

Attack on journalist condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different socio-cultural and political organisations have condemned the attack on journalist Probrir Sikder.

In separate statements yesterday, the leaders of the organisations held the anti-liberation forces responsible for the attack and demanded immediate arrest of the culprits.

Minister for Environment and Forest Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury in a statement yesterday condemned the attack on Probrir. She blamed the anti-liberation forces for the attack and demanded immediate arrest of those involved.

Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmla Committee in a statement said the anti-liberation forces are attacking those who are writing against them. The Committee demanded punishment to the culprits.

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) yesterday protested attacks on journalists in different parts of the country.

The union leaders also condemned the attack on the Faridpur correspondent of Dainik Janakantha and demanded immediate arrest of the culprits.

PM to address 3 public rallies in Khulna, Bagerhat today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to address three public meetings in Khulna and Bagerhat districts today.

According to official source, the prime minister will address a public meeting at Pather bazar of Digholia upazila of Khulna district.

She will address the second public meeting at Mongla after inaugurating a newly constructed tourist motel there.

In the afternoon, the prime minister will address, the last public meeting of the day after laying foundation stone of a bridge over Bishwa river and inaugurating Daukhali bridge in Rampal upazila of Bagerhat district, officials sources said.

Probrir improving

FROM PAGE 1

Our Staff Correspondent in Dhaka adds: Probrir Sikder is now fighting for life at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD).

"Although Probrir is now conscious, he is not out of danger. His condition is gradually improving," said the on-duty doctor at the Intensive Care Unit of NICVD.

According to the doctors and sources in the Pangu Hospital, Probrir suffered multiple fractures in his right thigh due to bullet injuries and two main veins (blood vessels) also ruptured beyond repair. He also suffered serious bullet injuries in his left arm.

Doctors said Probrir's femur bone in the thigh broke into six pieces, which was partially fixed at the Pangu hospital in a major operation Friday night from 10 to 11:30 p.m.

After he slipped into unconsciousness, the doctors at NICVD performed a bypass grafting which involved reconnecting his veins taken from other parts of his body.

Businessmen

FROM PAGE 12

It is necessary for the government to take steps to create an atmosphere conducive to economic and business activities, he said.

President of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) Latifur Rahman, President of the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) Wali Bhuiyan, President of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) Benajir Ahmed and President of the Agro-Processing Industries Association Major General (retd) Anjad Khan Chowdhury and other chamber and trade association leaders were present on the occasion.

In the middle of the press conference, a group of about 25 people including some FBCCI staff members led by a section of the Shop-owners' Association came to the venue with a white-flag procession in protest against hartals.

Move to defuse tension

FROM PAGE 1

"Our experience indicates that intruders are beaten by villagers whenever they enter another's territory. It happened in the past but in this case it cannot be said without investigation."

Asked why BDR did not have full control, he replied, "BDR discharged its duties valiantly and courageously. They were not adequate in number to deal with an adverse situation. Local people got involved as it happens in such border skirmishes."

About the Indian claim that there were more bodies of BSF men, he said, "We will also look into that allegation. Border forces of both sides have decided that they will search their respective territories for missing bodies, arms and ammunition, and if recovered, those will be returned to the other side."

The two injured BSF men captured during the skirmishes are undergoing treatment in Dhaka and may be handed over to Indian authorities in a day or two if doctors permit, he said.

Objective investigation

FROM PAGE 12

Barrister Ishthiaq Ahmed said he was frustrated to see heinous and inhuman acts of crime go unabated. "It becomes evident from newspaper reports that people from all walks of life except leading politicians are being killed."

The eminent lawyer asked the government not to deceive people by following the traditional way of investigation into the Ramna carnage. "Make the probe report public at the earliest so that the incident does not get lost," he said asking to mobilise public opinion against such incident. Offering legal assistance from the lawyers' community, he suggested that a special bomb squad of the police be formed to ensure security at big public gatherings.

Professor Anisuzzaman said nothing effective had so far been done to punish the people responsible for the bombing of bombing that were taking place one after another.

He urged all the cultural organisation (MCCI) Latifur Rahman questioned if the investigation into the Ramna blasting would be a repetition of what had happened to similar incidents in the past.

The noted business leader wondered why the police allowed massive gathering at the spot of the blast and why they did not cordon off the area for proper investigation.

Stressing the need for specialised and well-trained police force to deal with such incident, he proposed for bringing in experts from abroad, if necessary.

"We're not yet clear about the nature of bombs being used. Investigation into such incident has to be made professionally and in an objective manner," Rahman said.

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Asked to comment on Indian Home Minister L.K. Advani's remarks that BDR committed excesses, he said, "It is a comment by an honourable Indian minister. It is his personal opinion. As foreign secretary, it is not proper for me to comment on the remarks of an esteemed minister."

His attention was drawn to reports in some local newspapers that foreign ministry sought an explanation from the Director General of BDR. He said, "This is not correct. The foreign ministry has no jurisdiction over BDR, which is under the home ministry."

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad was asked by BBC last night how he would react to India's "resentment".

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Move to defuse tension

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Delhi protests 'mutilation'

FROM PAGE 1

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and was assured that all aspects of these unfortunate incidents would be investigated.

Replying to a question, he said security personnel should be treated with dignity at any situation.

"The inhuman treatment meted out to dead BSF personnel is unacceptable," he told a questioner.

PTI adds: The CPI-M yesterday demanded a credible explanation immediately from the Vajpayee government on the situation along the northeastern borders.

Expressing concern over it, the party politburo in a statement said the "barbaric killing" of 15 BSF personnel on the Bangladesh side, when both countries have close and friendly ties, has shocked the country.

It said the Vajpayee government must immediately provide a credible explanation as to how such a situation came into being on the northeastern borders.

BSS adds: A spokesman of the External Affairs Ministry said protest was also lodged about destruction of property of Indian villagers even after the two governments had agreed through diplomatic channel to restore status quo ante and defuse tension.

He said the government of Bangladesh was asked to return immediately the two injured BSF men undergoing treatment at a hospital in Dhaka.

The spokesman said it was emphasized that such unfortunate incidents were not in keeping with friendly relations between the two friendly countries and those must be prevented.

Foreign Secretary Ms Iyer had talks with her Bangladesh counterpart Syed Moazzem Ali by phone, he added.

The spokesman said the Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka Manilal Tripathi met Bangladesh

Demarcate city lakes

FROM PAGE 12

stream, and constructing walkways and shades around the periphery of the lakes.

Expressing concern over the gradual transformation of residential areas into commercial complexes, the students called for creating awareness among the neighborhoods to prevent the lakes from going into the hands of the illegal occupants.

They called upon the authorities concerned to introduce a good sewerage disposal scheme to ensure that the lakes and other water bodies are free of pollution.

Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam said that the city's water bodies are no longer an issue for beneficiaries, instead it is an issue of survival. He said lakes of the city are absolutely in a dangerous state due to negligence by the

authorities.

Initiating the discussion, Head of the Architecture Department of BUET Prof. Shahidul Amin said the lakes of the capital are now problem-ridden due to ignorance by the authorities concerned.

"Many of the city's water bodies have already disappeared while the rest is going to disappear soon."

Prof. Nizamuddin said that the city lakes are in real danger due to frequent encroachment and pollution, creating an adverse impact on the city's environment.

He suggested that opinion be sought from the experts and the neighbourhoods before implementing any development project in the lake areas. "A policy which will ensure ecological protection of the lakes should be taken immediately."

Architect Iqbal Habib of Viti

Shadhin remanded again

FROM PAGE 12

Senior police officials feared that this 'misunderstanding' between the two departments of police might hamper the investigation.

SB interrogated Motiur and Yasin at the SB office in the city yesterday afternoon after bringing them from Demra and Hajaribagh thana custody respectively.

Meanwhile, a body of the nine blast victims still remained unclaimed at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue.

Opposition

FROM PAGE 12

They also urged people to make the 72-hour hartal beginning tomorrow a success.

City unit of All Party Action Committee will bring out torch processions from 11 points of the city today to make the 72-hour hartal a success, said a press release.

Prior to the procession, a rally will be held in front of the BNP central office with Sadek Hossain Khoka MP in the chair.

Nagorik Andolan vows to foil

FROM PAGE 12

convention adopted an action programme to attain various objectives of the CCM. The convention decided to hold rallies and meetings at district and upazila levels till July this year, form human chain at local and national levels and conduct a signature campaign in support of various demands of the CCM.

The convention also decided to launch advocacy drive so that fundamentalists, fatwahas, corrupt elements, terrorists and anti-liberation forces could not get nominations from any political parties in the next general election. It also took resolutions to conduct voters' education programme to create awareness about their right of franchise.

The convention also decided to resist issueless hartals which bring misery to the people and destroy national economy.

Kalidas Murder Case Mobile phone seized from Bablu: AL, BNP leaders worried

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police recovered a mobile phone from the possession of Bablu Mollah, the main accused in AL leader Kalidas Boral Murder Case.

The mobile phone contains numbers of 108 people including senior Awami League and BNP leaders of the Bagerhat district, police said.

Bablu has disclosed names of those who talked to him frequently over mobile phone regarding execution of the conspiracy to kill Kalidas Boral.

Bablu is yet to say anything about illegal arms used to kill Boral. But he has given some information about the conspiracy of the murder and the masterminds.

Bablu Molla, BPCP cadre, was interrogated by a team of police officials. He confessed his involvement in several murders and terrorist activities in favour of the ruling party after 1996 general elections.

Police quoting him said some leaders of AL and BNP of Bagerhat helped form a separate strong group of armed cadres and set up an arms factory.

His cadres started their mission by committing a dacoity in Chitalmari branch of Sonali Bank in 1997. He used to maintain liaison with outlawed organisations and the two major political parties, Bagerhat district police said.

Police officials are in a fix with what to do and how to deal with mobile phone numbers of top political leaders of the district recovered from Bablu.

A BNP leader is reportedly trying to secure Bablu's bail from the court at any cost, police said yesterday.

Bangladesh on back foot

FROM PAGE 1

take a firm grip on the match, scoring 457 in reply to the tourists' 257 in the first innings. Bangladesh were on 91 for two at stumps.

Sub-standard ground fielding and catching let down a brilliant bowling effort from Monjurul. The left-arm pacer from Khulna came close to a hatrick when he dismissed Zimbabwe captain Heath Streak and Andy Blignaut with successive balls in his second spell on the day. It was also the best bowling figures of a Bangladeshi in Test cricket, bettering Naimur Rahman's six for 123 against India in the inaugural Test last November.

Bangladesh will however remember the third day of their first away Test for all the wrong reasons. They were reduced to ten men when wicketkeeper Khaled Masood was unable to take the field after fracturing his right ankle during their warm-up before the start of play.

The home side, taking full advantage of as many as five dropped catches including two on the third day, piled on runs to take a lead of 200 before being all out one-and-a-half hours after the lunch break.

Bangladesh started disastrously losing opener Mehrab Hossain for a duck in the first over when the right-hander dragged the fifth ball of the Handi Streak on to his stumps.

One-down Bashir and Javed added 55 runs for the second wicket and when they appeared set for a bigger partnership the former departed for 24, playing a rash shot once again. His dismissal was a replay of his first innings, where he slashed outside the off-stump and was caught at point.

But there was more cause for concern for coach Trevor Chappell, whose effort to improve the fielding failed for the second successive day.

Skipper Naimur Rahman and Akram Khan dropped two vital catches in the slips as Zimbabwe, resuming on 287 for five, went on to add 170 runs.

Grant Flower, dropped on 24 by

Prof Sayed Ahmed Khan dead

BSS, Dhaka

Prof Sayed Ahmed Khan of Dhaka University died of heart attack at his Fuller Road residence in the city last evening, he was 63.

He left behind his wife, two sons and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death, a DU press release said.

His nama-j-e-janaza will be held at the University Central Mosque after Zohr prayers today.

Vice-Chancellor of the university, Prof A K Azad Chowdhury, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Prof Mohammad Shadat Ali, Treasurer Prof Abul Hashem rushed to the residence of the deceased immediately after hearing the sad news.

Prof Khan completed his Bachelor and Masters degree from the Sociology Department of the university in 1960 and 1961 respectively and joined the same department in 1973 as assistant professor. He also attained LLB degree from the university in 1967. He was the director of Nazmul Karim Study Centre.

Environment Day

FROM PAGE 1

5 "independently and in a big way", meeting sources said.

It also decided to carry out all environmental programmes independently without having any link with the MOEF.

The World Environment Day had so long been observed jointly by MOEF and NGOs to highlight environmental degradation and create public awareness in this regard.

The meeting was attended by representatives of ADAB, IJCN, FEJB, BIDS, BUJ, CARITAS, Gano Chhetana, Prism, CAMPE, Unnayanay Sammonoy, Waste Concern and BELA.

It was followed by another meeting of the Coalition of Environmental NGOs (CEN), chaired by Dr Atiq Rahman of Bangladesh Centre for Development Studies. Representatives of 51 NGOs including BRAC, Proshika, RDS, Swanirvar

PM: Armed forces

FROM PAGE 12

raising ceremony of Bangladesh Infantry Regimental Centre (BIRC) at the Rajshahi Cantonment.

The prime minister also asked the members of the armed forces to perform their duties with utmost sincerity. She hoped that they would further brighten their image through professional skill and efficiency.

"You'll have to remain active to acquire highest professional efficiency through honesty, sincerity, dutifulness and discipline," Hasina said.

"We have kept the armed forces free from politics and established the chain of command," she said.

The prime minister mentioned the importance of the armed forces in safeguarding country's sovereignty and security, and termed the Infantry a major part of the army.

She said the government has formed the country's second infantry regiment after the East Bengal

PM: Armed forces

FROM PAGE 12

Regiment.

East Bengal Regiment was the country's first infantry regiment, which played a heroic role in the War of Independence, she recalled. "We've fulfilled another commitment to the army by establishing the Bangladesh Infantry Regimental Centre."

Hasina praised the members of the armed forces for their role in UN peacekeeping missions and at times of natural disasters.

She said the government has been leading the country taking the armed forces along with the people to ensure development in all sectors. "For this, we've built up a modern and well-trained army."

Army Chief Lieutenant General Harun Ar Rashid, Navy Chief Rear Admiral A Taher, Air Force Chief Air Vice-Marshal Jamal Uddin and Commandant of the newly-established Regimental Centre Brigadier General Mohammad Mahboob Haider Khan were present.

Major pro-Islamic political parties

FROM PAGE 1

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Acting secretary general of Jamaat-e-Muhammadiyah said his party never raised any objection or made any comment against celebration of Pahela Baishakh and other days and occasions which are part of Bangla culture and tradition. But Jamaat and Islamic scholars always condemn and protest nakedness in the name of culture.

He said the Awami League government, without any inquiry, instantly blames Jamaat and other pro-Islamic parties for any bomb explosion or other incident of violence, which is not correct.

The government blames us to show the western world that there is fundamentalism in Bangladesh and that AL is fighting alone against this. They (AL government) have joined hands with the Western world which is trying to portray Muslims, their countries and organisations as terrorists, Kamaruzzaman said.

Another senior leader of Jamaat said the so-called religious forces also want to turn Bangladesh into a Taliban state, which according to him, is a "foolish dream". He said there are zealous and reactionary forces among people of every religion, but their number is insignificant in Bangladesh compared to that in India.

A top leader of IOI said some illiterate so-called religious leaders and reactionary quarters misinterpret Islam.

They also express their own views on many things including politics and culture. They say observance of Ekushay February, Pahela Baishakh etc, are anti-Islamic, which is not correct.

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