

'Stop process to lease offshore blocks to foreign co'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 128 teachers of different universities yesterday urged the government to stop the process of leasing offshore blocks to foreign companies terming it 'anti-people, unconstitutional and illegal'.

In the statement signed by Prof MM Akash of Dhaka University, the teachers said according to the constitution people are the owner of all mineral resources of the country but the present government is busy giving the blocks to the multinational companies without the consent of the people.

"Though a writ is pending in the High Court challenging the legality of the leasing, the process is still on," the statement reads.

They also said according to the constitution the caretaker government is not legally able to adopt new policies and sign new deals.

The signatories to the statement include Prof Anisur Rahman, Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, AKM Saaduddin, Prof Shishir Bhattacharjee, Prof Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Prof Anu Muhammad and Prof Hasan Azizul Haque.

Workers' Party of Bangladesh also protested the process of leasing offshore blocks and demanded formulation of a policy for protecting the interest of the people and the country.

Jatiya Mukti Council also demanded the same.

AL to return to power thru Dec 18 polls

Hopes Jalil

UNB, Naogaon

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil yesterday said his party will return to power with people's mandate in the parliament elections slated for December 18.

Jalil, who had long been away from party politics since his arrest and illness, urged the party leaders and workers to work for establishing a people's welfare government through the elections.

He made the brief remarks to local party leaders and workers in front of the party office here in the afternoon.

Naogaon district AL General Secretary Abdul Malek and Organising Secretary Nirmal Krishna Saha also spoke.

Jalil, who was arrested on May 28 last year under the Emergency Power Rules, said had there not been emergency, there would have been a surge of the people in Naogaon today. He said many people could not come due to the restrictions under emergency.

"The state of emergency will not be in place forever. I will go to the people and the people will come to me. None will be there at that time for putting obstruction," he said.

Claiming himself innocent, Jalil said, "What is my offence? I have never ever harmed anyone in my long political career. I have never thought of my own interest beyond people's welfare. I have never been involved in corruption."

He said the property he inherited from his father does exist only.

"Rather, I had to sell many of my father's property for politics. I have still many things to share with the people. I have that ability."

Witnesses said people stood on the roadside from Santahar Bypass to Naogaon AL office on the occasion of Jalil's visit to Naogaon after 17 months. Party leaders and workers and general people greeted him with flowers and bouquets.



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia offers munajat at an Iftar party at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. Factions of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists organised the Iftar party. (Story on Page 1)

BANGLADESHI WORKERS IN SAUDI ARABIA Measures to be taken to improve quality of life

Say Iftekhar, Saudi FM

UNB, Dhaka

Both Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia will take measures to improve the quality of life of Bangladeshi workers and promote their welfare.

It was agreed when Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury met his Saudi counterpart Prince Saud al-Faisal at a mid-town hotel in New York on Friday, according to a message received here yesterday.

During the discussion, they covered the whole gamut of bilateral, political and economic relations and the means to widen them further.

Iftekhar thanked Prince Saud al-Faisal for the fact that Saudi Arabia

hosts a huge number of Bangladeshi workers who deem it a privilege to contribute to the growth of Saudi economy.

Prince Saud al-Faisal noted with appreciation the contribution of the Bangladeshi workers.

Iftekhar mentioned that a minimum wage for workers would help alleviate much of their problems.

The Saudi foreign minister said this would be conveyed to the Ministry of Labour where it will be studied.

Iftekhar also offered skilled Bangladeshi professionals for Saudi educational institutions.

He apprised Prince Saud al-Faisal of the recent political developments in Bangladesh and the

contents of the chief adviser's latest speech to the nation announcing December 18 as the date for the general election.

Prince Saud al-Faisal thanked Iftekhar for informing him the developments and assured continued support of the Saudi government in fulfilling the government's goals.

They reviewed the situation in the Middle East and hoped for the return of peace to Palestine. They also agreed that a strong United Nations was necessary for global peace, order and development.

The Saudi minister conveyed his "warm invitation" to Iftekhar to visit Saudi Arabia at a mutually acceptable date.



Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury met his Saudi counterpart Prince Saud al-Faisal at a hotel in New York on Friday.

APUB against new private university ordinance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of the Association of Private Universities of Bangladesh (APUB) yesterday strongly protested the government move, saying some of the rules in the proposed private university ordinance-2008 will change the basic structures of the universities.

The country's private universities run on the basis of Private University Act 1992 and its amendment 1998 but there is no need to enact new act, they added.

"We welcome the government if they move to amend the Private University Act 1992 and Amendment 1998. There is no need to formulate a new act for operating the private

universities," said APUB Chairman Abul Quasem Haider at a press conference at DRU auditorium in the city.

APUB chairman, also founder chairman of Eastern University, said the expansion of higher education would be hampered if government does not withdraw the proposed ordinance.

Denying the allegations that some private universities are involved in unholy practices like selling certi-

icates and offering sub-standard education, IUBAT Vice Chancellor Prof M Alimullah Miyan said most of the private universities impart quality education. For this reason, the number of students in private universities is increasing every year.

"We strongly protest the government move to promulgate a new ordinance as some of the points will change the basic structures of private universities," he added.



Former chief engineer of housing and public works ministry Muhammad Yusuf joins Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) by presenting a bouquet to its President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury at an Iftar party at Bangladesh Photojournalists' Association auditorium in the city on Friday.

Removal of PSC chairman demanded

DU CORRESPONDENT

The unsuccessful candidates of the 27th BCS examinations have demanded immediate removal of PSC Chairman Prof Saadat Hussain putting a question on the legality of the second phase results of the exams.

They placed the demands at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium in the city yesterday, which included cancellation of new results and appointment of innocent candidates who were succeeded in the previously published results.

The candidates also demanded a judicial investigation into the scandal created in publishing the results.

They alleged that Prof Hussain is fulfilling the interests of a specific group in order to save himself from the corruption charges.

The candidates demanded steps to immediately reform the PSC removing its inefficient and corrupt officials.

To realise the demands, candidates would submit a memorandum to the president and the chief adviser today. They would go for a token hunger strike programme on Eid day at Central Shaheed Minar.

Md Sohel Rana, Md Mohsin Sikder, Farukh Ahmed and Abu Sayeed Md Faysal took part in the press conference on behalf of unsuccessful candidates.

'Refrain from smoking in public places'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pratyasha, an anti-drug club, and WBB Trust organised a campaign at Sadarghat launch terminal yesterday with a view to creating awareness about Tobacco Control Act.

The campaign led by Secretary General of Pratyasha Helal Ahmed also urged the homebound people to refrain from smoking in public places.

"Although smoking has been reduced in workplaces, shopping malls, public places, trains and buses due to awareness campaigns, the frequency of smoking at the launch terminals, rail stations and bus stands is comparatively higher," said Helal Ahmed.

He urged the authorities to take initiatives to make these areas smoking free, says a press release.

Suspected arms dealer held with arms in city

UNB, Dhaka

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested a suspected arms dealer at Phulbaria Nagar plaza under Kotwali Police Station in the city yesterday.

Rab officials said they recovered a foreign-made pistol, four pistol magazines and two bullets of pistol from their possession.

Acting on a tip-off, members of RAB-1 arrested Mohammad Abdul Matin, 48, at about 2:00pm and recovered the arms from inside garments in front of a shop.

Matin, a resident of Jigatala Government Colony in Dhanmondi, has confessed to the crime during the interrogation, saying he has long been engaged in supplying arms to criminals in different parts of the city, Rab said.

RMG workers demand arrear salaries, Eid bonus by today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Alliance for Protection of Garments Workers and Industries formed a human chain at Topkhana Road in the city yesterday demanding payment of arrear salaries along with Eid bonus by today, says a press release.

In a statement leaders of the organisation also urged the government and garments owners to reopen the laid-off industries and give compensation to the injured workers of Honour Way garments factory.

Their demands also include withdrawal of restrictions on trade union activities and all cases against the workers and their unconditional release.

They also demanded that the owners who violated the labour law are punished.

Meanwhile, Gono Sanghati Andolon Committee at a meeting yesterday urged the government to meet the demands of jute mill workers in Khulna.

The leaders of Revolutionary Garments Workers Solidarity yesterday demanded payment of arrears, salary, overtime bills including Eid bonus of the garments workers before September 29, says a press release.

In a statement they also urged the government and garments owners to give the workers Eid holiday and implement the tripartite agreement.

The leaders of the organisation called on government to put pressure on the garments owners to meet their demand according to tripartite agreement.

Integrated education policy a must for pvt universities

Says UGC chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam yesterday said the commission cannot guide private universities in the country due to lack of an integrated education policy.

We need an education policy, but it is very tough to get a policy approved in the country, he added.

The UGC chairman was speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of Master's in Public Policy and Governance (MPPG) programme at the department of General and Continuing Education (GCE) at North South University (NSU).

"We do not have an education policy. We cannot guide, control and monitor private universities, as there is no education policy," he said, adding that there are 51 private

universities in the country.

Blaming bad governance for not having necessary policies in the country, Prof Nazrul Islam said, "It takes some time to write a policy but it takes much time to get it approved."

Though urban policy was prepared back in 2006, the policy has not been approved yet and there is no urban policy in the country yet, he mentioned.

Presided over by NSU Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof Hafiz GH Siddiqui, the programme was attended by Tribhuvan University VC Prof Madhab Prasad Sharma, Vice Rector of University of Bergen Prof Kjersti Flottum, Norwegian Ambassador Ingebjorg Stofring, GCE Chairman Dr Khalikuzzaman Elias and NSU Board of Governors chairman MA Awar.

Speakers said the newly introduced department would enhance the capacity of understanding theoretical and practical aspects of public policy and good governance.

NSU VC said, "Lack of policy resulted in bad governance in our country. I hope students of the department will formulate policy in organisational and national level and enhance the capacity of the country."

The two-year term MPPG programme has been introduced in collaboration with the departments of Administration and Organisation Theory of University of Bergen and Central Department of Public Administration at Tribhuvan University.

A total of 22 students from Bangladesh and Nepal are taking part in the programme at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city.



Former Awami League (AL) lawmaker Meher Afroz Chumki places wreath at the grave of her father Shaheed Moyez Uddin at Banani graveyard in the city yesterday on the occasion of his 24th death anniversary. AL leaders were also present.

Moyez Uddin's anniversary of death observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 24th death anniversary of former Awami League (AL) leader and lawmaker Shaheed Moyez Uddin was observed in the city yesterday, says a press release.

AL and the family members chalked out elaborate programmes, including placing wreaths and offering special prayers, to mark the day.

Presidium members of the party Begum Motia Chowdhury, organising secretaries Abdul Mannan and Akhteruzzaman, Krishak League Organising Secretary MA Karim and ex-lawmaker Zahid Ahsan Russel placed floral wreaths at his Banani graveyard.

Shahab Uddin, brother of late Moyez Uddin, his daughter and former AL lawmaker Meher Afroz Chumki also took part in the programme.

Moyez Uddin embraced martyrdom at an anti-autocratic movement against the then government at Kaliganj.

Chinese citizen electrocuted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tongji

A Chinese citizen was electrocuted yesterday morning while working in Radiant Pharmaceutical at BSIC in Tongji.

The deceased was identified as Fan Shi Ming, 51. The incident occurred when he was installing a machine at the factory.

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