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Left leaders urge PM to ensure security of SUST students

Leaders of the 11-party Alliance called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday, reports BSS.

They urged the prime minister to ensure security of the students of the Shahjalal University of Science and Technology so that they can attend their classes and pursue studies.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina assured the 11-party leaders that the government would ensure steps regarding the safety and security of the students.

Hasina expressed the hope that the university syndicate would act accordingly.

The 11-party leaders reiterated their stand against anti-liberation and fundamentalist forces during the meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

They said they are committed to upholding the spirit of the Liberation War and at the same time will remain ever vigilant to frustrate the evil designs of

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Khaleque murder Police blamed for patronising killers

By Staff Correspondent

A section of Awami League leaders of Ward No 39 in the city have blamed police for 'patronising' killers and said they would stage street demonstrations demanding arrest of the killers of Local Juba League leader Abdul Khaleque.

The killing of Khaleque was a sequel to 'intra-party' feuds, they told this correspondent yesterday, seeking anonymity.

The leaders alleged that police failed to submit charge sheet in any of the cases for murder of AL leaders of the area since the party came to power about four years ago. Rather, the complainants were harassed.

Khaleque, general secretary of Juba League unit in Ward No 39, was gunned down in front of the unit office at Karwan Bazar Thursday evening. His nephew filed a case with Tejgaon thana accusing six persons of the killing.

When contacted, police denied the accusation of patronising the killers. Investigations are at times delayed due to shortage of manpower and at times due to 'political pressure,' they said.

One of the six FIR-listed accused in the Khaleque murder case has been arrested, said Tejgaon police who are investigating the case. The arrested was identified as Rafikul Islam, 22, of village Santoshpur in Faridganj thana of Chandpur. His brother Moinur Rahman is also an accused in the case. Both of them are brothers of Hannan, an accomplice of notorious criminal Hamed Aslam now detained in Dhaka Central Jail.

The other accused are: Lamha Selim, Shahab Ali, Shams Ahmed Bhutto and Chez Zaki, police said.

Ex-BNP MP Rubel sent to jail

SHERPUR, Apr 30: Former BNP MP and convenor of Sri-bordi thana BNP Mahmudul Haq Rubel was sent to jail in a corruption case today, reports UNB.

Rubel was sent to Sherpur district jail amidst tight security after a senior special judge rejected his bail petition.

The case story says Rubel attended one Musa Mia as 'Moktar Hossain' for drawing a grant of Tk 30,000 for a local school from Prime Minister's fund in 1997.

The cheque was originally issued to Moktar Hossain, chairman of the governing body of Barakuchi Registered Primary School.

Rubel had been absconding since the case was filed on April 13, 1997.

Direct goods train service with India this month likely

BENAPOLE, Apr 30: Direct goods train service between Bangladesh and India is likely to begin this month, reports UNB.

Officials said Jessore-Benapole rail route has already been renovated for smooth running of freight trains between the two countries.

The authorities of both the two countries reached a consensus on November last year on goods train movement.

The officials said India is keen to introduce direct rail communication with Dhaka and Agartala-Akhaura routes.

Golden Rice variety arrives, awaits field tests

By Reaz Ahmad

'Golden Rice', a genetically engineered crop variety, have entered Bangladesh for research purposes, official sources confirm.

Maiden entry of any genetically modified organism (GMO) took place quietly, but to no apparent immediate avail.

Vitamin A-rich 'Golden Rice' would have to wait for unspecified time before being tested in the fields as the biosafety guidelines, a prerequisite for carrying out frontier researches, is not in place yet.

Official sources confirmed that Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) recently collected one kilogram of 'Golden Rice', a transgenic variety developed by a Swiss university.

Official sources confirmed that Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) recently collected one kilogram of 'Golden Rice', a transgenic variety developed by a Swiss university.

The genes were taken from daffodils.

Experts from home and abroad told The Daily Star that if and when it clicked, 'Golden Rice' could substantially contribute in solving the problem of vitamin A deficiency -- an acute health problem for Asian children.

GMO means a genetically modified organism. GMOs are

living organisms whose genetic materials have been altered or modified by the techniques of modern molecular biology to make them capable of producing new substances or performing new functions.

Almost six months have elapsed since the Ministry of Science and Technology accomplished the job of preparing the 'Biosafety Guidelines for Bangladesh' and government endorsed it. But it is yet to be notified in the gazette creating the roadblock for pursuing advance level biotechnological researches in the country.

"I don't know why it should take so long to notify the guidelines that the government endorsed last year through the gazette," said Prof Hadiuzzaman, who also runs the lone Biotechnology Research Centre of Dhaka University.

But everyone out there is not equally appreciative at the GMO-entry into Bangladesh. There are 'green' groups who dubbed the event as a criminal activity.

Farhad Mazhar of UBINIG, a biodiversity protagonist, is seeing Bangladesh's entry into this genetic engineering episode as a criminal offence on the part of the state.

"Endorsement of a mere biosafety guideline does not validate biotechnological manoeuvring. Unless there is a piece of law, citizens would not get justice against biodegradation," said Mazhar.

NCBB recommendation is mandatory, as per the guidelines, in pursuing any work on genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Science and Technology Secretary M Fazlur Rahman told The Daily Star that formation of NCBB was being delayed because of the gazette notification.

He acknowledged that Min-

Opposition opts for no hartal

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She said cases have been filed under the PSA against the ministers who led the stick procession in the city, but no action has been taken. She demanded immediate arrest and trial of those ministers who 'violated law'.

Demonstrations will be held at thana headquarters from May 7 to 15 demanding immediate arrest and trial of the ministers, she announced at the meeting.

If the demand is not met by May 15, the BNP-led opposition

alliance will hold a joint 'mass procession' in the city on May 16, and tougher programmes will follow, she announced.

On AL's demand for completion of trial of the Bangabandhu murder case, Khaleda Zia said, "Hundreds of people have been killed and tens of thousands repressed during this government's tenure. People are seeking justice. It can not happen that only they (AL) will demand justice while people will remain deprived".

Referring to the Prime Minister's challenge that there was

no corruption in MIG purchase, Khaleda Zia said ruling party men were involved not only in it but also in big deals including purchase of frigate, telephone equipment and allowing private banks.

"They must face trial for looting the wealth of the country and its people."

Khaleda Zia claimed that AL always damaged the image of the country abroad whenever it came to power. "The present Prime Minister's brother had committed bank daeoty when AL was in power earlier. Now his nephew has forcibly occupied a big house in the city."

"AL had introduced Bangladesh in the world as a basket case earlier. Now, it has made the country the most corrupt one in the world", she said.

JP Chairman Ershad termed the AL government the "most corrupt" one in the world and asked it to quit immediately for "your (AL leaders) survival".

He said after 28 years of independence, there can not be any anti-liberation forces in the country because everybody is doing politics openly as per laws and the Constitution.

Rather, the AL has worked against the independence and sovereignty of the country by signing the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty and the CHT accord, he alleged.

Jamaat Ameer Golam Azam said the High Court and the Supreme Court are the last shelters of the commonman. "My citizenship was snatched. I got my citizenship following the High Court order. I would not have got citizenship had there been no higher court," he said.

The people are behind the judges, he said.

IOJ Chief Azizul Haq said the AL government has destroyed the image of the country. "There is no example in the world that a government threatened the judiciary and judges," he added.

About 35 leaders from the four parties addressed the meeting. They included BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and its central leaders M Saiful Rahman, Oli Ahmed, Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, Mirza Abbas, Abdus Salam; JP leaders Nazirul Rahman, Manju, ABM Golam Mostafa, ABM Ruhul Amin, Hawlader and Saifur Rahman; Jamaat leaders Mohammad Kamaluzzaman and Abdul Qader Mollah; IOJ leader Fazlul Haq Amin and Jagpa President Shaiful Alam Prodhan.

Slum at Paribagh demolished: 20 injured

By Staff Correspondent

One study said people in general think that PSA is violative of human rights and 58 per cent of the respondents said its 'weak point' is that it was passed without the Opposition's presence in parliament. Besides, 86 per cent supported the provision of punishment for false case.

The respondents suggested the Opposition to make its points against PSA in the parliament and continue movement without calling hartal.

They stressed formation of a commission to monitor activities of police in the interest of the people.

The speakers dwelt on the PSA and the SPA with reference to laws of the land, state institutions, parliament, judiciary, police, coercive power and politics, human rights, minority rights and gender rights.

Two students of Dhaka University -- Zakia Haq and Sharif Atique Rahman -- presented the findings of and recommendations in two studies on SPA and PSA conducted recently.



Kashmiri women mourn the death of their brother yesterday who was killed in a shoot-out with police in Srinagar. The relatives of Hafiz Mehraj, a former photojournalist, alleged he was killed by Indian police in custody after his arrest.

— AFP photo

Both SPA, PSA failed'

By DU Correspondent

Speakers at a dialogue on Power and Public Safety in the city yesterday said that the Public Safety Act (PSA) and the Special Power Act (SPA) failed to ensure security to the commonman and suggested reorganising the police force.

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