

188 youth bodies get Tk 20 lakh from PM's welfare fund

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday doled out Tk 20 lakh to 188 youth organisations aiming to involve unemployed youths in self-employment activities, reports UNB.

The hands of every worker should be engaged in productive activities to face the formidable challenge of the Twenty First century she said giving away the money from the Welfare Trust Fund of the Youth and Sports Ministry at a simple ceremony at the International Conference Centre.

The great challenge of the 21st century is confronting us. The youth community can play the key role in facing the challenge, the Prime Minister said. She hoped the youths would play the role as guide in the nation building activities.

She said the budgetary allocation for the youth sector was Tk 6.93 crore in the 1989-90 fiscal while it surged up to Tk 205 crore in the current financial year. The current allocation is 30 times as high as that of 1989-90 fiscal.

Not only the budgetary allocation, Begum Zia said, all the undertaken youth-development programmes of her

government had already achieved tremendous success.

So far, 3.15 lakh youths and women have been provided training. Of them, she told the function, 60 per cent have already undertaken self-employment activities.

She said the Welfare Trust Fund of the Ministry of Youth and Sports was providing grants to those youths who are preparing development-oriented projects to alleviate poverty and trying for self-reliance, making arrangement for self-employment for the youths.

The Prime Minister said last year 67 organisations were given Tk 10 lakh as grants, and the amount was doubled this year. Gradually, the youth organisations are getting government grants.

"We know that this grant is not sufficient to meet the requirements. Yet I hope that this little amount will help the youths on their way to self-reliance."

Congratulating the recipients of the money, Begum Zia hoped that the organisations would contribute to the national uplift endeavours through proper utilisation of public wealth.

Thousands move to high land to escape US flood

NEW YORK, Jan 21: Thousands of people were moved to high ground for much of Saturday in Pennsylvania and hundreds more were urged to get out of communities on the Delaware and Ohio rivers to escape devastating flooding, reports AP.

"We are bracing for a very dangerous weekend," said John Comey, spokesman for the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency.

At least 30 deaths were blamed on the combination of cold, blizzard conditions and flooding since midweek from the plains to the East Coast. Four people were missing.

Hundreds of roads and bridges were closed by high water, along with some water and sewage plants. Barges and pleasure boats broke from their moorings and drifted on the Ohio River and its upper tributaries.

A burst of record warmth that contributed to the rapid snow melt and flooding in the East was squeezed off the continent by arctic temperatures.

Under this project, low income people are provided with medicine, blood and treatment free of cost. On the other hand, the Ministry's Rural Social Welfare Service (RSS) programme providing credit to eight lakh members of 51,000 groups in the country will also be expanded in view of its 96 per cent loan recovery rate, said the source.

"Some of the programmes under the Ministry need expansion and evaluation," said Shah Abdul Hannan, Additional Secretary in charge of the Ministry. "We are giving great importance to consolidating these programmes and making them more effective for poverty alleviation."

Hannan added that the expansion of the welfare programmes will be made with minimum increase in administrative cost.

Justice Sarker

From Page 1

He was buried at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mirpur.

Justice Sarker was born at Haldibari in Cooch Behar, West Bengal, on January 2, 1932.

He took active part in the Historic Language Movement in 1952 and was decorated with a medal by late President Ziaur Rahman on February 24, 1981.

Justice Sarker was elevated as a judge to the high court division on December 30, 1983 and the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court on June 8, 1995.

He left behind his wife, four sons and one daughter.

Condolences

BSS adds: President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday expressed his profound grief and sorrow at the sudden death of Justice Ismailuddin Sarker, a Justice of the Appellate Division of the Bangladesh Supreme Court.

On hearing his death news, President Biswas went to his residence to pay respect to the late justice and offered munajat for the salvation of the departed soul. He talked to the members of the bereaved family and consoled them to bear the loss with fortitude.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has expressed her profound grief at the death of Justice Ismailuddin Sarker.

In a condolence message yesterday, the Prime Minister said Justice Sarker was an eminent jurist and he made significant contribution to uphold the rule of law in the country. His death is a big loss to the country's judiciary, she observed.

Speaker Shaikh Razzaque Ali also expressed his deep shock and sorrow at the death of Justice Mohammad Ismailuddin Sarker.

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Awami League President Sheikh Hasina addressing a public meeting at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday.

— Star photo

JP warns govt of agitation from Jan 31

The Jatiya Party yesterday called upon the government to resign before January 31, otherwise it warned that it would go for an all-out agitation to bring down the government, reports UNB.

Addressing a press conference, JP acting Chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury announced a 9-day mass contact programme to motivate the candidates to withdraw nominations and election officials not to conduct the one-party farcical election.

Mizan also urged the government to resign in response to the people's demand, otherwise, he warned, fresh anti-government agitation programme would be launched from January 31.

He said that the new programme, beginning today will be the second phase of movement and the third and final phase will be launched on January 31.

Moudud Ahmed blamed the government for the ongoing crisis and said it was unfortunate that the party which came to power through ballot became undemocratic. He said the present crisis was the result of its obstinacy.

Begum Roushan Ershad, who also spoke press conference, said the political crisis being faced by the country for last two years was aggravated by the decision of the BNP government to hold unilateral election — ignoring Opposition's demand.

She called upon the people to get united and make the Opposition programme aimed at protecting democracy successful.

Stop polls process

From Page 1

she said pointing to the Lalbagh killings after DCC mayoral election.

She also suggested that arms drive be launched in the real depots of illegal arms, including the residential halls of the Dhaka University and other educational institutions. "None can carry illegal arms without the protection of the government," she observed.

"The movement for restoring people's voting rights will be continued until the resignation of the government, until the demand for neutral caretaker government can be realised," Hasina declared calling upon the people to continue the ongoing movement.

Hasina said running a one-party parliament, holding a unilateral election and infringing people's franchise are flagrant violation of the Constitution.

People rejected the election of 1988, and they will again reject it in 1996," she said, adding "the lust for power of the Prime Minister is backpedalling the country towards conflict and confrontation."

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About the arms-recovery drive, the Awami League chief said another "farce has been started. In the name of arms recovery, opposition leaders were being subject to harassment."

Charging the Home Minister with distributing illegal arms among the government party "terrorists," she suggested the members of armed forces to take that list

Lawyers demand removal of N'ganj thana OC

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Jan 21: Lawyers of the town demanded removal of two police officials including the OC of Narayanganj thana while they continued boycott of the Magistrate's Court here for the second day today.

The police officials are the Officer-in-Charge (OC) Nurul Alam and Sub-Inspector Selim.

The lawyers took the decision at a meeting at the auditorium of the district Bar Association this morning with senior vice president of the association Advocate Akther Hossain in the chair.

They began boycott of First Class Magistrate's court here after police assaulted a lawyer in the courtroom and baton charged some others in the room of the OC of Narayanganj thana on Saturday.

The BCL activists had burnt the effigy demanded resignation of the PM.

The accused are Saiful Islam, city president of the party, All Akbar Tipu, Dipak, Jahangir, Jamaluddin Rumi, Lal, Ripon, Azad, Subrata and Shefarul Islam.

"It will be credible, if people exercise their voting rights ... It is the duty of political parties to allow voters to cast their votes and help flourish democracy."

Islam, who negotiated from the BNP with the Opposition on the issue of interim caretaker government, said the government side had given enough concession to the Opposition to have a compromise on a caretaker government.

Addressing a rally at the northern gate of Baitul Mukarram Mosque, he alleged that the ruling party, ignoring the demand of the people, had conspired to hold a "farcical" election to serve the interest of their masters abroad.

He announced an eight-day nationwide programme to force the government to step down.

Presided over by City Jamaat Ameer A T M Azharul Islam, the rally was addressed by party's Secretary General Maulana Maitur Rahman Nizami, Assistant Secretaries General Muhammad Quamruzzaman and Ali Ashan Muhammad Mujahid and Publicity Secretary Abdul Kader Mollah.

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