



A procession was brought out in the city on Friday on the occasion of the Eid-e-Miladunnabi, the birth and death anniversaries of Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (SM).

'More investments, subsidies needed to save agri sector'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday called on the government to pay more attention to the development of agriculture to boost the economy.

The Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad organised the seminar on 'Agriculture and farmers of Bangladesh' at Cirdap auditorium in the city to mark its silver jubilee.

4 killed in city road accidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four people, including a cloth trader and a nine-year-old boy, were killed in separate road accidents in the city in the last two days.

Shah Alam, the cloth trader, was killed when a speeding passenger bus hit him near New Market at about 3:00pm yesterday.

Witnesses said the bus hit Alam, owner of 'Ashirbad Than Kapor' at Reza Supper Market opposite to Dhaka College, when he was crossing the road. Locals rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors on duty declared him dead.



Local people and businessmen put up a barricade on the road in the New Market area following the death of a cloth trader in a road accident.

WEATHER TODAY Thundershowers likely

Table with 5 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Lists cities like Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.

Domestic help's body recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the body of a domestic help from Tejaon in the city on Friday.

The body of Ruma Begum, 18, was hanging from a ceiling fan at a house at West Rajabazar. Quoting the family members of the housemaster, police said she had committed suicide.

One gunned down, 2 others shot in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A young man was killed and two others were shot when the miscreants opened fire on them at Kafurl in the city on Friday.

A gang of five started firing on Hafizul Islam, 28, and his friend Nuruzzaman, 28, when they were gossipping near Matborer Pukur in Kafurl after Juma prayers, police said.

Hafizul, who passed master's degree from the Department of Islamic History of Rajshahi University recently, received two bullets in the head and chest. He was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead.

He came to Dhaka on Wednesday to meet his friend Nuruzzaman, a computer hardware engineer, who resides in a mess at Kafurl. Nuruzzaman was also shot in a hand. He was released from the DMCH after being operated upon on Friday.

Mahbub Islam Rony, 29, was shot in his leg as he came out of a local mosque during the incident. He was admitted to the Orthopaedic Hospital.

"We were gossipping standing near the pond at about 2:15pm. Suddenly five youths appeared and started firing

indiscriminately on us," Nuruzzaman told reporters at the DMCH.

He, however, could not say whether the criminals targeted him.

"I am certain that my brother was not the target as he does not reside in Dhaka," said Hafizul's elder brother Joyal Islam.

Police arrested one Sohail Friday night from the area suspecting his involvement in the incident and sent him to Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court seeking seven-day remand.

"We are trying to find out whether any feud in Chapainawabganj, the home district of Hafizul and Nuruzzaman led to the incident," said Investigation Officer of the case Sub-Inspector Nasimul Islam.

He said Sohail gave a hint them that a feud at Chapainawabganj is the reason behind the killing. He, however, declined to disclose anything more for the sake of investigation.

Nuruzzaman filed a case with Kafurl Police Station on Friday night without mentioning any name.

British HC apprised of AL move for reforms in CG

Anwar Chy meets Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

British High Commissioner in Dhaka Anwar Choudhury yesterday met Opposition Leader and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina at her Sudha Sadan residence in Dhanmondi.

During the meeting, the AL leader apprised the envoy of her party's move for reforms in the caretaker government system and the Election Commission.

"We have explained to the envoy the reasons for which the mainstream opposition parties have raised the demand for reforms in caretaker government system and other electoral laws," Saber Hossain Chowdhury, political secretary to AL chief, told the reporters after the meeting.

The reform proposals should not be taken as a demand of the AL only, he said, adding, "Other opposition parties and civil society members are also in favour of the demand for a free, fair and credible election."

"The AL did not raise the issue to derive any benefits from the reforms. Rather, the demands are made for establishing people's right to vote and at the same time to ensure accountability of the interim government," Saber said.

On the government's negative approach to the reforms of the caretaker government, the AL leader posed the question, "What is the problem of the government if we could introduce a better system through reforms for the sake of free and fair elections?"

He referred to last year's Dhaka-10 by-election and a recent by-election for a ward commissioner in Dhaka, and said, "These polls and others have proved that the present government is determined to take the results in their favour by any means."

Saber said the high commissioner was also informed of the opposition's concern over the grenade attacks and political killings that took place in the country in recent times, and the suspected link between those incidents and big arms hauls.

Newly appointed British Deputy High Commissioner Jason Grimes and head of the political section of the High Commission Stephen Briges were present during the hour-long meeting.

On the AL side, Abdul Jalil, Kazi Zafarullah, former ambassador Ziauddin and Hasina's son Sajib Wajed were present.

DU FAZILATUNNESA HALL Female students confine pro-VC, provost to dormitory

UNB, Dhaka

Hundreds of angry resident students of Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall of Dhaka University yesterday confined the pro-vice-chancellor and the hall provost in the dormitory for several hours to realise their 13-point demand.

The students kept hall Provost Prof Nasreen Ahmed under lock and key for nearly six hours since 1:00pm inside her office while Pro-VC Dr AFM Yusuf Haider was confined for about four hours since 3:00pm at the common room of the house tutors.

The pro-VC had to face the anger of the female students as he went to visit the spot along with Proctor Dr AKA Firoz and Senior Assistant Proctor Fatema Begum after he was informed of the demonstration. The demands of the students include reintroduction of the bus service from their hall to the main campus, eviction of shops and stores from the hall rooms, introduction of the attendance register on every floor, reduction of rents by 50 percent for those who share seats, installation of a phone booth and permission for everybody to keep PC.

During their demonstration, the unruly students cut off the telephone and electricity lines of the dormitory. The pro-VC and the hall provost managed to come out of their captivity after assuring the students that their demands would be met in phases.

The hall authorities told the students that from now on they would be able to keep three computers in their respective room and assured them of taking immediate steps to upgrade their existing hall library into full-fledged one.

They said a phone booth would be installed in the dormitory and the number of stoves in the kitchen would also be increased shortly. About the bus service, the pro-VC said a new bus would be pressed into service soon from the hall, which is about a km away from the main campus.

The female students had been demonstrating for the last three days to meet their long-awaited

demands. They alleged that the authorities did not provide any bus since the old one went out of order six months ago. "We had requested the authorities several times to repair the bus, but our requests went unheeded," a resident student told UNB wishing anonymity.

"When the hall students are suffering from accommodation crisis, the authorities have allotted four four-seated rooms for setting up shops," she said.

The resident students also shouted slogans against the hall provost and the house tutors protesting their alleged misconduct with the students.

"The house tutors often interfere in our personal matters and hurl abuses at us," another student said, also insisting not to be named. The hall provost and the pro-VC could not be reached for comments, as the students did not allow reporters to enter the hall during the demonstration.

Opposition won't participate in polls without reforms in CG, EC: Menon

UNB, Chittagong

Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon has said that none of the opposition parties will take part in the next general election without reforms in the caretaker government system and Election Commission.

All opposition parties will launch a movement seeking reforms, said Menon while addressing the district workers conference here on Saturday.

He said the opposition has reached a consensus against participation in the election without reforms.

Reform discriminatory laws against women

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gender discrimination in the existing laws and lack of women's political empowerment are major obstacles to ensuring women's participation in development decisions at all levels, speakers at a workshop said yesterday.

Women are trapped in a cycle of poverty because of these factors, they said and called for reforms of the discriminatory laws. Women today have achieved successes in many spheres of life, including education and income-generation, but have very limited access to the decision-making process, they observed.

The NGO Coalition on Cedaw and Beijing Process (NCBP), Bangladesh organised the workshop in the city to share the experience and outcome of the 49th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) on

Beijing+10 held at the UN Headquarters in New York from February 28 to March 11.

A state delegation led by Khurshid Jahan Haque, minister for women and children affairs, attended the session in New York while another group comprised of NGO representatives was present as an observer and submitted a shadow report on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) alongside the state delegation's report.

The Beijing Platform for Action was adopted by the 23rd special session of the General Assembly (Beijing+5) in 2000 to establish gender equality, development and peace for the 21st century.

Speaking as the chairperson at the workshop, women's rights leader Salma Khan said a lack of women's participation in the policy-making process at the state level and the government's reluctance to

amend the discriminatory laws were identified as major obstacles to this goal.

The laws on marriage, divorce, guardianship and inheritance are highly discriminatory against women, said Mahmuda Islam, president of Women for Women.

Ferdous Ara Begum, director general of Bangladesh Television, who was a member of the state delegation, underscored the need for incorporating the NGO's experience into women's development policy.

Md Abdur Rashid Sarker, secretary, ministry of women and children affairs, said the ministry has taken an initiative to develop strategies for eliminating gender discrimination in the laws.

Ayesha Khanam, general secretary of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, also spoke.



Newly elected leaders of the Supreme Court Bar Association led by its President Mahbubey Alam called on Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at the Awami League Dhanmondi office yesterday.

HASINA'S CTG VISIT CMP boss refuses to hold meet on security

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) commissioner yesterday refused a meeting with two former police high-ups on the security of Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina for her May 1 visit to the port city.

Former CMP commissioner AT Ahmedul Haq Chowdhury and former deputy inspector general (DIG) of police Shafique Ullah went to meet CMP Commissioner Amjad Hossain at his office at around 11:00am, sources said.

The visitors sent Amjad a note to discuss security measures for Hasina, also Awami League chief, and waited for him at the reception.

After about an hour, four police officials came to Haq and regretted for the 'inconvenience' on behalf of their chief, the sources said.

AL sources said the two former police officials came as an advance security team for Hasina. Haq served as the CMP commissioner from January 10, 1999 to July 26, 2001 and later went into forced retirement after serving a few months as an additional IGP.

Obituary

Advocate Md Anwaruzzaman, a Language Movement veteran, a senior lawyer of the Supreme Court, passed away due to cardiac arrest at the Ibrahim Cardiac Hospital in the city on April 22 at the age of 70, says a press release.

He left behind his two sons and three daughters.

Mustak Ahmed Chowdhury, former election commissioner, died of cardiac arrest on April 22 at the age of 81, says a press release.

He left behind his wife and two daughters to mourn his death. The officers and employees of the Election Commission Secretariat expressed deep shock at the death of Mustak and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

Moulavi Ahmed Ali

Moulavi Ahmed Ali, an Islamic thinker and teacher, passed away on April 22 at his son's residence at Dhaka University at the age of 100, says a press release.

His qulhwani will be held at his village home in Salkhira on April 25. Moulavi Ahmed Ali is survived by his 6 sons and two daughters.

'Govt making judiciary, JS non-functional'

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday accused the BNP-Jamaat coalition government of making two vital state organs -- parliament and judiciary -- virtually "non-functional."

Addressing the newly-elected leaders of the Supreme Court (SC) Bar Association in the evening, the opposition leader said the judiciary has not yet been separated from the executive as our government had taken the first initiative to comply with the Supreme Court directives in this regard.

"Our government had made a provision for disbursement of fund by the Court authorities and efforts were taken with the financial assistance of the World Bank

to modernise the judiciary and higher courts for quick dispensation of justice," Hasina told the Bar leaders.

"We appointed judges according to the suggestion of the court authorities, irrespective of their political identities," she said.

New SC Bar President Advocate Mahbubey Alam said during the AL rule, the judges were appointed considering their merit, wisdom and quality. But the ruling coalition appointed 19 judges considering their political identities.

"The downfall of BNP-Jamaat government has started with our election victory and it will end through their defeat in the next general elections," said Bar Secretary Advocate M Enaetur Rahim.

DHAKA TODAY Seminar Musical evening Rally Painting exhibition Prize giving ceremony Discussion Meeting