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Try ministers who led stick procession: Liaison body

The liaison committee of the 4-party alliance yesterday demanded that the ministers and MPs who led a stick procession in the city threatening the judges should be taken to custody for violation of law, reports UNB.

"If the government fails to bring them to book as per the law made by it, people will try them," said the leaders of the committee at the meeting held at the official residence of the opposition leader.

The leaders said the government has destroyed all the sectors, including education and economy, and started a conspiracy against the judiciary.

Killing, extortion, mugging, snatching and dacoity have increased manifold in the city and the country as a whole with patronage of the ruling party causing worries among the people, they said.

They also expressed concern at widespread unfair means in SSC and HSC examinations and said the government was destroying the education system.

They called upon the people to join today's rally at Paltan Maidan and raise the voice asking the government to step down.

NSI official found dead in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent KHULNA, Apr 29: Deputy Director of NSI Riazul Karim, 46, was found dead in the bedroom of his office-cum-residence at Khalishpur today.

Police recovered his body at noon and sent it to hospital morgue for autopsy.

Riazul Karim joined here on February 20 from Dhaka. Since then he had been living here alone.

His house servant Shukur Ali was taken into custody for interrogation.

A case was filed with Khalishpur thana in this connection.

India's population to cross billion mark May 11

NEW DELHI, Apr 29: With a baby born at 1255 hours on May 11, India's population will cross the one billion mark, reports PTI.

The centre has alerted all states and union territories, hospitals and medical personnel in the country to inform about the birth of a child at that time.

Addressing a function organised by the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, A R Nanda, Secretary, Department of Family Welfare in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, said the national average of total fertility rate of 2.1 will be achieved by 2010, an official release said here today.

However, all the states and union territories will achieve this distinction only by 2026, he said.

6 more police stations to be set up in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Apr 29: Six more police stations will be set up under Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) to check rising crimes, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is likely to inaugurate the police stations on May 27. The proposed police stations are Karnaphuli, Patenga, Kulsli, Bayezid Bostami, Bakalia and Halishahar.

CMP was established in 1978 with 6 police stations when the port city had a population of 16 lakh in 60 square miles. The city is now extended to 120 sq miles with a population of 35 lakh.

CMP sources said site selection for the new police stations has been completed.

Disadvantaged groups deprived of treatment at public hospitals

By Naimul Haq

Last week, Dhirendranath Babu, a rickshaw-puller from Jessore, arrived at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital with severe pain in his lower abdomen.

By the time Babu's turn for consultation had come it was already two o'clock, closing time for the hospital's outdoor department.

The next day, after more than four hours in a long queue, he was once again denied access. In terrible pain and almost in coma, Babu now awaits, on a pavement outside the Curzon Hall, his turn for death or a chance to be treated, whichever comes first.

"I'd rather die. I came here in the hope of better treatment for my pain. But they won't even listen to me. I tried the hospital emergency but they told me it was a 'cold case' so they asked me to seek admission through

the outdoor department which has proved almost impossible," said Babu.

Similarly, Abdur Rahman, a brick-field worker from Bagerhat, had to wait for almost five months for admission at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) and when he finally got admitted he had to wait about two months more before he could arrange his own drugs for a heart surgery.

Like Babu and Rahman, thousands of poor patients, who have no choice other than seeking care at the public hospitals, are regularly denied access to whatever little healthcare facilities the government has on offer for them.

"It is a serious concern that the most disadvantaged group particularly the bottom ten per cent of this group remains almost cut off from healthcare

services," said an anonymous source.

The source engaged in planning of certain health programmes said, "We have not given adequate attention to the needs of the real poor."

"Whatever is being planned at tertiary hospitals is aimed at stopping people from seeking medical treatment abroad. Recently, the prime minister sanctioned Tk 25 crore for setting up of a modern cardiac centre at BIRDEM. But, who would avail the services? Obviously, those who can afford to buy healthcare services but how much money has the government allocated separately for poor - virtually none."

Elaborating on this, an economist conducting research on healthcare in developing nations, said, "The government does not consider spending on the poor is a good investment.

They only see immediate return from the investment but in longer term, investing on the poor would give the nation more productivity."

During spot visits most of the city hospitals were found unable to supply commonly required drugs and medical accessories supposed to be distributed to poor patients free of cost. Medical accessories like blood bags and tubing materials, syringe, suture, hand glove, bandage, cotton and normal disinfectant are frequently found out of supply.

There were also dearth of required reagents and laboratory accessories forcing many seriously ill patients to have their diagnostic tests at private places.

Brigadier Badrul Munir, the Dhaka Medical College Hospital Director, said, "We have an

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Artists brought out a colourful procession in the city yesterday to mark the World Dance Day. —Star photo



Finance minister S A M S Kibria inaugurating the principal office of Bank Asia at Motijheel Commercial Area in the city yesterday. From left: Chairman of the bank M Sayeduzzaman, state minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, the bank's vice-chairman Abdul Rouf Chowdhury and MD Badrul Islam. —Star photo

Mixing granular pesticides with fertiliser 'wasteful'

By Rafiq Hasan

Granular pesticides are effective against certain pests, but mixing those with fertiliser is wasteful since chemical reactions diminish their potency, says the Director General of Bangladesh Rice Research Institute.

"All pesticides are harmful to environment, but their judicious use may be advisable for commercial production," said Dr. M. A. Hamid. "However, other methods of pest control should be tried first."

Farmers in Sirajganj and Bogra districts have admitted they use granular pesticide mixed with fertiliser to protect their crops from pests. A study conducted by Novartis Bangladesh suggested that granular pesticides worth Tk 80 crore annually. Ninety per cent of that is later mixed with fer-

tiliser. Naimul Haq, chief scientific officer with the institute's entomology department, said granular pesticides can be effective measure against pests. However, they also kill aquatic animals that live in irrigated fields or wetlands, creating an ecological imbalance that could lead to more severe attacks.

Officials once recommended granular pesticides because farmers didn't have many other pest control options. However, there are a lot of alternatives available these days.

Some environmentally friendly pest control methods include placing bamboo branches in the field for birds, allowing frogs and spiders to flourish in the fields, and hand and swift nets to collect hispa and other pests.

Nazira Quraishi Kamal, head of the entomology de-

partment, said farmers should not use pesticides as a preventive measure. Institute scientists only advise farmers to use pesticides when the pests appear. Liquid pesticides are also bad, since they kill the helpful and harmful insects, said Kamal.

However, Siraj A Chowdhury, chairman of the Pesticide Association of Bangladesh, said in a letter to the Daily Star that he favoured granular pesticides. He claimed they were more cost effective than varieties.

Surveys conducted in various rice producing countries suggested a cost benefit ratio of granule pesticides was as high as 1: 4. Farmers get Tk 4 for each Tk 1 of granule pesticide they use, said Siraj.

Most granular pesticides don't harm the environment. See page 11 col 6

Gunmen fire shots at Salauddin Quader's house in city

Unidentified gunmen fired shots at the residence of BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury MP in the city last night, reports UNB.

Police and local sources said, the miscreants who came by an autorickshaw fired 5-6 shots, damaging the main gate of the MP's Dhanmondi residence at about 9 pm. None was hurt.

None was arrested in this connection.

When contacted Chowdhury said the attack was made to create panic on the eve of the grand rally of the opposition alliance to be held at Paltan Maidan today.

Video shop owner stabbed to death by muggers

By Staff Correspondent

A video shop owner was stabbed to death by muggers at Argarao in the city yesterday morning.

The victims, identified as Abu Sayeed, came under attack while he was going to buy a video game machine. His relatives said.

The muggers took away Tk 80,000 from him. He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the attending doctors declared him dead.

A case was filed with Mohammadpur Thana in this connection, but none was arrested till filing of this report last night.

KMP list of terrorists

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Apr 29: KMP authorities have prepared a new list of terrorists and their godfathers, extortionists and drug traffickers against whom operation will be launched soon.

The list includes some political leaders and three ward commissioners.

According to a highly placed source in KMP, 50 armed terrorists have so far been identified in the city most of whom are involved in murders and extortions.

Six political leaders and two MPs are in the list for harbouring the terrorists and drug traffickers, the source said.

Bus collision: 2 more die

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Apr 29: Two more victims of Friday's bus collision succumbed to injuries today, raising the death toll to 52.

Of the two, one died at Ibne Sinha Clinic in Dhaka and the other at Bogra General Hospital.

Minor girl gangraped

By Staff Correspondent

A ten-year-old school girl was gang-raped by some unidentified persons near the Hajaribagh slum in the city yesterday.

The victim was rescued by her relatives from near the Hajaribagh embankment at about 12:30 pm and taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Quoting the victim, hospital sources said she was caught by some unidentified persons from near her shanty, taken to a quiet place near the embankment and gang-raped. She was the girl of a day labourer. Hajaribagh police last night said the case was being filed in connection with the incident.

PM visits Netrokona, assures all help for storm victims

PURBADHALA, (Netrokona)

Apr 29: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, visited the cyclone-hit areas of Netrokona today and assured the victims of food assistance other possible help for their survival and rehabilitation, reports UNB.

"We will provide you all helps to save your life and give food under the VGF card system till next 'Kartik-Agrahayan' (harvesting season) so that none of you suffer from food crisis," she told the hapless people, who gathered to receive relief from the Prime Minister.

Later the Prime Minister addressed two public meetings at Haji Faezuddin Ahmed School at Laxmiganj in Sadar thana and Shadupara High School ground in Purbadhalata thana.

Hasina said: "After learning about your sufferings I've come here to stand beside you" and assured that the government has taken steps for relief and

rehabilitation of the affected people. "None will go without food or home during our rule." She said the government will provide food, loan and materials for reconstruction of houses, reschedule agriculture loans and provide fresh loans to the affected farmers, and donate money for reconstructing the damaged houses.

A severe storm on April 20 badly affected five upazilas of the district, killing 18 people and damaging more than 15,000 houses and corps on nearly 10,000 hectares of land.

The Prime Minister said the government has arranged immediate relief for the victims and assured long term assistance for rehabilitation of the affected people.

She said that besides providing farm loans, the government would also supply agricultural inputs, including fertiliser and See page 11 col 7

4-hr work stoppage in newspapers, news agencies today

Journalists and employees of all newspapers and news agencies will observe 'Demand Day' today, reports UNB.

The day's programme includes a 4-hour work stoppage in all newspapers and news agencies from 10 am and a grand rally of journalists, employees at 11 am on the Jatya Press Club premises and press workers to press home their 9-point demand, said a press release.

Besides, journalists, press workers and employees will hold meetings, rallies and processions across the country at the call of Sangbadik-Sramik-Karmachari Oikya Parishad.

The joint movement of journalists and newspaper employees was launched by the Parishad to realise their right to enjoy all public holidays, including May Day.

Parishad leaders urged all involved in the newspapers and news agencies to make the Demand Day's programme a success and abstain from work on the May Day (Monday).

Meanwhile, Dhaka Sangbadipatra Hawkers Bohumukuli Samabaya Samity has expressed solidarity with the demands of Sangbadik-Karmachari Oikya Parishad. Samity in its press release said the hawkers would not distribute newspapers on May 2.

Power connection snapped in some city areas

By Staff Correspondent

A nor'wester blew over the city yesterday evening, snapping power connection in some areas.

DESA sources said that an 11 KV line was snapped at New Elephant Road near the Science Laboratory, which caused the disruption.

Work was going on to restore the line, a DESA official said at 11-35 pm.

Advertisement for Janata Bank branch shift. Includes 'CHANGE OF ADDRESS' banner, 'NEW ADDRESS' and 'OLD ADDRESS' sections, and a 'Devoted to the Services of Motherland' slogan.

Advertisement for Chickenpox vaccine. Text: 'Chickenpox comes with no warning. Check it before it catches you. Vaccination can now prevent it. Ask your doctor how!' Includes logos for SD and SK-F.

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