

Punish those trying to protect killers of Bangabandhu: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the people to punish those who are trying to save the killers of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

"The trial of the killers has been held, the killers will be executed. But a vested group of people is trying to save the killers," she said urging the people to try those who are trying to save the killers.

Addressing the inaugural function of Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Women Technical Training Centre at Mirpur, she said for a long time the trial of the killers was not held. Rather they were awarded in various ways for the killings, she said.

Hasina said General Zia awarded the killers by giving them jobs abroad, General Ershad rehabilitated them in the society and former prime minister Khaleda Zia made a killer a Member of Parliament.

She said when the present government initiated the trial of the killers removing all obstacles, the anti-liberation forces started issuing threats to unseat the government and tried their best to save the killers.

"Those who try to save the killers should also get punishment, the people will decide what kind of punishment they should get," she said.

"The killing and terrorism have increased in the country for not holding the trial of the heinous killers," the prime minister said and urged the people to express their hatred for the killers and for those who are protecting the killers.

She said if a criminal is not brought to book, it encourages crimes in the society. She demanded trial of all killings and hoped that peace would be established in the society by removing injustices and crimes.

The Prime Minister said the present government has taken steps for holding the trial of the killers and at the same time created a base for development of the country.

She hoped that under the rule of Awami League the country would attain economic self-reliance and raise its head as a dignified nation.

Flag meet held BDR, BSF to avoid provocation to maintain peace at frontiers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A sector commander level flag meeting between BDR and BSF yesterday decided to avoid provocation to maintain peace at frontiers.

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Border Security Force (BSF) held the meeting at Sona Masjid point under Chapainawabganj district yesterday.

BDR sources said the meeting lasted nearly five hours discussed the overall border situation. The two sides agreed to maintain peace in frontier areas. The two sides also agreed to avoid provocation to maintain peace in the frontiers. The meeting also took some decisions in this regard.

This was the first sector commander level flag meeting in the region after the Roumari incident in Kurigram.

BDR sector commander Col Ahmed Ullah Imam Khan led the home side along with the commanding officers of Chapainawabganj and Naogaon while DIG of BSF, Malda sector MS Bist along with three commandants and two staff officers led the Indian side.

Visa Accord with Delhi

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revised agreement also permits flexibility in case of route changing and facilities for transit and double entry visa.

This agreement replaces the earlier one, which came into effect on September 1, 1972. It has also a provision for review of these new arrangements after five years or earlier if required.

The upgrading of visa facilities reflects the mutual desire of the two governments to facilitate people-to-people contacts, which constitute an important aspect of the multifaceted relations between the two countries, said a press release of the High Commission of India in Dhaka.

At the sixth meeting of Joint Working Group (JWG) held in Dhaka last year, the issue of easing visa procedure was discussed and the seventh JWG meeting in Delhi in February this year finalised the text of the revised agreement.

The Indian high commissioner in Dhaka called on Home Minister Mohammad Nasim at his office after signing the agreement.

Tisha frees herself

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the door, the abductor put a piece of cloth with chloroform on her nose, they said.

The kidnapper then took her to the airport rail-crossing in a rickshaw and then boarded a taxi. She regained consciousness before the vehicle stopped on a road. The miscreant then started walking with her on way to their den. Sensing danger, the girl suddenly bit him on his hand and started running away.

On the road, she found a traffic sergeant, Morhosed Hossain. The girl narrated the incident and gave him her uncle's address. The sergeant then took the girl to her uncle at Kakrail, who sent her back home, relatives said.

Later, a complaint was lodged with Uttara thana and police arrested one person named Zahid from a ground floor flat of the same building. Following interrogation of Zahid, his wife and four others were also arrested for their alleged involvement in the incident, police said.

Abdul Hamid, Second Officer at Uttara police station, said they are yet to ascertain what had actually happened. The arrested are being interrogated to know the fact, he added.

Landmark UN treaty

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A senior US official said Tuesday in Washington that Bush hoped to be able to present the new US proposals on climate change to European leaders when he meets them at an EU summit in the western Swedish city of Gothenburg next month.

"We are concerned with global climate change and we are obviously going to take steps to ensure that we address these issues," Whitman said.

"The president wants to be engaged. He feels that we have a domestic responsibility to be involved in this as well as an international responsibility."

Canadian Environment Minister David Anderson meanwhile called the signing of the POP treaty "very gratifying."

"We have so many countries who have signed, and so quickly," said Anderson who, took the unusual step of immediately presenting his government's ratification of the pact, worked out in advance.

He said the convention was "very important from the point of view of POPs - it is the first real control system" for planning, financing and verifying the desired eradication of the dangerous chemicals, most of them pesticides and dioxins.

The signing of the treaty, hailed by environmentalists as a rare and important success in efforts to make the planet safer and cleaner, marked the culmination of marathon international negotiations that began in Canada in 1998.

To become law, the pact must be ratified by 50 countries, a process expected to take several years. Many of the 127 countries that have adopted the treaty have however said they plan to begin implementing it immediately.

Indira-Mujib accord

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areas, increasing the manpower of border guards, improving their logistic support and providing them with modern equipment.

Ruling party members in the meeting criticised the opposition members for their absence from yesterday's meeting. "More effective suggestions could have come if the opposition members played their due role for development of our border guards," Sayedul Haq told The Daily Star last night.

BDR officials informed the committee that they had at least 216 flag meetings with their Indian counterparts at different levels since the recent border tension broke out.

"Now the border situation is normal," the BDR DG told the meeting.

Mamun

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accomplices stormed into daily Purbokone office on the night of April 18 and assaulted its Chief Sub-Editor and Reading Section In-charge.

Iskander Ali filed a case against Mamun under the Public Safety Act (PSA) with Panchlaish thana on April 20.

The incident triggered protest in the port city. Journalists here condemned the incident and launched an agitation programme that forced the ward commissioner to surrender before the CMM's Court.

EC rules

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In this regard, the EC submitted a fresh proposal on November 11 last year. It incorporated some changes in the previous proposal, as suggested by an establishment ministry sub-committee.

Besides, a high-power meeting on March 10, 1999 with the cabinet secretary in the chair had decided that the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Establishment would finalise the recruitment rules, proposed by the EC, within one month.

"But the process was stalled due to bureaucratic tangles in the Ministry of Establishment," said a senior EC official.

As a result, a total of 1,461 posts in 83 district and 487 upazila level election offices have been lying vacant since the commission had planned its restructuring.

30pc DA

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and a five-point demand of the employees.

The demands include a separate pay commission for government employees and class two status for headmasters of primary schools.

Speakers at the rally urged the government to accept their demands before the parliament's coming session.

They warned that they would go for a tougher movement if the teachers and employees are harassed or arrested during the programmes. Their next course of action would be announced after the sit-in, they said.

Chaired by BPTA chief Abul Kalam Azad, the rally bitterly criticised the government for 'promoting top officials' keeping in view the coming general election.

The speakers threatened to foil any political move to 'use the public servants' for political gains and said primary school teachers and class three and class four employees are the 'main force' in conducting polls.

KCC Mayor

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verifying their background and judging experience, the FIR stated.

The FIR further stated that none of seven recruited persons had experience of five and three years as wanted in the Appointment Notice.

One of the seven persons was given appointment as freedom fighter. But according to his birth certificate he was only nine years of age during the war of liberation as learnt from the FIR lodged by DAB with official permission from Prime Minister's Secretariat.

With this, total number of cases filed by the Bureau of Anti-corruption against KCC Mayor rises to three.

The Mayor could not be contacted for his reaction, but a spokesman of his office termed the DAB cases as politically motivated.

Polarisation of terrorists ahead of next polls

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Didarul Alam, president of the Raozan upazilla unit of BCL and a close aide to Tinku, was gunned down. A murder case was lodged with Karim as the prime accused.

Meanwhile, Tinku publicly held Karim's men responsible for the killing.

Incidentally, the terrorist group loyal to Karim is the strongest in Raozan and Rangunia. The Rangunia meeting was actually held to unify cadres of SQ Chowdhury and Shibir's Sajjad. At the meeting, participated by 39 terrorists, it was decided that Sajjad would be the leader of the unified group.

However, Nazim, a senior cadre loyal to SQ Chowdhury, could not accept the decision. He was killed on May 3. Local people believe that Sajjad had him killed to ensure undisputed leadership.

The merger of the two leading groups of terrorists has, meanwhile, won support from Ahmaidda, who runs his own band of armed hoodlums in Satkania. Tinku has also extended his support. Police and underworld sources said that the cadres of SQ Chowdhury and Tinku had a meeting at the High Court mazar in the capital. Fazal Haq, Bidhan Barua, Abu Taher Nooraiya, Abul Hossain, Azim and Jahangir represented the SQ group in the meeting. Azimma, Didar (who was later killed on May 8), Bashikka, Khasru, Ali Hamza and Jainal represented the Tinku group. All these developments have made the SQ group a lot stronger than before.

According to a Daily Star investigation, Bidhan Barua and Fazal Haq own two AK-47s, one M-16, one SMC, and 20 other firearms including eight to 10 cut-rifles. Besides, Bidhan has a lot of connections to bring in any number of firearms whenever needed. On the other hand, Fazle Karim's AL group has some 20 firearms including two AK-47s.

Local people and police fear that illegal arms will play a key role in Raozan, Rangunia, Hathazari, Satkania, Fatikchhari and Banskhali areas.

Meanwhile, in a written statement, Fazle Karim claimed that he did not patronise terrorists and blamed SQ Chowdhury for fanning



PHOTO: STAR

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan addressing a meeting of the four-party Opposition Alliance at Mukhtangan in the city yesterday.

Venezuela: Technical assistance

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her office, officials said.

The Venezuelan president promised to increase co-operation in oil and gas technology and increase import of jute and other products from the South Asian country.

He agreed to resume technical assistance in energy sector that was cut down a decade ago and in information technology during the talks that lasted one and a half hours.

Chavez agreed to resume training programme for the Petro Bangla officials on gas exploration which was discontinued about ten years ago because of his country's economic crunch. Having a background of 120 years experience in exploitation of oil and gas resources Venezuela has a lot to offer, he told Hasina.

The two sides also agreed to expand trade and economic ties between Caracas and Dhaka, the two-way trade remaining at small level, Bangladesh exporting about 0.7 million dollars worth of goods.

Chavez said he would try to expand the trade, boosting imports of more jute and jute products, garments and other items.

Indian ministers

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Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Border Security Force (BSF) to look after a common border.

The guidelines, the report said, envisaged the establishment of joint check posts to help the nationals of both countries to use main channel of the river wherever the boundary ran through a river.

The GOM underscored the need for implementation of the guidelines for setting up of joint check posts between the BSF and BDR and said if necessary, the matter should be given definite shape through diplomatic efforts.

The GOM report made various suggestions with regard to reforming the national security system of India which was considered by the cabinet committee on security.

Cultivation of hybrid rice

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from India and marketed those in the brand names of Aalok, Loknath and Amarsiri-1. Another variety imported from China was marketed as Sonarbangla-1.

Alongside marketing the imported consignments, these companies tried to produce those seeds locally, using the 'parent lines'. None of them will now be able to continue this without 'parent lines', sources in the companies said.

Agriculturist Mujibur Rahman, Director of Mallika Seed Company, said, "We are capable of producing high bred rice seeds, if provided with parent line. Our government will have to pursue the exporting countries to supply us the parent lines or allow us to import seeds for three-four years more."

Meanwhile, two hybrid rice varieties developed by the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) are awaiting approval of the National Seed Board for release at farmers' level.

Field trial of homegrown hybrid varieties showed yield potential of eight to 11 tonnes of rice per hectare against seven tons from BRRI-developed high yielding varieties (HYV).

Among the four imported varieties, Sonarbangla-1 yielded eight tonnes per hectare on an average.

Official sources said the government is now assessing the situation in the light of success in rice production from use of hybrid seeds in the last two IRRI-Boro seasons.

National Seed Board is likely to hold a meeting soon to decide the issue, they said.

Executive Chairman of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), Dr MA Hamid Miah, expects hybrid rice seeds will cover one million hectares of land or one fourth of total Boro growing area in the country by 2010.

Mallika Seed Company sold 225 tonnes of Sonarbangla-1 seeds in the current Boro season, which covered 15,000 hectares of land in 23 districts. Hybrid rice seeds are now under trial production in the company's fields in Jamalpur, Sherpur and Jessore.

Former Director (Research) of BRRI, Dr Md Nasiruddin, told The Daily Star that the government should allow import of hybrid rice seeds for some time more as any homegrown variety is yet to be released.

MA Aziz Miah, former chief rice breeder of BRRI, said local companies should continue their research and trial and attain excellence before going for commercial production of hybrid rice seeds.

Harun-Ar-Rashid, Executive Director of Agricultural Advisory Society (AAS), an NGO which studied performance of imported hybrid seeds, said use of such seeds should be encouraged in the country only when locally developed varieties are commercially produced.

Alleged mugger shot dead in Chittagong

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

An alleged mugger was shot dead and a loaded gun was recovered from him at Pahartoli in the city yesterday evening.

Police and witnesses said, four snatchers were engaged in mugging passengers and pedestrians near Nechharia Madrassah of Ipsahani rail crossing area under Pahartoli thana at around 8 pm.

On receipt of information, police rushed to the spot. Sensing police presence, the snatchers opened fire. An unidentified mugger was killed on the spot during exchange of fire.

One shot dead in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Armed miscreants shot dead a young man and injured another at Rayshaheb Bazar in the city's Kotwali area last night.

The name of the deceased could not be known immediately while the injured was identified as Masum, 25.

Witnesses said a gang of armed miscreants shot them and left the spot immediately at about 9.00 pm.

Kotwali police said that the victim was shot within the jurisdiction of Shutrapur thana but he died in their area. Police said an officer went to the spot but yet to back.

Venezuela to replicate Grameen model of micro-credit: Chavez

BSS, Dhaka

Visiting Venezuelan President Hugo Rafael Chavez-Friaz yesterday said most Latin American countries are encountering hazards like terrorism, drug trafficking and violence due to omnipresence of poverty.

"The inappropriate growth of capitalism in Latin America and Caribbean islands have created huge gap between the rich and the poor in those societies," President Chavez said, adding that a new socio-economic model of peaceful revolution is badly needed to address the burning issues.

The Venezuelan President was addressing an opinion sharing meeting at Grameen Bank headquarters at Mirpur here yesterday afternoon. Founder of Grameen Bank Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus, Kalid Shams of Grameen Bank, Venezuelan Minister for Planning and Development Prof Jorge Giordani, Venezuelan Minister for External Relations Luis Alfonso Davila, Minister for Science and Technology Dr Carlos Genatios, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury and Venezuelan ambassador Walter Marquez, among others, attended the meeting.

President Chavez said peaceful revolution in socio-economic sectors in Latin America as well as other parts of the world are needed and Grameen model of micro-credit could be highly useful.

"We have strong eagerness for replication of Grameen Bank model and inviting Professor Yunus to visit Venezuela to share some of his remarkable experiences in this field," the visiting President said.

Describing Venezuelan efforts to promote social justice and democracy, he said the country has already passed necessary laws and regulations to run micro-credit systems.

He said the Venezuelan government would encourage micro-enterprises to bridge existing great gap between the affluent and less privileged section of the country.

Professor Yunus thanked the Venezuelan President and his entourage for visiting Grameen Bank headquarters. He said Grameen Bank is promoting micro credit along with appropriate use of cellular communication and information technology (IT) to empower the rural women and marginal poor.

We are competing in the free market. But the benefits are reaching to the poor people across the country who are real stakeholders of this special bank, he said.

Prof Yunus said that Grameen Bank most of the time discourages training because sometimes in the name of training, the natural talents of the people are curbed. He said that in next couple of months Grameen Bank would introduce WAP (wireless application protocol) technology and most cellular phone users would have access to the Internet (via WAP).

Dr Yunus invited the Venezuelan leader to attend the regional micro-credit summit in Mexico in October this year. Highlighting the built-in talents of the rural Bangladeshi women he said, when Grameen Bank introduced cellular telephone most of the city people thought the illiterate women won't be able to use the cell-phones properly. But now nobody is confused, he added.

He said we need efficient growth of micro-credit along with information technology before the country drowns in the process of globalisation.

Grameen Bank executive Khalid Shams briefed the Venezuelan leader about his recent Mexican micro-credit experience. The Grameen Bank screened "Small loans, big leaps," a video documentary for the distinguished audience and offered them hand-woven clothes, caps and hand-fans (Haat-Pakha).

Benson & Hedges Star Search competition in July

DU CORRESPONDENT

The final event of the third 'Benson and Hedges Star Search' competition, organised by British American Tobacco, Bangladesh (BATB), will be held in the first week of July.

The process of selecting the young music talents for this competition has already been started, the BATB officials said at a press briefing in the city yesterday.

Interested persons have been asked to send the filled-in application forms along with a demo tape of their own music by June 8.

In the primary stage, 50 candidates will be shortlisted and they will be asked to take part in the live auditions. Of them, only 15 will be selected to perform in the final event.

A solo performer and one band will be declared the 'Benson and Hedges Stars' for this year. Awards will also be given in different categories, such as best drummer, best guitarist, best vocalist, best original lyricist, best composer, and best keyboard or piano player.

The BATB officials said, "The contest gives those who have talent for music an opportunity to get exposure and earn fame in the musical arena".

Application forms are available in selected restaurants and eateries. The forms are also printed in the Star weekend magazine, Independent weekend magazine, and few other daily newspapers.

A total of 1700 young musicians contested in the last two competitions.

Among others, Mehboob Haq Khandakar and Ikram Mayeen spoke at the press briefing.

PM's security

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the pretext that their lives are threatened.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru said, it would be premature to say whether the new law would also cover all former heads of government as "the law is still in the womb of mother."

He added, "nothing has been finalised. We're now at the preliminary stage of drafting."

Explaining the reason behind enactment of such a law, the minister said, some recent reports of national and international security intelligence agencies gave clear hints of potential threats on the life of Sheikh Hasina.

As the government is constitutionally obliged to guarantee security of lives and property of all the people of the country, it can not ignore the potential threats on the lives of VIPs, he said.

The minister also argued that the new law would no way go against the spirit of the concept of caretaker government and would pose no hindrance to its functioning.

Khaleda addresses Kishoreganj rally today

UNB, Dhaka

Leader of the Opposition and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will visit Kishoreganj district today.

She will address a public meeting at Muktiyoddha College maidan in Tarail upazila at 3 pm, said a press release.

Bid to enact new law

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the city thoroughfare.

The rally was organised at Mukhtangan in the afternoon by city all-party action council of the four-party opposition alliance as part of countrywide demonstrations against the government move to make law for the protection of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina after completion of her tenure.

Bhuiyan announced fresh countrywide demonstrations on May 28 on the same issue and demand for immediate resignation of the government.

The BNP secretary general said they have confidence in the people as they always fight for well-being of the people.

About recovery of illegal arms, Bhuiyan said it is not possible for the present government that is patronising the illegal arms-holders. He demanded recovery of arms during the caretaker government.

Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mujahed said the Awami League government would be given 'good-bye' by ballot in the next general election.

He urged the alliance activists to take preparation for resisting any election conspiracy of Awami League.

Presided over by city BNP President Sadek Hossain Khoka, the rally was also addressed by Abdul Matin Chowdhury and Abdullah Al Noman of BNP, Kazi Firoz Rashid and Saifur Rahman of JP and Ahmed Abdul Kader of IOJ.