



PHOTO: STAR  
Rajiv Sikri, Indian Secretary of the External Affairs Ministry, speaks at a seminar at Bangladesh Enterprise Institute in the city yesterday. Sitting from left are SMT Neelam Deo, former foreign secretary Farook Sobhan and Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri.

**Hasina protests JCD attack on students**

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday protested the attack on seven student organisations, including Chhatra League, allegedly by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) on the Dhaka University campus.

In a statement, Hasina said the ruling party's student wing wants to suppress the logical movement of the students by using the power of arms and terrorism.

"Police and terrorists belonging to JCD are assaulting general students, teachers and journalists on the DU campus for the three consecutive days. The cadres of the alliance government created heinous incidents like repression on female students in presence of university higher authorities," she said.

She also demanded immediate resignation of DU vice-chancellor and Proctor for failing to ensure security of students and teachers and sheltering criminals.

**27 killed in 'crossfire' last month**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-seven people were killed in 'crossfire' with the Rapid Action Battalion and police last month, according to a report of Bangladesh Bar Council.

Besides, 293 more people were killed in different incidents in the country during the period, the report said.

Of the victims, seven people were killed in political violence, 41 committed suicide and one person was killed in police custody.

The Bar Council prepared the report on the basis of newspaper reports.

Eleven women and children were killed after rape, 15 housewives killed over dowry and eight others died following torture by their husbands, the report said.

Besides, 50 women and girls fell victim to rape, 13 to domestic violence and four to fatwa.

The report said 40 people were injured in bomb attacks and 30

others in acid attacks. Also, 26 people were abducted during the period.

Five journalists were injured in attacks and four others received threats, the report added.

Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha, in its report, said 189 women and girls fell victim to repression last month. Of them, 81 women and girls were killed and 42 raped.

In another survey, the DemocracyWatch said two Union Parishad chairmen were killed -- one of them dies in 'crossfire' -- during the period.

Cases were filed against five UP chairmen and one UP member for their alleged involvement in murder, extortion, torture of businessmen, cheating and harassment of government officials.

An UP chairman was arrested for throwing acid on a child while another was sentenced to life imprisonment in a murder case, the report said.

**Murder of Comilla editor condemned**

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Leader of the opposition Sheikh Hasina and a human rights organisation condemned the murder of Golam Mahfuz, editor of Comilla-based the daily Comilla Muktakantha.

Hasina, also Awami League president, in a statement blasted the murder of Golam Mahfuz saying, "During the tenure of BNP-Jamaat coalition government, the repression and murder of journalists and throttling the voice of newspapers have crossed all limits. The journalists are insecure, let alone ordinary people."

She demanded the arrest and exemplary punishment to the killers.

Bangladesh Manobadhikar Bastobayan Sangstha also condemned the murder of Golam Mahfuz and demanded punishment of the murderers. In a statement the organisation observed that journalism as a profession is becoming increasingly risky.

**CONSTRUCTION OF PADMA BRIDGE JICA submits final report**

UNB, Dhaka

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) yesterday submitted its final feasibility study report on construction of the much-expected 6.1-km-long Padma Bridge to the government, projecting its positive impacts.

It will take primarily 54 months to complete the construction work of the bridge, involving Tk 7,500 crore as project cost, the feasibility study shows.

With railway attached to the bridge, the cost will increase 13 per cent.

JICA Resident Representative Akio Ari formally handed over the report to Communications Minister Nazmul Huda at the ministry.

"The proposed Padma Bridge will bring about a revolutionary change in Bangladesh's economy and expansion of regional trade," JICA resident representative Akio Ari was quoted as saying during submission of the report.

During the meeting with the JICA team, Huda said the construction work of the bridge will begin in 2007 if continuity of the government can be maintained.

The meeting was apprised that various donor countries and international financiers, including Japan, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, DFID and JBIC, have expressed their willingness to fund the gigantic project.

A six-member advisory council led by JICA Study Team leader Minoru Shibuya and a team of 26 experts conducted the feasibility study.

**50 injured in N'ganj clash**

BSS, Narayanganj

At least 50 workers were injured and 18 taxicabs damaged in a clash between taxi drivers and garment workers at Chashara Baluramath yesterday.

Police and witnesses said the clash ensued over the throwing of water from an eight-storey garment factory on the tinshed union office of

Narayanganj District Microbus and Taxicab Sramik Committee at 8:00am. At one stage garment workers attacked the taxicab workers with hockey sticks and damaged 18 taxicabs parked at BB Road.

They also ransacked the union office and looted Tk 2.85 lakh, Md Musa Bhandari, general secretary of the taxicab committee, told journalists.

Police said the garment workers put up barricade on the BB Road blocking the movement of traffic for one hour. Police brought the situation under control at 10:00am.

Of the injured, Delwar Hossain, 30, Gulzar, 25, China, 25, and Alamgir were admitted to 200-bed hospital and others were released after first aid.

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