

Expats embarrassed due to BNP-Jamaat misrule

Hasina tells gathering in Moscow

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the Bangladesh expatriates are facing embarrassment for poor law and order and human rights situation due to misrule of BNP-Jamaat alliance government.

Hasina, also Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, said this while she was addressing a gathering of leaders of Russia unit of Awami League, Bangladesh-Russia Chamber of Commerce and Industries (BRCCI) and Bangladesh-Russia Friendship Council at her hotel suite prior to departure from Moscow for London.

Hasina urged all to free the country from the clutches of BNP-Jamaat coalition government whom she termed as the "image destroyer of the country."

The government is trying to save the killers of former finance minister SAMS Kibria and other popular AL leaders and perpetrators of August 21 grenade attack in the name of trial and investigation, she said.

The government is diverting the August 21 grenade attack issue in political interest of the ruling party, she added.

She said the government is thwarting the systematic movement of the opposition by resorting to inhuman torture and repression.

"The administration cannot act neutrally due to massive politicisation and democratic institutions are on the verge of collapse," she said. "To save the country from the debacle, opposition parties are continuing movement to initiate fall of the government, she said.

AL presidium member Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim MP, International Secretary Alhaj Syed Abul Hossain, Forest and Environment Secretary Dr. Hasan Mahmud, Ambassador Mohammad Ziauddin, Russia unit President Dr. Moteleb Bahar Patowari and BRCCI President Mia Rafiqul Islam Arju were present.



PHOTO: STAR

Jono Udyog and Green Force form a human chain in the city yesterday demanding punishment to those responsible for Tengratila gas field blow-out and compensation from the Niko Resources Limited.

INDIAN STRIKE

Trade remains suspended at Benapole

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Export-import between Bangladesh and India through Benapole land port remained suspended since Monday due to a strike enforced by the West Bengal Transport Workers' Federation protesting fuel price hike.

Over one thousand trucks laden with perishable and non-perishable goods were lying stranded in different places of Petrapole, just opposite to Benapole land port.

Hundreds of goods-laden trucks also remained stranded at Benapole land port.

Indian police reportedly failed to resume export-import trade between the two countries.

Bangladesh government loses revenue earning of Tk 3 crore a day due to suspension of export-import activities through the land port, said a source at Benapole Customs Office.

SAGIR KILLING

Investigators try to find a phone caller

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Investigators are trying to trace a man who made a cell phone call to city Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal leader Sagir Ahmed two days before he was murdered and asked him to remain alert as there is a threat to his life.

A police official said they have already taken a call list and are checking it to ascertain the identity of the caller.

Meanwhile, police raided a house in Old Dhaka on Monday night to arrest Monir, younger brother of a ruling BNP lawmaker from the area, but the drive failed.

Monir might have led the gang that gunned down Sagir near his house on Friday, investigators suspect.

Police and local sources said there was a longstanding feud between Sagir and the lawmaker as the MP's men did not get position in the city (south) committee of Jubo Dal. The animosity took a serious turn when Sagir won a tender for construction work at Ahasan Manjil a few months ago. after.

In a bid to improve the strained relations between the two, Monir met Sagir on June 20 but the move turned futile.

Intelligence personnel meanwhile continued to quiz the parents of Nahid and Rony , two suspected killers of Sagir, to gather information about the two still at large.

"Once we could arrest even one of the two suspects, we will be able to ascertain the motive and trace the mastermind behind the murder," said the assistant commissioner of Detective Branch (DB) of Police, who is leading the probe team.

TANGRATILA BLOWOUT

Punishment of culprits demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations yesterday demanded punishment to those responsible for Tengratila gas blow-outs, and adequate compensation for the victims.

Tel-Gas Sampod O Bidyut-Bandar Rakkha Jatiya Committee (National committee to protect oil, gas, electricity and port) will hold a rally at Muktangan in the city at 4.00pm on July 1 demanding punitive measures against Niko and others who are responsible for the blowouts.

At a meeting in the city on June 26, the committee demanded cancellation of all unequal agreements to ensure proper use of national resources.

They said it is very mysterious that Energy and Mineral Resources Advisor Mahmudur Rahman blamed Bapex rather than Niko for the explosion.

They said mere resignation is not enough, former state minister for energy and mineral resources Mosharrar Hossain has to be brought to justice for his corruption.

The leaders wanted compensation from Niko for the affected people including rebuilding of damaged houses and roads.

Jana Uddyog and Green Force have also made similar demands including expulsion of Niko from Bangladesh.

The leaders of the two organisations made the demands at a rally at Shahbagh following demonstrations.

Sylhet Division Development Action Council demanded immediate halt of Niko's all activities and forma-

tion of a high powered body headed by a former chief justice to investigate the matter.

At a rally, they also decided to organise a long march towards Tengratila from Muktangan in the city at 10.00am on July 1.

Tk 387.53 crore CCC budget announced

UNB, Chittagong

Chittagong City Corporation Mayor announced a Tk 387.53,22,000 budget for 2005-2006 financial year with highest allocation to development.

Mohiuddin Chowdhury re-elected Mayor on May 9 announced the budget at the City Corporation office in presence of ward commissioners and elite of the city.

He also got adopted by the ward commissioners Tk 160,48,92,800 supplementary budget for 2004-05 fiscal.

Sector-wise major allocations for 2005-06 are development Tk 120.65 crore, education Tk 23.24 crore, city cleaning Tk 17.07 crore, health Tk 14.32 crore and revenue expenditure Tk 115 crore.

He estimated revenue income of Tk 177.48 crore, government grant Tk 200 crore and income from other sources Tk 9.50 crore.

He said Tk 150 crore has been sought from the government to meet the deficit.

WEATHER

T O D A Y

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over the country with moderately heavy falls at places till 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may fall slightly over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 34.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 24.2 degree Celsius at Sitakundu.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:50pm today and rises at 5:15am 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	27.5	25.2	95	89
Chittagong	29.2	24.8	90	89
Rajshahi	29.0	26.2	87	93
Khulna	29.7	26.0	97	83
Barisal	28.2	25.0	100	96
Sylhet	34.5	26.5	78	73
Cox's Bazar	--	25.0	92	--

AUG 21 ATTACK

Victims' families stage hunger strike for int'l investigation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family members of the victims of the August 21 grenade attack on an Awami League (AL) rally observed a token hunger strike yesterday demanding a transparent international investigation to find out the real culprits of the attack.

Expressing solidarity with the hunger strikers, AL top leaders said they along with the people must foil the government's present "conspiracy" to divert the August 21 incident to a different track in the name of investigation.

The family members of 13 victims killed in the grim incident and more than one hundred injured AL leaders and workers took part in the token hunger strike from 10:00am to 2:00pm organised by the Bangladesh Awami

Shechchhashebok League at the Bangabandhu Avenue in the city.

"It is not possible to bring the real culprits of the August 21 attack under trial unless the government is unseated," AL Acting President Zillur Rahman asserted while addressing the programme.

To carry out a deadly attack in broad daylight—as it happened on August 21—is not possible without the government's assistance, he observed, adding that its inaction about the investigation throughout the period of about a year since the incident demonstrates its involvement in the attack.

Terming the August 21 attack a clear attempt to exterminate the spirit of the Liberation War, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil condemned the government for "hatching conspiracy to save the real culprits of the grenade attack."

He also called upon the countrymen to be strongly united to bring reforms in the caretaker government system and the Election Commission for holding a free and fair election.

Shechchhashebok League President AFM Bahauddin Nasim announced that from now on it will observe a token hunger strike in the last week of each month demanding trial of the perpetrators of the August 21 grenade attack.

AL Presidium members Amir Hossain Amu, Motia Chowdhury and Abdur Razzaq, Bangladesh Jubo League Chairman Jahangir Kabir Nanok, General Secretary Mirza Azam, Barrister Amirul Islam, Shechchhashebok League General Secretary Pankaj Devnath and Chhatra League leader Liaqat Sikder also spoke at the programme.

Zillur Rahman broke the hunger strike by offering water to the strikers.

Expulsion of Niko demanded

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Jono Udyog and Green Force yesterday demanded the punishment to those responsible for Tengratila gas blowout, compensation for the blow-out and expulsion of Niko from Bangladesh.

The leaders of the two organisations made the demands at a rally at Shahbagh in the city.

Presided over by Sharifuzzaman Sharif, the rally was addressed by Abul Maksud, Ruhin Hossain Prince, Abu Naser Khan, engineer Golam Kibria and Tushar Rehman.

The speakers also demanded repealing of all unfair agreements.

212 girls' high schools receive Excellence Award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 212 female secondary schools across the country yesterday received the 'Excellence Award' for their outstanding performances in the Secondary School Certificate Examinations in last three years.

State Minister for Education ANM

Ehsanul Haque Milon gave the award at a function at the Biam auditorium in the city.

The 'Excellence Award' programme was organised under the Female Secondary School Assistance Project (FSSAP) of the Ministry of Education.

The ministry took the initiative last year to find out schools with good results and create a healthy competition among the schools.

Apart from the 'Excellence Award', 65 mid-level schools will be given Tk 1,00,000 each across the country under the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

The ministry has also taken another project titled 'Mobile Training Resource Team' (MTRT) where weak schools would be trained up.

Besides, ultra-poor schools girls would be identified in order to give them stipend on priority basis.

"This is a fruitful project and the focus is to maintain quality education and increase the number of female students in the schools," said the state minister.

He urged the school authorities to distribute the money properly.

Md Mahfuzul Haque, joint secretary of the ministry, said the project is a part of empowering the women across the country.

He called on the teachers to give their best as the whole nation depends on them.

FSSAP Project Director Md Gholam Rasul Miah and Deputy Director Md Sadequr Rahman also spoke on the occasion.

Jute, textile workers threaten hartal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Pat-Suta-Bastrakal Sramik Karmochari Sangram Parishad yesterday vowed to observe hartal on July 16, if their demands are not met by that time.

They said the parishad will organise a rally in the city on July 8, and countrywide demonstrations and distribution of leaflets and posters from July 9 to 13 to press home their demands.

Addressing a press conference in the city, the leaders urged the authorities concerned to buy jute from the farmers to continue the production in 22 state-owned jute mills, and pay Tk 500 crore as salary arrears and gas and electricity bills.

Shahidul Chowdhury alleged that a vested quarter in the government is trying to hand over all state-owned mills to private sector.

He said 55 state-owned jute mills out of 77 had already gone to the private sector, and the rest 22 are under threat due to lack of raw materials and proper management by the authorities concerned.

Shahidul said eight jute mills in Khulna zone and 15 in Sirajganj have already closed and the staffs are not getting their wages for the last eight months.

He said 55 public-owned jute industries are also under threat. Of them, only seven are on production, but they also face shortage of raw jute.

Lutfur Rahman said more than 50 lakh bales of raw jute is needed in peak season for smooth production in public and private mills. But due to authorities' insincerity, almost all quality jute is purchased by brokers within July.

"As a result, the growers do not get the real price of jute, and our mills also face severe shortage of raw materials," he said.

"At least seven lakh bales of raw jute is smuggled to India through brokers who buy most of the raw jute before July," Lutfur said, adding that "After July the government has to buy the low quality jute at high price."

Sardar Motahar Uddin said in the proposed budget, 35 percent allocation has been made for agro-based industries which do not include jute industry.

The parishad leaders also demanded stern action against the owners of the collapsed Spectrum Sweater Factory at Savar, and payment of compensation to the victims' families immediately.

Unite to resist fanatics to establish peace

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday called on the people to unite to revive the spirit of liberation war and resist the fanatics and imperialists in order to establish peace and solidarity among people.

They blamed the Western imperialists for inciting the fanatics to attack the minorities, carry out bomb attacks on rallies and create anarchy through extremist activities.

Criticising the government for assisting the imperialists, they said it has closed down many local industries, including Adjamjee Jute Mills, as per the prescription of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), rendering thousands of workers jobless.

The National Preparatory

Committee of Bangladesh for the 16th World Festival of Youth and Students organised the seminar 'For peace and Solidarity, We Struggle Against Imperialism, Religious Fundamentalism and War, at the National Press Club.

The World Festival will be held at Caracas in Venezuela from August 7 to 15.

"The freedom fighters sacrificed their lives for political and economic freedom, social justice, rule of law and democracy, but none of these exist in the country," said Advocate Mahabubey Alam, president of the Supreme Court Bar Association.

The fanatics backed by the imperialists have brought the governmental and non-governmental sectors under their control, he added.

"The rich have become richer and

the poor poorer. Politics has turned into a game of money and muscle power for the imperialists," said women's rights activist Sultana Kamal.

Golam Kuddus, general secretary of Sammilita Sangskritik Jote, called on all to wage a tougher movement to revive the spirit of the liberation war.

Artists Mamun-ur Rashid, Fakir Alamgir and Ataur Rahman, Mahmud Selim of Udichi Shilpi Gosthi, Shahidul Huq of Bangladesh Jubo Union, Advocate Sagir Anwar of Jubo Gono Forum, Aminur Rahman of Bangladesh Jubo Samity, Anisur Rahman of Jatiya Jubo Oikya, Dr Lelin Chowdhury of Khelaghar Asar and Baki Billah of Chhatra Union also spoke.

Nasir Uddin Yusuf Bachchu presided over the seminar.

Port accident once again exposes risks to naval base

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The country's main naval base BNS Isha Khan on Karnaphuli river channel is once again exposed to major risk after a container-loaded foreign commercial vessel on Monday evening hit its flotilla jetty damaging three frigates and a few pontoons while arriving at the Chittagong Port jetty from outer anchorage.

Although three separate committees of the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA), Bangladesh Navy, and Mercantile Marine Department (MMD) have already started investigation into the accident, people related with shipping are worried by repeated accidents at this key point installation.

The government has not yet felt the gravity of the recommendation of the parliamentary standing committee on shipping ministry to shift the naval base from the port channel, where hundreds of different types of vessels and containers ply to and from port jetties each day, they said yesterday.

Sources said the standing committee will hold another meeting on July 6 in Dhaka and discuss the matter to follow up their previous suggestions. The committee is likely to summon the Naval Chief Rear Admiral Hasan Ali Khan to the meeting.

On Monday evening, Bahamas flag carrier MV CEC Copenhagen, carrying 585 containers to the Chittagong Port from the Tanjung Palapas port of Malaysia, lost control

of its steering and hit the flotilla jetty.

Four major accidents, including the Monday's one, have taken place at the flotilla jetty in last 16 years, damaging properties worth hundreds of crores taka. The compensations, however, have always been meagre compared to the damage.

There are fears that another compensation claim might be placed and the matter will be finished there without going for any permanent solution to the recurring problem.

Two more committees

The Bangladesh Navy formed a nine-member probe committee headed by Captain Toufiquezzaman and asked it to submit its report by July 1, while the three-member committee of the MMD with Ship Surveyor engineer

AF Sirajul Islam as the head was asked to submit its report within seven days, sources said.

Earlier on Monday night, the CPA had formed a three-member committee headed by Captain Nazmul Alam, harbour master.

Naval chief returned

Meanwhile, Chief of Naval Staff Hasan Ali Khan, who was supposed to visit the frigates and pontoons and discuss the matter with the navy officials here, could not land yesterday morning at the Chittagong Shah Amanat International Airport due to inclement weather in the port city.

MUGGING CASE

3 Dhaka College JCD leaders chargesheeted

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Motijheel police yesterday pressed charges against three pro-BNP Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leaders of Dhaka College unit in connection with mugging Tk 12 lakh on June 19.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Mohammad Akhteruzzaman, who is also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka.

The accused are Golam Ohab Liton, 24, science and technology affairs secretary of JCD Dhaka College unit, Azizul Haq, 23, a member and Mohammad Ruhul Amin, assistant general secretary of the college unit JCD.

Motijheel police arrested Liton and Azizul Haq, who were caught red-handed after mugging the sum from a jewellery shop employee in Motijheel area.

Their companion Ruhul Amin is still at large.

The IO prayed for warrant of arrest against him and attachment of his movable properties.

Twenty-five people were shown prosecution witnesses in the charge sheet.

"The accused were brought under trial as the charges brought against them were primarily proved, the IO said in the charge sheet.

Dhanmondi police on June 19 seized about Tk 10 lakh from a room at the International Hotel of Dhaka College following the arrestee's statements.

Mohammad Abul Kashem, manager of Uma Jewellers filed a case against three JCD leaders with Motijheel Police Station under the Speedy Trial (Law and Disruption) Act.

Police filed another case under the Arms Act against Liton and Azizul Haq.

SDC seminar

Swiss agency for Development and Cooperation, in collaboration with Intercooperation, organises a dissemination seminar titled 'How to address poverty: the lessons learnt from SDC's Sustainable Land Use Programme'. Venue: Brac Centre Inn, Mohakhali. Time: 9.00am.

Musical evening

Bishwa Kabitakantha Parishad organises an evening of patriotic songs to be rendered by poet Jahangir Alam. Venue: National Museum, Shahbagh. Time: 4.00pm.

Film show

Academy Film Society will screen an American film titled 'Training Day'. Venue: Academy Auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

Poetry evening

Muldhara, a forum of writers, journalists and artists, organises an evening of poetry. Venue: Zakia Alam Auditorium, House-15, Road-96, Dhanmondi. Time: 6.30pm.

Film show

To celebrate the 150th anniversary of Santa rebellion against the British rule, the High Commission of India will screen a film titled 'Mrigayaa' starring Mithun Chakraborty and Mamata Shankar. Venue: Indian Cultural Centre, House-25, Road-96, Gulshan-2. Time: 6.30pm.

Academy film show

Academy Film Society will screen two films titled 'Dil Chata Hai' and 'Guntanamera'. Venue: Academy Auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 3.30pm and 6.30pm.