

N'GANJ DOUBLE MURDER

Six pirates to die

BDNEWS, N'ganj

A court in Narayanganj yesterday sentenced six pirates to death in robbery with murder case and seven-year rigorous imprisonment (RI) to another with a fine of Tk1 lakh.

District and Sessions Judge Abul Mansur gave the verdict in a jam-packed courtroom.

The convicts with death are Ayub Hossain Babul, Shamsul Islam Shamsu, Ripon, Shafiqul Islam, Soheli, and Shafiqul Bashar. The convict who received seven-year RI is Haji Mohsin.

The court acquitted Abdul Matin as the complainant brought against him was not proved.

According to the prosecution, a gang of pirates led by Ayub Hossain Babul robbed a sand-laden ship named *Sufia-2* and threw its steering man Hossain Sheikh and another crew into the river tying their hands and legs at the Dapa Balughat.

After two days of the incident, their bodies were recovered from the river Buriganga. Police arrested Ripon, Soheli and several others in this connection.

Give befitting reply to anti-country campaign

PM urges expatriates

UNB, Abu Dhabi

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday urged the expatriate Bangladeshis to project the real picture of the country by giving befitting reply to anti-Bangladesh activities and false campaigns.

"We've received recognition as a liberal state for our unflinching commitment to democracy and democratic tolerance. But an interested quarter is engaged in a false and evil campaign at home and abroad to push Bangladesh and Bangladeshis into difficulty," she said.

Khaleda, now in United Arab Emirates (UAE) on a two-day state visit, said her government has arrested those who were engaged in terrorism in the name of Islam and they are being tried in accordance with the laws of the land.

She said Bangladesh is working unitedly with Muslim Ummah and all

countries in the East and the West in fighting the global war against terrorism.

"Bangladesh earned international praise for institutionalising our democracy, efforts for socio-economic development, our firm position against terrorism and our active role in maintaining regional peace and stability," she said.

Describing expatriate Bangladeshis as the country's "good-will ambassadors", Khaleda said, "the prestige of the country depends on your activities abroad."

She said expatriate Bangladeshis are not only contributing to improve the condition of their families but also the socio-economic development of the country.

Khaleda said the government, when it assumed power this time, inherited a near-destroyed economy with almost an empty national exchequer and lowest-ever foreign

exchange reserve.

She added that foreign direct investment (FDI) also registered a record growth to 2.5 billion US dollar during the present government, which is three times more than the previous five years.

She said that companies from different countries including UAE, Egypt, India, Singapore, UK and USA have come up with investment proposals worth Tk 33,000 crore while approval or negotiation on investment proposals worth Tk 70,000 crore remained in the pipeline.

She said a foreign company alone came up with a proposal to invest Tk 21,000 crore. "Such huge investment proposals were made never before," said the Prime Minister, adding that local investment proposals of Tk 62,000 crore in 9,000 projects were registered during the period.



PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia talks with UAE President Shaikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan during a meeting at Al Batin Palace in Abu Dhabi yesterday.

Govt pushes country to the brink of ruin

14-party leaders tell rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Awami League-led 14-party opposition combine yesterday said the four-party alliance government has pushed the country to the brink of ruin through widespread corruption, politicisation, religious militancy and terrorism during its four and a half years' rule.

Addressing a public meeting in the city they demanded resignation of the government as it has failed to fulfil people's demand in every sector.

The meeting was organised jointly by Tejaon and Ramna thana units of Awami League (AL) at Karwan Bazaar.

Reiterating their stance on the reforms of the Election Commission (EC) and caretaker government system, the 14-party leaders said they would not allow any election in the country unless the reforms are brought.

They also demanded cancellation of the new voter list, removal of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and protesting price hike of essentials.

Speaking at the meeting as chief guest AL presidium member Tofail Ahmed said the nation is now in a deep crisis as the government has failed to keep the prices of essentials under control, ensure security of people and curb corruption in all sectors.

Citing examples of development made during AL government in various sectors, he said leaders of BNP-Jamaat-led government have only build up their own fortunes by plundering public money.

Tofail said the CEC has no right to stay in his chair anymore as the Supreme Court in its verdict declared the new voter list fake.

He said street agitation would continue in order to ensure a free and fair election to establish people's rights.

Another AL presidium member Motia Chowdhury said the transfer of state minister for power is not enough, the prime minister should also resign as she is the chief of the power ministry.

She said whenever the BNP government comes to power, it only increases the people's sufferings by hiking the prices of essentials.

AL city unit General Secretary Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya said there is no alternative to reforms of the caretaker government system and the Election Commission for holding a free and fair election.

"Today is a day of happiness as the hopes and aspirations of the whole nation have been fulfilled after the Supreme Court had declared the voter list fake," he said.

He urged party leaders and activists to join the protest rally to be held at Muktangan tomorrow to get rid of the misrule of the government.

Presided over by AL Tejaon thana unit President Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, the meeting was also addressed by 14-party leaders including AL Joint General Secretary Obaidul Quader and former lawmakers Dr HBM Iqbal and Haji Selim.

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PHOTO: STAR

A roundtable discussion on 'Bangladesh in Next Five Years: Economic Growth and Employment' organised by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) was held in the city yesterday. Sitting from left are Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud, Dr Quazi Shahabuddin, Dr Rushidan Islam Rahman, Rokia A Rahman and Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed.

Exhibition of bronze and brass statues begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Aten-day exhibition of statues made of bronze and brass begins at the Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts in the city today, aiming to promote the glorious heritage of the country.

Organised by the Bengal Gallery in cooperation with the American Centre, the exhibition titled 'Oitihya Aparup' (splendid tradition) will take you back to the Pal period from 8th to 11th century through showcasing statues of Shiva, Krishna, Bishnu, Parvati, Ganesh, Gurur and other Puranic characters.

Craftsmen of Dhamrai Metal Craft have made these statues.

"The artistic motif of the joint statues of Shiva Parvati, Uma Maheshwra and Urdha Natraj will surely win the hearts of the people," said Mahub Alam Pallab, assistant director of Bengal Foundation, at a press conference yesterday.

Trees, animals and utensils such as plates and jugs made of bronze and brass will also be put on display.

Sukanta Banik, managing director of Dhamrai Metal Craft, said a number of families had been involved in creative metal work even after independence, but their number has reduced alarmingly because of lack of assistance from the government.

The bronze and brass industry has still immense prospects, and if patronised, it can earn huge foreign currency, create employment opportunities and even brighten the image of the country, he said.

"Even the utensils made of bronze and brass are also environment-friendly," he noted.

Urging the government to help develop the industry, Sukanta said, "If the industry do not get support, the tradition will be lost forever."

Subir Chowdhury of Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts and Manoshi Banik of Dhamrai Metal Craft were also present at the press conference.

Qulkhwani



Qulkhwani of Begum Khairunnesa will be held at House # 4, Road # 3, Block # C, Section # 2 at Mirpur in the city after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

Khairunnesa, wife of late K F Akbar, retired district judge, passed away on May 20 at the National Heart Foundation Hospital in the city at the age of 72.

She was buried at the Mirpur Intellectual Graveyard after namaz-e-janaza at Masjidul Ferdous.

NON-GOVT TEACHERS

JS body for 100pc salary hike by June

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Parliamentary Committee on Government Assurances yesterday asked the government to increase the salary of the non-government teachers from present 90 per cent to 100 per cent within next month.

The committee also recommended that the education ministry register the educational institutions in Monthly Pay Order (MPO) that has remained suspended after 2004.

The parliamentary body in a meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban recommended increase of the allowance of Ebtedayee madrasa teachers, which is now Tk 500 only and also discussed the progress in implementing the promises made by the government at different times during its tenure.

"We recommended additional allocation in the next budget to upgrade the standard of Fazil and Kamil education, ensuring same facilities for Ebtedayee madrasa and primary schools and revising the salary structure of the teachers," committee Chairman Abdus Sobhan told the reporters.

The committee asked the government to include 500 madrasas in the development project, he said.

He said crises of Bangladesh Birman and transportation on the waterways also came up for discussion in the meeting.

The government has decided to charter aircraft as an alternative to pur-

chasing new planes, the civil aviation ministry told the committee.

The meeting asked the shipping ministry to get the worn out water vessels repaired and resume their operation.

Committee members Azizur Rahman Chowdhury, Mostafa Kamal Pasha, Miah Golam Parwar, Shah Shaheed Sarwar were present at the meeting.

Zakaria Milan passes away

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Senior journalist Zakaria Milan passed away at his Uttara residence early yesterday at the age of 58.

Family members of Milan said he had been suffering from cardiac diseases and diabetic.

He left behind his wife, two sons and a daughter to mourn his death.

He was buried at Uttara after his namaz-e-janaza on the Jatiya Press Club premises.

Milan, former chief reporter of the daily Ittefaq, was born in Chandpur.

He was also the vice-president of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ).

President of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul and Secretary General Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, DUJ President Altaf Mahmud and General Secretary Omar Faruq in separate messages condoled the death of Milan. They also conveyed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for salvation of the departed soul.

Maimoona Arif Tabani

Maimoona Arif Tabani, wife of Late Arif Wali Mohammad Tabani, chairperson of Mirpur Ceramic Works Ltd, passed away at her residence on May 7 after protracted illness, says a press release.

She was buried at Banani Graveyard.

Death anniversary

Today is the 23rd death anniversary of Barrister Sayed Kamrul Islam M u h a m m a d Salehuddin, a Language Movement

veteran, freedom fighter and former parliamentarian, says a press release.

On the occasion, a Qurankhani will be held after Asr prayers at 131/1, Uttar Basabo.

Students of Rajshahi University (RU) started leaving the campus yesterday as 39-day summer vacation begins.

Classes and examinations will remain suspended from yesterday till June 30 but offices will remain open during the vacation.

Official sources said, many departments voluntarily decided to take classes and examinations during the vacation.

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