

Contribute to nat'l dev efforts

PM urges retired officers, employees

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday called upon the retired officers and employees to contribute to the national development efforts from their respective positions.

"You have retired from government jobs, but not from your social obligations," she told a delegation of Bangladesh Retired Officers and Employees Welfare Association.

A five-member delegation of the association paid a courtesy call on Khaleda Zia at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday afternoon.

Various activities of the Association and government programmes for retired officers and employees were discussed during the meeting.

The retired officers lauded the government for a new pay scale and inclusion of retired officers and employees for enjoying festival bonus.

Highlighting some of their plans for expanding welfare activities, the association leader sought govern-

ment assistance in the move.

Government programmes for welfare of the senior citizens also came up for discussion in the meeting. A programme for providing special discount to senior citizens in passenger train services is under consideration of the government, the meeting was informed.

The BNP government has simplified the process of availing pension by a retired public servant and introduced family pension for the spouse after death of a pension holder.

The delegation of employees welfare association comprised former Finance Secretary Kafil Uddin Mahmud, former Cabinet Secretary M Mahbu-uz-Zaman, former Chief Conservator of Forest Abdul Malik Chowdhury, former Public Service Commission (PSC) Member AM Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and former Additional Secretary M Abdul Quiyum Thakur.

EXTRA-JUDICIAL KILLINGS

Govt using Rab to cling to power

Hasina tells grassroots leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday alleged that the BNP-Jamaat-led alliance government has been using members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) to kill people extrajudicially to cling to power.

"The government has destroyed the image of the Rab battalion," Hasina said, adding that though Rab is called an elite force, its members are now involved in snatching and robbery.

Rab has created a record in extra-judicial killing under the directives of the government, the AL chief said, adding this massacre must be stopped right now.

Hasina was speaking at a closed-door view exchange meeting with the grassroots leaders of Nilphamari and Kurigram districts at party's Dhanmondi office in the city. She told the grassroots leaders

that the BNP-Jamaat government might use huge money they looted illegally from the people to create dispute inside the party ahead of the upcoming election.

The AL president directed the party leaders to resist those who would try to create dispute inside the party.

She also urged them to make a list of those ruling partymen who looted and resorted to criminal activities in their localities.

The former prime minister said Khaleda, her ministers and MPs have stolen public money which encouraged the government officials to become corrupt.

Protesting remarks of Khaleda who accused the AL chief of doing politics of arson and hartal, Hasina asked what the PM would tell now when her partymen had called hartal protesting the killing of a JCD leader in an intra-party conflict at Golapganj in Sylhet.

The AL chief apprehended that her party leaders and activists might be implicated in false cases in JCD leader killing as BNP had done before.

Hasina said they have given reform proposals as they want to establish people's rights to voting.

Hasina gave advice to grassroots leaders to take necessary preparation for the upcoming election alongside the ongoing movement.

Sounding a note of warning to them, she said everyone must maintain the party decision and discipline.

Hasina also suggested local leaders to resist the rebel leaders of the party who would contest the election in defiance of the party decision.

In response, the grassroots leaders urged Hasina to declare names of the candidates much earlier of the next election to take necessary preparation for the poll.

They also informed the party

Meet with non-govt teachers in 4 days

Says education minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Teachers and employees of non-government high schools, colleges and madrasas who are observing indefinite strike, yesterday agreed to sit for a dialogue with the education minister.

However, they vowed that they would not withdraw their strike until their principal demand of cent per cent basic salary from the government exchequer is met.

Education Minister Osman Farruk told the reporters that he might hold a discussion with the agitating teachers within three or four days. However, community primary teachers yesterday announced that they will go for an indefinite strike from August 1 and observe fast-unto-death at the Central Shaheed Minar from August 6.

"It is necessary to sit with the teachers to solve the problem and invitation letters have already been sent. It is difficult to fix a date immediately due to my illness but I will try to hold a meeting on Thursday," the minister said while talking to the reporters at his residence yesterday evening.

Meanwhile, Prof Mazharul Hannan of Shikshak Karmachari Oikya Jote said that they had agreed to sit for a dialogue with the education minister but discussion is not essential to meet their demands.

Jote led by Prof Shariful Islam also formed a human chain at Muktagang in the city yesterday while another faction of the Jote led by Selim Bhuiyan held Khulna divisional rally at Jessore Eidgah where teachers vowed to continue their strike until their demands are met.

Besides, National Front of Teachers and Employees (NFTe) yesterday tried to besiege the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) offices across the country.

Leaders of the NFTe said that they will organise a press conference today where they will announce fresh agitation programmes.

PADMA BRIDGE PROJECT

Participation of private sector stressed

BSS, Dhaka

Speakers at a workshop yesterday stressed the need for private sector participation for preparing the Padma Multipurpose Bridge Project (PMBP), construction of which is expected to begin in 2009 at an estimated cost of 1.4 billion US dollar.

The private sector participation in the operation and maintenance of the bridge could provide an effective support to the government and donor agencies, they said.

Shinsuke Nagai.

Three keynote papers on different aspects of private public partnership in the PMBP were presented at the daylong workshop.

A keynote paper said that the PMBP could provide better inland transport system, link in the Trans-Asian Highway System, additional rail link for more efficiency and effective support service in case of any disaster.

CONTROVERSIAL APPOINTMENTS

Resignation of RU VC demanded

RU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Progotishil Chhatra Jote (PCJ) of Rajshahi University staged a demonstration on the campus yesterday demanding resignation of the vice-chancellor for appointing "controversial" persons as teachers.

Leaders of the two organisations at a rally in front of central library also protested selection of a 'controversial person' as a teacher in marketing department, who was allegedly dismissed from a university earlier for his alleged immoral activities.

They demanded removal of the VC for allowing Shibir leader Salehi to appear at masters examination. Mahbub Alam Salehi, president of RU Islamic Chhatra Shibir (ISC) unit is a key suspect in Prof S Taher Ahmed murder case.

They also demanded arrest and punishment to the killers of Prof Taher.

The leaders expressed concern over the selection for appointment of eight teachers against two vacant posts in marketing department. They said the 'controversial appointments' will tarnish image of the university in the country and abroad.

They threatened to launch a tougher agitation if the authorities do not stop such "illegal" appointments and allow Salehi to appear in the examination.

BCL RU unit President Ibrahim Hossain Moon, General Secretary Ayan Uddin, leaders Zahid Al, Rashidul Islam, Reajul, Prince and Masud spoke at the rally.



Sarkari Unnayan Prakaala Karmachari Karmachari Kalyan Parishad begins a fast-unto-death at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday to press their five-point demand, including enactment of a law to transfer their jobs to revenue sector.

UK Shadow Secy of State visits Grameen Bank

BSS, Dhaka

Andrew Mitchell, the United Kingdom's Shadow Secretary of State for International Development and Lord Ashcroft, KCMG, paid a two-day visit to Bangladesh on July 17-18 to observe and discuss development issues, particularly micro-finance, water and sanitation.

His programmes included visits to Grameen Bank and Wateraid projects in Dhaka and elsewhere in Bangladesh and a discussion with Brac and other members of the Bangladesh development community, a British High Commission press release said yesterday.

RMG unit closed after labour unrest

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Several hundred readymade garment workers went on a rampage at Waqif Knit Fabrics (Pvt) Ltd at Konabari inside the BSCIC Industrial Area as they did not receive their pay hike and overtime that the authorities had promised earlier.

The factory was shut down following the workers' unrest, sources said.

The factory authorities announced in the wake of worker unrest on June 17 that the worker salaries would be raised soon, claimed some agitated workers.

The workers yesterday gathered to collect their payments and were shocked to find out that their last month's salaries were even less than that of the previous months.

Their total take-home salary has decreased even though the salary has been increased by five percent as the authorities have cut their overtime bills to 60 percent from earlier 75 percent, some workers complained.

Infuriated at this situation, the workers refrained from work while some went berserk and vandalised some factory machinery and the administration offices.

Witnesses said the outburst and ransacking went on for a couple of hours which damaged ten comput-

Property worth Tk 25 lakh gutted at Hotel Rajmoni

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Valuables worth Tk 25 lakh were gutted in a fire at Hotel Rajmoni Isha Khan in the city yesterday morning.

The fire originated from room no. 812 at the 7th floor of the hotel at about 10:00am but the reason could not be known immediately.

However, fire fighters doused the flames within half an hour.

Fire Service and Civil Defence officials said the fire gutted two air conditioning machines, a sofa set, a fridge, a television set, carpet and bed of the guest room that worth about Tk 25 lakh.

RMCH female staff held

RU CORRESPONDENT

A female staff member of Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital (RMCH) was held at a ward with huge bandage, syringe and medicare materials of the hospital on Monday night.

She was a class IV employee of the ward.

Sources said 118 syringes, several bundle gauges, Finail, Herpic and huge bandage was found from her possession.

Police said she was leaving the hospital compound with some baggage.

Police challenged her on suspicion and found the hospital properties in her baggage, sources said.

Security beefed up in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Security measures were beefed up in Khulna City from noon yesterday following information that Khulna Citizens' Forum (KCF) will lay a siege to Khulna Power Station at Khalishpur to prevent state minister for Power Major General (Retd) Anowarul Kabir Talukder from entering there during his seven-hour official tour in Khulna today.

Additional security forces have been deployed there apprehending subversive activities.

KCF will also be prevented from showing black flags to the state minister when he will go to office of West Zone Power Distribution Company Limited (WZPDC) at 12:00noon today to discuss matters relating to power crisis in the south-western region.

The state minister will visit Khulna Power Station at 9:30am today.

KCF, that is backed by all NGOs and opposition parties, urged the people to stop payment of electricity bills from next month if power crisis is not resolved by July 31.

PM lauded for introducing freedom for girls

UNB, Dhaka

UN Under Secretary General Thoraya Ahmed Obaid said that free education and stipend for girls up to 12th class, introduced under the leadership of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, will improve socio-economic status of women in the country and accelerate economic development.

It will also contribute towards redefining the gender relationship in society, observed Thoraya Obaid, also the Executive Director of UNFPA. She recently visited Bangladesh.

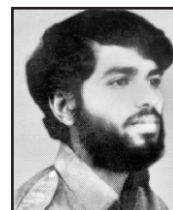
She made the comments in a letter to the PM, saying Bangladesh, despite its many challenges, has recorded enormous success in the field of gender equality and fertility decline.

"Excellency, your presence at the Imam Conference reflects your firm commitment to address national issues in a culturally sensitive manner. We deeply appreciate the finalisation of the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) last year, which shows the firm commitment of your government towards the attainment of the ICPD agenda and realisation of the Millennium Development Goals," Mrs Thoraya observed in her letter to the PM.

She said the successful implementation of the PRS will certainly help Bangladesh in improving the quality of life of its people.

The UN Under Secretary General also thanked the Prime Minister for giving her time during her visit in Bangladesh last May.

Obituary



Mahmud Alam Madhu, freedom fighter, passed away at the Millennium Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 52, says a press release.

Madhu was the first trainer of Roumari Camp under Sector-11 during the War of Liberation.

He left behind his mother, two daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

He will be buried with state honour at the Rahmatganj graveyard in Siraganj after namaz-e-janaza at Shiraganj Khan Shahab Eidgah.

Fahmida Tarek (Rimi)

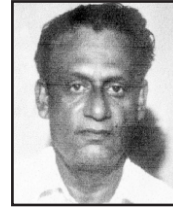


Fahmida Tarek (Rimi), wife of Enayet Hossain, passed away due to brain hemorrhage at Apollo Hospitals in the city on July 16 at the age of 35, says a press release.

She left behind her parents, one brother and husband to mourn her death.

Her kulkhwani will be held at her father's residence at Shewrapara in the city after Asr prayers on July 21.

Alhaj Yakub Ali Faruk



Alhaj Yakub Ali Faruk, owner of Popular Rubber Industry and a social worker, passed away at Apollo Hospitals in the city on July 17 at the age of 75, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, two sons, three daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

His kulkhwani will be held at his residence at 17/1, Shiddheshwari Road in the city after Asr prayers on July 21.

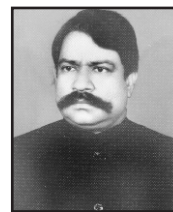
Zahirul Alam Chowdhury

BSS, Dhaka

Zahirul Alam Chowdhury, a retired government officer, died at the Holy Family Red Crescent Hospital here in the early hours of yesterday at the age of 68.

Zahirul Alam, father of Chowdhury Mohammad Ali Kajawi, a sports reporter of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), was admitted to the hospital on July 14 following a brain hemorrhage.

Death anniversary



Today is the seventh death anniversary of Dr Md Zahir Khan, former chairman of Bangladesh Krishi Bank, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at his Gulshan residence after Asr prayers on Friday.

Relatives and admirers have been requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Fazlul Karim



Today is the 12th death anniversary of Fazlul Karim, former chief arboriculturist of the Roads and Highways Department, says a press release.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to pray salvation of the departed soul.

WEATHER TODAY

Moderately heavy falls likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind are likely at many places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Sylhet, Chittagong, Barisal and Khulna divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy falls are also likely at places. Met Office in a forecast. It said that day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Highest temperature 35.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sayedpur and lowest 24.9 degree Celsius at Sandwip.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:48pm today and rises at 5:22am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.3	27.5	72	76
Chittagong	31.5	26.9	83	85
Rajshahi	34.7	26.7	79	76
Khulna	32.5	27.2	73	87
Barisal	30.6	27.5	84	92
Sylhet	32.7	27.0	88	91
Cox's Bazar	30.5	25.2	92	89

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar
Centre for Advanced Research in Social Sciences of Dhaka University (DU) will organise a seminar. Venue: 401, Lecture Theatre. Time: 11:00am.

Sit in programme
Nagorik Sanghati will hold a sit in programme demanding security of Ahmadiyahs. Venue: In front of National Museum. Time: 4:00pm.

Weekly meeting
Weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka will be held. Venue: Hotel Sarina. Time: 8:00pm.

View exchange
The handling over ceremony of Arts and Crafts from Switzerland will be held. Venue: National Museum. Time: 2:00pm.

meeting
Bangladesh Mahila Parishad will hold a view exchange meeting with judges, lawyers and civil society members on the draft bill of Citizenship Act. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 4:00pm.

Book launch
A book titled 'Who gets what: A gender analysis of public expenditure in Bangladesh' published by University Press Limited will be unveiled. Venue: RDEC Building conference room, LGED Bhaban. Time: 4:00pm.

Handing over ceremony
The handing over ceremony of Arts and Crafts from Switzerland will be held. Venue: National Museum. Time: 2:00pm.