

Intensify efforts for poverty-free South Asia: Khaleda

AGENCIES, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday called on the South Asian nations to invest all their resources and strengthen their united efforts to materialise the dream of a poverty-free South Asia.

"A poverty-free Bangladesh, for that matter a poverty-free South Asia, is not an impossible dream," she said while launching of a report of the Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation (ISACPA) at the International Conference Centre.

All the possibilities for poverty reduction would have to be explored, she said and called for waging the battle against poverty on many fronts with unremitting vigour, commitment and vision.

The 12th Saarc Summit in Islamabad endorsed the ISACPA report titled 'Our Future: Our Responsibility'. It has been launched in Nepal and Bhutan few months ago, the function was told.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman and Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan also addressed the function chaired by ISACPA Co-convenor and Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Dr Kamaluddin Siddiqui. ISACPA Core Group Coordinator Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman gave a brief presentation on the report.

Ministers, MPs, diplomats and representatives of donor and development agencies were present.

The priorities and targets set in the ISACPA report are: mobilising the power of the poor, prudent macroeconomics, mainstreaming the informal economy, enhancing gender and other equities, sustainable development, and effective, harmonious and all-round cooperation among the countries of the region.



PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia launches report of the Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation (ISACPA) at the International Conference Centre yesterday. Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, left, was present.

tion among the countries of the region.

It also set medium-term regional agenda halving poverty by 2010, eradication of malnutrition and ensuring universal food security, putting in place a social security system, halving the number of people without safe drinking water and sanitation and halving the number of people without access to primary education by 2010 and eliminating all forms of trafficking and child labour.

The prime minister said her government has given highest priority to accelerating the fight against poverty and accordingly a full-blown Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) is now being finalised.

"We have to ensure the necessary synergies between these

national, regional and global strategies," she added.

The fight against poverty is not the responsibility of anyone alone, she said, adding that the problems of poverty are so huge and complex that they require not only individual efforts but also collaboration at regional and international levels.

Assistance from the development partners has also an important role in this regard, she observed.

The prime minister mentioned that Saarc has traversed a long and difficult road and weathered many ups and downs to become the principal focus of a common South Asian aspiration today.

"And no aspiration has been more urgent and more compelling than our common fight against poverty."

Khaleda said Bangladesh is

committed to fight against poverty and significant progress has been made in the social sector, particularly in education, health and social welfare.

"Bangladesh has achieved the highest primary school enrolment in the developing world," she added.

The prime minister said despite repeated natural calamities, the country has achieved a commendable growth rate which has increased from less than two per cent in the 1970s to around five per cent during the current decade.

"Our infrastructural progress too has been noteworthy. Barely two decades ago, most of our villages suffered from remoteness. Today, virtually most of the villages are connected by all-weather roads."

Despite all these achievements, Bangladesh has still a long way to go, she added.

"This journey has to be a shared one. The problem of poverty cannot be solved from the top by the government alone."

Khaleda said the NGOs and the community-based organisations have been playing a very important role in the fight against poverty.

Grameen Bank has been a pioneer in the field of micro-credit, she said, adding that the government has established PKSF to provide concessional resources to the NGOs for their micro-credit programmes.

Speaking at the function, Finance Minister Saifur Rahman said internal political support is necessary to develop a poverty-free South Asia.

He denounced the political programmes that have been blocking economic activities and stressed the need for broad-based politics for reforms to alleviate poverty.

Sylhet BCL leader shot dead by JCD cadres

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) was shot dead allegedly by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) cadres at Majoritia area in the city on Saturday night.

The victim Mizan Kamali, 20, was a member of the convening committee of Sylhet Government College unit of BCL.

Police and local sources said five to six armed cadres of JCD went to a student mess at about 2:00am and sprayed bullets on Mizan.

He was rushed to MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital with bullet injuries in his head, but died in the early hours.

Kazi Shiplu, a friend of Mizan and a student of Madan Mohan College, also received bullet wounds and was undergoing treatment at the hospital.

BCL leaders received the body of Mizan from the hospital morgue at around midday and held a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar.

City Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran and district BCL President Jaglu Chowdhury addressed the rally demanding immediate punishment to the killers.

SIX ROBBERS ARRESTED

2,000 mobile phone cards recovered in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A special team of police arrested six robbers and recovered firearms and about 2,000 pre-paid mobile phone cards worth Tk 6 lakh in Lalkhan Bazar, Kazir Dewri and Jhataula Colony areas in a nine-hour-long raid that ended yesterday morning.

The arrestees are Md Jasim, 22, Md Matin, 22, Md Amir, 23, Shah Alam, 24, Shahjahan, 23, and Yaar Mohammad, 35. One revolver, one toy pistol and three cartridges and 2,000 Grameen Phone cards of Tk 300 each were recovered from their possession.

The mobile phone cards were looted from AM Enterprise, a dealer of Lever Brothers, in Nasirabad Housing Society area on Friday night.

Police arrested Md Harun, a CNG autorickshaw driver, from New Mooring No. 1 lane the same night after a case was filed with the Panchlaish Police Station.

The driver disclosed the names of the gang members who looted the cards after he was taken on a seven-day remand.

Acting on his statement, the police team raided the hideouts of the gang and arrested the six with the arms and booty, said Senior Assistant Commissioner (Detective Branch) Gazi Jasimuddin.

Hunt is on to catch the other gang members, he added.

Another tornado victim dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another victim of tornado, that lashed Tongi Bishwa Itjema ground on Thursday, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday.

Abdul Jabbar, 75, succumbed to his injuries after a 76-hour of fight for life.

He was hit by a corrugated tin in his leg and back during the tornado that has killed four devotees so far.

Abdul Jabbar came to Itjema from Sunamganj on October 1.

Obituary

Iqbal Hossain, former executive engineer of Dhaka Wasa and president of a Theatre group, died on October 8 in Kuwait, says a press release.

Rafiqul Islam

Rafiqul Islam, owner of the M K Engineering Works, died of liver cirrhosis at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in New Delhi on Saturday night at the age of 48, says a press release.

He left behind his mother, wife, one son and two daughters.

He will be buried at his family graveyard at Batna under Barisal Sadar Upazila.

Syed Azharul Hoque

Syed Azharul Hoque, former jute officer of BJMC, died of old age complications in Dhaka on October 7 at the age of 76, says a press release.

He left behind his wife and two sons.

His quikhwani will be held at his residence 'Abbas Villa' at 5, North Jatrabari in the city after Asr prayers today.



PHOTO-STAR

Police intercept the Jubo Mohila League a procession at Russel Square in the city during hartal hours yesterday.

Bogra listed criminal killed in 'crossfire' with police

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A listed criminal was shot dead at Namabala, the outskirts of Bogra town, in a 'crossfire' between police and miscreants early yesterday.

The criminal was identified as Liakat.

Acting on a tip-off, Sadar thana police arrested Liakat from his residence at Khander and recovered

some firearms from his possession.

Following his confessional statement, police took Liakat to Namabala at about 3.30am to arrest his accomplices but the miscreants fired at police and tried to snatch him as they reached the spot. The miscreants left the spot on a microbus as police returned fire. Liakat was shot in the crossfire and rushed to Mohammed Ali Hospital where the attending doctor

declared him dead.

Police and miscreants exchanged at least 60 round of bullets, police sources said.

The criminals fled the spot leaving a 9mm pistol, six bullets, two pipeguns and two sharp weapons.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Sadar thana Monsur Ali Mondol told the journalist that Liakat, son of Gadu Zialader in Khander area of the town, was wanted in 15 murder cases including Jubo League leaders Monla and Jahurul.

He was also wanted in a number of criminal cases in Jessore, Bogra and some other districts, a police officer said.

According to his statement, police raided Pallimongal, Shakiari and Namabala villages for recovery of firearms.

College student abducted for ransom in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Agang of criminals abducted a college student from his home at village Miton in Mirpur upazila on Saturday night after his father declined to pay them Tk 50,000 in toll.

Later, the kidnappers demanded a ransom of Tk 5 lakh for the release of Anwar Hossain, a second year student of Alhaj Nurul Islam College.

The gang stormed the house of Nurul Islam, held all the family members hostage at gunpoint and asked him to pay Tk 50,000, family sources said. But being refused, the gang picked up his son.

A case was filed with Mirpur Police Station, but police could not rescue the boy till filing of this report.

As many as 119 people, including 46 school and college students, have been abducted in the district since January.

Of them, 12 victims were killed and eight are still missing.

An organised gang and outlaws are responsible for the abductions, police said. Local people alleged that police often ask the victim's family to pay the ransom.

A police official, preferring anonymity, said "The criminals even threaten to kill the victim if we launch a massive manhunt for them."

"The victim's family also sometimes asks us not to go after the gang for fear of the victim's life," he added.

Khaleda greets Howard

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has congratulated Australian Prime Minister John Howard for the victory of the Liberal-National Coalition in the just concluded election in Australia.

"Bangladesh and Australia enjoy excellent relations based on mutual trust and cooperation. It is also a matter of great satisfaction that in the recent years these relations have deepened and widened in many areas of cooperation," said the prime minister in a message yesterday to her Australian counterpart.

Zonta Club holds musical evening

Zonta Club Dhaka III organised a musical evening to raise funds at the STM Hall on Scholastica campus in Uttara on Friday, says a press release.

Club President Fahmida Karim in her welcome speech emphasised the biennial goals of Zonta: to ensure basic education and healthcare for women, access to higher education and to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women.

Noted Ghazal singer Jamal Hasan performed at the function sponsored by the ParTex Beverages Ltd.



The Alumni Association of BKSP (AAB) brought out a colourful procession on the BKSP campus on Friday on the occasion of the second annual reunion of former students of Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan.

WEATHER TODAY

Rise in day temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over the country till 6.00pm today.

Day temperature may rise by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country during the period, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 33.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 20.9 degree Celsius at Srimangol.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:35pm today and rises at 5:55am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	31.4	23.9	66	80
Chittagong	33.2	23.4	80	73
Rajshahi	32.0	23.0	95	83
Khulna	32.1	24.7	77	83
Barisal	31.8	24.8	83	92
Sylhet	31.2	21.8	79	90
Cox's Bazar	32.5	24.0	85	81

BKSP old students' reunion held

The Alumni Association of BKSP (AAB) held the second annual reunion of former students of the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan on the campus of the country's lone sports institute in Jirani, Savar on Friday, says a press release.

One of the main attractions of the day-long programme was a special award presentation ceremony in which the AAB honoured ex-students who have represented the senior Bangladesh team at international level in different disciplines.

AAB at a special meeting on the same day called a general meeting on October 22, at the BKSP. The meeting will start at 2:30pm and culminate in an Iftar party. All former students of the BKSP have been requested to attend the general meeting.

1,246 more held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested some 1,246 people on various charges during their countrywide drive in the last 24 hours ending at 6.00am yesterday. During the period, the law enforcers recovered seven firearms, 10 other weapons and 18 bullets and filed five cases against nine people under the Arms Act, says a police headquarters press release.

Computer lab set up at Faujdharhat Cadet College

The Old Faujians Association, a global organisation of the ex-cadets of Faujdharhat Cadet College, has set up a computer laboratory with 22 computers to facilitate computer education for the cadets of the college, says a press release.

Obaidur Rahman Khan, chairman of the association, formally inaugurated the computer lab at the college recently.

Principal and faculty members of the college and a number of old Faujians were present at the function.

JU CSE deptt stalemate continues

JU CORRESPONDENT

The academic life of about 250 students of computer science and engineering (CSE) department of Jahangirnagar University (JU) has become uncertain as the ongoing stalemate continued for the 16th day yesterday.

The students enforced an indefinite strike on September 25 demanding immediate cancellation of the appointment of a person, who was a student of private university, as teacher in their department.

All classes and examinations of the department remained snapped since then creating fear to five months more session jam.

Expressing solidarity with the students' demand, most of the teachers of the department have kept themselves away from taking classes while the honours final examination of 1998-99 academic session remained suspended in the wake of the movement.

Jahangirnagar University Teachers' Association (JUTA) will have a meeting with the teachers of the department today to discuss the situation.

Sultan Mela at Bhagyakul today

BSS, Dhaka

A day-long Sultan Mela will be held in front of the WAPDA compound at Bhagyakul today in observance of the 10th death anniversary of world famous Bangladeshi artist SM Sultan.

Mela's main features include juvenile painting competition, poster exhibition, discussion and prize giving ceremony events, organisers said here yesterday.

Former Vice-chancellor of Dhaka University Prof Emajuddin Ahmed is expected to attend the function as chief guest.



Obaidur Rahman Khan, chairman of the Old Faujians Association, inaugurated a computer lab at Faujdharhat Cadet College recently.



Zonta Club Dhaka III President Fahmida Karim speaks at a fund-raising musical evening in the city on Friday.