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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing the annual conference '96 of the Dhaka Reporters Unity at a city hotel yesterday. — PID photo

PM: Press freedom

From Page 1

She also gave away 'Monajatuddin Memorial Gold Medal' award to one reporter and 'DRU President Award' to two reporters for outstanding performance. The awards have been introduced by the Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina observed that professionalism in journalism and strong editorial institutions could not develop in the past due to a legacy of autocratic regimes, censorship, use of advertisement and newspaper quotas, division of the journalists' union and harassment of newsmen.

"I believe that newsmen belong to no party. They will work for the greater causes of the people and the country. Blind political views suppress truth and encourage yellow journalism," the Prime Minister said. She, however, expressed her great pleasure to see that all reporters of the city irrespective of their political beliefs got united under the banner of the DRU and hoped, "this unity will definitely help raise the professional standard of journalism."

Leaders of the DRU took the opportunity in urging the premier to repeal the Official Secrecy Act and provide facilities required for development of journalism in the country.

The Prime Minister assured her government's best efforts in offering more facilities to newsmen for development of journalism.

Prime Minister said her government has a plan to turn the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) into a 'centre for skill development' and added, "our efforts will always be for developing professional skill of newsmen and give them the latest information technology." In this regard she mentioned that through the Internet, Bangladesh has become a part of the global information super-highway.

She said that journalists' working styles and technique have changed a lot with the development of information technology in the world but Bangladesh is lagging behind. Facilities like satellite television, Internet and other advanced tele-communication systems have made the world a 'global village' observed Hasina adding that the government would render all assistance to develop the profession of journalism in the country.

The Prime Minister said the Fifth Wage Board for journalists has already been formed to review salaries and other facilities and assured that the housing problem of newsmen would be considered.

The Prime Minister recalled that newsmen were subject to attacks during BNP rule when police had entered into Jatiya Press Club and beat journalists. Termining reporters the lifeline of newspapers, she said, "reporters' job is very risky. It is reporters' responsibility to gather news and present those in an objective way." In this regard, she praised late reporter Monajatuddin.

Sheikh Hasina said, people's participation was missing in the process of transfers of power from 1975 to 1990. "But ballot is more powerful than bullet and the right to franchise has been achieved. Now our fight is to establish peoples' right to have meals," said the premier.

She lauded the courageous role of journalists in democratic movements.

Prof Abu Sayeed said, the quotas of government advertisement and newspaper are not used now as a tool to suppress the press. He said that the government was well aware of

Maid dies at Mugdapara in city

By Staff Correspondent

A maid died at a house at South Mugdapara in the city Friday, police said yesterday.

Police took the body of Fatema Begum, 20, from her employer's residence Friday evening and sent it to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy.

Fatema, daughter of one Siddique Miah of Balipara village under Indurkani thana of Pirojpur district had been working in the house for about three years, police added.

ADB concerned

From Page 1

that BOU had been doing under Prof Ali's leadership, who met all the basic criterion set by it regarding appointment of a VC.

The five criterion set by the Bank, which provides 85 per cent funding for BOU, say that the VC should be at least 55-year old, should have an excellent academic background with national and international experience on distance learning and should have publications and technical expertise on the method that heavily relies on electronic media.

ADB also noted that while appointing a new VC, these criterion should have been taken into consideration, and it should have been taken into confidence about a successor to Prof Ali, sources said.

The new VC is likely to take charge on October 21. He was elected to the VC panel for Dhaka University recently.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Habiganj by-polls: Fight between Suranjit, Siraj

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, Sept 5: Electioneering in Habiganj-2 constituency of the Jatiya Sangsad comprising Baniachang and Ajmiriganj thanas has gained momentum.

By-election in the constituency will be held on October 15. The seat fell vacant following the death of Sharifuddin Ahmed MP of Awami League.

Six candidates had filed nominations for contesting in the by-election. Two of them including BNP candidate former minister Jakaria Khan Chowdhury withdrew their candidature earlier leaving four in the race including Awami League's Suranjit Sengupta and Jatiya Party's Sirajul Hossain Khan.

There will be a tough contest between the AL and JP candidates, according to political observers. The election scenario had changed following the withdrawal of BNP candidate, they said.

Suranjit is facing a 'little problem' from some local AL leaders who aspired to be candidates, an observer said. "But he is trying to manage the situation with blessings from the party high command," he said.

Sengupta has an advantage because he is a ruling party candidate, another observer said.

The JP nominee is also facing "some intra-party conflict." The local and non-local issue may also give him an advantage, the observers said.

Total number of voters in the constituency is 176,407 including 88,506 female voters, said an official.

Slum dweller killed in Ctg wall collapse

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Oct 5: A slum dweller was killed and another injured when a hill-protection wall collapsed due to torrential rainfall last night at Chattershari road, police said.

The wall collapsed over the hut of Abdur Razzak, 65, killing him instantly and injuring another family member, police added.

Police recovered the body this morning and recorded a general diary with Panchalish thana.

Met office said 110 mm rainfall was recorded during the 24 hours between 3 pm on Friday and 3 pm today.

Arsenic-panic grips Chandpur village

CHANDPUR, Oct 5: Panic gripped Chandpur village in Faridganj thana of the district after arsenic elements were detected in tubewell water, reports UNB.

The panic created in the area after excessive quantity of arsenic was found in water tested by a specialist of Japan's Asia Arsenic Network who visited the village late August.

Several people of the village who fell ill after taking tubewell water were rushed to Dhaka, according to doctors of Faridganj Thana Health Complex and Chandpur Sadar Hospital.

Public Health Engineering Department's (PHE) Executive Engineer A K M Mainuddin in an exclusive interview with UNB has sealed up as many as 5/6 tubewells in the village and directed the villagers to drink pond and lake water after proper boiling to avoid arsenic related diseases.

Meanwhile, a government official and a primary school teacher of Hajiganj thana have been attacked by the arsenic disease. The Atomic Energy Commission, Dhaka, confirmed this after scanning and analysing their hair.

ALCWC urges govt to intensify rice procurement drive

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) in a meeting on Friday urged all to contribute in the efforts of the present government in eradicating the menace of terrorism and extortion from the society within the shortest possible time, according to a party press release issued yesterday.

Presided over by party chief Sheikh Hasina, the meeting deplored the fact that instead of accepting the peoples verdict in the June 12 elections, the BNP was now trying to resurrect allegations of rigging against the Awami League.

The ALCWC meeting reviewed the activities of the government over the last 100 days and appreciated the performance of the Awami League government during the period.

It also stressed on intensifying the process of rice procurement by the government and ensuring proper marketing of fertilizer, adequate distribution of power and irrigation facilities during the Irrigation season.

The meeting also took stock of the political situation and took some important decisions on organisational matters, the release said.

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Clash over relief distribution; 19 injured

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 5: Nineteen people were injured, five seriously, in a row over the distribution of relief materials in Belkuchi thana today, reports UNB.

Police sources said some distressed mothers and supporters of Chairman of Bhangabari Union Parishad, Abdul Matin, clashed following altercation over distribution of VGD rice.

During the 40-minute clash, lethal weapons and brick bats were used.

The seriously injured were admitted to Belkuchi thana health complex.

Alleging maldistribution of the relief materials, the women refused to receive a lesser quantity of 16 kilograms of rice.

According to government instructions, every card holders are entitled to get 31 kilograms of rice.

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BGMEA President Redwan Ahmed presenting a crest of the organisation to BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia at the concluding ceremony of BATEXPO '96 at a city hotel yesterday. — Star photo

BATEXPO

From Page 1

Participants expressed their disappointment over the arrangements made for the fair.

"Decoration was not good," said a Taiwanese participant. He said the fair authorities should arrange the decorations. "We have been charged 1,000 US dollars for two wooden racks," he said expressing his dissatisfaction.

The objective of the fair has failed," said K M Shahid Ullah, Managing Director of the S H S Sweaters Ltd. He told The Daily Star yesterday that his company received orders worth seven lakh dollars at last year's fair. "We did not receive any order till now today," he said.

Taurus Knitwears also did not receive any spot orders till noon yesterday. "We hope some of the queries will turn into business deals," hoped a company official.

"Spot orders should not be considered as the main purpose of the fair," said Atiqul Islam, an executive committee member of the BGMEA and Coordinator of the BATEXPO.

He informed that BGMEA would allow sufficient time for the participants and overseas visitors to the fair from next year.

Talking about the space constraint, Redwan Ahmed said the government would build a 'Garments Complex' to solve the space crisis. He informed that the previous government had allotted a 84 decimal piece of land on which the construction work for the proposed complex is likely to begin soon.

BGMEA had sent more than 2,000 invitation letters to different overseas buyers and contacted 24 Bangladesh missions abroad and 26 foreign missions in the country to inform international buyers about the fair. BGMEA charged one thousand dollars for each 64 sq feet size stall and it sold entry tickets worth more than Tk 2 lakh, at Tk 50 each.

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Another police patrol and local people immediately took the injured policemen to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where Amzad succumbed to his injuries. Motiur was shifted to Orthopaedic Hospital where he died at around 6:40 am, police added.

The driver of the truck fled. Police seized the truck and filed a case with Demra thana.

The bodies of Amzad and Motiur were sent to their village homes in Narsingdi and Shariatpur respectively, police said.

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