

Carry out responsibilities rising above party interest

PM urges employees

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday called upon the employees of all sectors to carry out their responsibilities sincerely for the national interest rising above personal and party interest.

The call came when the newly elected office-bearers of Sonali Bank Employees Association (CBA), led by its president BM Bakir Hossain and general secretary Mohammadul Chowdhury, made a courtesy call on the prime minister at her office.

Terminating the banking sector an important area, she said it is directly related to the economic development.

Congratulating the newly elected CBA leaders, she said her

government removed various obstacles in the economic sector, resulting in massive successes in the economic field.

Khaleda said that if all, including the employees of the respective organisations and institutions, in different sectors work together for production and development, its fruits could be enjoyed by everyone in the country.

Responding to the CBA's demands, she said the government has been providing assistance and cooperation for the welfare and development of various institutions and organisations, and similarly, their interests would also be considered.

The CBA leaders appreciated the government's successes in a number of sectors, particularly

substantial improvement of law and order, restoration of discipline in banking sector, massive recovery of loans from defaulters through formation of Artha Rin Adalot (Money Loan Court).

They told the Prime Minister that CBAs in various sectors are working in fair and disciplined manner for the national development. The victory of the pro-BNP CBAs is the reflection of the government's successes in various sectors.

PM's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury, acting president of Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal Abul Kashem Chowdhury and General Secretary Mohammad Zafrul Hasan were also present.

7 killed in road accidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six women and a child were killed in separate road accidents in Savar, Dhaka and Brahmanbaria in the last two days.

Of them, a woman and her 18-month-old daughter were killed when a truck in which they were travelling with her husband and another daughter plunged into a roadside ditch in Brahmanbaria the early hours of yesterday.

In Savar, three women were run over by a speeding truck on Wednesday night. The accident took place near the Savar thana when they were crossing the road at about 8.35pm. All of them died on the spot.

Police sent the bodies to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy but their identities could not be known.

Two other women died when two speeding trains knocked them down in Tejgaon area of Dhaka on Wednesday night.

Razia Begum, 22, a resident of Tejgaon rail station colony, died on the spot when a Kishoreganj-bound train

hit her when she was walking along the rail track near Nakhla para at about 10:45pm.

The other victim could not be identified. A Noakhali-bound train hit her near Tejgaon level crossing at 8:45pm.

Our Brahmanbaria correspondent adds: The woman and her child who died in truck plunge were identified as Maya, wife of Sub-Inspector Atiar Rahman, and their daughter Snigdha.

Sub-Inspector Atiar Rahman along with his three family members was going to Sylhet from Faridpur by the hired truck to join his new workplace, police sources said.

But the truck suddenly overturned and fell into wayside ditch near the Titas Bridge at Shahbazpur village in Sarail upazila at around 1:45am, killing Maya and Snigdha.

Atiar Rahman and his another daughter Samma, 10, were injured critically. They were admitted to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital.

Police arrested truck driver Nurul Islam.



Dhaka City Corporation demolishes illegal structures at Mohakhali in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Reforms CG, EC to ensure voting rights: Hasina

BDNEWS, DHAKA

Reiterating her demand to ensure accountability of the Caretaker Government and the Election Commission by bringing reforms, opposition leader in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her party wants fair and free election so that the people can vote according to their wills.

Terminating the BNP-Jamaat alliance government as a "corrupt, terrorist, killer and repressor", the Awami League president urged the people to be united and build up a vigorous movement to save the country.

Addressing a discussion meeting in observance of the 33rd founding anniversary of Bangladesh Krishak League (BKL) at the Engineers' Institution auditorium in the afternoon, she urged the people to be alert about the rights of vote.

Chaired by BKL president Dr Mirza Abdul Jalil, AL general secretary Abdul Jalil, MP, presidium member Begum Matia Chowdhury, Advocate Rahmat Ali, MP, Dr Abdur Razzak, MP, and BKL general secretary Motahar Hossain Mollah also spoke.

In her speech, Sheikh Hasina narrated various development programmes and initiatives taken during her previous AL regime. She said, "We ensured food security by turning the country into self-



PHOTO: STAR

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina gives away prize among the best farmers at the Engineers' Institution auditorium yesterday.

sufficient and kept the prices of all essential commodities under purchasing capacity. But, the alliance government has made the country dependent after assuming office by looting and corruption."

Bitterly criticising agri-policy of the alliance government, she said the government has destroyed the whole agri-sector as well as destroyed the economy. "We must bring change of such a situation so that country's farmers would not bear the burnt of the misdeeds of the alliance further," she said.

The AL president hoisted national flag inaugurating the founding anniversary function while BKL leaders presented agri-products to the opposition leader and other guests.

Besides, BKL also accorded Bangabandhu Agriculture Award to Sheikh Hasina. Impress Telefilm (Channel I), Kamal Miah of Bogra, Abdul Mannan of Shahjapur and Mobarak Sarder of Kalkini of Madaripur.

'Women's participation in decision making still absent'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a meeting yesterday said despite women's empowerment in many spheres, their participation in the decision making process is still absent.

They underscored the need for joint programmes of men and women to establish the political empowerment of women and prevent violence against them.

The meeting was organised to share experience of the 49th session of the United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) (Beijing+10 conference) held in New York between February 20 and March 11 this year.

The Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP) organised the meeting at the Cirdap auditorium with its President Hena Das in the chair.

BMP General Secretary Ayesha Khanom said women's organisations need to work jointly to establish their political and human rights.

"We need to bargain jointly with the government," she added.

Referring to the Millennium Development Goal (MDG), Ayesha said very little about women's affairs was included in it.

She called for incorporating the issues of women's rights in the MDG.

Salma Khan, member of the UN Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), said women have made remarkable progress in many fields in Bangladesh compared to other South Asian countries.

The Bangladeshi women have been able to overcome scores of barriers in terms of moving ahead in the last decade. Women are now joining air force, army and business occupying notable place in those spheres, she added.

But the lack of participation in decision making process is still a serious impediment to women's empowerment, said Salma.

Country Director of the Hunger Project Dr Badiul Alam Majumder, and President of Women for Women Dr Mahmuda Islam were present on the occasion.

Public security stays Rab's main task

Says former chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The outgoing director-general (DG) of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday said the force's main task remains ensuring public security, no matter what the rights activists say.

"We are trying to make sure that parents will not be in tension after sending their kids to schools and people will not be mugged," Anwarul Iqbal, the outgoing Rab DG told during a courtesy meeting with newsmen at Rab headquarters at Kurmitola.

The outgoing Rab DG said that no government permission is required to file a case against Rab members.

On shootings by Rab men, he said that in 61 cases Rab members were compelled to open fire. Of those, police and magistrates are carrying out investigations in 58 cases.

"So far investigations in 35 cases have been completed, but we do not yet have any information regarding the results [of the investigations]," he said.

Iqbal said so far 133 Rab members of ranks ranging from senior warrant officer to constable have been sent back to their parent organisations as a punitive measure. Of those, 57 committed serious crimes like robbery, corruption and bribery, and 76 anti-disciplinary acts.

Additional DG of Rab Colonel Chowdhury Fazlul Bari, directors of different wings, deputy directors, and commanders in chiefs (CO) were also present at the meeting.

About controversy surrounding Rab's role, Col Bari said, "Ask your parents and brothers and sisters. If

any one of them says what Rab does is bad, I will take off my uniform and quit the job."

Referring to newspaper reports that say Rab is more powerful than the police, Iqbal said Rab is a force under the police. "I do not think that Rab has been given more power than the police."

Deputy Inspector General of police (DIG-Khulna Range) Abdul Aziz Sarkar, who is expected to join Rab in a day or two, will replace Iqbal, said sources. Iqbal was transferred to the police headquarters.

Regarding the Rab assault on The Daily Jugantor Chief Photographer SM Gorkey, the outgoing DG said after a thorough investigation they have transferred the officer concerned and punished the others involved in the incident.

Akheri Munajat today

The Akheri Munajat (grand prayer) will be held at Dhaka Kendro Khankah Sharif at Mirpur in the city at 11:45am on the occasion of Eid-e-Miladunnabi, says a press release.

Thousands of people irrespective of religions, race and caste, along with ministers, member of parliaments, national leaders, members of the diplomatic missions are expected to participate in the prayer.

Anjuman-e-Rahmania Moinia Maizbhandaria will also hold seminar and discussion from 8:30am to 10:30 at the Khankah Sharif today.

GARMENT FACTORY COLLAPSE Impartial investigation demanded

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Sramik Nirapatta Forum (SNF) yesterday demanded an impartial and independent investigation into the collapse of the Spectrum sweaters factory building at Savar, and stern punishment to the persons responsible for the tragedy.

The SNF, a coalition of 14 human rights, labour, environmental and civil rights organisations, urged the authorities concerned to make the probe report public.

The forum, in a statement, also demanded that the survivors and the family members of the victims be adequately compensated and rehabilitated.

It called for taking immediate

steps to prevent such incidents in future by ensuring that all factory buildings are constructed in full compliance with the building codes.

The forum also expressed its concern over the fact that the factory owner was not arrested even after the ninth day of the incident.

The forum included Ain O Salish Kendra, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association, Incidin, Jatiyo Nari Jote, Karmojibi Nari, Nijera Kori, Odhakar, Oxfam, Sammilito Samajik Andolon, Sammilito Nari Samaj and Ubining.

CAG submits audit reports to president

BSS, Dhaka

Comptroller and Auditor General of Bangladesh Asif Ali yesterday submitted a set of audit reports to President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban here yesterday.

While accepting the reports, the president underlined the importance of regular auditing to ensure financial discipline of the government.

He said independence and accountability were established in different sectors and pointed out that the role of audit report is very important in this regard.

The president thanked the Auditor General and other concerned for submitting audit reports in time.

Secretary to the President M Abu Solaiman Chowdhury and Press Secretary M Mukhlisar Rahman Chowdhury were present.

QUESTION PAPER LEAKAGE Students submit memo to DU VC

DU CORRESPONDENT

The students of Arabic department of Dhaka University (DU) submitted a memorandum to Vice-Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz yesterday demanding that the probe report on question paper leakage be made public.

Question papers of MA (general group) examinations-2002 of the department held in January this year allegedly leaked out, prompting the authorities to postpone the exams.

But no fresh date of the examinations has yet been announced, which threw the students into uncertainty.

In the memorandum, the students also demanded punishment to the persons responsible for question paper leakage. They also threatened to launch tougher movement if their demands are not met.

A four-member probe committee, headed by arts faculty Dean Prof Sadrul Amin, submitted a report to the VC on April 16, but it is yet to be placed at the Syndicate meeting.

The VC, however, assured the students that the probe report would be placed at the next Syndicate meeting on May 3 and action would be taken against the persons responsible.

Death anniversary

The 21st death anniversary of Justice Abdul Jabbar Khan, former speaker of Pakistan National Assembly, will be observed tomorrow, says a press release.

He was born in village Baheerchar Khudrakathi under Babuganj thana in Barisal in 1901.

A doa mahfil will be held on the occasion.

Satyra Ranjan Dasgupta

The 2nd death anniversary of Satyra Ranjan Dasgupta, a spiritual person of Daser Bari in Gaila, Barisal will be observed tomorrow, says a press release.

A programme in his memory has been arranged at Daser Bari.

Quikhwani

Quikhwani of Hafiza Samad, wife of former deputy commissioner late MA Samad and mother of Irtiza Nasim Ali, chief editor of the Probe News Magazine, will be held at her residence, House # 10B, Road # 9 Dhanmondi, after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

She died at Labaid Cardiac Centre in the city on Wednesday.

Asma Kibria demands FBI probe again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Asma Kibria, wife of slain lawmaker SAMS Kibria, demanded FBI and other international organisations' probe into Kibria killing as the chargesheet in the case filed under explosives act 'hints at al Qaeda's involvement in it'.

Addressing a press conference yesterday, she said that it is the government's responsibility to unearth the sources of the grenades in this country. If they [government] do not take measures to stop grenade smuggling immediately, more intellectuals might soon be killed like Kibria, she observed.

Reza Kibria, son of the former finance minister, was also present at the press conference held at their Dhanmondi residence.

Habiganj police submitted the chargesheet in the case filed under explosives act on April 20 accusing 10 ruling BNP leaders of carrying out the January 27 grenade attack in Habiganj.

"The government version [chargesheet] itself links international terrorist groups to the Habiganj carnage. So, we demand that they [government] let international organisations like FBI, Scotland Yard and Interpol investigate the incident," said Asma Kibria.

Reza described the chargesheet as incomplete. He said that some more influential people might have links to the incident that left SAMS Kibria and

four others killed. "It really is a big opportunity for the government to detect the network of international terrorist organisations and thus uproot it," Reza said adding, "We want our country to be free from international terrorists."

The government should be sincere in pinpointing the sources of thousands of grenades and firearms smuggled into the country, Reza observed. "FBI should investigate the sources of those grenades," he said. "We do not know who would be the target of the next grenade attack," he added.

"We also learnt that a few of the accused wanted to be approved, but they did not get the home ministry's permission," Reza said wondering why the home ministry did not want this.

He said that Finance Minister Saifur Rahman who once described the killing as a local incident should also be quizzed.

"Saifur's comment suggests that he might know something about the killing and that's why he should at least be quizzed," he said.

Reza Kibria also said that Industries Minister Motiur Rahman Nizami had made a reference to the intelligence apparatus of a neighbouring country for the killing but now the chargesheet reveals that the ruling BNP leaders were in fact involved in the killing.

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PHOTO: STAR

Sanjiv Mehta, chairman of Unilever Bangladesh Ltd., speaks at a seminar at the Osmani Memorial Hall in the city yesterday.