

HABIGANJ GRENADE ATTACK AL concerned at govt's failure to nab culprits

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International affairs sub-committee of the main opposition Awami League (AL), at a meeting yesterday, expressed its deep concern over the government's failure to arrest the perpetrators of January 27 grenade attack on Habiganj rally.

The meeting was held at AL's Dhanmondi office in the city with sub-committee chairman and former foreign secretary Faqur Ahmed Chowdhury in the chair.

The meeting observed that the investigators have become busy to find out AL's link with bomb and grenade attacks rather than arresting the real culprits.

It said the attacks across the country are aimed at killing AL leaders and workers as well as eliminating progressive individuals.

The sub-committee meeting said the government's failure in governing the country forced the development partners to hold Washington meet excluding Bangladesh.

The meeting also demanded proper investigation into all bomb and grenade attacks and find out the criminals behind those attacks.

Syed Abul Hossain MP, Promod Mankin MP, former ambassador Mohiuddin Ahmed, Wali-ur-Rahman, Mostafa Faruk Mohammad, Akramul Kader, M Mizanur Rahman, Manjurul Alam, Mohammad Zamir and Mohammad Ziauddin attended the meeting.

One beaten to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was beaten to death in the city yesterday.

Farid Bepari, 42, a carpenter at Katasur Namar Bazar in Mohammadpur, was fatally injured when Mohammad Yusuf, another carpenter, hit him in the head with a stick during an altercation.

Farid was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries. Locals caught and beat Yusuf before handing him over to police.

WPB CONGRESS ENDS Menon reelected president

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

The Workers' Party of Bangladesh (WPB) yesterday elected its 37-member central committee, with Rashed Khan Menon as president and Bimal Biswas as general secretary.

The committee was announced at the party's 7th congress that ended in Jessore yesterday.

The politburo members include Haider Akbar Khan Rono, Abul Bashar, Nurul Hasan, Fazle Hossain Badsha, Anisur Rahman Mollik, Mahmudul Hasan Manik, Shafiqul Islam, Iqbal Kabir Zahid, Hafizur Rahman Bhuiyan, Azizur Rahman and Nur Ahmad Bokul.

And the eight alternative members are Rafiqul Islam Piarul, Liaquat Ali Liku, Anwarul Haque Bablu, Nazrul Islam, Mohiuddin Mohon, Mizanur Rahman, Dr Akhtar Sobhan Mashrur and Korom Ali.

'Pranta Swar' launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shamunay, a non-government organisation (NGO), yesterday launched a magazine with the objective to raise the voice of marginalised people in the process of poverty reduction.

The half-yearly magazine 'Pranta Swar' (voice of the marginalised), was launched at the National Press Club in collaboration with the Manusher Jonno, another NGO.

Speaking at the launching ceremony, noted economist and editor of the magazine Dr Atiur Rahman said the marginalised people cannot participate in the budget making process.

The magazine will disseminate budget-related information to common people in an easy and simple manner so that people can understand the budget easily, he added.

Farzana Naim of Manusher Jonno, Shakhawat Hossain of Power and Participation Research Center and journalist Mahmudul Hasan Dara addressed the ceremony.



Chhatra Dhara, student wing of the Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh, stages a demonstration on the Dhaka University campus yesterday protesting the BCS question paper leakage and demanding cancellation of the exam.

Skop announces fresh programmes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sramik Karmochari Oikya Parishad (Skop) yesterday announced fresh programmes demanding full implementation of the agreements that it signed with the government on January 8 of last year.

The programmes include rallies in all district headquarters and industrial areas on March 6, a grand rally at Paltan Maidan in the city on April 1, and a countrywide 48-hour strike on April 5 and 6.

The programmes were announced by Skop leaders at a press conference at its office in the city.

They also demanded restarting of all closed mills and factories and payment of all arrears to the employees.

The leaders said Skop signed the agreement with the government demanding declaration of national minimal wage, stoppage of

privatisation of public industries, and restarting of the closed mills and factories.

"But none of them were implemented in last 13 months though the government had pledged to do that in four months. More over, the government violated the agreements by closing and privatising the running industries," said Jatiya Sramik Jote President Abdul Kader Hawlader.

The government has formed pay commission for the government officials and employees, but is indifferent to the employees of private sector, he said.

Eighty lakh workers and employees in private sector are passing an inhuman life, said Shahidullah Chowdhury, acting president of Bangladesh Trade Union Kendro.

When contacted, Shajahan Ali Sarder, deputy secretary of labour ministry, could not say anything on the state of the agreements.

ONE YEAR OF ATTACK ON HUMAYUN AZAD Govt's inaction blamed

DU CORRESPONDENT

Family members, different student bodies and Sammilita Nagorik Samaj yesterday reiterated their demand for immediate arrest and punishment of the culprits who critically chopped eminent writer and Dhaka University (DU) teacher Prof Humayun Azad a year ago.

Prof Azad came under attack on February 27 in front of Bangla Academy while he was returning to his DU residence from Amar Ekushey Book Fair. Later he was found dead in a Munich apartment in Germany on August 12, four days after he went there on a research fellowship.

Addressing a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar, leaders of Sammilita Nagorik Samaj, a combine of citizens from all walks of life, condemned the government for its inaction to bring the culprits to justice.

Family members including Prof Azad's wife Latifa Kohinor and daughter Mouli Azad said the fundamentalist forces killed him in a planned way.

DU Teachers' Association President Prof AAMS Arefin

Siddique said the government failed to arrest any culprits though one year has passed as the fundamentalist forces inside the government launched the attack.

Dr Muhammad Samad, SA Malek, Salauddin Badal, Kamal Lohani also addressed the rally.

Later a procession was brought out lighting candle from the Shaheed Minar and ended at the place where Prof Azad was chopped.

Six opposition-backed student organisations and left-leaning Bangladesh Chhatra Union also demanded immediate arrest and punishment of the culprits responsible for the attack on Prof Azad.

The student bodies lit candles at the place where he was chopped in the evening.

Progressive Student Alliance took out a procession and held a rally on DU campus.

Speakers at the rally said the attack on Prof Azad was not only an attack on a person but also an attack on the freedom of speech.

Rab team off to Malaysia for training

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A twenty-member team of the elite force, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), left Dhaka for Malaysia on Saturday night to participate in a weeklong training programme.

The Rab team has been sent as part of its training programme in home and abroad to enhance skills of the force, said a Rab press release.

The team includes four directors, six deputy directors, five senior assistant directors and five assistant directors.

The training programme will be held at North Brigade General Operation Force Head Quarters at Ulu Kinta Perak State in Malaysia from March 1 to 7.

British MP castigates Blair in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Visiting British opposition lawmaker George Galloway yesterday said Prime Minister Tony Blair has put Great Britain on top of the three most hated countries in the world.

The British are puzzled whether their country is a member-state of the European Union or an outpost of the US, thanks to the role of Blair, said Galloway.

The people now want a liberal and equal Britain, he told a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club.

Galloway's visit to Bangladesh aims at showing solidarity with the Bangladeshi anti-war movement and is also part of a worldwide campaign to force Blair to withdraw British troops from Iraq.

The British lawmaker will meet Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina to discuss development programmes in Bangladesh.

He is likely to discuss his role to mitigate problems of Bangladeshi immigrants that have been intensified in the name of anti-terrorist movement in Britain.

He said, "Seven seventy-nine Muslims were arrested by the British police since 9/11 and the harassment makes the Muslims frightened and is spreading anxiety among them."

"Besides, the House of Commons is going to stop taking immigrants, although the country needs working people, and the birth rate is also declining in Britain," Galloway added.

He went on to say that to put an end to the unilateral US policy, a strong, united and multipolar world is needed. A strong and united China, Middle East, Asia and Africa could have challenged the US now.

The British MP from the Respect Party has been elected from Tower Hamlets where 40 percent people are Bangladeshis.

Galloway is also set to visit Sylhet.

1,889 more held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested 1,889 people, including three listed criminals, on various charges during their countrywide drive in the last 24 hours till 6.00am yesterday.

Obituary

Alhaj FKM Aminul Islam, former general manager of the Oriental Bank Ltd, died at his RK Mission Road (Islam Villa) residence in the city on February 22 at the age of 64, says a press release.

He left behind his mother, wife and 4 daughters to mourn his death.

Mostakim Sattar



Mostakim Sattar (Montu), a businessman and advisor to Nitol Motors Limited, died of a cardiac arrest in the city on Saturday morning, says a press release.

He left behind his wife and two sons.

Death anniversary



Today is the second death anniversary of Afia Khatun, wife of Moulvi Md Fakhruddin Islam Bhuiyan of Narayanganj, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani will be held at her village home at Daudpur in Narayanganj. Foods will also be distributed among the poor.

Dr Md Nuruzzaman

Today is the first death anniversary of Alhaj Dr Md Nuruzzaman, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his residence at Darshana Keru Hospitalpara in Chuadanga after Asr prayers today.

AYUB ALI MURDER CASE 3 outlaws get death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Three outlaws were sentenced to death in the sensational Ayub Ali murder case yesterday.

District and Sessions Judge Syed Ishaque Hussein handed down the verdict on Ajmal, Helal and Shailen. All of them were tried in absentia.

However, six other accused were acquitted as the charges brought against them were not proved. They are Monirul Islam, Ajit, Habi Shaikh, Zakir, Kaizer and Gazi Kamrul, a ringleader of Biplobi Communist Party.

According to the prosecution story, Ayub Ali, a shrimp trader, was gunned down on September 25 in 1995 at Arhonghata under Daulatpur thana of the city.

His mother Amina Begum lodged an FIR with Daulatpur thana the following day accusing nine people,

including seven outlaws.

SI Sohrab Ali submitted charge sheet against all the accused on February 29, 1996.

Twenty prosecution witnesses were examined during the trial.

Art exhibition begins at JU today

JU CORRESPONDENT

A three-day art exhibition organised by Anandan, a cultural organisation of Jahangirnagar University, begins today at the corridor of the proposed Zahir Raihan auditorium on the campus.

A total of 75 paintings will be on display.

Cop found dead in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

A police constable was found dead in a narrow lane at Guptara in Rangpur town yesterday.

Police claimed that Constable Rafiqul Islam, 50, died of a cardiac arrest while answering nature's call. His body was recovered yesterday morning.

However, the death is still shrouded in mystery and has worried the law enforcers.

Police said Rafiqul Islam was patrolling the area with two other constables on Saturday night.

The other two went back to the Nawabganj police barracks at dawn after their duty, but Rafiq remained missing until the local people found his

body at the lane from New Cross road.

Officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station Noor-e-Alam said, "Constable Rafiq parted from his two colleagues to answer nature's call. But his heart failed while he was urinating."

Finding no trace of him, the two other constables came back to the barracks, he added.

A resident of Dhagara of Rayganj, Sirajganj, Rafiqul Islam is survived by his wife, four sons and one daughter.

An unnatural death case was registered with Kotwali police in this connection. His body was sent to his village home after an autopsy.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry over the country till 6.00pm today. Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met office said.

Highest temperature 32.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chuadanga and lowest 12.8 degree Celsius at Srimongol.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:01pm today and rises at 6:21am 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	30.3	17.6	43	26
Chittagong	31.8	19.5	70	56
Rajshahi	30.5	13.5	60	45
Khulna	31.0	16.6	69	57
Barisal	31.4	17.0	81	55
Sylhet	30.5	16.2	67	37
Cox's Bazar	31.7	19.5	80	52



A twenty-member Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) team poses for photograph at Zia International Airport on Saturday night before leaving for Malaysia on a weeklong training programme.

National debate festival concludes

DU CORRESPONDENT

The 5th National Debate Festival ended yesterday with exciting rounds of intense arguments between media men and poets, sportsmen and sports journalists, and actors and politicians.

The two-day festival, sponsored by the Bangla daily Prothom Alo, was held at the National Museum auditorium in the city, with the slogan 'It does not suggest that everything has gone to the devil's hand'.

At the first session, debaters from different districts took part in two debate contests.

Later, poets Anisul Haque, Mahmuduzzaman Babu and Tokon Thakur confronted media personalities Manzurul Ahsan Bulbul, Sumana Shamrin and GE Mamun at an interesting debate. The motion for the debate was 'Poets are never

defeated'. It was followed by an anti-drug rally organised by the Prothom Alo.

The works of the press box is easier than in field' was the motion of the debate where sportsmen Farook Ahmed and Gazi Ashraf Lipu faced sports reporters Partha Tanvir and Utpal Shuvro.

Media men Sudip Ranjan Deb, Rafiqullah Romel and Galib Hamid competed against Rumi Noman, Shahana Munni, Munir Hasan in a debate with the motion 'Mass media does not reflect the mass people'.

'Politicians are successful as actors' was the motion of another debate in which actors Pijush Bandopadhyay and Mannan Hira confronted Ehsanul Haque Milon, state minister for education, and Mahi B Chowdhury, a leader of Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh.