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Dhaka Education Board premises wore a deserted look yesterday, the first day of an indefinite strike in all eight education boards of the country, called by Bangladesh Inter-Education Board Employees Federation to realise its four-point demand. -Star photo

World Food Day seminar told Autarky not enough to ensure food for the poor

By Staff Correspondent

Food autarky alone could not ensure access to required food to the 30 million hardcore poor in the country, speakers observed at a World Food Day seminar in the city yesterday.

They noted that despite attaining self-sufficiency in food for the first time in 1999-2000, Bangladesh is still required to take a lot more initiatives to enable the hardcore poor to have such access.

The Ministry of Agriculture and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) jointly organised the seminar on A Millennium Free from Hunger in observance of the World Food Day. A three-day food exhibition in this connection also began yesterday at Khamar Bari.

Three ministers, FAO representative to Bangladesh, researchers and academics took part in the seminar held at Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC).

In his keynote speech, Planning Commission Member Dr MA Sattar Mandal said that though average calorie intake in the country had increased to 2283 kcal (kilo calorie) in 1999 from 2216 kcal in 1996, the rural poor got only 1932 kcal per capita per day. The minimum requirement is 2310 kcal per person per day.

Mandal said one fourth of the country's population or 30 million people, whose calorie intake remains below 1805 kcal per person per day, are designated as hardcore poor.

However, Sattar Mandal presented statistics showing that the incidence of poverty declined to 44.7 per cent in 1999 from 47 per cent in 1996.

At this point, Dr M Asaduzzaman, a research director at the BIDS, said though the country has achieved food autarky, poverty declined

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জহরুল ইসলাম সাহেবের

৫ম মৃত্যুবার্ষিকী



আগামী ১৯শে অক্টোবর ২০০০ বৃহস্পতিবার ইসলাম গ্রন্থের প্রতিষ্ঠাতা চেয়ারম্যান পরম শুভেন্দু মুহাম্মদ আলহাজু জহরুল ইসলাম সাহেবের ৫ম মৃত্যুবার্ষিকী। এ উপলক্ষ্যে মুরহমের নিজ ঘাম কিশোরগঞ্জ জেলার অস্তর্গত বাজিতপুর থানার ভাগলপুরে সকাল সাড়ে দশটায় এক মিলাদ মাহফিল ও দোয়া অনুষ্ঠানের আয়োজন করা হচ্ছে।

মুরহমের আয়ার মাগফেরাত কামনার্থে আয়োজিত উক্ত অনুষ্ঠানে সকল আয়ীয়-স্বজন, বন্ধু-বাক্সু, ভক্তাকাঙ্গী ও ইসলাম গ্রন্থের সকল সদস্যবৃন্দকে উপস্থিত হওয়ার জন্য বিনোদন অনুরোধ জানানো হচ্ছে।

মুহাম্মদ জহরুল ইসলাম সাহেবের স্মৃতির প্রতি শুভ্রা জানাতে আগামী ১৯শে অক্টোবর বৃহস্পতিবার ইসলাম গ্রন্থের সকল প্রতিষ্ঠান বক্ত থাকবে।

বিনোদন

পরিবারবর্গ ও ইসলাম গ্রন্থের পক্ষে
মুহাম্মদ জহরুল ইসলাম
চেয়ারম্যান

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PM tells expatriates in London Opposition wants to unseat govt by any means

LONDON, Oct 16: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said here yesterday that since BNP does not believe in people's franchise, the opposition party is plotting to unseat her government by any means, reports UNB.

"BNP does not believe in independence and democracy... it is bluffing people in the name of so-called politics of agitation," she said addressing Bangladeshi expatriates at Camden Centre Hall here yesterday afternoon.

Hasina made a stopover in London on her way to Washington to meet President Bill Clinton.

Hasina, who is seeking a second term in office, told the Bangladeshi here that her party Awami League fulfilled most of its election pledges and worked hard for last four years to improve economic status of the people at home and boost the country's image abroad.

Organised by UK Awami League, the meeting was addressed, by Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Shah Azizur Rahman MP, Baroness Paulauddin, Mayor of Tower Hamlets Saiful Alom, Member of Parliament of Labour Party in London Zim Pilz Patrick and Shafiqur Rahman Chowdhury. Shamsuddin Khan presided.

The Prime Minister recalled with gratitude the contribution of the Bangladeshi living in Britain who sent eminent lawyer Sir Tomas to defend

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the Agartala conspiracy case.

She also mentioned that the Inquiry Commission to probe the Bangabandhu Murder Case was formed with financial assistance from Bangladeshi expatriates, but the inquiry commission could not work because of non-cooperation of General Ziaur Rahman.

Making a flashback on her struggle for democracy in post-75 era, Hasina said she had launched anti-monarchy and anti-autocracy movement from London yesterday afternoon.

Today I have become the Prime Minister of Bangladesh as an outcome of a long-drawn democratic movement," she said.

Referring to the issue of enlisting expatriate Bangladeshi as voters the PM noted that it is a complex issue and it could be settled only with cooperation of the opposition.

About the Surat Mia Murder Case she said the matter was pending with court and "we are waiting for the judgement."

Witnesses said opposition supporters belonging to BNP, Jatiya Party and IOJ the parties who are in movement at home staged demonstrations while the Prime Minister was going to Camden Hall to address the meeting. The protesters chanted slogans against Sheikh Hasina.

Bangabandhu Murder Case

Col Rashid was not involved in the killing: Defence

The defence counsel for Lt Col Khandakar Abdur Rashid in death reference of Bangabandhu Murder Case completed his argument in the High Court yesterday strongly submitting that his client was not in any way involved in the conspiracy or the killing of BNP.

JK Paul, the counsel appointed by the state for Col Rashid who remains fugitive, submitted that the charge against the accused said some disgruntled, sacked and aggrieved members of the Army killed Bangabandhu through a planned conspiracy involving some ambitious politicians.

But Col Rashid was neither sacked nor an aggrieved officer of

the Army. Therefore, he was not involved in the killing of Bangabandhu.

Again, the defence counsel argued that the charge said the Army officers had conspired with some ambitious politicians. Tuberuddin Thakur, the lone politician, accused in the case was acquitted of the charge. This proved that there was no conspiracy for the killing and hence his client was also not involved in the murder.

Quoting prosecution witness Col Shafayet Jamil, the counsel said according to him (Jamil) those who committed the massacre on August 15 in 1975 were also involved in the coup plot against President Ziaur Rahman

in 1980 as they were sacked from the service and living a fugitive life abroad.

Advocate Paul contended that the statement of the prosecution witness proved that Lt Col Rashid was not involved in the killing of Bangabandhu as he was sacked from his service on July 1, 1976, long after the Bangabandhu murder.

Referring to the statement of PW-44 and PW-45 (Gen Shahidullah, the then Army Chief), the defence counsel argued that their contentions should not be taken into cognizance as those were not verified by counter witnesses.

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A small listening device helped Fariya's rescue

Police say they're so poorly equipped ...

By Staff Correspondent

A small listening device made available by BTTB was instrumental in rescuing two-year old Fariya from the clasp of her abductors in the early morning of September 6.

As soon as the Officer-in-Charge of Ramma police station ABM Sultan Ahmed learnt about the abduction, he requested BTTB to tap the telephone of victim's father where the abductors were telephoning asking for a Tk 10 lakh ransom.

Within a matter of hours of tracing the call, police raided a house in Aldi village under Munshiganj thana and rescued a terrified and dehydrated Fariya. They also arrested one of the two abductors.

As the prompt police action brought a rare praise for the force, police officials at different city thanas said if they are given access to some modern facilities, they would not only be able to prevent crimes, but also nab criminals promptly.

Officials at different police stations said they are so poorly equipped and manned that they often feel helpless against criminals.

"When people on the street point our attention to cars emitting black smoke, we feel ashamed; we need to improve our transport system immediately," said an official of Ramma police station.

While most top police officials enjoy riding luxurious vehicles, the policemen in-charge of the streets are regularly required to acquire public vehicles to discharge their duties.

About computer use at thana level, a police official said that

almost all the top officials have been given computers in their offices but none of the thanas, which are directly involved in maintaining law and order, has access to computer.

"With computer we can instantly have access to criminal lists, pictures and act promptly. But now if we have to find out about a possible suspect we need to flip through a pile of papers and the process is very time consuming," said the official adding that many criminals get away simply because police are poorly equipped.

Another official complained about the lengthy process of finger print testing. He said only the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has the facility to test fingerprints. But once a crime has been committed, it takes up to two months by the investigative officer to obtain the report of a fingerprint.

"Then again, can you tell me how you can expect a person to run a family of three people in the city with a basic salary of Tk 2,500," said another official of Mohammadpur police station who largely blamed low pay of the police for corruption.

"You will notice these days that most police officials in the city have mobile phones. It is because we cannot depend on our wireless sets, these are mostly inoperative," he said.

Young university graduates coming from decent backgrounds are joining the police. We have to give them incentives to stay in the department and serve the people, but the system only encourages corruption," lamented the official.

Star Report

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Syed leaves for a three-week official visit to the United States amidst fears that his absence may further worsen the crisis in the Election Commission (EC).

Abidur Rahman, the senior most of the three election commissioners, will act as the CEC until Syed returns.

On an invitation from the US government's Internal Visitor Programme, Syed will attend the US Political System Study and the US Presidential Election 2000 observance.

The EC activities are now suffering due to tension between

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Syed and other members of the four-member commission over some appointments including that of a foreign consultant. Syed also came under bitter criticism for bringing some employees to the EC from the Securities and Exchange Commission, of which Syed was the chairman.

An EC official said the issue is now beyond control. There is no scope to settle the matter as both sides are rigid on their position."

Besides, long vacancy in some key positions including that of the secretary has slowed down the EC activities.

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An autocratic & terrorist govt is ruling country: Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has said an "autocratic and terrorist" government is ruling the country and the people do not have any security under it.

"Today, life of journalists, teachers, businessmen, politicians, professionals and even women and children are not secure. No one can do one's job properly for fear of being killed, kidnapped or subjected to extortion," she said.

She was addressing the inaugural session of the biennial conference of a faction of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

A section of leaders and activists of the ruling party are involved in these crimes and in corruption, she alleged. Advocate Habibur Rahman Mandal and Kalidas Baral were killed by terrorists of the ruling party, but none was arrested, she alleged.

Referring to the law and order situation, he said at least half a dozen people are being killed in the city every day but the government is silent because Awami League cadres are involved in those, she alleged.

She said the government which can not ensure law and order has no right to stay in power.

The Leader of the Opposition in Parliament said the Awami League government has totally failed in all fields but has become champion in propagating falsehood.

"All relief and rehabilitation activities of the government in flood-hit south western region of the

country are only in Radio and Television," the BNP Chairperson said.

The former prime minister said the AL government, after politicising the administration and all institutions, is now trying to destroy the judiciary and the media. Stick processions participated by ministers are a threat to the judiciary, she mentioned.

Khaleda Zia called upon journalists and other professionals to join the current oust-government movement to restore rule of law, establish peace and ensure security of life and property.

Refusing AL's propaganda that BNP was trying to make Bangladesh a part of Pakistan again, she, "It is AL which tried to make it a province of India in the past and is now conspiring to jeopardise the independence and sovereignty of the country."

"They will be put on the dock some day for their anti-state activities and conspiracy to introduce one currency and make the country a part of India," Khaleda Zia added.

The opposition leader said BNP is fully aware of the conspiracies. "All conspiracies will be foiled with the help of the people".

Presided over by DUJ President Abu Saleh, the inaugural session was addressed by, among others, by Amarnullah Kabir, Reazuddin Ahmed, Gias Kamal Chowdhury, Manjur Ahmed, Zahirul Haq, MA Aziz, Manjurul Alam and Ruhul Amin Gazi.

Akther's 'appeal' to army men

By Staff Correspondent