also arranged for dinner at the house of another victim Shahjahan Ali and invited the policemen who were scheduled to patrol the village, but no police team went to the village on the night of the murder.

Rajshahi range DIG Anwar Hossain said police at the Digheerpar camp could have nabbed some of the murderers had they been alert.

But camp in-charge SI Rezaul Islam who was suspended for negligence of duty told newsmen that police's 303 rifles were no match for the outlaws' modern weapons.

Sources said the murders were a sequel to a longstanding dispute

between pro-AL Nabi-Latif and pro-BNP Subhan-Sattar groups over nine water reservoirs (dighee) and several hundred bighas of khas land in Naidighee.

Golam Nabi and Abdul Latif were killed on May 21 and December 10 of 1998. Muniary UP chairman and BNP leader Abdus Sattar was killed on October 7, 1999 while his brother Abdus Subhan Chowdhury, who was also chairman of the same UP was murdered on August 30 last year.

Friday's victims are all relatives of Abdus Subhan.

Police have virtually failed to check activities of the outlaws in the greater Rajshahi region and failed to arrest any outlaws as some 20 persons including four policemen have been murdered since the much trumpeted special anti-crime drive began in September last year.

The special drive began following a killing spree including murders of political leaders. "The police have kept the outlaws on the run. Yet the Naidighee incident could not be avoided as the outlaws have strong and deep-rooted networks in the area and the villagers did not cooperate with the police," DIG of Rajshahi range police Anwar Hussain told The Daily Star.

The counsels appealed for bail of the accused, which court sub-inspector Abdus Salam opposed. After hearing both sides, Magistrate Syed Mehedi Hasan granted the bail upon a bond of Tk 2 lakh with three guarantors. Meanwhile, Babul was also granted bails in two other cases filed with the Badda Police Station. He was shown arrested in the cases yesterday and granted bail the same day. Metropolitan Magistrate Shafiq Anwar granted the bails upon a bond of Tk 20,000 each with two guarantors.

The two cases were filed with the Badda Police Station accusing Babul and his men of trespassing and looting.

French minister

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his office today.

Besides, he will have lunch with French businessmen at Hotel Sonargaon and attend a dinner to be hosted by State Minister Reaz Rahman at Hotel Sheraton.

Muselier will address a press briefing in the evening. He will leave Dhaka tomorrow.

Power outage

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water due to load shedding, a WASA official said.

"We are running nine out of the 15 tube wells by generators," said Kazi Mohammed Sheesh, chief engineer of WASA.

To cope up, WASA is also supplying by water carrier cars.

"We are getting water from other parts of the city to supply there" Sheesh said.

Coupled with sweltering summer heat and energy sapping humidity, the frequent power disruption and inevitable water crisis is proving to be just too much for the residents of these areas.

Jamuna Group

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bailable.

Moreover, they maintained that only Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipokkha (RAJUK) can file a case for the alleged wetland grabbing case. But in this case the police filed it, which is a violation of Wetland Protection Act, 2000.

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Criminals drug

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the local shops sold soft drinks. Some locals, however, said their tea might be drugged.

Police suspect the miscreants drugged the cops, who were on an 8:00pm to 8:00am patrol shift, after 1:00am on Saturday. The trio joined police force three years ago.

Senior police officers visited the spot yesterday morning and ordered police to find out the guilty.

Four shopkeepers were picked up for interrogation.



Four journalists awarded by the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) for investigative reporting at the National Press Club yesterday pose for photographs (Story on back page).

Arms dump blasts kill 40

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told Reuters.

Local residents said US forces had been packing cars with Iraqi weapons over the last three days and detonating them, but a US officer, Colonel John Peabody, denied that.

He said his unit had been guarding the ammunition dump for a week and "during that time we have not destroyed any ammunition."

Peabody said it was not known who fired the flares into the dump. "It was somebody who doesn't like us, and doesn't like their own people."

He said about 80 missiles, including FROG-7 short-range surface-to-surface rockets, had been stored at the site.

Tractors were digging through the rubble of homes in Zaarafaniya, a district of mostly two-story sand-coloured cement houses, in search of survivors.

"We dug out six people who died, with our own hands," Nassir Abdelrahman told Reuters, as hundreds of people gathered around the destroyed houses.

"There is much confusion, many buildings have been destroyed where the missiles have gone off... there is glass everywhere," added local resi-

dent Ali Hassan. Another man who was hurt said that five people, four women and a child, were killed in the house next door.

"There was a huge explosion next to our house. Fires started all around. Explosions ripped through the neighbourhood," the injured man, who gave his name only as Mohammed, told Reuters. "In the next house, four women and a child were burned to death. It is a big mess."

An enraged man at the scene vented his fury at the US forces who took the capital two weeks ago: "Why, why?... The war is finished. A baby, a woman, 14 under this building," he screamed in English.

"May God exact his revenge," added a woman, whose head was bandaged. She was seated next to a young girl whose dress was soaked in blood from a head injury. The girl's leg was being bandaged by a soldier.

About 500 Iraqi men, chanting anti-American, pro-Islam slogans, drove in a convoy of trucks, buses and cars out of the suburb -- the first truck carrying six coffins, apparently containing bodies.

"No Americans or Saddam; Yes,

Yes to Islam!" the men chanted in Arabic, some of them flying green Islamic flags and banners. Among the slogans were two in English: "Stop Explosions Near Civilians" and "The Terror After War."

The blasts also sparked an angry demonstration in central Baghdad where protesters carried banners reading "No bombs between houses, yes, yes to freedom" and "US forces kill innocents with Saddam's weapons in Zaafa-raniya."

Whatever the precise cause of the explosions, they seemed likely to complicate US efforts to win Iraqi support for the US presence in Iraq, however pleased most people are to be rid of Saddam Hussein.

Coker said his unit had been forced some three km from the scene because they had been fired on.

"We tried to go and help them. The people came out and shot at my men," he said, adding that the soldiers did not return fire and that some of them had been hurt.

"The people are scared, but it is our intent right now to reassure them so we can get back in there and get the people who are trapped, out," Coker told Reuters.

Uplift HR state

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Asma Jahangir described various types of human rights violation in Pakistan and observed that the human rights issue should get priority over other issues.

Criticising the role of the military rulers in the violation of human rights and democratic norms in her country, she said, "A country should be run by the politicians not by the generals."

Asma blasted the role of Pakistani military forces in Bangladesh during its independence struggle and said only expressing sorrow for the atrocities was not enough. There should be proper justice for their misdeeds during that period, she observed.

Dr. Kamal Hossain said though the region was freed from colonial rule about 50 years back, the legacy of the colonialism is still haunting them.

All the countries in the region share the same human rights situation, he said.

Kamal felt that Myanmar and

Afghanistan should also be brought into the forum of human rights in South Asia.

Rokonuddin Mahmud said arrest without warrant, frequent detention, torture in police custody and remand are some major features in the violation of human rights in Bangladesh.

He mentioned that the 'Operation Clean Heart' had left 54 people killed and scores of others injured without any legal framework.

Nepalese representative D Pandey also presented a gloomy picture of human rights in his country. Human rights are being violated mainly due to conflicts among the monarch, political parties and Maoist insurgents.

S Balakrishna from Sri Lanka observed that the conflicts in his country are the result of trampling of human rights of the minority communities for long.

He observed that the civil society in south Asia can play a vital role in upholding human rights.

White quits as US Army secretary

REUTERS, Washington

The civilian who oversees the US Army, Thomas White, has submitted his resignation, the Defence Department said on Friday, after controversy over his role in the failed energy trader Enron Corp. and support for an artillery system killed by Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

The Defence Department, in a two-paragraph statement, gave no reason for the resignation, and an Army spokesman did not return a call seeking comment.

Rumsfeld expressed his appreciation to White for his service, first as a career Army officer then as the Army's top civilian leader for the past two years.

The effective date of White's resignation had not been determined, the Pentagon said.

TIB award

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Manabzamin won the second prize while Anwar Hossain Mintu, Jamalpur correspondent of Doink Janakantha won the third.

Dr. Anisuzzaman of Dhaka University, Abul Momen, resident editor of Prothom Alo Chittagong office and Zahiduzzaman Faruque, editor of Doink Orththon were the members of the jury board.

The winning reports were selected on the basis of how well it unveiled corruption and administrative irregularities.

Renowned economist and trustee member of TIB Prof. Mozaffar Ahmed moderated the ceremony

Meanwhile, the TIB has invited investigative reports from reporters for the two prizes of Tk 50000 each for the year 2003. The reports have to be published in any Bengali or English newspaper from January 1 to December 31, 2002.

The reports should be submitted by June 30, 2003 at the TIB office, Progress Tower, House # 1 (sixth floor), Road # 23, Gulshan Circle-1, Dhaka-1212.

The TIB had introduced this Investigative Reporting Award in 1999.

Revised ADP

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The ADP has been slashed for the second time mainly due to declining foreign assistance and also slow progress in implementation, the minister said. "We could increase local resources if the pace of implementation was good."

Foreign assistance has been cut by Tk 1,434 crore or 16 per cent and local resource allocation by Tk 666 crore or six per cent, Saifur added.

Many of the low priority and unapproved projects with zero local currency provision have been axed, he said, adding that projects with no progress and no foreign assistance tie-ups have also faced the axe. The government has given priority to the projects with 70 to 90 per cent implementation so that these should not continue next year's ADP.

The minister mentioned agriculture, education, transport, energy, health and rural development received priority in the downsized ADP.

The minister also said import of 23 to 24 lakh tonnes of food grains this fiscal shows that Bangladesh is not self-reliant in food. "We should have modern technology in agriculture sector and diversify it by increasing investment in the sector."

assistant professors, which is granted for all cadre officials after completion of 10 years of service.

The leaders threatened that they would launch a greater movement with BCS education cadre officials if their demands were not immediately met.

Border talks

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Islamic elements for operations directed against India.

Among other issues the Dhaka meeting is likely to discuss are border fencing by India and trans-border crimes.

The Indian side is also likely to find out if progress has been made in dismantling the 'insurgents and terrorist training camps in Bangladesh'. India last year submitted to Bangladesh a list of 99 such training camps in Bangladesh.

Illegal migration from Bangladesh has been a major concern for New Delhi and ties between the two countries suffered strains following the weeklong face-off over 213 Bangladeshis along the border with Cooch Behar district of West Bengal early this year.

Tensions over the issue ran so high that it required Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan to undertake a visit to New Delhi for a series of meeting with Indian leadership.

Dialogue in Ctg

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keynote paper.

The speakers stressed the need for political will, transparency and discipline to salvage the crisis-torn sector.

Monzurul Amin Chowdhury, vice-president of CCCI, criticised the procrastination of banks in sanctioning loans to aspirant entrepreneurs. "One has to overcome so many hurdles before getting loan," he said.

Chief Executive of Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) Maruf Matin said the share market should be properly valued as it is one of the key components of economy.

Highlighting the viability and benefit from investing in share market, he said despite the unprecedented scam in 1996, the bourses rose from ashes in recent times. In less than one and a half years, 13 new IPOs (initial public offerings) have come up to fetch Tk.33.80 crore whereas they got an investment of Tk.194.88 crore from the public, six times higher than what they expected.

The CSE chief executive said if shares were sold for larger projects like Jamuna Multi-purpose Bridge, the country could have saved billions of taka in foreign currency.

CPD Executive Director Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya intervened at this stage and differed on the role and state of the capital market.

"Competence and accountability of self-regulatory bodies like CSE must be there, otherwise they would not be able to provide benefit in true sense," he said. "It may sound great what was said here about the 13 IPOs, but the desired dynamism has not been seen in the primary markets," he continued.

Dr Debapriya alleged many companies did not hold annual general meetings (AGMs) regularly or declare dividends. "Rather they play foul and manipulate audit reports. Besides, we are yet to see the much talked-about Central Depository System (CDS) in action," he said.

Dr Fasilul Alam, professor of management at Chittagong University (CU), feared that the Debt Collection Unit (DCU), proposed by a task force in every bank, could be used as a tool of harassment. "To check this, cautionary measures should be adopted," he said.

He suggested fixing of ceilings for loans. "It is needed to know which sectors or parties actually deserve the loans."

Dr. Fasilul said chaos cropped up in the financial sector due to political influence and illegal interference by trade unions in the last 30 years.

Professor Sikander Khan of economics department of CU called for strengthening supervisory role of the central bank.

"I am, however, sceptical about the implementation of the recommendations, as the bank managing board itself is not free from politics," he said.

Professor Ahmad Nali of CU finance department urged for decentralisation of the banking sector and creation of an atmosphere for even competition among stakeholders.

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) leader SM Nurul Haq said many sick industries would find their feet if simple interest system for rescheduling of loan was introduced.

He also criticised bureaucracy in approval of loans for new projects. "I had a bitter experience a few months ago and I had to go to the minister to get the nod," he said.

Dr Shanti Ranjan Das, dean of CU commerce faculty, said an evaluation by the banks concerned was badly required for awarding loans. "Thorough scrutiny and examination of existing default loans should be there to bring order and stop indiscipline in the financial sector," he said.

Abdul Awal, managing director of Bengal Shipping, suggested incorporation of the insurance sector in the task force report.

The chief guest of the session thanked Dr Toufique Ahmed Chowdhury and other member of the task force for presenting the keynote paper.

"The recommendations of the task force can be termed as successful considering its aspects. Sixty per cent of the recommendations have been implemented or at least taken into cognisance," he said.

Ali Ahmad said proper law or measures are needed to convert borrowings into assets. "Our banking sector has already shown some signs of improvement as some measures were taken."

He stressed the need for introduction of a tribunal like the 'Special Tribunal Court' to shed existing anomalies in the sector.

Depths of despair

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About, said her daughter and eight grandchildren had been killed in the explosions. It was not immediately clear if she was related to Kalaal and if they were talking about the same victims.

"George W Bush and Saddam are both criminals," About said. "First we had Saddam and then we were given Bush. What did we do to deserve this?"

US troops blamed the series of blasts on attackers they accused of firing flares into the arms dump.

Hundreds of people gathered to watch a bulldozer shift the rubble of four houses destroyed in the blasts.

The neighbourhood, surrounded by factories, consists largely of two-story sand-coloured concrete houses. A cooking-oil plant stands about 400 meters away from the houses that were destroyed.

Residents said US forces had been packing vehicles with seized Iraqi weapons over the last three days and detonating them.

"Those Americans did this," Kalaal said, shaking his finger in anger.

Residents said they believed US efforts to destroy weapons at the arms dump on Saturday had gone wrong, causing the explosions.

"We dug out six people who died, with our own hands," Nassir Abdelrahman told Reuters. "The Americans are the worst human beings on earth."

An elderly woman in a black shawl wept and said: "What did we do to deserve this?"

Iraqis dug through the rubble hoping to find two people who they believed had

been killed. In the distance stood a tank belonging to the US troops who overthrew Saddam Hussein in their three-week war.

Some houses had chunks missing from their walls, and witnesses at the scene said unexploded rockets were lying in the rooms of some buildings.

Reuters photographer Yannis Behrakis carried a baby aged about nine months from a damaged house surrounded by burning buildings to a US military checkpoint, where Army medics treated the child.

CIH virus

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the computer unnoticed and runs on its own.

The impact of computer viruses on users can range in severity -- from a minor inconvenience to a major problem requiring extensive technical repairs, an expert said.

He said most viruses are spread by reading infected e-mail attachments or by putting an infected programme, file or diskette into a "clean" machine. Attachments should always be scanned before opening or if the user is unsure of the source.