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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina distributing National Youth Award '97 among the youths having achievements in self-employment generation at a function in the city yesterday.

— PID photo

PM asks youths to work for honest living

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said the government would take all possible measures to stop youths from going astray, reports UNB.

She expressed her government's determination to redirect the youth force into nation-building activities as a youth festival got off to a colourful start in the capital yesterday.

Inaugurating the week-long national youth festival at Palitan Maidan in the morning, the Prime Minister called upon the youths to build their career through honest earning for the interest of themselves as well as of the nation.

She said after the brutal assassination of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Rahman, a politics of coup, killing and conspiracy started in the country and the youths were used as the main tool of the politics of capturing power.

"The power mongers used the youths for their political interest and pushed them into a state of confusion, handing over arms and drugs to them," said Hasina.

"But we'll never use the youths for our political interest rather than building the nation. We will involve them in only welfare activities," she told the gathering.

Ministers, MPs and diplomats, political leaders and elite were present at the inaugural function. Youth and Sports Minister of Sri Lanka SB Disanaiha attended the function.

Youths from different parts of the country and representatives from Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, UK, India and the Philippines are taking part in the colourful and eventful festival.

Addressing the function, the Prime Minister said the government is determined to check the moral degradation of youths. "Those who build the country and are always ready for the supreme sacrifice for overall development of society can never be destroyed by any means."

She said the youths of the

country have a glorious tradition of struggle. At critical junctures of national history, the youths have played an important role in social, cultural, political and economic movements.

She said the government had identified the problems of the youth as one of the main problems of the country and took steps for the improvement of their condition.

Youth activities have been extended to all the thanas including all metropolitan thanas of the country in the current year, the Prime Minister said.

The activities include training and self-employment project, thana resource development and employment-generation project, technical training project, technical assistance programme, youth-involvement project in family planning activities through youth clubs, and participatory development projects.

Besides, the government will undertake programmes very soon for setting up national youth centre, human resource development, mobilisation of tools for self-employment generation, participation in social services, and setting up of rural training and women training centres.

The present government has also taken measures to provide the trained unemployed youths with *khals* waterbodies up to 20 acres on lease for their self-employment.

The Prime Minister said about Tk 60 crore has already been disbursed among the trained youths as credit. In the current fiscal year, another credit of Tk 37 crore will be disbursed.

He also urged all to take initiative for creating job opportunity alongside government's programme. For this, the jobseekers have to devote themselves to evolving self-employment opportunities.

Later, the Prime Minister gave away National Youth Award '97 to 12 youths for their success in different self-employment ventures.

12 trains stranded at Bonarpura for 8 hours

GAIBANDHA, Nov 1: Movement of trains remained suspended for eight hours here today due to barricade by local people at Bonarpura Railway Junction, reports UNB.

Twelve trains were stranded during the barricade.

The barricade was enforced by an action-committee of Saghata thana which has been demanding to run inter-city and mail trains through Bonarpura instead of Trimohini-Balami ghat route.

Nat'l Cooperatives Day observed

LGMD Minister Zillur Rahman yesterday said the cooperative movement should immediately be freed from the 'soft seekers' who had infiltrated in different cooperative organisations in the country, reports BSS.

The self-seekers should immediately be expelled for making the cooperative movement obstacle-free and a successful one," he said while speaking at a discussion in the Samabaya Sadan auditorium in the city.

"In Bangladesh, yesterday was a fabulous day for me," Betty said.

Dacoity in a city house

By Staff Correspondent

From Robbed Tk 4.11 lakh

gold ornaments and cash

for a l. use at Senpara under

Mirpur thana in the city early

yesterday.

Police said a gang of about

eight armed men entered the

house of Sahabuddin Ahmed after

breaking the lock of the

main entrance at about 3:30 am.

Brandishing firearms, they

took away gold ornaments

worth about Tk 2.61 lakh and

Tk 1.5 lakh in cash. The dacoits

left the house at about 4 am.

None was arrested in connection with the incident. A case was lodged with Mirpur thana in this regard.

They alleged that their party workers and leaders were being denied of their fundamental rights and subjected to physical torture due to political reason.

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Replies to a question, he said an alliance would be formed in future, but now they prefer launching of agitation programmes simultaneously.

"But we're marching towards forming an alliance to strengthen the ongoing movement," the Jatra president said.

BNP leader Ehsanul Kabir, who was present during the meeting, said Begum Zia has urged all to further intensify the current movement.

BNP leaders Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan MP, Salauddin Qader Chowdhury MP and Harun-al-Rashid MP, and Jatra leaders Dr AK Aziz, Rehana Prodhan, ASM Zahirul Haq, Sarder Mohammad Shahjahan and Md. Fizur Rahman Alo were also present.

But the journalists and employees said that most of them decided to ignore the order as the order had failed to state clearly under which rule he had asked them to resign.

Nirmal Sen, a well-known columnist who put in 33 years at Dainik Bangla since its inception in 1964, told a press conference that the order violates the labour law and Newspaper Employees (conditions of service) Act 1974.

As he spoke, the senior journalist broke into tears and fought hard to check his emotions at the Jatra Press Club where some of his colleagues gathered, brooding over their future.

He said that in the same evening a government handout gave an account of the benefits he and his colleagues would receive.

"But the sums it mentioned are not correct. The authorities gave a notice to take 'retirement' but it failed to mention the dues

for four months of pay as per law of the land. Besides, it failed to state one month's gross salary for each year as per rules if the gratuity is added to it. Rather it gave an account of the compensation," Nirmal Sen said.

He sought direct intervention of the Prime Minister in this regard so that all employees and journalists are duly paid, including their provident fund.

He further said that there is a confusing situation prevailing in the two newspapers as the government did not announce winding-up of the Times-Bangla Trust which owns the publications. It should have been the Trust Chairman asking the employees and journalists to resign. "A Deputy Secretary did not have the right to ask the employees to take voluntary retirement," he said, adding that the editor of the Dainik Bangla had resigned and acceptance of his resignation has not been announced. The paper was published since the authorities did not come out with any closure notifications.

At about 9:15 pm police made forays into the Dainik Bangla premises to investigate why the agitated employees, staging a sit-in since Thursday, raised slogans protesting the disruption of electricity without any reason.

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