

AL honours 38 for role in promoting mother tongue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina has asked the people to retaliate the "growing acts of persecution" by the BNP-led coalition government.

"The Bangalee nation has a glorious history of resisting persecution at different times. They cannot tolerate the ongoing tyranny any more," she said and called upon the "oppressed people" to "rise once again".

Speaking at a seminar in obser
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BAT official shot dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Production Manager of the British American Tobacco (BAT) Mohammad Nasir was shot dead by unidentified assailants last night at Mohakhali Wireless gate.

Nasir was riding a motorbike when the hoodlums came in a car and sprayed bullets on him at around 10:00pm.

He was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the on-duty doctors declared him dead.

Jubo Dal, JCD men attack cops for arrest of terrorist

UNB, Feni

Jubo Dal and JCD activists removed plate of a bailey bridge, exploded crackers, barricaded road and attacked police at Kalirhat in Fulgazi upazila yesterday protesting the arrest of a listed terrorist.

Fulgazi thana OC Sirajul Islam, four constables and a pedestrian were injured in the attack. Police fired about 16 blank shots to bring the situation under control.

Witnesses said police arrested terrorist and Jubo Dal cadre Golam Rasul Golap when he was holding a meeting at Anandapur High School compound at about noon.

Police said Golap, a cadre of Joynal Hazari Bahini, has recently joined the ruling party backed Jubo Dal.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Feb 20		5-57 pm
Feb 21	6-28 am	

Prayer Timings		
Feb 20		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-40	6-10
Zohr	12-45	1-20
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	6-05	6-09
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation



At other people's expense... DESA employees yesterday used about 100 emergency power supply vehicles during CBA electioneering yesterday, violating all norms of public service.

AL govt signed PSCs for gas export, claims minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three out of six Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) signed by the previous Awami League government were intended for gas export, claimed State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharrar Hossain yesterday.

"The present government did not come to power with a decision to export gas. But the contracts have put the government in an embarrassing situation, and we are under pressure." The issue of gas export surfaced in 1996, he added. "And the PSCs have now become obligatory for us."

Contrary to what the state minister said is the fact that the first proposal for gas export was forwarded by Unocal under a PSC signed during the period of the BNP government in 1995.

"If AL did not want to export gas, why did they sign six PSCs?" the state minister questioned. According to him, the AL government

should not have signed six PSCs without ensuring market for gas to be explored under previously signed four PSCs.

Mosharrar Hossain was speaking at an exchange-of-opinions programme organised by Forum for Energy Reporters, Bangladesh (FERB) at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium yesterday.

The past BNP government signed four PSCs and two initials, and the Awami League signed six PSCs and three initials, he said.

However, the state minister has said the decision of exporting gas entirely depends on the reports of the two committees which are working on different aspects of gas reserve, future demand and its proper utilisation as well as on the export issue.

Asked whether the government alone is going to take a decision on the utilisation of gas, Mosharrar Hossain said he hoped the main opposition would join the parlia

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Probe into alleged irregularities in NGOs begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has initiated an investigation into alleged irregularities in some non-government organisations (NGOs) working in the country's development sector, official sources said.

A unified NGO policy is also being formulated in the first such move to strengthen government control on these development partners and to ensure their 'transparency and accountability.'

Some of the NGOs allegedly have political affiliation and spent funds for projects other than the specified ones, for which the funds were allocated by the donor agencies. The government list of NGOs having such alleged irregularities include Proshika, PRIP Trust, Nari Pragati Sangha and some other organisations.

According to NGO sources, the government has asked the NGO Bureau to investigate activities of nearly 50 NGOs out of about 2000, which were allegedly working against the interest of BNP-led four party alliance before the last general election.

Officials of the bureau and those of intelligence agencies asked them to produce sector-wise estimates of their earnings and expenditures in development sector. Several NGOs have already closed their operations, the sources said.

Asked about the investigation, a senior official of the NGO Bureau only said, "The government would take appropriate steps when the investigation is completed."

The NGOs apparently split into two camps as a group of their representatives met Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office about a month ago. One group led by Kazi Faruk criticised recent government actions while the other led by Khushi Kabir supported the government decisions regarding NGOs.

Earlier, the prime minister had announced that her government would ensure accountability of the NGOs and take action against those found

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On-arrival visas

11 countries still on 'hold back' list

M ANWARUL HAQ

Nationals of at least eleven countries continue to be on a 'hold back' list and are prevented from entering Bangladesh without having prior entry permit although citizens of many countries enjoy this 'on-arrival' facility.

The list prepared long back is still being followed at Zia International Airport and other entry points, where passport holders from the eleven countries are denied the privilege of getting 'on-arrival visas.'

The countries are Afghanistan, Nigeria, Libya, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cameroon, Ghana, Congo, Togo and Uganda. Citizens of these countries are not allowed to enter Bangladesh without having clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Immigration officials said the list was prepared following instances that nationals of those countries were involved in drug trafficking. Another official said this policy is being practised to prevent unwanted stay of nationals of certain countries without valid work permit.

But no senior official of the home ministry or immigration department would like to be named or quoted, mostly passing off the responsibility 'to higher authorities,' who were not available for comments.

However, the officials said that if citizens from those countries can procure visas from Bangladesh missions, then there is no bar on their entry. But in most of the listed countries, consular facilities for procuring Bangladesh visa are not available.

Some officials and businessmen feel that the policy of hold back list for foreigners should be withdrawn immediately because it is a 'highly discriminatory practice' and potential tourists and entrepreneurs from some of the listed countries are being discouraged from making trips to Bangladesh.

"The policy of hold back list is also contrary to the government's policy of

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Road accidents kill 12 in three dists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twelve people were killed and 52 others injured in separate road accident, in Moulvibazar, Feni and Jhenidah district yesterday and the day before.

Of them, five were killed in Moulvibazar, five in Jhenidah and the rest two in Feni.

Our Staff Correspondent from Sylhet writes: Five people were killed and 50 others injured when a Moulvibazar bound truck collided head on with a minibus coming from opposite direction on Dhaka-Sylhet highway at Baurbagh in Moulvibazar sadar upazila at 10 am yesterday.

Four of the dead were identified as Abdul Latif, 50, son of Salimullah of village Bekamura, Moulvibazar, Golap Mia, 45, of village Premnagar in Rajnagar upazila, Moulvibazar, Akmat Mia, 35, of village Premnagar in Rajnagar upazila, Moulvibazar and Mainuddin, 35, of Bouragazia, Kishoreganj. The identity of other could not be known.

Of the injured, 15 were admitted to Moulvibazar sadar hospital and three to Sylhet Osmany Medical College Hospital.

In Feni, two persons were killed and four others injured in two separate road accidents here yesterday, according to BSS.

Police said Abdul Haque, 45, a local businessman was killed on the spot in front of a post office in Feni town at about 4 pm when a speeding truck ran over him.

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