

Poverty remains as past govts ignored key principles

Says symbolic tribunal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Poverty is not wiped out from the society as all previous governments ran the country ignoring its key principles, said a symbolic tribunal against poverty in a verdict yesterday.

The tribunal was constituted at a daylong programme organised jointly by the Peoples

Empowerment Trust and the Peoples Forum on MDG at LGRD auditorium in the city.

The court handed down the verdict following some cases filed by distressed people from different places.

Justice Golam Robbani led the jury board of the symbolic tribunal.

He said it is the duty of an independent state to ensure fundamental rights of its people, but previous political and non-political governments failed to meet these demands.

Justice Robbani said the future government should follow the constitution and the spirit of the

liberation war to rid the countrymen of poverty.

The other jury members were Ranjan Karmakar, executive director of Steps Towards Development, Taramon Bibi, BNP Protik trade union leader Dr Wazedul Islam Khan and Dhaka University teacher Hafizur Rahman Karzon.

Different political leaders, economists, intellectuals, women leaders, lawyers, educationists, journalists and civil society members took part in the programme.

Awami League Presidium Member Suranjit Sengupta said an additional three crore people are now living under poverty line due to skyrocketing price hike of daily

essentials.

"Country's poverty will not be removed if we follow the prescriptions of the US and the World Bank. The caretaker government should immediately hand over the power to an elected government, otherwise, the number of distressed people will increase further," he said.

Chairman of Transparency International Bangladesh Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said the allegations of poor people are true and the state cannot avoid them.

Economist Dr Atiur Rahman, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal leader Shirin Akhtar and Jatiya Party leader GM Kader also spoke on the occasion.

Concerted efforts can make Bangladesh a middle-income country by 2020: Army chief

UNB, Bagerhat

A young man was killed by a crocodile in a large pond on the premises of Hazrat Khan Jahan Ali's shrine here on Wednesday night.

Police recovered the floating body of Rubel Sheikh, 25, yesterday morning. He hailed from Nurullapur village in Morelganj upazila of Bagerhat district.

Rubel along with his mother Firoza Begum came to visit the shrine. When he went to the pond for taking bath, the crocodile attacked and dragged him into deep of the pond.

Local divers could not recover the body despite overnight operation in the pond. The crocodile devoured some parts of his body.

'Remain alert about frauds in name of army officers'

UNB, Dhaka

Military authorities have urged all concerned not to get confused with the reports of recent incidents of fraudulence in the name of army officers and to remain alert about such frauds.

"Recently some incidents of fraudulence in different areas in the name of senior army officers came to the notice of army headquarters," the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a release yesterday.

A few days earlier, a "so-called journalist" was arrested by the law enforcers while committing extortion in the name of army officers in Khagrachari.

"Gangs of frauds have been collecting tolls and receiving other benefits illegally from the local people in the name of senior army officers," the release also said.

"All concerned have been requested not to get confused with such illegal activities and beware of it."

The authorities also requested all to contact directly over mobile phone (0171333256, 01713247504 and 01191001728) to check such matters.

Fema president resigns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Munira Khan, president of Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (Fema), yesterday resigned from the post in protest of violating its constitution, says a press release.

She said: "There is no provision to conduct the election to the national executive committee in the annual general meeting (AGM) according to the Fema constitution."

"A letter was sent to the election committee chairman by the president requesting him to cancel the executive committee election which will be conducted in half an hour only, which is a gross violation of the constitution," added the release.

"As the election committee did not reschedule or announce the cancellation of the election till now, I do not want to be a part of the meeting or the election," she added.

Munira Khan, a life member of Fema, a non-government election watchdog, was elected its first president in 2003.

Fema in a press release said last night Munira Khan's resignation that came only 36 hours before holding of the AGM is an attempt to create confusion among its members.

Clarification

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Airline Pilots' Association yesterday gave clarification on a report headlined 'Passenger suffer as pilot refused to fly Airbus' published in The Daily Star on August 20.

It said the flight to Sylhet on August 19 was delayed as no pilot was detailed beforehand to operate the Airbus.

"As per regulations, at least 12 hours prior notice is required to detail a pilot to operate any flight. Since this was not done, no Airbus pilot was available to operate Dhaka-Sylhet-Dhaka flight," said the clarification signed by Capt. SM Helal, president of the association.

Concerted efforts can make Bangladesh a middle-income country by 2020: Army chief

UNB, Noakhali

Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed yesterday said Bangladesh could become a middle-income country by 2020 if all of us make a concerted effort to this end.

"Our concerted efforts will be the key to development of Bangladesh," he said while addressing a gathering at Hazipur village in Begumganj, Noakhali.

Earlier, the army chief visited Ahammad Bahumukhi Samabaya Samity there and inaugurated various projects such as dairy farm, biogas plant, bio-electricity and mushroom cultivation.

General Moeen said the unemployment problem could have

been avoided if the rich people in every locality had created employment opportunities, especially for the young generation.

He also assured that the army would continue to assist in such cooperative ventures.

General Moeen said some 120 families would have electricity facilities through bio-power plant and the gas to be produced by the plant could be used as fuel by 16 more families daily. Besides, local farmers could use organic fertiliser in their croplands.

GOC of Comilla region Maj Gen Anwar Hossain, Deputy Commissioner Abdul Haque and Chakim Siddiqui were present on the occasion.

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Some 50 Bangladeshi workers who returned from Dubai after being cheated by manpower brokers stage a demonstration in front of the Labour and Employment Bureau at Kakrail in the city yesterday.

NIKO, BARGE-MOUNTED POWER PLANT CASES HC begins final hearing on Hasina's petitions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday started final hearing on the petitions filed by Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, now abroad on parole, for quashing the Niko and Barge-mounted power plant graft cases against her.

Barrister Rafique-ul Huq, counsel for Hasina, made his preliminary arguments in favour of quashing the cases.

The HC bench comprising Justice Sheikh Rezwan Ali and Justice Md Raisuddin fixed August 25 for further hearing of the petitions.

On September 2 last year, Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Deputy Director Sabir Hasan filed the barge-mounted power plant corruption case with Tejgaon Police Station on December 9 last year accusing Hasina and six others of corruption and abuse of power in awarding three "abandoned" gas fields at Chhatak, Kamta and Feni to Canadian company Niko Resources Ltd during the tenure of the Awami League government.

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WEATHER TODAY Light rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over all the six divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy rainfalls are also likely at places during the period, Met Office said, predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 34.1 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 24.1 degrees Celsius at Sandwip.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:26pm today and rises at 5:37am 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	31.9	26.7	78	65
Chittagong	30.0	25.1	82	78
Rajshahi	33.4	26.4	81	76
Khulna	32.5	26.0	81	83
Barisal	31.8	25.6	77	76
Sylhet	34.1	25.0	89	71
Cox's Bazar	31.0	24.4	75	81

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Former lawmaker Sayeda Sakina Islam, wife of cultural personality and journalist Fakhrul Islam Khan, passed away at her residence at Lalmatia in the city yesterday at the age of 81, says a press release.

She left behind one son, two daughters, grandchildren and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn her death.

She will be buried at Muslim Graveyard in Barisal today.

Kotwali police said someone hurled the bomb when the three policemen were patrolling the Judge Court area around 10:35pm.

Under the agreement, the



Hundreds of leaders and activists of Awami League gather in front of the party office at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday to pay homage to those killed in a grenade attack on a party rally on August 21 in 2004. (Story on page 1)

3 cops injured in bomb attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three policemen were injured, one of them critically, when unknown criminals hurled a homemade bomb at them near the Judge Court in the capital last night.

The injured, Constable Monwar Hossain, 25, was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in an unconscious state. He received serious wounds as the bomb hit his chest and throat, hospital sources said.

Two other constables - Shafiq and Akram - received minor injuries.

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Tk 4cr Japanese grant for Nat'l Museum

UNB, Dhaka

Japan will provide 62.3 million yen, equivalent to approximately Tk 3.88 crore, in grant aid for the Project of Improvement of Audio-visual Equipment of Bangladesh National Museum.

Japan's Ambassador to Bangladesh Prof Masaaki Inoue and Secretary of Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance, Mohammad Aminul Islam Bhuiyan signed an agreement to this effect in the city yesterday.

Under the agreement, the

government of Japan would extend grant assistance to the government of Bangladesh to provide the National Museum with audiovisual equipment such as video-shooting system, studio-editing system, projection system and sound-and-lighting systems.

"Video-shooting system and studio-editing system would make it possible to record high-quality image and quality editing. This is how the museum can preserve national and cultural heritage of Bangladesh," says a press release.

The leaders underscored the need for upholding the ideal of secularism for establishing a modern democratic system and consolidating national unity and solidarity.

They said the spirit of protecting equal rights for all, irrespective of caste, creed and religion, is an established fact in the democratic world.

They called for celebrating major festivals of all religions at the state level and upholding religious harmony in the country.

Bangladeshi student shot dead in US

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two schoolgirls drowned in river Turag at Nirashpara village in Tongi yesterday afternoon.

Nipa Akhter, 12, a class four student of Shaheed Smriti School, and Rita, 10, a class three student, drowned when they were swimming in the river at about 3:30pm.

Two other girls, who were also swimming with them, informed local people of the incident. The locals then rushed to the scene and recovered the bodies at about 5:30pm.

Tongi police said an unnatural death case was filed in this connection and the bodies were handed over to their families.

Shamsul Huda Choudhury, an eminent scholar, passed away due to old-age complications on August 19 at the age of 85, says a press release.

Prof Shamsul Huda Choudhury, a former dean of the agriculture faculty of Bangladesh Agricultural University, also served as a teacher at MC College in Sylhet and at Rajshahi College in Rajshahi.

His quikhwani will be held at his residence at Uttara after Asr prayers today. Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the quikhwani and pray for the departed soul.