

Govt using militants to manipulate election

11-party leaders tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Left-leaning 11-party leaders yesterday said they have united under the umbrella of 14-party opposition alliance to establish secularism and implement 23-point national minimum programme to ensure people's rights.

Speaking at a discussion in the city, they said the country has got political independence, but economic independence is yet to be achieved.

The discussion titled 'Independence of Bangladesh: Rise of militancy, communalism and fundamentalism' was organised at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium marking the Independence Day today.

The 11-party leaders accused

the ruling BNP of giving shelter to anti-liberation war criminals and fundamentalist forces in the country.

The government has long been patronising the militants to manipulate the upcoming general election, they added.

Describing militancy as a threat to country's independence and sovereignty, the speakers vowed to eliminate it from the society.

Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon said militancy has been created due to extreme differences between the rich and the poor and the life style between urban and rural people.

As the government is sponsoring militancy, there is no way to get rid of it except a unity on the basis of the spirit of the liberation war, he

added.

Gono Form General Secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manir said the failure of democratic forces has given rise to militancy in the country.

Gonotanti Party President Nurul Islam said only the successful implementation of 14-party's reform proposals can foil all conspiracies of the alliance government.

Samyabadi Dal General Secretary Dilip Barua, who presided over the discussion, said the militant forces have been posted in all government sectors to turn this country into a new Pakistan.

11-party leaders Pankaj Bhattacharya, Azizul Islam Khan, Abdus Samad, Zakir Hossain and Lutfor Rahman also spoke.

Dawn-to-dusk hartal in Khulna April 5

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Greater Khulna Development Action Coordination Committee has called a dawn-to-dusk hartal in city on April 5 to press home its nine-point demand.

These include construction of Padma bridge at Mawa, a deep-sea port at Akram point and an airport at Khanjhan Ali, installation of 210 megawatt power plant, a full-fledged TV centre, expansion of district stadium and installation of floodlight in divisional stadium, reopening of Daulatpur Jute Mill and supply of gas through pipeline.

The decision to call a daylong hartal was taken at a rally held at Khalishpur smamik maidan on Friday.

Convenor of Khulna-Jessore regional committee of 'Patkai Sangram Parishad' Sardar Motaharuddin pres-

Rita, Mita return to normal life, want to set up clinic for the poor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rita and Mita, the two sisters who hit the headlines in July last year for their strange lifestyle, returned to their home at Mirpur in the city yesterday after undergoing treatment for about eight months at a clinic.

On their return home, the two sisters, who had been suffering from serious mental and behavioural disorders, thanked all who helped them return to normal life.

"We will now set up a charitable clinic in our house to provide treatment for deprived people," said Rita, who is a doctor.

The two, Engineer Nurunnahar Mita and Dr Ainun Nahar Rita, being engrossed in religious practices and supernatural beliefs, had been leading an extremely confined and secluded life at their paternal house at Block-9, Section-6, Mirpur since 1996.

In July last year, a team of the Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR) managed to convince the sisters and enter the house with the cooperation of Pallabi police and took them to a clinic for immediate treatment.

Since then, they had been under the treatment of psychiatrist Dr Mohit Kamal at Prottoy Medical Clinic at Banani.

The two sisters yesterday arranged a programme at their newly renovated house on the occasion of their return home.

Speaking as the chief guest, Dr Kamal Uddin Siddique, principal secretary to the prime minister, said Rita and Mita are very brilliant students and they will live a normal life again.

He also said that he would help them get jobs in their respective fields as per the direction of the prime minister.

Rita obtained her MBBS degree from Salimullah Medical College in 1988 and joined the government service in 1991 but resigned in



PHOTO: STAR
Dr Kamal Uddin Siddique, principal secretary to the prime minister, and his wife present bouquets to engineer Nurunnahar Mita and Dr Ainun Nahar Rita at a programme at their home in the city yesterday.

caused by a multi-factorial situation.

One isolates oneself from the society and social life the way the two sisters have done only when one is schizophrenic, he added.

He also said mental breakdown, suspicion, sense of insecurity and various social pressures might have caused their serious mental disorder.

Citing a WHO survey, Dr Mohit said that one percent of the population in Bangladesh suffer from serious mental diseases while 10 percent suffer from minor mental disorders.

Dr MA Hadi, president of

Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), said the case of the two sisters has sent a message to the mental patients that such diseases are curable.

Dr Firoz Mahmud Iqbal, assignment officer to the PM's Office, Advocate Elina Khan, executive director of BSEHR, AZM Zahid Hossain, secretary general of BMA, Nazmul Haque, managing director of Prottoy Medical Clinic, and Kamrun Nahar Hena, elder sister of Rita and Mita, also spoke.



PHOTO: STAR
BDB Organising Secretary Mahi B Chowdhury MP speaks at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

6 engineers assaulted by Jubo Dal men in Feni

UNB, Feni

Jubo Dal activists allegedly assaulted six engineers of LGRD at Parshuram yesterday as they gave an order to stop road repair work for its poor quality.

Abu Bakar Siddique, one of the victims, said four or five activists led by Shamsul Haq Shahid assaulted them when they were returning after inspecting the repair work of Jhankunda road athon.

During the inspection, the engineers gave an order to stop the work for its extremely poor quality.

They came from Dhaka to inspect the work following complaints of poor work, said Siddique.

The Tk 8 lakh contract for the road repair work was awarded to M/S Abu Kalam Bhuiyan. But Shamsul Haq Shahid, joint general secretary of Phulgazi upazila Jubo Dal, grabbed the work from the construction firm.

JCD men beat DU student, 2 cafeteria staff

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Activists of Jatiyatabdil Chhatra Dal (JCD), student wing of the ruling BNP, beat a resident student of Dhaka University (DU) on Friday night leaving him seriously injured as he joins the procession of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) occasionally.

He was identified as Humayun Kabir, a resident student of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall.

Kabir, also a fourth year student of Law, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital with severe injuries in his body.

Later he was shifted to DU Medical Centre and was undergoing treatment there as of filing this report.

Sources said a group of 15 to 20 JCD men under the leadership of Rupun, Kalam and Kashem attacked Kabir at about 11:30pm. They also threw out Kabir's bed and valuables from his room no 505.

Meanwhile, a group of JCD men at Kabi Jasimuddin Hall ransacked the cafeteria of Suryasen Hall and beat its manager and one staff yesterday.

Witnesses said the expelled JCD activists including Delwar Hossain, Bashir Siddique and Zafor Ahmed ransacked the cafeteria in the morning when its manager told them to wait for a while for their breakfast.

The hall authorities are reportedly taking a move to file a criminal case in this regard.

Several BNP MPs to join BDB ahead of polls: Mahi

BDB to produce video documentary on govt's corruption

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mahi B Chowdhury, organising secretary of Bipalika Dhara Bangladesh (BDB), yesterday said a number of BNP lawmakers will join BDB ahead of the next general election.

"When I resigned from BNP, several BNP MPs also wanted to resign with me, but they refrained from doing so after receiving threats of repression from the government," Mahi, also a lawmaker from Munshiganj-1 constituency, said at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city.

He said the BDB will produce a video documentary on BNP-Jamaat alliance government's corruption in different sectors ahead of the election.

It will also publish a white paper on the 'plundering of Tk 20,000 crore by the government', he added.

Mahi alleged that his constituency is being deprived of develop-

ment because he is an opposition lawmaker.

The district administration has cancelled an allocation of Tk 56 lakh for development work in his constituency for 2005-2006 fiscal year at the instruction of the government, he said.

The government has also cancelled Tk 15 crore projects for his constituency, he added.

"Protesting the government's discriminatory attitude, we build a two-kilometre road in my constituency with voluntary participation of several thousand people in the construction work," he said.

Mahi also said that there is no possibility of BDB forming an alliance with the 14-party opposition combine for the general election.

BDB Joint General Secretary Firoz M Hasan and Convener of Jubo Dhara ATM Kamal were present at the press conference.

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