

Khaleda resorts to falsehood: Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Describing the BNP-Jamaat government as "enemy of the people", Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the anti-liberation forces have already destroyed the country's image abroad and Khaleda's "falsehood" in her Time Magazine interview has proved it again that this regime wants to make Bangladesh a fanatic state.

"What a big liar the Prime Minister is! On what basis the PM says that she came to know about militancy in Bangladesh after Aug 17, 2005 when her government itself banned several Islamic outfits in February of the same year? Who were behind the grenade attacks on Aug 21, 2004 in which dozens of AL leaders and activists were killed? Were the attackers directed by the government?" Hasina raised the questions at a discussion on the premises of Bangabandhu Bhaban marking the World Health Day.

She said the real culprits behind the Aug 21 grenade attack could not be brought to book due to government's reluctance to fully investigate the savage attack.

"Khaleda's falsehood to an international magazine proves that she wants to hide the real history of the rise of militancy in Bangladesh. Police have arrested Bangla Bhai and Shaikh Abdur Rahman. But it seems that the government is indifferent to unmask 2000 members of JMB's suicide squad. Where have the brutal killers gone?" Hasina questioned.

She alleged that when the country's pro-liberation forces were trying to protect democracy and sovereignty of the country by proposing reforms in the caretaker government system and the Election Commission, the government was trying to sidetrack the people's demand.

"The government is conspiring to cheat the people. When the BNP secretary general invites us to hold dialogue on reform proposals, Khaleda says there is no need to reform the caretaker government system and the Election Commission," she said.

Hasina accused the Prime Minister, her family members, government ministers, MPs and their relatives of plundering public money and ruining the economy

and all service sectors including health.

"People are deprived of minimum services. They don't have food and power. Farmers don't have fertiliser and diesel. But some people who have the blessings of the government are fattening their bank balances," she said.

The opposition leader said the country is now passing through such a bad time that police and ruling party cadres are killing innocent people just for demanding uninterrupted supply of electricity.

"In Kansat, police and government cadres have killed 14 people on two occasions as they have been on an agitation to realise their rights as the citizens of a sovereign country," she said.

Hasina urged people to raise their voices against all kinds of repression and put an end to present anti-people rule.

Chaired by Abdul Mannan MP, the discussion was attended by AL acting general secretary Obaidul Kader, presidium member Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Dr Mustafa Jalal Mohiuddin and Dr Abul Barakat.

52 students win language competition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The final round of the second nationwide Bangla Language Competition titled 'Bhasha Protijog' ended in the city with a vow to promote the mother language.

The speaker said one cannot be a true patriot without loving one's own language.

They called on the students to foster love and affection for the language.

HSBC Bank and the Prothom Alo, a leading Bangla daily, jointly organised the competition at the Residential Model School and College (RMSC) in the city.

About 400 students, who earlier competed at district levels, were qualified for the final competition. They sat for Multiple Choice Questions test on Bangla grammar and language. Among them, 52 students in four categories won prizes in the final round.

Md Nuruzzaman of Rangpur Government School secured first position at higher secondary level while Iftekhar Alam Khan of Mymensingh Zila School stood first at the secondary school level. Sheikh Rahat Rahman of Rangpur Zila School grabbed the top position at the lower secondary and Rafin Rahman Turja of Government Laboratory School came first at primary school level.

Eminent writer Prof Muhammad Zafar Iqbal and writer Bashir Al Hald distributed prizes among the winners.

Addressing the students, Prof Iqbal said you people are lucky, as you got a chance to learn your language at this tender age, which is very important and difficult at the same time.

Earlier, Prof Nurunnahar Begum, principal of the RMSC, along with Prof Anisuzzaman of Dhaka University, inaugurated the function by hoisting the national flag.

Prof Zaman said you need to love your mother tongue first if you want to be a good human being.

Anisul Haque, assistant editor of the Prothom Alo, and Arun Basu conducted the programme.

Bishwajit Ghosh, professor of Dhaka University, Dr Vishotdev Chowdhury, Sazzad Sharif, assistant editor of the Prothom Alo, Mostafizur Rahman and Mamun Mahmud Shah of HSBC Bank, and ABM Jalaluddin, vice principal of the RMSC also spoke.

The Close-up stars Abid, Mahadi and Rumi performed on the occasion.

Obituary

UNB, Dhaka

Abul Hashem Master, former general secretary of Purbadhala Upazila Awami League, passed away due to a cardiac arrest yesterday at the age of 58.

He left behind his wife, three daughters, one son and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina expressed profound shock at the death of Abul Hashem Master.

Nasima Alam

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Nasima Alam, mother of Sabiha Alam, a sub-editor of BDNEWS, passed away due to lung cancer yesterday at the age of 53.

She is survived by her husband, two sons and a daughter. She was buried at Mirpur Graveyard.

Death anniversary



Today is the eighth death anniversary of Dr Benazir Durdana Khan, an associate professor of English department of Dhaka University, says a press release.

Dr Benazir, wife of Md Zakaria Khan, editor of the Banglabazar, was also a director of the newspaper. She died of cancer in 1998.

Doa and milad mahfil will be held at her residence at Gulshan after Maghrib prayers today.

DHAKA

TODAY

Roundtable on election

Society for Peace and Progress organises a roundtable discussion on 'Election 2007: Crisis and Potentials'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

Roundtable on food security

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) organises a roundtable discussion on 'Food Security in Bangladesh: Legal Obligation'. Venue: Cirdap. Time: 10:00am.

Rotary Dhaka Central

The regular meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 1:30pm.

WEATHER

TODAY

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Jessore, Kushtia, Noakhali and Comilla in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said in a forecast.

It said that day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 36.6 degree Celsius was recorded at Jessore and lowest of 19.0 degrees at Sayedpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:17pm today and rises at 5:43am tomorrow.

The 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	33.1	22.0	53	60
Chittagong	32.5	25.0	78	71
Rajshahi	35.2	22.6	68	75
Khulna	35.0	25.0	77	58
Barisal	34.0	24.4	86	72
Sylhet	30.8	20.6	74	68
Cox's Bazar	33.1	24.9	66	71

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain speaks at a seminar organised by Journalists' Forum Against Repression at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

Experts for use of granule urea to boost crop production

BSS, Dhaka

Agriculture experts underscored the need for ensuring large-scale use of GUTI Urea (granule urea) instead of the generally available urea fertilisers in their farmlands to raise crop production in the country.

They said in the face of increased prices of common urea fertilisers, the framers can easily go for massive use of granule urea as it is environment-friendly and also boosts crop production.

They made the observations while addressing a press conference on "Urea deep placement (UDP) as an option to save urea and increased yields" on Thursday in the city.

International Fertiliser Development Corporation (IFDC), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and Bangladesh Fertiliser Association (BFA) jointly organised the press conference.

They said the farmers scatter generally available urea fertilisers over the crop lands, making them

more susceptible of being washed away by waters and mixing its nitrogen gas into air bringing havoc to environment.

On the other hand, they said the GUTI urea invented by the Bangladeshi scientists and used in the croplands through deep plugging of the soil, ensures full benefit in terms of increased crop production and protection of environment from any sort of degradation.

The reason is, they further said GUTI urea does not wash away by the water currents or its gas cannot mix into the air.

While referring to the country's annual requirement, Vice Chairman of BFA Kamrul Ashraf said Bangladesh needs 28,000 lakh tonnes of fertilisers a year but this amount can be reduced to half by ensuring use of GUTI fertilisers." This will also help save huge foreign currency, he added.

Agriculture specialist M Mofidul Islam said if GUTI urea is used, crops and its hay can consume 42 percent and 23 percent ingredients respectively of the total elements resulting in high yielding of crops

and reducing uses of common fertiliser.

"While the consumption capacity of crops and its hay of the ingredients of the regular fertiliser at 23 percent and nine percent respectively indicates the wastage of fertilisers and production of less crops," he observed.

The specialist said a total of 10 lakh farmers have been using GUTI urea on 2.50 lakh hectares of land across the country. Besides, he said, the technology has been transferred to Vietnam and Cambodia.

Mofidul Islam also highlighted other potentials of use of GUTI urea including employment generation, full use of its ingredients by crops, hay and soil; saving of foreign currency and higher yields.

Chairman of Bangladesh Fertiliser Association Kafil Uddin Ahmed, IFDC Agronomist Craig A Meisner, Resident Representative of IFDC for Asia Division Walter T Bowen and Agriculturist Dr Shaheedul Haque also spoke on the occasion.

AL leader stabbed to death in Kishoreganj

UNB, Kishoreganj

A local Awami League leader was stabbed to death by a gang of assailants at Sadullar Char on Kishoreganj-Mymensingh road yesterday.

The dead was identified as Shahidullah Khan, 36, information and research secretary of Sadar Upazila Awami League.

Police and local people said the assailants led by three brothers -- Jewel, Rubel and Koyel -- stabbed Shahidullah indiscriminately at about 12:30pm, leaving him dead on the spot.

The police sent the body to Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy. Five people were arrested in this connection.

The police suspect that previous enmity led to the killing of the AL leader.

Communist Party of Bangladesh stages a demonstration at Muktangan in the city yesterday protesting killing of demonstrators who were demanding smooth power supply at Kansat in Chapainawabganj.

Over 100 criminal gangs active in city

UNB, Dhaka

Over a hundred gangs are now active committing all sorts of criminal acts in different parts of the capital, zoning their areas of operation, said reliable sources in the law-enforcing agencies.

Those groups, through negotiations, have allocated the areas among themselves and are committing various crimes such as murder, extortion, drug peddling, robbery, mugging, kidnapping, burglary, forgery, pickpocketing, carlifting, and rape, they said.

There are allegations that local godfathers run drug trade in the city with the support of some "unscrupulous members in the law-enforcing agencies, political persons and even also with the support of a few ward commissioners", said the sources on the basis of intelligence work.

The operatives in the criminal gangland choose some convenient places and propitious time to conduct their swoops. Some of the places are identified as Banga Bhaban Park Road, Taxi Stand opposite to Sergeant Ahad Police Box, Joy Kali Mondir Road, Crossing between Joykali Mondir

Road and Kaptan Bazar Road, Baldha Garden, Wari Community Centre area, Nandalal Lane, Bahadur Shah Park area, Dholaiakhal-Narinda Crossing, Alobazar Primary School area and Lion Cinema Hall areas.

They choose a particular time between 5:00am and 9:00am and 5:00pm and 11:00pm for the crime. Pedestrians and people travelling by rickshaws or motor vehicles frequently fall victim of muggers.

According to the sources, the muggers prefer such time as traders use these points to move between their business establishments and other points such as banks and government offices. And, maybe, the law-enforcing agencies do not keep close watch on those points in these periods of time.

On the other hand, each of the criminal groups comprising 20 to 60 members has one godfather--sometimes more than one--who are said to have close liaison with different political parties.

Some of these rackets have sub-groups known as killer group comprising 5 to 10 members, who conduct killing mission under the direction of the respective godfa-

ther.

"Young boys aged 15 to 25 are usually the members of the killing squad. Sometimes, they act as hired goons to carry out the killing missions," a competent source said.

Godfathers themselves take part only in the big killing missions. Killer groups charge Tk 15,000 to Tk 50,000 for a common murder and Tk 100,000 to Tk 5 lakh for disposing of a rich and influential one.

The sources said that only big crimes are recorded with concerned police stations. For example, maximum numbers of robbery cases are recorded as burglary or theft instead of robbery since robbery is a serious type of crime compared to others.

On April 4, a gang of robbers numbering seven to eight stormed into the house of Sohrab Ali in Block-Dha of Mirpur section-12 under Pallabi police station at about 8:15pm.

The gangsters, five of them masked, looted cash and valuables and decamped without any intervention. Pallabi police registered it as robbery showing the number of felons 3 to 4.

Ahl-e-Sunnat Wal Jamaat (Bangladesh) takes out a colourful procession from Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in the city yesterday to mark Eid-e-Miladunnabi, the birthday of Prophet Muhammad (SM).

SCBA office-bearers pay homage to Bangabandhu

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The newly elected office-bearers of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) led by its President Barrister Amir-Ul Islam and Secretary Advocate AM Amiuddin yesterday visited Tungipara in Gopalganj to pay homage to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

They placed wreaths at the mazar of Bangabandhu and offered fateha for the salvation of the departed soul.

Vice-chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council and former SCBA president Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud, former SCBA president Advocate Abdul Baset Majumder, senior lawyers Advocate Khandaker Mahbub Hossain and former High Court judge Advocate AFM Mesbauddin accompanied them.

Earlier in the morning, the SCBA leaders placed wreaths at the graves of the family members of Bangabandhu and four national leaders at Banani graveyard in the capital.

SCBA Vice-president Abdul Mannan Khan told the news agency that all the 14 office-bearers of the SCBA visited Tungipara while leaders and members of Gopalganj district Bar Association joined the SCBA leaders during their programme.

SECOND DAY OF STRIKE Hundreds more Nepali protesters detained

AFP, Kathmandu

Hundreds more protesters were arrested yesterday in Nepal on the second day of a general strike amid violent demonstrations demanding King Gyanendra restore democracy.

"Some 200 protesters from the Nepali Congress Party and more than 150 from the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) have been arrested and 12 injured during protests," said Nepali Congress Party secretary Shovakar Parajuli.

He vowed the protests, which have seen several hundred people arrested over the past two days, would go on.

At Tribhuvan University on the outskirts of Kathmandu, around 300 students engaged in running battles with riot police during the afternoon.

The students hurled stones and chanted slogans against Gyanendra. Police responded by firing dozens of tear-gas canisters and baton-charging the protesters.

Police arrest numbers were lower than those given by the Nepali Congress activist.

"Only about 100 people have

been detained from various protests, but the numbers could rise as the protest is still going on," said a police officer on condition of anonymity.

"Around a dozen vehicles including two police vans were vandalised and about 12 policemen have been injured in clashes with protesters," the police officer said.

The streets of the capital were deserted again Friday apart from the heavy security presence and sporadic protests usually by small numbers of people.

Defying a ban on public meetings, opposition parties have called a four-day general strike against the royal power grab and have paralysed the Himalayan kingdom.

The king's government has locked up dozens of political leaders and arrested hundreds of people this week for breaking the ban.

"This is the final push of the movement. The days of the king are numbered," said Sovu Sapkota, an activist with the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) as she prepared to take part in a protest in the capital.

Jalil admitted to Mount Elizabeth Hospital

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil MP was admitted to Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore, said a press release.

He was flown to Singapore on Thursday midnight.

Earlier, Jalil was admitted to LabAid Cardiac Hospital in the city on Wednesday evening with complaint of chest pain.

According to LabAid doctors, he has been suffering from respiratory problems and other physical complications.

'Women worst victims of water, power, gas crises'

Bangladesh Nari Mukti Sangsad formed a human chain in the city yesterday protesting price hike of essentials and scarcity of water, gas and electricity, says a press release.

The leaders urged people to launch a tougher movement against the frequent price hike of essentials by a vested quarter of BNP-Jamaat led government.

Speaking as chief guest, Comrade Bimol Bishwas said, 'A section of people in the government is amassing wealth while the poor are getting poorer.'

Convener of the organisation Hajera Sultana pointed out that women are the worst victims of price hike and scarcity of utility services, as they have to do household chores.

Mostafa Alamgir Ratan of Jubo Maitri, Rafikul Islam Sujon of Chhatra Maitri and other leaders of the organisation also spoke on the occasion.

DULAL MURDER CASE

Charge sheet submitted, 4 main accused dropped

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkhira

A charge sheet was submitted before a magistrate's court at Sathkhira yesterday framing charges against six accused in the murder case of Dulal, a VDP member of Tala upazila.

Sub-Inspector Raja Ali of Tala Police Station, who is the investigation officer (IO), submitted the charge sheet dropping the four main accused Shahadat Fakir, Gaffar Moral, Idris Ali and Sohrab Hossain.

The victim was abducted from his home at Sremantakati village and killed by a group of miscreants on March 5 in 2005.

Aruna Rani Sarkar, victim's wife, filed a case with Tala Police Station accusing 10 people including Shahadat Fakir, Gaffar Moral, Idris Ali, Sohrab Hossain and others.

Police arrested Shahadat and Sohrab on the same night.

But the IO has submitted the charge sheet dropping the four main accused, said Aruna while talking to this correspondent.

"I submitted a written allegation to Sathkhira Police Super (SP) Abdur Rahim seeking his intervention as the IO was pressing me to exclude the four accused from the charge sheet," she said.

The SP ordered the officer-in-charge (OC) of Tala Police Station to submit charge sheet against all the FIR-named accused, but his order was ignored by the IO, she claimed.

When contacted, Goldar Ashraf Haque, a witness in the case, said the IO has named one Amina Khatun of village Sremantakati as witness who died seven months back.

Kalma High School centenary celebrations Apr 27

UNB, Dhaka

A preparatory meeting for the centenary celebration of Kalma High School in Munshiganj was held in the city on Thursday, with State Minister for Health Mizanur Rahman Sinha in the chair.

The celebrations will be held on April 27 and 28.

The meeting discussed preparatory measures for the celebration, mobilisation of funds and publication of a souvenir. The registration fee for the ceremony has been fixed at Tk 400.

Former students of the school have been requested to contact convener of the centenary celebration committee Brig. Gen. (retd.) Moniruzzaman Khan at 0173019365.

Faizul Islam Bhuiyan, Shamsuddin Ahmed, Brig. Gen. (retd.) Moniruzzaman Khan and Ahsan Habib Khan Kohinor attended the meeting.