

Bangabandhu Poverty Alleviation Training Centre Foundation laid Programmes taken up to produce skilled manpower: PM

KOTALIPARA (Gopalganj). May 18: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said her government has undertaken various programmes to produce skilled manpower and improve the economic condition of the common people, reports UNB.

"Opposition parties may not be happy with the government since we are not working for a handful of people of the society, but for the entire population and their economic development," she said.

The Prime Minister made the remarks while laying the foundation stone of the Bangabandhu Poverty Alleviation Training Centre here.

Referring to the rule of the past BNP regime, she said certain opportunist quarters could manage to change their lot by depriving the whole nation.

Hasina deplored that over the years communications of the regions could not be developed. The present government, she said, has undertaken plans to improve the communication network of the region.

The PM said Bangabandhu took some specific poverty alleviation programmes to build the war-torn country after the liberation war in 1971.

"He dreamt of improving the destiny of the oppressed masses. But he could not finish his task as he was assassinated in 1975," said Hasina, eldest daughter of the slain independence leader.

Referring to her struggle for ballot and bread, the PM said previous government took away democratic rights and patronized terrorism to consolidate their power base.

"It was Awami League that established people's rights to vote and food after a long bloody struggle," she said.

Hasina said since assumption of power her government has exerted efforts to achieve economic emancipation of the masses.

She said, "Our resources are limited but we have a huge manpower and we could change our lot easily if we could use this force in a planned way."

The PM said the proposed centre would create skilled manpower to develop the country.

The LGRD ministry is implementing the project for construction of Bangabandhu Poverty Alleviation Training Centre involving Tk 16.79 crore. Work on the project started in July 1996 to be completed by June 2000.

The centre will impart vocational training, agricultural and non-agricultural, handicraft and other training to rural youths.

The PM said during her rule, literary rate increased to 57 per cent under a plan to fight out illiteracy from the country by 2006.

Refuting the opposition's

claim that the government is destroying the country, Hasina said during the BNP regime Tk 1960 crore was allocated for poverty alleviation in the fourth five year plan but the present government allocated Tk 8700 crore for this sector.

She said communication network is vital for economic uplift. That is why the government has planned to establish an extensive communication network to connect union, thana and district headquarters with the capital.

The PM referred to the plan for construction of bridges over Padma, Arial Khan, Rupsha and Meghna rivers to bring revolution in the communication sector.

The function was addressed, among others, by LGRD Minister Zillur Rahman, Communications Minister Anwar Hossain Monju, State Minister for Relief and Disaster Management Talukdar Abdul Khaleque, Sheikh Fazul Karim Selim MP, Gopalganj district AL secretary Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and thana AL secretary Habibur Rahman.

Earlier, the Prime Minister inaugurated Kotalipara Rest House built at a cost of Tk 54.91 lakh.

She also opened 92.96-meter-long Ghaghar Bridge. The project was implemented by the Communications Ministry at a cost of Tk 2.75 crore.

PM offers feteiha at mazar of Bangabandhu

TUNGIPARA (Gopalganj). May 18: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today offered feteiha at the mazar of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, reports UNB.

The Prime Minister, who visited Gopalganj and Bagerhat districts to attend a number of programmes, has made a stopover at her ancestral home and offered feteiha at the mazar of her father.

Hasina during her daylong visit inaugurated the newly constructed Kotalipara Rest House and Ghaghar Bridge, laid foundation stone of Bangabandhu Poverty Alleviation Centre at Kotalipara and addressed a meeting there.

In the afternoon, the Prime Minister went to Chitalmari of Bagerhat district and inaugurated Chitalmari Thana Health Complex followed by a public meeting.

Law, order situation improves in S districts

The Cabinet Committee on Law and Order, at a meeting, yesterday observed that the law and order situation in the southern districts has improved with the arrest of terrorists after the setting up of 150 new police camps and the combing operation, reports BSS.

The meeting, presided over by Home Minister Mohammad Nasim, discussed the prevailing law and order in the light of the different measures taken by the government in south-western region.

The meeting was attended, among others, by Education Minister ASHK Sadeque, Water Resources Minister Abdur Razak, Commerce and Industries Minister Tojal Ahmed, Agriculture Minister Begum Motia Chowdhury and Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Kashru.

Cabinet Secretary Kazi Shamsul Alam, Home Secretary Saifur Rahman, Law Secretary Amin Ullah and IGP AYBI Siddiqui were present in the meeting.

PM's remark on Kader Siddiqi criticised

By DU Correspondent

Bangladesh Muktijoddha Sangsad Central Coordination Council (BMSCCC) has expressed resentment over the Prime Minister's recent remark regarding veteran freedom fighter Kader Siddiqi.

Condemning the PM's remark, BMSCCC said it was unfortunate for the nation, said a press release of the organisation yesterday.

Central executive committee of the BMSCCC at an emergency meeting with its convenor Ish-tiaq Aziz Ullat on Monday resolved that "the day is not far away when people will force all the plunderers of peoples' property including Sheikh Hasina and his relatives to give the account of their illegal property."

Referring to Hasina, BMSCCC said "All of us joined the liberation war in 1971 as we were made but she stayed in Dhaka safely."

The BMSCCC also lashed out at "the collaborator leaders of the ruling Awami League for joining the Mushtaka cabinet after Sheikh Mujib's assassination." The PM has also expressed her own complex by asking for taking account of property of Kader Siddiqi," the BMSCCC press release said.

Returning from the Hague the PM at a press conference on May 16 termed Kader Siddiqi as 'mad' and said she did not understand his activities.

Members of the Parishad went to the office of the Vice Chancellor, university teachers' lounge, administrative Building and Teacher-Student Centre (TSC), to solicit votes during their day-long movement.

The candidates exchanged views with the teachers and officers and demanded initiatives to create a congenial atmosphere at the university.

Among others, Prof Afrozan Nahar, former DUCSU general secretary Dr Mostak Hossain, Advocate HAM Zahurul Islam Khan, Dr Nehal Karim, Moazzem Hossain Khan Majlish, ex-BFUIJ president Habibur Rahman Milan, Prof Ferdous Ara Mini and Abul Khayer Siddique were present.

Progati Parishad, one of the three panels contesting the Senate election, also expressed solidarity with the on-going movement for saving the trees at the Osmany Uddyan.

"Movement for Saving 11 Thousand Trees in Osmany Uddyan" arranged the rally to press home its demand to change government's decision regarding the construction of a conference centre there.

The candidates of the parishad took part at the citizens' rally held at the Osmany Uddyan yesterday afternoon.

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A group of employees demonstrating at the Secretariat in the city yesterday demanding full implementation of pay scale and withdrawal of new office timing. —Star photo

Frequent hartals leave negative impact on economy in Ctg

CHITTAGONG. May 18: Fresh sprees of hartals centring local issues and causes jolted the port city recently that resulted in crippling economy.

Consequently, such frequent enforcement of hartals triggered concern among the business circle here. Besides, normal life was disrupted here mounting sufferings of the city dwellers.

President of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) Kamal Uddin Ahmed talking to this correspondent today said that the hartals enforced here on regional issues had left negative impact on the economy of Chittagong known as the country's commercial capital.

"I vehemently oppose calling of such hartal regionally on local causes and earlier I also protested against it on behalf of the business community here," said CCCI president Kamal.

On May 13 last, the agitating workers and employees of Chittagong Steel Mills based at Patenga industrial belt here, enforced dawn-to-dusk hartal in Chittagong protesting the government's pay off decision and demanding reopening of the mills.

The agitating workers and employees of Chittagong Steel Mills also threatened to enforce fresh hartals for two days on May 30 and 31 in Chittagong if the pay-off decision is not withdrawn by the government by this time.

Earlier, the agitating workers for the same cause, enforced hartal at Patenga area and put up barricades on Chittagong Airport road.

Another hartal was enforced recently here by Jamaat-e-Islam in protest against the killing of one of its leader at Fatikchhari, 25 miles away from the city, but it called the hartal all over Chittagong.

From Nurul Alam

"I would request the leaders of political parties here to refrain from calling frequent hartals on local issues," he added.

However, the latest hartal on local cause, was enforced in Chittagong on Monday by pro-Jamaat student front — Islami Chhatra Shibir.

Chhatra Shibir called the hartal in Chittagong in protest against the killing of one of its leaders Jubair Hossain at Chittagong university campus located outside the city on May 15.

Jubair was killed during clashes between Shibir activists and pro-ruling student front Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists, police said.

Chhatra Shibir backed by local Jamaat leaders enforced hartal yesterday in entire Chittagong including the city causing disruption in normal life.

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Shafi murder 2 DB informers' statement recorded

By Staff Correspondent

Two informers of the Detective Branch (DB) on Sunday recorded their statement before a Metropolitan Magistrate where they told that Inspector Zia forced Shafi to get onto the rooftop of the DB office where he was strangled to death on the night of March 19, court sources said.

The informers — Mizanur Rahman and Babul Khan — recorded their judicial statement under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure before Metropolitan Magistrate AKM Abdus Salam, sources added.

In their statement, Babul and Mizan told that they became informers with the help of Shafi as he had links with a number of DB officials.

They said that on the basis of Shafi's information, Inspector Zia along with other DB personnel recovered a large amount of illegal dollars a few days before his killing. But Shafi's relationship with Zia deteriorated as he did not get his expected amount from the inspector after the recovery.

Since then Shafi started avoiding Inspector Zia. Zia became very much annoyed when he came to know that Shafi informed another Inspector of DB about a large quantity of smuggled gold.

According to the statement, Inspector Zia kept Shafi detained at the DB office for two days since March 13. Shafi was tortured again on March 19 when he came to the DB office. At around 1 am that night, Zia forced Shafi to get onto the rooftop of the building and Shafi was strangled to death, sources added.

Mizan and Babul also claimed that they witnessed the whole incident and they were at the DB office since the recovery of Shafi's body. But they left the DB office on March 25 out of fear, sources said.

Power supply restored in Mymensingh

By Staff Correspondent

Power supply in the greater Mymensingh area was restored on Monday night.

Power supply in five districts under greater Mymensingh had been disrupted since Friday as a 132KV power transmission tower in the Ashuganj-Kishoreganj transmission line broke down when technicians were installing a circuit in the tower. The affected areas were Mymensingh, Kishoreganj, Netrokona, Jamalpur and Sherpur.

To overcome the problem, Power Development Board engineers and technicians made a by-pass line Monday night. At the same time, PDB has begun re-installing the broken tower.

Meanwhile, countrywide power supply situation has generally improved in recent days. The level of loadshedding was only 40 MW yesterday. Against a projected demand of 2400 MW, PDB supplied 2355 MW power yesterday.

In recent months, loadshedding level seldom went below 250 MW-350 MW.

Rival groups clash at Savar: 10 hurt

SAVAR, May 18: At least 10 people were injured in a gun-fight between the two rival groups over the possession of a shop at Nohhati bazaar of Shikra union here on Monday morning, reports UNB.

Of the wounded, Mohor Ali, 32, Abdul Baseed, 35, and Ziaur Rahman, 21, were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in a critical condition while the rest were admitted into local health complex.

A licensed gun and seven rounds of bullets of Mujibur Rahman, a supporter of Nurul Islam group, were looted during the battle.

Police visited the spot. Tension was prevailing in the area. A case accusing 15 people was filed with the police.

Death anniversary of poet Sunil today

By JU Correspondent

Jahangirnagar University Journalists' Association (JUJA) will observe the 17th death anniversary of poet Sunil Saifulah today.

On the occasion, a discussion and recitation programme will be held at the seminar room of the Central Auditorium. Sunil was the student of English Department at JU.

Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Abdul Bayes will be present at the programme as chief guest while the renowned dramatist Dr Selim Al Din and poet Mohammad Rafique will take part in the discussion. President of JUJA Kazi Zakir Hossain will preside over the discussion meeting.

Road accident sparks violence in Rajbari

RAJBARI, May 18: A traveller's ticket examiner (TTE) of railway was killed in a road accident near the town this afternoon, reports APB.

Three policemen, including an ASI, were injured in a mob attack immediately after the accident.

The ASI, Yunus Ali, was admitted to Rajbari Sadar Hospital. Two other policemen were given first aid.

Witnesses said Mizanur Rahman, 40, was hit by a speeding motorcycle at Sripur in sadar thana when he was returning home by a bicycle at about 4pm. He succumbed to his injuries on his way to the sadar hospital.

Enraged by the incident, local people attacked the R&H office here for its failure to put up a speed-breaker on the road. The mob also put barricade on Rajbari-Fardipur road for about half an hour.

Three police personnel sustained injuries when they tried to resist the agitating public. BDR has been deployed in the town.

Journalist dead

SATKHIRA, May 18: Advocate Nurul Islam, a local journalist and lawyer died of heart attack at his residence at Katta Rasulpur on Sunday afternoon. He was 68, reports BSS.

He left behind his wife, one son, one daughter and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

He was buried at his family graveyard at Rasulpur after Namaz-e-Janaza at Satkhir Bar Council premises on Monday.

He worked for BSS for quiet a long time.

Export sector leaders place 11-pt demand

Leaders of the country's different exporter associations at a joint meeting yesterday appealed to the government to make all export earnings tax-free and stop 0.25 per cent deduction as tax in advance on export bill, reports BSS.

They placed an 11-point demand, saying if implemented, the measures would boost the export sector of the country.

They demanded further devaluation of