



Rally demands curbs on sale of toxic vegetables

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a rally in the city yesterday urged the government to ban sale of all kinds of fruits and vegetables contaminated by toxic pesticides, unwanted chemicals and poisonous colours immediately.

They also said that the toxic addition and contamination of the fruits and vegetables are 'silent killers' and are definitely a threat to future generation.

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) under its Education and Health Development Programme organised the demonstration at Shahbagh crossing in the city. A number of NGOs like Hunger Free World, Usha, Biswa Shanti Shangho, among others, participated in the rally. Most of the participants carried many kinds of vegetables during the demonstration.

"Now the city markets are flooded with contaminated fruits and vegetables which are also chemically ripen and applied with toxic colours. The government must enact laws for bringing to book persons involved in this unscrupulous business," Bapa Vice President ABM Shahjahan said while addressing the rally.

"There must be provision in the laws for banning the production and sale of these toxic pesticides, chemicals and colours. The task of the government will

PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon activists rally in the city yesterday demanding a ban on pesticides in vegetable farming and sale of chemically-contaminated fruits.

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AL scans B Chy's move Thursday

REAZ AHMAD

A month into the 'third force' hype on the political stage, the central working committee of the Awami League (ALCWC) sits on Thursday to take stock of the situation and chalk out organisational problems.

Some AL leaders said the emergence of Badruddoza-initiated third force would figure prominently on the agenda when the 73-strong ALCWC meets also to finalise schedules for countrywide mass-contact programmes and support to the leftists-called nationwide hartal for Saturday.

After Sunday's meeting of the 15-member AL presidium had touched briefly on the emergence of 'third force', the upcoming full-house sitting would offer party chief Sheikh Hasina a chance to read the party's sentiment on

former president Badruddoza's political move.

Most presidium old guards said they were least worried about the emergence of Badruddoza's platform.

Hinting at the involvement of some low-profile and inactive political leaders in the new forum, Abdus Samad Azad and Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim went hard to comment that the 'zero-plus-zero-plus-zero' equation would not produce any good.

But some leaders told The Daily Star that there was every likelihood that young leaders would speak their mind and their views might largely differ with the old guards.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, a central AL leader yesterday said formation of a new party with Badruddoza, founding secre-

tary general of BNP, at the helm and a section of 'so-called' nationalists on its ranks would wane Khaleda Zia's BNP and bring dividend to the AL.

AL general secretary, Abdul Jalil, did not comment on a platform yet to take shape, saying he was 'waiting to see what transpires'.

The ALCWC meeting is also likely to work out the mass-contact programme under which party leaders will fan out across Bangladesh to drum up public support in the run-up to its planned anti-government movement early next year.

The left 11-party grouping that has given a countrywide daylong hartal call for Saturday to denounce what it terms the BNP-led coalition's misuse, is expecting AL's support to the programme.

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PM leaves for Geneva this morning

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia leaves for Geneva this morning to attend the first ever World Summit on Information Society (WSIS).

During the three-day summit of the heads of state or government, beginning tomorrow in the Swiss city, Khaleda Zia is expected to address the plenary session on the second day of the meet.

She is leading a 31-member delegation that includes Science and Information Communication Technology (ICT) Minister Abdul Moyeen Khan, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Reaz Rahman and prime minister's Political Secretary Mosaddek Ali.

The prime minister will meet a number of world leaders, including Egyptian President Hosne Mubarak and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, on the sidelines of the summit. She will return home on December 14.

Zimbabwe quits C'wealth over suspension

REUTERS, Abuja

Zimbabwe said it was quitting the Commonwealth after the organisation extended its suspension of the southern African country for violating its democratic principles Sunday.

President Robert Mugabe's information minister said the suspension, renewed at a summit on Sunday in Nigeria, proved that "racist leaders in Britain and Australia" had taken over the group whose members are mainly former British colonies.

Talks on Zimbabwe had dominated a four-day Commonwealth summit in the Nigerian capital Abuja, causing the worst split since South Africa's apartheid in the 1970s and 1980s and dividing its 54 members largely on color lines.

Zimbabwe was suspended early

last year on the grounds Mugabe, who has ruled the country since independence in 1980, rigged his re-election in 2002 and persecuted his opponents.

Some African Commonwealth members lobbied hard for its readmission but failed to win the day.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who had led the drive to keep Harare suspended, said it would send "a clear message to people in Zimbabwe that the Commonwealth is on the side of democracy and human rights."

There was no immediate British reaction to Zimbabwe's decision to quit the Commonwealth -- which gives its members a political stage and some trade benefits -- for good.

The government in Harare said the leaders of Jamaica, Nigeria and

South Africa called Mugabe on Sunday to urge him not to pull out, but to no avail.

"Accordingly, Zimbabwe has withdrawn its membership from the Commonwealth with immediate effect," it said.

"Our problem with Britain and Australia is over the land we took over from their white kith and kin to redistribute to the indigenous black people of this country," Information Minister Jonathan Moyo told Reuters.

"These racist leaders are using the Commonwealth to try to punish us."

Mugabe accuses Britain and its allies of punishing him for land reforms that have given white-owned farms to landless blacks, an argument that finds resonance

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Nepalese PM due Dec 17

UNB, Dhaka

Nepalese Prime Minister and Chairperson of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) Surya Bahadur Thapa arrives in Dhaka on December 17.

The 12th Saarc summit is scheduled for January 4-6 in Pakistan capital of Islamabad when Nepal will hand over the chairmanship of the seven-nation regional forum to the host country.

"Prime Minister Thapa will apprise the Bangladesh prime minister about Saarc activities and progresses so far made during his two-year tenure," Nepal's Deputy Chief of Mission in Dhaka Yugnath Paudel told the news agency.

Nepal assumed the chairmanship of the Saarc in January 2001 with hosting of the 11th summit in Kathmandu.

The Nepali prime minister will

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Suspended rail staff force their reinstatement

A CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Two suspended railway employees leading a gang of over 30 people took control of the railway divisional traffic superintendent (DTS)'s office at around 12noon Sunday and forced the DTS to withdraw the suspension order.

Railway police and other railway sources said the unruly men threatened to beat up the DTS when he refused to withdraw the order, and then confined him in his office for two hours.

Akramullah Liton, a booking clerk of Barokhata railway station in Hatibandha was suspended for misappropriating over Tk 9 lakh. The other, senior TTE Motiur Rahman of Santahar railway station in Bogra district, was found guilty of drawing salary for two years and enjoying other facilities

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Maghbazar road is yet another testimony to mindless fund waste as the road divider, built only a few months ago, has been demolished for what Dhaka City Corporation called reshaping.



Torched homes force them to live in the open

17 indigenous families under goon threat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Naogaon

Seventeen indigenous families in Bhatrandra village in Niamatpur upazila of Naogaon are living a miserable life under the open sky for the last seven days as their makeshift houses on a piece of khas (government-owned) land were looted, torched or damaged by miscreants allegedly hired by a local influential person.

The poor families, mostly

day labourers and with at least 30 children, are now half-fed or starving with their belongings and stored crops looted during the attack.

Leaders of the National Aboriginal Council visited the spot yesterday and decided to go for a movement from tomorrow to protest what they described as the pre-planned attack to evict the indigenous families.

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Prayer Timings

December 9		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-15	5-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-16	5-21
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

DU admission form prices cut

DU CORRESPONDENT

Following a decision by Dhaka University's General Admission Committee, authorities yesterday withdrew the recent price increase in admission test forms.

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6 journos hurt as BNP men attack Jhalakathi meet

AKTER FARUK SHAHIN, back from Jhalakathi, Barisal

Ruling BNP activists yesterday attacked Jhalakathi Press Club and local Daily Shatakanta office and foiled a protest meeting, injuring seven including six journalists.

The programme was organised in protest at the recent attack on the correspondent of the regional

daily Dakkhinanchal, Humayun Kabir, by the cadres of Mir Ziauddin Mizan, organising secretary of the district BNP and president of Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal, witnesses and sources said.

They cordoned off the journalists of Barisal and Jhalakathi in the Jhalakathi Press Club premises for hours on end and set up check

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Sikder, 4 others sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

All five men detained Sunday for making unauthorised entry into a restricted area of Shah Amanat International Airport with a shotgun were sent to jail custody by a metropolitan magistrate's court yesterday.

The five -- Zahedul Haq Sikder, son of the owner of Dhaka's Sikder Medical College Hospital, Sohail Alam, director (marketing) and Md Salim alias Mohan, executive officer of the hospital, and Zahedul's bodyguards Mahbubul Alam and Farhad -- were produced before the court in the afternoon.

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