

JSD forms human chains to protest 'misrule'

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu) yesterday formed human chains at Muktangan, Motijheel and Gulistan protesting the 'misrule' of the coalition government.

The JSD formed the human chains on the sixth day of its eight-day human chain programmes across the country that began October 13.

JSD leader and workers and commoners as well took part in the human chain, a JSD press release said yesterday.

Addressing a rally after the human chains, JSD President

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PHOTO: STAR

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) rally in Motijheel, Dhaka, yesterday demanding the coalition government be replaced with a national government.

395 nabbed, 8 arms seized in S-W drive

STAFF Correspondent, Khulna

The joint forces have so far arrested a total of 395 people, including 18 outlaws, in southwestern region and recovered eight firearms.

Four of the arrested outlaws belonging to Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) and five women, nabbed by the Joint forces with arms and ammunition on Friday, have been shown arrest under the Arms Act.

They are Bijon das, 25, Sujon Shaikh, 32, Moinul Huq, 30, Bazlu Sarder, 38, Helena Begum, 45, Xasmin Akhtar, 26, Kanij Fatema, 19, Sabina Akhtar urmi, 21, and Shumona Akhtar Shumi, 23.

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Dinajpur ethnic people doubly denied

PINAKI ROY, back from Dinajpur

Laxmikanta Hasad went to jail last June at the age of 65 for demanding his promised benefits from the forest department. Instead of receiving what he thought he would, he was accused of stealing wood.

Laxmikanta and four others, accused in the same case, were released on bail 12 days after they were arrested in their Nababganj home village of Joypur.

The clash with forest officials that led to the arrest of the five also affected scores of other members of the Santal community of Nababganj, as well as farmers in the

Orao, Malo, Rajbanshi, Turi, Munda, Maushaher, Bhuiinmali and Pohan communities.

"The forest department charged all with wood theft," said Advocate Rafiqul Islam, who defended them in court.

The cause of the clash was a community forestry project, now known as social forestry, which started in the early 1980s with the funds from the Asian Development Bank.

The ethnic people of Dinajpur allege that to implement the project the forest department acquired 2,750 hectares in 10 upazilas, including Birampur, Ghoraghat,

Nababganj, Fulbari, Birganj, Parvatyapur, Khanshama and Biral. But the department paid them nothing in return for the land.

In Nababganj alone, it acquired 1,637 hectares, mostly in areas where the indigenous community lives, they alleged.

But the forest department said they acquired only 3,66.87 hectares of the 10,336.26 hectares forest. They claimed that about 5,050 hectares fell to encroachers' hands.

The deal was that the department would plant trees and the original landowners would look after them and receive 45 per cent of

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Transport owners, workers threaten indefinite strike in Sylhet Div

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The transport owners and workers on Friday threatened to go for an indefinite strike in Sylhet Division from Tuesday if their 20-point demand was not met by Monday night.

They gave this ultimatum at a meeting held at the city's Shibganj Bus Stand in the evening with Sylhet Zila Paribahan Malik-Sramik Oikya Parishad president Azizur Rahman Ambia in the chair.

On the other hand, bus and minibus service boycott programme in Jaintapur, Gowainghat and Kanaighat upazila continued for the sixth day yesterday. The Brihattar Jainta Samannaya Samity called the boycott programme demanding immediate resumption of BRTC service on Sylhet-Tamabil-Jaflong

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C a m b o d i a slaps restrictions on Bangladeshi visitors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cambodia has recently imposed restrictions on visits by nationals from Bangladesh and eight other countries, mainly with a sizeable Muslim population.

Nationals from these countries would not be issued visas on arrival, according to information available from Phnom Penh.

The other countries are Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran.

Following the regulation that was imposed in March, two renowned Bangladeshis who were invited to Cambodia to conduct training for an

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India must give up river-link plan, experts agree

REAZ AHMAD From Kathmandu, Nepal

The most controversial water project of the present time India's River-Link Project (RLP) -- must be halted immediately, and India should give up its unilateral plans for the inter-basin transfer of water from transnational rivers flowing from Nepal and Bhutan to Bangladesh through India.

This was the unanimous recommendation issued yesterday on the second day of the 'South Asia Consultation on Water: Options and Challenges' conference being held in Kathmandu.

Over a 100 experts, policy planners, civil society members,

academics, lawyers, engineers, journalists and activists of NGOs from different South Asian countries joined the meeting being held at the Nepal Administrative Staff College. The South Asian Solidarity for Rivers and People (SARP) and the Water and Energy Users' Federation of Nepal (WAFED) jointly organised the three-day consultation.

Delegates from both upper riparian Nepal and lower riparian Bangladesh raised their voices firmly against their bigger neighbour India's attitude of going ahead with the \$200 billion RLP without consulting or even informing its copriparians. Indian delegates representing NGOs, expert groups and

media personnel also echoed this opinion saying the Indian government appeared to be indifferent to the project's disastrous effects even on some of the northern and north-eastern Indian states.

WAFED Coordinator Gopal Siwakoti Chintan told the meeting India must stop the RLP immediately. He referred to three treaties signed between Nepal and India on water sharing of three rivers -- the Koshi, the Mohakali and the Gandhak -- to say that as water from these rivers flows down to India from Nepal, India must first review its treaties with Nepal first before embarking on the RLP.

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PHOTO: STAR

The champions and first and second runners-up of the Closeup fashion designing and creative writing competition pose with judges Maheen Khan, 4th from left, and Syed Shamsul Huq, in punjabi, after a gala prize-giving ceremony held at Hotel Sheraton, Dhaka.

Clarification

Saudi Arabian Airlines has clarified some of the points of a report carried in The Daily Star in its October 13 edition headlined, 'Fare plight in Hajj flight'.

The Saudi airline said the fare of \$1,050 for non-ballotee Hajj pilgrims was fixed upon an understanding between Biman Bangladesh Airlines and the Saudi national flag carrier. "The Hajj flights carry only one-way load and return flights remain almost vacant. So, financial viability is taken into consideration before determining the fare," it said.

"Moreover, before determining

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Oct 19		5-29 pm
Oct 20	5-57 am	
Prayer Timings		
October 19		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	5-00	5-30
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-37	5-42
Esha	7-30	8-00
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Dr Kamal for nat'l commission to fight corruption

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent lawyer and Gono Forum President Kamal Hossain yesterday suggested the establishment of a National Commission (NC) headed by a former chief justice with the objective of dealing with the corruption which is leading the country towards anarchy.

The NC should be empowered to play an effective role both in ensuring healthy electoral politics and free and fair elections, said Kamal while speaking at a roundtable titled "Economy and Rule of Law" organised by Oikya Prochesta at Cirdap auditorium.

The NC should be established after due consultation with all concerned, including political parties, professional organisations, and civil society, Kamal said.

"We must find ways to drive corruption and godfathers from politics as the current situation will

never produce positive results for the country," he added.

Referring to the stagnation of the country's administration, the Gono Forum president said the politicisation of the administration has created the situation.

Unjustified delays in implementing the Supreme Court judgement on the separation of the judiciary from the executive and recent reports regarding the judiciary are matters of serious concern, he noted.

Kamal also said the failure to establish the rule of law was the main cause holding back productive economic activity and investment.

Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA) Secretary General Abul Barakat said public ownership and mass access to state property would ensure proper economic

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President of Bolivia quits amid turmoil

REUTERS, La Paz, Bolivia

Carlos Mesa, a moderate political unknown, took over Bolivia's presidency yesterday after a month-long bloody revolt by the country's Indian majority forced the resignation of his predecessor.

Sanchez de Lozada, 73, submitted his resignation on Friday after the deadly riots triggered by a plan to export natural gas to the United States and Mexico. The proposal outraged many Bolivians who had grown disillusioned with his free-market economic policies.

Tens of thousands of farmers,

workers and miners marched in and around the world's highest capital for weeks to reject Sanchez de Lozada's US-backed, pro-market policies.

Mesa, the former vice president, is a respected journalist, historian and TV anchorman. He was designated by Congress to serve out Sanchez de Lozada's term, due to end in 2007. But the new leader immediately asked for early elections to be called.

News of Sanchez de Lozada's resignation saw protesters dance, clap and bang drums in the narrow

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