



Communist Party of Bangladesh stages a demonstration in the city yesterday protesting the hike in prices of gas, electricity and other essentials.

'Improve safety standards in ship breaking industry'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop yesterday called for government support to improve safety and environmental standards in the ship breaking industry.

They said if the industry can meet agreed standards, the country could benefit greatly by creating huge employment and providing more revenue for government exchequer.

The workshop was organised by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

"Bangladesh could attract an increasing number of vessels for disposal if the industry here can demonstrate better environmental and occupational safety standards," said Age Bjorn Anderson, an international shipping expert.

He said the huge task of dismantling ships is done manually in Bangladesh without providing helmets, gloves or goggles to the workers. As a result, many workers die or become injured and disabled, he added.

Despite the danger faced by the workers, their wage, hours of work and overtime payments fail to meet minimum labour standards, said

Anderson.

Moreover, he said, the improper disposal of harmful chemicals around ship breaking yard is hazardous for the workers and a serious source of pollution in the surrounding environment.

In view of the prevailing scenario, the government has initiated a project with the support of the United Nations Development Programme and the International Labour Organisation to improve safety and environment standards in the ship breaking industry through Safe and Environment Friendly Ship Recycling Project

(SEFSRP).

The project includes the establishment of an office in Chittagong and some initial safety training for the workers.

The three-year project with a budget of \$1.29 million is aimed at regulating ship breaking in the country by bringing together all parties concerned.

The shipyard owners had already drawn up a number of recommendations for improving practices, said Yasin Ali, vice-president of Bangladesh Ship Breakers Association.

607 gold chains seized at Ctg airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Customs officials seized 607 gold chains worth over Tk27 lakh from a passenger at Chittagong Shah Amanat International Airport yesterday.

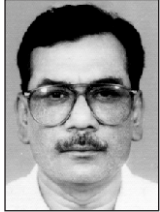
Nurul Huda who came from Dubai by a Bangladesh Biman flight brought the ornaments

without making any declaration beforehand, sources said.

Soon after the flight landed in Chittagong airport at around 11.45am, Huda was seen hurriedly leaving the checking point.

On suspicion, the customs officials searched his luggage and found the chains stuffed in several packs inside two toaster machines.

Death anniversary



press release.

A qurankhwani and milad mahfil will be held at his home at 195/B Shantibagh in Dhaka after Maghrib prayers.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the milad.

DHAKA TODAY

Drama

Udichi, a cultural group, will stage a drama titled 'Boubasanti' directed by Azad Abul Kalam. Venue: Experimental Hall of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Segun Bagicha. Time: 7.00pm.

Book fair

The inaugural ceremony of a Book Fair, organised by Sraban Prokashani to mark the 64th birth anniversary of noted writer Ahmed Safa, will be held. Books written by Ahmed Safa, Shahidul Zahir, Mamun Hussain, Shahaduzzaman, Shaheen Akhter and Moshui Alam will be on display. Venue: 28, Aziz Super Market, Shahbagh. Time: 5.00pm. The exhibition will remain open till July 11.

Launching ceremony

The launching ceremony of a children's organisation styled as 'Deepalak Shishu-Kishore Sangathan' will be held. Venue:

Dhaka University Natmondol. Time: 4.00pm.

Discussion

Bangladesh Adibasi Odhikar Andolon organises a discussion on 'Adibasi Samaj in democratic movement: Sidhu-Kanu's Uttaradhihar'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3.30pm.

DHAKA TOMORROW

Prize giving ceremony

The prize giving ceremony of IT-based quiz competition, co-sponsored by The Independent and the University of Information Technology and Sciences (UITS) will be held with Science and ICT Minister Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan as chief guest. Venue: UITS Campus, North Gulshan. Time: 11.00am.

UN reform a must for peace, nat'l security of small states

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Reform of the United Nations and democratisation of its Security Council is imperative for peace and national security of the small states, said the participants at a seminar yesterday.

The seminar on 'UN Charter and the Security of Small States' was organised by Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies at its auditorium

in the city.

If the international community does not undertake a clear road map to regain the UN supremacy through democratic reform, the idea of collective security would probably disappear, said former ambassador Alsarul Qader in his keynote paper at the seminar.

"This seems to be the right time for the leaders of small states to express their concerns and see that the UN does not become an instru-

ment for aggrandisement of hegemonic powers," he said in the context of Iraq invasion by coalition powers.

As a small country in South Asia, Bangladesh must build up its own power and form alliance across the world, apart from bilateral fraternity for its national security, said the National University Vice-Chancellor Prof Aftab Ahmed.

He said potential threat to Bangladesh's security and interests emanates from one particular state in the region.

"It's high time for the smaller countries to charter a path against unipolar hegemony taking a stand for drastic UN reforms," Prof Aftab added.

Chairman of the National Education Commission and former Dhaka University vice-chancellor Moniruzzaman Mian underscored the regional grouping of the smaller states for their national security.

Advisor to Ministry of Foreign Affairs Reaz Rahman said in any case the relevance and primacy of the UN could not be rejected.

BIISS Chairman Mufleh R Osmany chaired the seminar.

Form JS body to probe Sunamganj blast: Suranjit

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League leader Suranjit Sengupta yesterday demanded formation of an 11-member parliamentary inquiry committee headed by the Speaker to probe the bomb blast at his public meeting at Dera in Sunamganj last week.

The report of the proposed inquiry committee would be discussed in camera in presence of the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition, he said taking part in the discussion on budget in Parliament.

Suranjit called for effective steps to stop recurrence of the killing of MPs or attacking their public meetings in future.

"The opposition parliamentarians are being killed today, but the days are not far away when popular BNP parliamentarians will also face such attacks ... BNP must find out who are these forces," he said.

Blaming Jamaat-e-Islami and other fundamentalist forces for the twin bomb blasts at the shrine of

Hazrat Shahjalal (R), the Awami League lawmaker said the prime minister and the government would be held responsible for any further attack on the members of parliament.

He said that while BNP was in power during 1991-96, such incidents of killing of MPs and bombing shrines had not occurred. "But why these incidents are taking place now when BNP assumed power with the forces that were opposed to independence and democracy?"

The BNP-led alliance government would be responsible for desecrating the sacred place before the next election, he added.

Suranjit was also critical of Finance Minister Saifur Rahman's budgetary measures that, he said, would make Bangladesh "a nation of shopkeepers" from a country of industrialisation.

KILLINGS OF NEWSMEN

Minister assures journalists of proper probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information Minister M Shamsul Islam assured the newsmen of proper investigations into the killings of all journalists.

"It is not true that the family of Humayun Kabir is afraid to file case, it is because they are aggrieved," he said in an interview with the BBC radio yesterday.

The minister also said it is not the failure of the government that the journalists do not get justice. "We are trying our best to track down the criminals."

He said such killings also took place during the Awami League regime but the situation had improved later. "Of course, now the scenario is different."

The minister sought cooperation from all, including the journalists, in bringing the criminals to book and ensuring justice for the families of slain journalists.

Balu murder case

FROM PAGE 1

report (FIR) recorded under Section 302 of the Criminal Proceeding Code. They are Abdur Rashid Malitha alias Dada Tapan, Shoyeb, Shumon, BDR Altaf, Khorha Nazu, Masum, Shyamal, Swadhin, Ripon and Zahid.

Ten suspects held by police were also shown as arrested in another FIR recorded under Explosive Substances Act, said KMP Deputy Commissioner DC (South) Akbar Ali.

Meanwhile, the rival faction of Janajuddho, PBCP (M-L), has strongly condemned and protested the murder.

In a message faxed to local newspapers Monday night, the self-styled central secretary of the outlawed party, Mofakkhar Chowdhury, termed Balu a spokesman of the oppressed masses and an eminent journalist. The message said the brutal murder has been committed by those who have little or no knowledge about 'revolution and people's war'.

The PBCP (M-L) does not believe in physical liquidation of a journalist like Balu, who was not its class enemy, the message claimed.

NO CONFIDENCE IN POLICE

The Khulna journalists simply have no confidence in the police investigations, as some of the earlier probes into killings of their colleagues, including Manik Saha, Shamsur Rahman, Saiful Alam Mukul and Harun-or-Rashid, failed to unmask the real culprits and their godfathers. The statuses of these four investigations are as follows.

Manik Saha: The charge sheet in Manik Saha murder case was submitted last week accusing 12 outlaws for the crime. Out of 54 witnesses in this case, an overwhelming majority of 34 belongs to police force. There is no acceptability of this charge sheet among the Khulna journalists. They allege it does not name the real masterminds of the killing acting behind the scene.

Shamsur Rahman: Journalist Shamsur Rahman was murdered on July 16, 2000. The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) submitted two charge sheets in the case -- the first on May 22, 2001 accusing 16 people. Trial of the case is yet to begin. Police have failed to arrest most of the accused,

while the arrested ones remain free on bail.

Saiful Alam Mukul: The CID investigated the August 30, 1998 killing of Mukul, editor of Daily Ranar of Jessore. After the CID submitted the charge sheet, the plaintiff filed a 'naraji' (dissent) petition creating some procedural flaws. The High Court later quashed the case.

Harun-or-Rashid: Harun-or-Rashid was killed on March 2, 2002. After two years, the CID is still carrying on the probe and no-one knows when it will be finished.

The murder cases of journalists Nahar Ali, Sukkur Ali, Bazlur Rahman and Rezaul Karim are still in the courts. Sources said, all the defendants in these cases are out on bail.

Courts have delivered judgement in only two of the 13 journalist murder cases in the last 10 years. Lower courts awarded the two accused of killing journalists Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury and Faruq Chowdhury life imprisonment. But they are out on bail from the higher court.

JCD LEADER MURDER

Ex-army sergeant gets death, six others jailed for life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Speedy Trial Tribunal, Chittagong division, yesterday sentenced a former army sergeant to death and six others, including his two brothers, to life imprisonment for killing a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal leader in Nabi Nagar, Brahmanbaria, four years ago.

Judge M Hasan Imam passed the death sentence on Rafiqul Islam in a crowded courtroom. Twelve others, however, were acquitted of the charges.

The other convicts are Shafiqul Islam and Nazrul Islam, brothers of Rafiqul, former police havilder Golam Kibria, Nazmul Haq, Zakir Hossain and Alam Meah.

The killing took place at village Alamdanga under Nabi Nagar Upazila on November 6, 2000. Equipped with sharp weapons, about 25 people led by Rafiqul attacked Md Anwar Hossain, then general secretary of Nabi Nagar JCD.

They beat up Anwar and knifed him to death.

Anwar's brother Kamaluddin filed a case against 21 people on the day. The case was transferred to Speedy Trial Tribunal on March 10 this year.

Over 1,900 held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested 1,974 people, including one identified criminal, on various charges during their countrywide drive in last 24 hours till 6.00am yesterday.

They also recovered 13 firearms and 24 bullets and filed eight cases against 15 people under the Arms Act, said a police headquarters release.



Awami League Presidium Member Tofail Ahmed exchanges views on 'resistance to fundamentalist forces and greater unity of pro-liberation forces' at a meeting organised by Muktijoddha Samannoy Parishad at Forhad Auditorium in the city yesterday.

Body recovered in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The body of an unidentified young man was recovered from a lake in Tejgaon in the city yesterday.

On information, police recovered the body clad in T-shirt and brown trouser from a lake near Hassan's slum at South Kunipara at around 8.30am.

Police suspected that the victim was killed on Monday night and the killers dumped the body there later. His head bore injury marks.

Police sent the body to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.



Prof H A Arefin speaks at a discussion on 'Tribal society in democratic movement' at the National Press Club yesterday. Bangladesh Adibashi Forum and Bangladesh Adibashi Odhikar Andolon co-organised the discussion.