

THIRD KARNAPHULI BRIDGE

Suspend all activities regarding construction of pillar bridge

Opposition leaders urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition leaders at a discussion in the capital yesterday demanded that the government immediately suspend all activities regarding construction of a pillar bridge across the river Karnaphuli in Chittagong.

The government should leave the decision of constructing the third Karnaphuli bridge for the next elected government that will step forward after considering all the aspects and through consultation with experts and local people, they said at the discussion presided over by Chittagong city Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

Expressing solidarity with the Chittagong mayor's movement against constructing a bridge with a number of pillars, they said a pillar bridge will create siltation in the river and badly affect the Chittagong seaport located on the riverbank.

The discussants expressed views in favour of constructing either a suspension bridge across the river or a tunnel beneath the river for direct road communication between south and north parts of Chittagong district.

Demanding immediate suspension of all activities regarding the construction of the pillar bridge, general secretary of main opposition Awami League (AL) MA Jalil said there is no need for quick decision on this important issue as only 85 days remain before the government's tenure expires.

"Let the next elected government decide in this regard," he said, adding that they would do everything necessary to resist the government's move for constructing a pillar bridge across the Karnaphuli.

Chittagong Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury said the next course of agitation would be declared at a meeting on August 5.

He vowed to resist the move for

construction of a pillar bridge over the river Karnaphuli for the sake of 'national interest' and sought support from the national level leaders.

"We think construction of a hanging bridge across the river would be the right decision in favour of the seaport and the nation," he said.

Describing the background of the port and previous studies on the river ecology, the Chittagong mayor pointed out that the Chittagong Port authority that opposed the idea of constructing a pillar bridge at the upstream was ready to provide at least Tk 200 crore for constructing a suspension bridge.

Such a bridge across the Karnaphuli may create massive siltation and hinder the activities at the country's main seaport, said AL president member Tofail Ahmed.

All the experts who studied the bridge site rejected the proposal of constructing a pillar bridge across the river fearing negative impact on

the port, he said.

The government's position on the bridge reflects the entire episode of its corruption, plundering of national wealth and mismanagement, he added.

"The government should choose the options that would leave less negative impact on the navigability of the river," eminent lawyer and Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain said, adding that an elected government cannot act whimsically.

There are many suspension bridges in the world, he said.

Hasanul Haque Inu said the communications minister who failed in running the ministry came with the proposal of constructing a bridge across the Karnaphuli river just to get commission.

The interest of the river and the port must get priority over the government's interest, he said. He expressed his views in favour of building a suspension bridge or a tunnel beneath the river bed.

Barrister Amir-Ul Islam urged the people to launch a national level movement against the government's initiative for constructing the pillar bridge. He observed that all the rivers in the country are facing encroachment.

The meeting was also addressed by Pankaj Bhattacharya, Dilip Biswas, barrister Rokonuddin Mahmud, Mujahidul Islam Selim and a number of river experts, social leaders and environmentalists.

Idris Ali, Ansarul Karim, Maynuddin Hasan Chowdhury, former army chief Harun Ur Rashid, Prof Nurul Islam, Khorsheed Alam, Syeda Rizwan Hossain, among others, participated in the general discussion.



Chittagong city Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury speaks at a discussion in the city yesterday. On his left are Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil and JSD President Hasanul Haque Inu and on his right is JSD leader Mainuddin Khan Badal.

Reduce suffering of overseas workers

Expatriate Bangladeshis urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expatriate Bangladeshi citizens yesterday urged the government to take effective steps to reduce the sufferings of overseas workers and simplify the procedure for casting votes in national elections.

25-storey Press Club media complex okayed

BSS, Dhaka

The design of the 25-storey media complex of National Press Club (NPC) was unanimously approved yesterday at the Extraordinary General Meeting of the club members.

General Secretary Shawkat Mahmud presented the concept paper of the media complex to the members at the meeting, presided over by club President Rezauddin Ahmed.

Kazi Arif Ahmed of Dexterous Consultants Limited (Dicon), the designer organisation, explained the design of the media complex in detail.

"After the construction of the media centre, this will be the greatest architectural design of the country," Arif Ahmed said.

The media complex will comprise open stage, plaza, theatre hall, big space auditorium, banquet hall, two swimming pools, a number of seminar rooms, mosque, floor space for newspapers and other media, floor for different national and international establishments including banks, modern restaurants, and various types of other facilities.

Tk 120 crore will be needed to complete the proposed media complex, a press release of the Club said. Different suggestions and advices were given by the members for funding for building the media complex.

The daily Jugantor Editor Golam Sarwar described the proposed design of the media complex as 'excellent'.

NTV Chairman Alhaj Mosaddeq Ali, a new member of the club, described 'Dicon' as one of the best-known organisations in the country.

He hoped that the Press Club will hold its dignity and tradition by building this media complex.

Fazlul Karim, Sheikh Rakib Uddin, Ershad Mojumder, Swapan Saha, MA Aziz, Abbas Uddin Absari, Khondaker Golam Azad, Amirul Islam Kagoji, Altaf Mahmud, Enamul Haque, Manzurul Ahsan Bulbul, Subash Chandra Badal, Shamsul Haque Durrani, Omar Farooq, Monwar Ahmed, Rasheed Ahmed and Salahuddin Ahmed took part in the discussions.

They also called for making expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry and Bangladesh missions abroad more efficient to pursue economic diplomacy with other nations.

The call was made by the leaders of Bangladesh Antarjati Prabashi Kalyan Samity (BAPKS) and Bangladesh Samity Riyadh (BSR) at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city.

Their demands also included facilities for skill development training and easy bank loan for prospective overseas workers, enacting tougher laws to reduce their hazards caused by different recruiting agencies and other mid-level commission agents, investment of their remittances for industrialisation and providing the expatriates with tax identification number (TIN) under special arrangement.

While mentioning the contribution of 35 lakh Bangladeshi expatriates across the globe to national economy BAPKS President Dr Md Abdul Rahman said the total inflow of remittances in last fiscal year was Tk 35000 crore.

"This amount could reach Tk 55000 crore if Hundi business could be stopped," he added.

Regarding manpower export he said the government should legislate tougher laws so that no recruiting agency can deceive overseas workers who are usually poor.

He alleged that in most cases Bangladeshi workers go abroad spending much higher amount than logical but just after reaching the airport of foreign countries the agencies compel the workers to sign deals which permit the employers to pay the workers much less than they were supposed to get.

He said if prospective workers were provided bank loans with five percent interest, the sufferings of the workers would have reduced to a great extent.

Pointing to complicated voting procedure for expatriate Bangladeshis abroad, he said some simple steps could ensure their participation in national election but nothing is done in this regard.

BAPKS President Dr Abdul Rahman read out a written statement at the press conference which was attended by its Secretary General Syed Nasiruddin, BSR President Engr Md Ruhul Amin and its Secretary General Mahbubur Rahman.

CTG ROAD MISHAP One burnt alive, three vehicles gutted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

One person was burnt alive and 20 others injured while three vehicles were completely gutted in a road accident on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway yesterday.

The identity of the victim, a covered van driver, could not be ascertained and seven critically burnt were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

Witnesses said the accident took place when a Dhaka bound covered van carrying around 30 drums of chemical Venyle Acitate Monomar (a highly flammable chemical), collided head-on with a Chittagong bound truck loaded with poultry, feed from opposite direction near Sultana Jute Mill at Choto Kumira area under Sitakunda upazila at around 7:15am.

In the mean time, another Chittagong bound passenger bus from Feni collided with the two vehicles from behind in a few seconds as the driver lost control over steering that resulted in an explosion with a big bang, the jute mill workers said.

Fire engulfed the three vehicles that left the covered van driver burnt alive on the spot and 20 others injured.

Around fifteen passengers of the bus tried to come out quickly through the window but six of them were severely burnt.

The injured identified as covered van helper Md Masud, Obayedul Hasan, Morshed Alam, Md Mostafa, Farida Yasmin, her daughter Oishi and an unidentified person were admitted to CMCH at about 8:50am.

Of them, Masud and Oishi are in critical condition, CMCH sources said.

The chemical, carried by the covered van, which is highly combustible, might have been the main cause of the fire, said injured Obayedul, the area manager of Libra, a pharmaceuticals company, while talking to The Daily Star at ward no. 27 in CMCH.

According to the fire service, six fire fighting units from different fire stations of the city and the district rushed to the spot and extinguished the fire after two and half hours of efforts.



Family of slain former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria and civil society members stage a demonstration as a part of Blue for Peace Programme in front of the Bangabandhu Museum in the city yesterday demanding proper investigation into the killing of the former minister.

JCD leader caught red-handed for mugging in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday caught a JCD leader red-handed yesterday afternoon while he was running away after robbing a businessman of Tk one lakh and two mobile phone sets on Sylhet Railway Station bypass road.

The members of the elite force also recovered the cellphone sets from the possession of JCD leader Sumon. However, the accomplices of Suman managed to escape.

Rab sources said a gang of about 10 muggers riding on five motorcycles intercepted the private car of businessman Shabu Miah at around 2:00pm. They broke the window of the car and took away the money and cellphone sets from him at gunpoint on the busy road.

Hundreds of people witnessed the crime, but nobody came to the aid of the businessman.

After committing the mugging, all but Suman fled the scene as he could not start the engine of his motorcycle.

Some pedestrians then informed two Rab men who were passing the area by a motorcycle. They immediately caught hold of Suman, along with his motorcycle.

Suman is the president of Teti union unit of JCD, local people said.

Arrest of militants an eyewash: Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the nabbing of 26 militants by BNP-Jamaat-led coalition government from Bhaluka upazila in Mymensingh is nothing but an eyewash as the US assistant secretary of state is now visiting the country.

"Whenever any foreign guests visit the country, the alliance government is seen busy in arresting militants to make them happy," Hasina said, adding, "The government had earlier nabbed the militant outfit Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh's (JMB) kingpins Shaikh Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai when US President Bush was visiting neighbouring India."

She said the government always nabs militants under pressure from the international community. The AL chief was speaking at a view-exchange meeting with her party's grassroots level leaders from Jhenidah district at her Dhanmondi office in the capital.

Expressing her concern over the activities of fanatic militant outfits in the country, Hasina said they are the partners of the alliance government.

She alleged that there are still several training camps of militant outfits across the country and these must be traced out to catch those militants.

"There are 2000 suicide squads of militant outfits in the country but none have been arrested so far though the government claimed

uprooting the militancy from Bangladesh," she added.

Criticising bitterly the activities of Jamaat, Hasina said she came to know that this fundamentalist party has 15,000 militant guerrillas.

She said the alliance government has turned the country into a death valley by patronising the fanatic militants and resorting to bombing and terrorism.

The AL president alleged that under the patronisation of the government, militancy has spread like a wildfire in the country snatching away peace and tranquillity from people's life.

She alleged that the government is indulging in unbridled corruption from 'top to bottom in its administration' and said all the persons in the alliance government are corrupt and they are swallowing public money at the fag end of their tenure.

Calling upon her party's grassroots level leaders to strengthen the party in their areas building a broad based unity to tide over the present precarious situation, the former prime minister said if her party is voted to power again they would establish security and peace in public life ensuring rule of law.

Senior AL leaders including Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Matia Chowdhury, Sheikh Fazul Karim Selim, Kazi Zafarullah, Obaidul Quader, Abdul Mannan Khan and Noor-e-Alam Chowdhury Litan were present on the occasion.

JCD FACTIONAL FEUD Cops beat JCD men at JN varsity: 10 hurt

DU CORRESPONDENT

At least ten activists of Jatiyataabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) were injured at Jagannath University as police beat them up following a clash between two factions of JCD on the campus yesterday over a trifling matter.

Two of the injured were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), while the rest of the injured received first aid at different clinics and hospitals at old Dhaka, hospital sources said.

The incident occurred on the third day after the university reopened following a 15-day unscheduled closure.

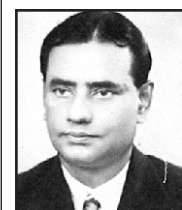
Witnesses said two factions of Jagannath University unit JCD, one led by General Secretary Anisur Rahman Khokon and another led by President ABM Parvez Reza, locked horns yesterday morning on the campus, equipped with sticks.

Sources said that Shohag, an activist of president group and Muhsin of general secretary group had a hustle over taking part in a procession of university unit JCD that was marching towards Muktagang to join a programme of its parent organisation BNP on Wednesday.

As a sequel of Wednesday's incident, two factions took position on the campus. Police charged baton on two factions and dispersed them right after they were engaged in a clash at around 11:30am, sources added.

ABM Parvez Reza denied commenting on the incident but said soon actions would be taken against persons responsible.

Death anniversary



Today is the 29th death anniversary of renowned physician Dr Nawab Ali, says a press release.

He was born in Matlab North in Chandpur in 1902 and died in Dhaka on August 4 in 1977.

Dr Nawab Ali Smriti Parishad has taken elaborate programmes to observe the day.



Today is the fourth anniversary of Air Commodore Ghazi Lutfur Rahman, says a press release.

Friends, admirers and relatives have been requested to pray for eternal peace of his departed soul.

He died on this day in 2002 at the age of 66.

Chehlum



Chehlum of Syed Nurul Huq, a retired director of Power Development Board and father of engineer Syed Ziaul Haque, secretary to Bangladesh Computer Council, will be held today, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad and doa mahfil will be held at Ahmedbagh (Bashabo) Mosque after Asr prayers.

Relatives, colleagues and admirers have been requested to join the milad and doa mahfil and pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Shamsul Islam

Chehlum of Air Commodore (Retd) Shamsul Islam will be held at his Banani residence after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

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

Mokhlesur Rahman Khan



Chehlum of Mokhlesur Rahman Khan Badsha Mia, a social worker, will be held at his residence at Demra in the city after Juma prayers today, says a press release.

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

Qulqhwani

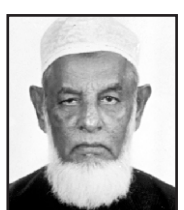


Qulqhwani of Zahida Akhtar Mukti will be held at her village home at Shantanpara in Ghorasal under Narsingdi today, says a press release.

Friends, relatives and admirers have been requested to attend the qulqhwani.

Mukti passed away due to cancer at a hospital on June 26 at the age of 25.

Obituary



Alhaj Mohammad Aziz-ullah, chairman of Aziz Pipes Limited, passed away at the Birdem Hospital in the city on August 2, says a press release.

He left behind his mother, wife, five sons and four daughters to mourn his death.

He was laid to rest at his village home at Bipulasar in Monoharganj under Comilla district after namaz-e-zanajia at Kakrail Mosque in Dhaka.

Karmul Ahsan Mukul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Karmul Ahsan Mukul, son-in-law of former speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali, passed away due to a massive cardiac arrest on Wednesday at a city clinic at the age of 48.

Mukul is the husband of gynecologist Dr Shahana Razzak and proprietor of Sharifa Printers & packagers' Private Limited in Khulna.

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