

Govt trying to groom youths as skilled manpower: PM

UNB, Savar

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government is arranging whatever necessary to turn the huge population, particularly youths, into human resource by providing training and creating scope for jobs.

"Youths are the lifeblood, force and prospect of our nation, we want to rear them as skilled manpower for productive use of their potential," she said while visiting a youth-development centre named after the PM.

The Sheikh Hasina National Youth Centre has been constructed here at a cost of Tk 24.16 crore to develop human resource through training. This centre is imparting training in poultry-farming, fisheries, nursery and gardening, computer and in different technical vocations.

So far, 23169 youths, including 6805 women, have received training from here under a tin shed. Now a big complex is being constructed

with more facilities, including auditorium, classrooms, hostel, cafeteria, media centre, gymnasium and display-cum-sales centre.

"We have named this complex after four beloved Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as she is very much careful and active about the development of youths," State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Qader told the function.

Prime Minister Hasina said the youths are the main force for developing the country and the government is trying to groom them with this end in view.

"We are providing training and micro-credits to the youths for their self-employment and development. Training gives them encouragement and confidence."

For many years, she said, the youth forces had been neglected in the country, they were not utilised but rather abused as the tool for capturing power. But the present government is trying for their all-round skill development for accommodating them in development

activities. "We're trying to groom them properly."

She said the government created scope for employment, providing loans from different organisations, including the employment bank. For the steps of the government, the country achieved self-sufficiency in food, while per-capita income and calorie intake increased.

The Prime Minister hoped that with all this the nation will be able to stand tall in dignity in the current century and urged the youth to put their potential to good use.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, CHT Affairs Minister Kalpa Ranjan Chakma, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, a good number of diplomats and trainees and trainers of the centre were present in the function.

Earlier, the Prime Minister went round different sections of the Sheikh Hasina National Youth Centre.



Construction materials occupy a significant portion of the city's Manik Mia Avenue, as work goes in full swing to build apartments for NAM Summit delegates. The buildings are constructed without clearance from the Department of Environment.

25 killed in Kashmir

AFP, Srinagar

Muslim militants on Saturday carried out two bloody attacks in Kashmir, a daring raid on a police station and a village massacre, which left at least 25 people dead, Indian officials said.

Ten people, eight police and two Muslim militants, died when a rebel squad attacked the main police control centre for Kashmir in the city of Srinagar overnight, police said.

In a second attack, Indian military officials said militants burned down the houses of three suspected army informers in a village northwest of Jammu, killing 15 people including three women and seven children.

The upsurge of violence in the troubled Himalayan region has left the Indian government's controversial unilateral ceasefire in Kashmir hanging by a thread, analysts said.

Indian commandos re-gained control of the Srinagar police complex shortly after dawn on Saturday. Troops launched a final all-out assault on a building where several gunmen had been holed up since the militants fought their way into the large complex nearly 12 hours earlier.

Kashmir police chief Ashok Bhan said eight police and two militants had been confirmed dead.

The Pakistan-based Islamic fundamentalist group Lashker-e-Taiba and the Alumar Mujahideen claimed responsibility.

The squad of militants approached the police station's front gate at around 7:10 pm (1340 GMT) on Friday in a white Ambassador taxi and opened fire with grenades and automatic weapons.

Some of the militants then managed to get inside the sprawling complex and intense exchanges of gunfire could be heard for more than one hour.

Troops using bullet-proof vehicles moved into the complex late on Friday night to hunt for the gunmen and at around 5:00 am (0000 GMT) on Saturday around 50 policemen were escorted to safety.

The soldiers waited for the first rays of dawn before launching a final attack on a building adjacent to the main compound where the militants had been hiding, police sources said.

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Killing of marine turtles raises fear of int'l sanctions

SHEHAB AHMED

Wildlife experts are worried about death of marine turtles in fishermen's nets and their indiscriminate killing during laying season in coastal belts of the country.

This has a bearing on country's export of marine fish also, they said. "The country may face international sanctions, particularly from the United States. Export of marine fish to the US requires certificate

that those were caught with nets having Turtle Excluder Device (TED)", Dr Ainun Nishat, Country Representative of the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) told The Daily Star.

There had been trouble earlier with marine fish export to the US and the European Union. Exports were accepted when Bangladesh agreed to certify catches using nets having TED.

But some recent trends are worrying all concerned. Dead

turtles, mostly Olive Ridleys, the most endangered among the eight species of marine turtles, were found on the beach between Himchari and Inuni in Cox Bazar.

Some were battered by egg collectors as the turtles came on the shore to hatch. Others were discarded by fishermen and beached or simply found dead, the reports said.

The Daily Star in February 1999

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Six marine turtles lie lifeless on the beach.

Newly constructed bridge not operational despite PM's nod

REAZ AHMAD

Even eight months after the Prime Minister's directive to make a newly constructed bridge on Dhaka-Sylhet highway operational, virtually there has been no progress in this regard.

The 162.5 metre long Bridge on the river Kushiara at Sadipur, some 35 km from Sylhet, had developed cracks even before its scheduled inauguration by Prime Minister

Sheikh Hasina on June 3 last year. The authorities then closed the bridge for vehicle movement, sources concerned pointed out.

Damage of the bridge built at a cost of over Tk 17 crore even before its formal opening caused widespread resentment among the people of Sylhet Division.

Later, on instruction from the Prime Minister, the bridge was opened only for light vehicles while

passenger buses and trucks continued to use the 20 year-old floating bridge on the Kushiara.

The sources said non-operation of the economically important new bridge is causing immense sufferings to about one crore people of Sylhet Division. Their miseries multiplied when the floating bridge also remained inoperative for about a week before being repaired on

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Alleged terrorist Monu arrested in Feni

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Feni

Police yesterday arrested Abul Kalam Monu, an alleged terrorist from Selonia Bazar in Dagon Bhuiyan thana of the district.

Police said Monu was wanted in a case in connection with ransacking of Sultan Memorial Girls' High School in Dagon Bhuiyan a few weeks ago.

Tipu Sultan, UNB's Feni correspondent was severely beaten up by a gang of terrorists after publication of a news item in this regard.

Sources said Monu was also involved in beating Tipu Sultan. Followers of Awami League leader Joynal Hazari gheraoed Dagon Bhuiyan thana following the arrest. Joynal Hazari, a local MP, is allegedly creating pressure on police officials to release Monu.

When contacted over telephone, SP, Feni denied allegations that any quarter put pressure on him. He, however, admitted that some local leaders had gathered at thana headquarters after the arrest.

2 officers killed as CRPF jawan goes berserk at Dum Dum

SAKYASEN MITRA, Kolkata

A CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) jawan went berserk and killed two police officers and critically injured two others at the Dum Dum International Airport in Kolkata yesterday. The jawan then tried unsuccessfully to commit suicide by shooting himself, sustaining injuries in the abdomen.

The dead are inspector Mahadeb Roy and sub-inspector Iliyas Mondal and the injured are PK Roy and Bikramjit Pal.

The incident occurred at around 3:30am yesterday at the airport's immigration counter. As police officers were examining passports of incoming passengers, CRPF Jawan RC Barma on duty at the arrival gate suddenly opened fire, killing police officer Mahadeb Roy on the spot and injuring three others. Sub-inspector Iliyas Mondal died on the way to hospital. Both the assailant and the injured were taken to the SSKM hospital here. Barma is expected to recover in a few days. However, the conditions of police officers PK Roy and Bikramjit Pal were stated to be critical.

Clashes leave 12 hurt in Rajshahi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

At least 12 people were injured, four of them seriously, in a series of clashes between two rival groups of youngmen at Budhpara in Motihar thana in the city last night.

Police arrested four people and recovered one pistol, one shutter gun from their possession.

The arrested are Giash, 25, Zamil, 22, Zion, 19 and Dollar.

Khatunganj traders go on strike to protest murder of employee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Traders and shop owners at Khatunganj business centre in the city went on a wildcat strike yesterday morning protesting the killing of an employee of a shop there.

Nurul Alam, 17, an employee of an electrical goods shop, was gunned down by a gang of muggers at 8.30 am, police and witnesses said.

They said Alam was shot when he tried to resist the armed muggers

who were snatching money from three hawkers. Alam died on the spot.

Protesting the killing, the shop owners shut their business houses and shops, suspending all business activities.

They also brought out a procession in the area demanding immediate arrest of the killers.

A large number of policemen rushed to the spot, but could not arrest the muggers as they fled the scene immediately after the inci-

dent. Police said drive was on at different places of the city to nab the killers.

Hundreds of trucks loaded with goods got stuck in a traffic jam from Boxirhat to Khatunganj as movement of vehicles to and from Khatunganj remained suspended after the incident. Agitating business urged the authorities concerned to ensure security at Khatunganj business centre.

Two children burnt alive in Bandarban

UNB, Bandarban

Two children were burnt alive in a fire at village Gazalia of Lama upazila in the early hours of Friday.

The origin of the fire that broke out at a house of the village could not be known.

Police said the fire gutted the house of one Ali Ahmed leaving his three-year old son and seven-year old daughter dead. But police could not give names of the victims.

KU reopens on Feb 13, convocation next day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna University will reopen on February 13, just a day before the second convocation where 150 graduates have been invited to receive their certificates from the Chancellor of the university President Shahabuddin Ahmed.

The graduates have already got their names registered for joining the convocation on February 14 on condition that the Vice Chancellor will allow students to return to their dormitories and reopen the university.

The decision to reopen the university was, however, taken in a meeting of the Academic Council held yesterday.

The university was declared closed sine die on January 21 following a movement launched by the students to press home their four-point demands which include removal of the honorary Treasurer Sarder Abdur Razzak who is a senior Vice President of Khulna district Awami League.

The agitating students also submitted a memorandum to President Shahabuddin Ahmed recently, said a source in KU Public Relations Department. The university will be reopened in honour of the President's august visit to the university on the occasion of the convocation, said a spokesman of VC.

According to an unconfirmed source, the President has asked the KU authorities to resolve the crisis and create a congenial atmosphere for holding the convocation.

Khulna citizens' committee led by city Mayor Tayebur Rahman also had a meeting with the KU academic council on January 28 where the Vice Chancellor assured to resolve the crisis.

The reopening of the university and all residential halls will not at all help solve the problem until and unless the honorary treasurer Sarder Abdur Razzak is removed from the campus, said leaders of KU Students' Action Committee.

Arson, looting in Pak city over murder of 5 people

AFP, Quetta

Angry mobs looted shops, burnt vehicles and clashed with police in this southwestern Pakistani city on Saturday after five people were killed in a dispute between two groups of transport operators, police and witnesses said.

At least 10 jewellery shops and grocery stores were looted as violence broke out after members of the ethnic Hazara community forced people to down shutters over the killings in an ambush on late Friday, they said.

Rampaging youths from Hazara settlers and local Pashtun and Baloch tribes torched six motor-bikes and damaged about 20 vehicles, they said.

"Groups of people armed with sticks and iron bars removed shutters and plundered gold and silver shops and several departmental stores," a resident said.

They also smashed windows and badly damaged more than a dozen other shops, witnesses said, adding that offices and markets were closed and traffic stayed off the roads.

Troops from the paramilitary Frontier Constabulary have been

called in as police failed to bring the situation under control after thousands of people gathered outside a hospital where bodies of the five were lying.

Police said unidentified gunmen opened fire on a passenger van, killing five people and injuring seven others in the Hazara neighbourhood overnight.

The killings came amid simmering tensions after Pashtun and Baloch tribes operating bus services on major routes opposed the running of passenger vans and pickups by the Hazara settlers in the city.

Hazaras are mainly Shiite Muslims who form about 15 percent of Quetta's 1.2 million population.

The city administration chief Athar Hussain Sial told reporters police were trying to apprehend the assailants.

He said the government of Baluchistan province had been trying to amicably solve the transport operators' feud "but no positive attitude was demonstrated."

He assured those responsible for the killings would be dealt with according to the law without discrimination.