

AL won't harbour criminals: Hasina

Opposition leader visits slain journalist Manik's family

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina has said her party is fully committed not to harbour any criminals.

She was addressing a largely attended view exchanging meeting with the local journalists at the Khulna Press Club yesterday noon. Humayun Kabir Balu, president of the club, presided.

Soon after her arrival in Khulna she visited the residence of slain journalist Manik Chandra Saha, former president of Khulna Press

Club, who was killed in a bomb attack on Thursday.

Hasina expressed deep shock at the death of Manik Saha and met the members of the bereaved family. Manik's wife Nandita Saha and two daughters Natasha and Portia burst into tears when she consoled them.

Hasina arrived at the press club auditorium at 12:25pm with former agriculture minister Motia Chowdhury, former state ministers Obaidul Kader and Talukdar Abdul Khaleque MP, former whip Mostafa Rashidi Shuja, Sheikh

Helal MP and district president of Awami League Sheikh Haroon ar Rashid.

While expressing her concern over the mounting insecurity of the people the leader of the opposition said, "The entire southeastern zone has become a valley of death where 12 journalists and many leaders and activists of our party have been killed in the last two years."

A hit-list has been prepared by the ruling BNP-Jamaat alliance to kill 25 AL leaders of the Khulna

NSI, DGFI quiz Shaikhul Hadith's son-in-law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police and intelligence agencies in a surprise move yesterday raided the house of Shaikhul Hadith Azizul Haq, arrested and interrogated him.

Neyamat was freed after seven hours.

High officials of police were tight-lipped about the seizure, saying it was a matter of state security, while Neyamat claimed police made a mistake.

Sources said a joint team of police, National Security Intelligence (NSI) and Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) raided Neyamat's house at 8, Elephant Road at 1:00pm and



Non-governmental primary schoolteachers agitate yesterday at Muktangan in Dhaka to press home their long-standing demands.

Lay siege to magistrates in case of arrest warrant

Rokan tells journalists

UNB, Dhaka

Supreme Court Bar Association President Rokanuddin Mahmud yesterday suggested that journalists should lay siege to magistrates who issue warrants of arrest against them in criminal defamation cases, complying with orders from ministers and MPs.

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SC stays bail of commissioner Khwaja Habib, asks him to surrender

UNB, Dhaka

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday stayed the High Court orders that granted bail to two convicts Khwaja Habibullah Habib, a ward commissioner of Dhaka City Corporation,

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Wreaths galore at the monument of Language Movement martyr Asad in front of Dhaka Medical College Hospital marking Shaheed Asad Day yesterday.

Sacrifices of Asad, Motiur ignored

Martyrs' kin allege

DU CORRESPONDENT

Sacrifices made by the martyrs of the mass upsurge in 1969 for the country's liberation have not been properly appreciated and noted in its history. Asad's brother Nuruzzaman and Motiur's father Azhar Ali Mollik alleged yesterday.

They were speaking at a programme organised by Liberation War Museum on its premises in the city to mark the 35th death anniversary of the two martyrs - M o h a m m a d Asadaduzzaman Asad and Motiur Rahman.

Member Secretary and Trustee of the museum Sarwar Ali, in his inaugural speech, said Asad and Motiur were the spirits of the Liberation War and inspired the people of all walks to rise against the autocratic government of Pakistan.

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Talks on common river sharing 'move forward'

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India and Bangladesh yesterday began two-day water talks to hammer out a long-term water sharing arrangements of seven of the 54 common rivers.

Emerging from the daylong session of the joint committee of experts at the state-owned Ashoka Hotel, water secretaries of both countries told of a 'forward movement' in discussion to clinch an interim accord on the sharing of Teesta river waters.

Indian Water Resources Secretary V K Duggal told reporters that "the trend of talks is positive. There will be a movement forward."

"Talks have been positive as we sought to understand each other's points of view. The discussions

were held in a spirit of cooperation."

His Bangladesh counterpart Ayub Quadri, leading a nine-member delegation, said, "We are hopeful of a positive outcome of the talks."

Responding to a question, he said the thrust on the first day discussion was on the interim arrangement for sharing of Teesta waters. Sharing of the Dharla, Dudhkumar, Monu, Muhuri, Khowai and Gumti river waters also came up for discussion, he said.

Neither side was prepared to go on record beyond describing the talks as 'positive'.

The meeting is understood to have discussed the terms of reference for a joint scientific survey of the quantum of water available in

Teesta, especially during the lean season, as this would form the base for an interim water-sharing accord.

There is at present no scientific data about the availability of waters in the Teesta and six other rivers, sources said adding this compounds difficulties in reaching an understanding.

The coriparian countries have so far struck water-sharing treaty on only one river -- the Ganges -- in 1996, while talks continued on the seven for years.

The secretary-level talks are a follow up of the ministerial meeting of Joint Rivers Commission held here in September last year.

When the meeting concludes today, the two sides are likely to come out with agreed minutes of the deliberations.

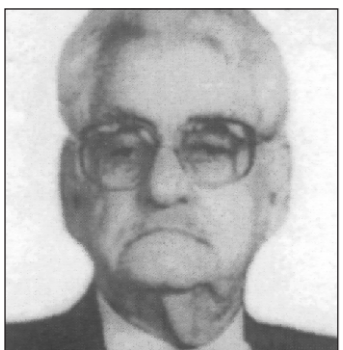
IGP sorry for contemptuous remarks about judge

UNB, Dhaka

The inspector general of police (IGP) yesterday atoned on oath before the High Court for the contemptuous remarks he made earlier about a judge.

Submitting an unconditional apology afresh in a contempt case, IGP Shahudul Huq, earlier exempted from personal appearance during the day's hearing,

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Mirza Mehdy Ispahani passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mirza Mehdy Ispahani (Sadri), chairman of MM Ispahani Limited, died of cardiac arrest at Bumrungrad Hospital in Bangkok yesterday. He was 81.

He was being treated there for the last three months for old age complications. Before that, he was admitted to DAB Cardiac Centre and Sikdar Medical College Hospital in Dhaka.

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Prayer Timings		
January 21		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-45	6-20
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-44	5-50
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

WORLD SOCIAL FORUM 'Outcasts' of the world unite

AFP, Bombay

India's Dalits, once known as "untouchables", have reached out at a huge anti-globalisation rally to millions of the world's other outcasts, calling on them to join forces to end the oppression they all face.

The Dalits, at the bottom of Hinduism's caste system, invited "all those who are discriminated against" -- from the Osus of Nigeria and the Quechuas of Ecuador to the Burakus of Japan -- to unite to end their common suffering.

The appeal came in Bombay at the World Social Forum, the anti-globalisation meeting which began last Friday and is billed as a counterweight to the World Economic Forum which starts this week in Davos, Switzerland.

"The caste system is racist, it rests on discrimination," said Aparna Lanjewar, caste specialist at Bombay University, struggling to be heard above the din of a huge crowd gathered for a seminar on "Discrimination and oppression in the name of race or caste".

The Dalits have been hoping the World Social Forum will help forge an international alliance with other marginalised groups so that discrimination can be tackled globally.

"Your battle is a battle for humanity," said A. Padmanabhan,

a high-caste Hindu who runs a group aimed at aiding Dalits.

Even though India outlawed untouchability half a century ago, millions of Dalits still are treated as "unclean" -- denied permission to drink from the same water as higher caste Hindus or worship or live alongside them.

While their plight may be best known internationally, the New York-based Human Rights Watch says at least 250 million people worldwide still live in situations of segregation and servitude.

Participants at the meeting late Monday listened as representatives of the world's outcast communities, such as Victor Dike, champion of Nigeria's Osus, recounted the painful discrimination they endure.

"Osus are social lepers in Nigeria," said Dike, referring to the 1.5 million "excluded" Osus who live in the part of southeastern and south-central Nigeria and are regarded as "subhuman, unclean or slaves".

"One can't drink or eat with them or touch them otherwise one can be transformed into an Osu," Dike told the audience.

From Japan came tales of the difficulties faced by the three million

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WSF fumes at Indian media over lewd 'rape' coverage

ZAFAR SOBHAN, from Mumbai

Organisers of the World Social Forum (WSF), entering its fifth day here in Mumbai, are furious with the Indian media over the lurid coverage of the arrest of a South African judge on charge of raping a fellow South African delegate.

The Times of India ran the incident as its lead story Tuesday titled, "WSF reels as SA delegate arrested for rape", accompanied by a picture of judge Sirajuddin Desai being led away in handcuffs by Mumbai police. Most of the other top Indian dailies including the Indian Express and the Asian Age also put the story on the front page Tuesday.

"After a week of saying no-one's interested in the WSF, now this incident is interesting because it

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Road blockade in CHT ends

STAR REPORT

The 48-hour road blockade in three Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) districts and hartal in Khagrachhari ended without any major incident yesterday evening.

All the three districts were isolated during the programmes, according to our correspondents. Only some sporadic clashes took place in some areas of Rangamati and Khagrachhari.

Parbatya Chattogram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) called the road blockade and Bharat Pratyagata Jumma Sharanarthi Kalyan Samity, the platform of indigenous internal refugees, called the hartal for allocation of rations throughout the year.

The PCJSS called for a 72 hours road blockade programme from

NEVER SAY DIE: Md Giasuddin, 50, of Marjal of Raipura thana of Narsingdi district, quit the job he joined in 1975 on being refused leave to see his ailing mother who eventually died. He took to learning to play flute under the tutelage of Ustad Abdur Rashid and once confident of his exploits with the flute, he started hawking his skills in the streets of the capital. Still, he could hardly eke out a living by so doing. Giasuddin then tried selling lungi to people in the lower-income bracket. From then on, there was no looking back. He buys lungi from the wholesalers in Pabna and now covers a 10,000-strong clientele spread around 500 sawmills and dyeing factories in Old Dhaka. His eldest son now works abroad, the younger one is with a private firm while the daughter attends college. Giasuddin has one last wish, though: to play folk tunes on radio and TV.



PHOTO: STAR