

Hasina asks partymen to be humble

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the party leaders and workers to be self-sacrificing and humble keeping in mind "there is someone above all".

"Allah, the Almighty, doesn't like those who are self-conceited. Be humble and engage yourselves in social work to ensure maximum welfare of the people with a sacrificing spirit," she asked the party workers at a discussion at Mohanagar Natyamancha auditorium in the city.

Awami League arranged the discussion marking Amar Ekushey, the National Language Martyrs and

International Mother Language Day. Senior AL leaders, including Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, LGRD Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam, president members Amir Hossain Amu, Suranjit Sengupta and Tofail Ahmed.

Hasina, also AL president, said those who believe in the ideology of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman hardly think what s/he has got and what not. "The main thing is what we've been able to do for the people. They've given us the mandate. Now it's our duty to deliver."

She said the previous BNP-

Jamaat government had taken the country many years back in all sectors, including power and energy and education through politicisation, corruption and militancy. "But now our only aim will be to work for the welfare and development of the people," she said.

She lambasted the BNP-Jamaat regime for not taking any step for publicity of the International Mother Language Day across the world.

The PM said the new government would carry out necessary publicity to observe the International Mother Language Day all over the world in a respectable manner.

Cop killer arrested

A CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Mugger Mamun who stabbed to death a police sub-inspector and injured three other policemen on Wednesday was arrested at Bhairabpur Government Adarsha Shishu School in Bhairab upazila yesterday.

Police said they launched a massive hunt in the area and arrested snatcher Mamun, 27, at the school, where he was hiding, at about 8:00am.

Mamun stabbed SI Mustafizur Rahman, SI Mizanur Rahman, constable Abdul Kuddus and Habibar Ruhul Amin indiscriminately in a bid to flee from their custody as they caught him after a mugging incident in Bhairab on Wednesday, SI Mustafizur died on the spot.

After the knife attack, the mugger managed to flee and went into hiding.

Meanwhile, the namaj-e-janaza of SI Mustafizur Rahman, 42, hailing from Barachhapa village in Manuhardi upazila of Narsingdi district was held in Police Lines of Kishoreganj town at 1:30pm yesterday.

Citizenship (Amend) Ord placed in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday placed a bill in the parliament to ratify the citizenship (amendment) ordinance, beginning the process to translate 54 ordinances out of 122 ordinances promulgated during the tenure of caretaker governments into laws.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun piloted the bill titled 'Citizenship (amendment) Act 2009' with the provisions to scrap the ordinance that brought amendment to the act and also safeguard the activities done after the amendment.

Another 53 bills are expected to be placed in the parliament on February 24 to ratify the same number of ordinances as per the recommendations of the special committee of the Jatiya Sangsad.

All the bills will have the same provisions for scrapping the ordinances with the clauses to safeguard the activities done under the ordinances those will be repealed.

There is a possibility of passing the bills in the current session which will continue until February 26 unless the period of the current session is extended. All the bills will be sent to the standing committees on the ministries concerned for scrutiny.

But the ordinances will get a legal cover after being placed in the parliament as bills seeking ratification. The rest of the 68 ordinances will cease to have effect after February 24, as no bill will be placed in the parliament seeking their ratification.

After placement of the bill titled citizenship (amendment) act 2006, it was sent to the parliamentary standing committee of home ministry for scrutiny and the committee was asked to place report in the parliament within seven days.

In the statement of the bill, the home minister said the amendment will remove the discrimination from the citizenship act which earlier provided citizenship of a child born in Bangladesh if his or her father was a citizen of the country.

The ordinance that was promulgated by the caretaker government amending the citizenship act provided a child with Bangladeshi citizenship if his or her father or mother is a citizen of the country.

Re-excavation at Wari-Bateshwar tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The archaeological excavation at the historic Wari-Bateshwar village is going to start for the eighth time tomorrow.

Archaeologists discovered a number of artifacts from the area which are believed to be around 2,450 years old.

Earlier, remnants of ancient terracotta, streets, side streets, terracotta artefacts, trinkets and ancient silver coins which are a significant addition to the country's rich history.

A brick-built structure of 9.75x5.49 metres was excavated in 2007 and 2008 in the area. A 3.66-metre wall made of clay mortar still stands intact below the surface.

Communications Minister Rajjuddin Raju will be present at the inaugural function of the excavation as the chief guest.

Trustee Board Chairman of Oltijhya Onneshan Captain Imam Anwar Hossain will preside over the programme.

Exhibition of the excavated artefacts will be put on display in a temporary museum at Wari.



Children are engaged in a handwriting competition at Nazrul Institute in the city yesterday on the occasion of the International Mother Language Day.

APPOINTMENT OF JUDGES

Accept CJ's suggestions

Dr Kamal tells Supreme Court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday told the Supreme Court (SC) that if the recommendations of the chief justice (CJ) are not accepted in appointing judges to the High Court (HC), then the highest person of the judiciary will be turned into a less important person and the rule of law will be hampered.

He said the then BNP-led four-party alliance government had not confirmed the services of 10 HC judges on political consideration in spite of CJ's recommendations and as a result the judges have been deprived of seven years.

Dr Kamal was placing submissions on behalf of 10 unconfirmed judges during the hearing on the appeal filed by 29 sitting HC judges against the HC judgement directing the government to re-appoint 10 judges with seniority.

Barrister Rafique-ul Huq, counsel for the sitting 29 HC judges, told the court that the 10 petitioner judges cannot get seniority since their services were not confirmed.

He also said the government cannot withdraw its appeal against the HC verdict since the appeal was pending with the SC, although the attorney general on Wednesday prayed to the apex court not to proceed with the government appeals against the HC verdict.

The five-member full bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice MM Ruhul Amin adjourned the hearing of the appeal for yesterday and fixed Sunday for further hearing of the appeal.

While talking to newsmen at his office yesterday, Attorney General Mahbub Alam said if the chief justice has no authority in the appointments of the HC judges, he (CJ) will be made ignored and the executive

organs will take the control of the judiciary and that will be against the Constitution.

He said there are many judges in the HC, whose seniorities were affected with the HC verdict, but they did not take any stand against the verdict that has gone in favour of 10 deprived judges.

Attorney General's office sources said the BNP-Jamaat coalition government did not confirm the services of total 14 High Court judges among 31 judges appointed by the Awami League government, in spite of the chief justice's recommendations.

The four-party alliance government in its five years' tenure appointed a total of 45 additional judges to the HC and confirmed services of 42.

Among the rest three judges one Syed Shahidur Rahman was removed by the government as per recommendation of the Supreme Judicial Council for misconduct.

MPs should not be advisers of UZ parishads

Say speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday called for self-governing of all local government institutions including upazila parishads to strengthen democracy at grassroots level.

They said strong local government is a prerequisite for strengthening democratic process and good governance.

They also demanded that the lawmakers should not be kept as advisers in upazila parishads to ensure authorities of locally elected representatives and cut bureaucratic control.

The press conference was organised by Governance Advocacy Forum at the National Press Club in the city demanding establishment of self-governing and truly powerful local government system for the sake of a change.

Dr Salahuddin M Aminuzzaman, professor of public administration at Dhaka University, said despite having specific direction from

the Constitution the local government of the country is yet to be strengthened owing to controlling by the central government, bureaucracy and lawmakers.

It is found in a research that the country with a strong local government system has sound economic growth, he said, adding, "We want a strong local government capable of running independently."

"There will be a conflict in leadership if the members of the parliament (MPs) are allowed to have their previous controlling authority over the elected local representatives," he feared.

Dr Salahuddin suggested that Local Government Commission (LGC) should be approved with some amendments as an effective LGC is a must for a strong local government system.

Justice Ghulam Rabbani said the outline of the local government has been stated in the articles 59 and 60 of the Constitution and it has to run as per the Constitution. "We achieved independence

and democracy through liberation war and democracy doesn't mean only exercise of franchise. Peoples' participation is also necessary which is possible through strengthening the local government," he said.

In his keynote paper, Mohsin Ali, coordinator of the forum, said the ruling party in its electoral manifesto pledged for a strong local government before the parliament election.

So it would be a backtrack from its pledge if the government adds new provisions including restoration of MPs' authority over the local governments in the ordinances, he said.

He also demanded that the LGC should be kept intact. The forum will form human chain in front of the National Press Club and other district headquarters on February 23 to press home their demands, he announced.

Ranjan Karmakar of Steps Towards Development and Numan Ahmed Khan of IED, also spoke at the press conference.

Afazuddin wins Channel i Agri Award 2009

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Afazuddin, a marginal farmer from the village Kholabaria in Natore who later became the pioneer of herbal plant cultivation, has won this year's Channel i Agriculture Award 2009.

Managing Director of Channel i Faridur Reza Sagar announced this at a press conference at its Siddeshwari office in the city yesterday.

Director and Chief of News Shykh Siraj also spoke on the occasion.

The award is announced ahead of February 21, the day Hridoye Mati O Manush steps into the sixth year of its journey.

The award, introduced in 2006, will be handed over to Afazuddin on April 10 at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. The prize includes a crest and Tk50,000.

Afazuddin started cultivation of herbal plants in around 1975 when the treatment of his family members needed herbs.

However, later this turned out to be his occupation.

Soon local people started to follow him and the whole Kholabaria village turned into a village of herbal plants.

Now tonnes of herbal plants and products are supplied to different parts of the country from this area.

The names of the winners of the essay competition organised on the fifth anniversary of Channel i will also be announced at the programme on April 10.

A compilation of the best essays titled 'Janavashya-4' will be unveiled at the programme.

Shykh Siraj said he wants to create awareness among the policymakers about agricultural development.

Otherwise, the development of agriculture sector won't be possible in Bangladesh, he added. He underscored the need for continuing government subsidy in the sector.

He also stressed a lot of research works for adopting with the aftermath of climate change.

Researcher Aditya Shahin also spoke at the press conference while other members of the Hridoye Mati O Manush team were also present.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 9th death anniversary of Kazi Akram Hossain, former president of Bangladesh Chhatra Union and Khetmojur Andolon.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil and discussion will be held at his residence at Silicon Destiny (House 348, Road 4, Baitul Aman Housing, Adabor) in the city after Maghrib prayers.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend the programme.

Obituary

METRO DESK

Md Nurul Islam, manager of Tangail Branch of Bank Asia, passed away due to a cardiac arrest on February 12 at the age of 45, says a press release.

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

DHAKA TODAY

Publication ceremony
The publication ceremony of the book 'Crime Index Bangladesh 2007' by Muhammad Omar Faruk and Nurjahan Khatun will be held. Venue: Dhaka Reporters' Union. Time: 10:30am.

Seminar
Equity and Justice Working Group organises a seminar on 'Role of local government commission: Local government and lawmakers in institutionalising democracy and development'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

Photo exhibition
Bhasha Andolon Museum and Nymphaea Publication jointly organises a photography exhibition on Language Movement. Venue: Bhattola premises. Time: 10:00am.

Roundtable
Sangskritik Oikya Front organises a roundtable on corridor, taskforce, Tifa and national consensus. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4:00pm.

Comprehensive reform in agri sector soon

Says Matia Chy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury at a workshop yesterday said the government is working to bring comprehensive reform in the agriculture sector to make Bangladesh a food surplus country.

"We are now busy in fertilizer management and its distribution for Boro season. Once this is over, we will start reforming the total agriculture sector," she said, adding that the sector faces a number of problems due to the negligence of the last regime.

Matia was speaking as the chief guest at the workshop titled 'Farm-level fertilizer management' jointly organised by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) at the Cirdap auditorium in the city.

Organic fertilizer, which is very useful for soil health,

could reduce pressure on chemical fertiliser, but the natural resources to make natural fertilisers are so scarce, she said, adding that excessive use of chemical fertilisers is damaging soil health in many areas of the country.

On the other hand, the minister said fertilizer factories are not producing as per their capacities. "We will overhaul the old fertilizer factories to up production."

Dr Z Karim, former chairman of Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council, in his presentation said 53 percent cultivable lands of the country have inadequate organic contents due to intensive use of land and imbalanced use of chemical fertilisers.

He suggested using more green manure and providing incentives to farmers for it, leaving crop residues in the

field and increasing fertilizer efficiency by upgrading their knowledge.

There may be different methods of fertilizer use, but the farmers must follow only the proven methods, Karim added.

Stating that Bangladesh is vulnerable in terms of fertilizer availability, Dr Shahidul Islam, former director of the Department of Agriculture Extension, said, "There should be buffer stocks of fertilisers so that farmers can get the chemicals in any crisis."

Head of Research at Centre for Policy Dialogue Dr Uttam Deb said there should be a mechanism that the government does not provide subsidy for the fertilizer used for non-agriculture purposes.

FAO Representative Ad Spijkers also spoke at the workshop with Agriculture Secretary Sheikh Enayetullah in the chair.

BNP to take hard line against move to eliminate opposition

Warns Delwar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Termed the post-election violence "a drive to eliminate the opposition from the country," BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday asked the government not to make any situation so that the opposition party will be forced to take any extreme decision that will make 'single party parliament'.

He said the government does not get the ownership of the country as in a democratic system, the opposition is a part of the government. That is why, democracy would be at stake if the opposition is ignored and its leader faces indecent behaviour.

"They [ruling party] started attacks on our workers and supporters just after election. Many party men are now staying outside of their houses," Delwar said this at a press briefing at the chairperson's Gulshan office.

Even the ruling party grabbed the opposition member's seat in parliament and changed the names of opposition members in standing committees, he alleged and called on the government to change their attitude towards

Pak's envoy comment protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eleven-party alliance formed a human chain in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday protesting the comment by Zia Ispahani, who is visiting Bangladesh as special envoy of Pakistan president, on trial of war criminals.

During the demonstration the alliance leaders alleged that Zia Ispahani have insulted the parliament and people of Bangladesh.

They said while the whole parliament agreed to meet the long awaited demand of the people, Zia Ispahani made comment that it is not a suitable time to try the war criminals.

They also demanded withdrawal of the comment by Zia Ispahani showing respect to the sacrifice of martyrs and desire of the people.

Abdus Samad, coordinator of 11-party alliance, presided over the programme while Rashed Khan Menon MP, Zakir Hossain, Wajedul Islam, and Mohammad Afzal spoke.

Security tightened on Amar Ekushey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Both Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and police have taken strict security measures with the deployment of around 8,000 forces ahead of the smooth celebration of 'Amar Ekushey' and International Mother Language Day tomorrow.

Rab officials said along with over 600 forces, they would deploy several teams of dog squad and bomb squad and install CCTV monitoring system at different strategic points.

Rab sources said they divided the entrances into three sectors and 13 circles surrounding the Central Shaheed Minar. They would also set up several control rooms, outposts, observation posts and check posts.

Director General of the elite force Hasan Mahmood Khandaker yesterday visited the Shaheed Minar area to inspect the security measures taken in observance of the Ekushey February.

Meanwhile, DMP Commissioner Naim Ahmed said apart from around 7,000 forces, they would install 27 pickets, 23 barricades, six archways and 28 CCTVs to ensure the safety measures.

Besides, several teams of plain-clothes policemen would remain patrolling everywhere, he added.

Asked, the commissioner said they have no information of any possible militant attacks or subversive activities. But they are prepared to face any untoward situation.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Dry weather is likely to continue over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Light fog may also occur over the river basins of the country during late night till morning, Met Office said, predicting nearly unchanged night temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 31.3 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 11.2 degrees Celsius at Rajshahi.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:57pm today and rises at 6:27am 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	29.5	18.6	50	36
Chittagong	29.6	17.3	66	58
Rajshahi	29.4	11.2	72	58
Khulna	29.0	14.4	76	43
Barisal	29.6	13.6	75	64
Sylhet	31.0	15.9	64	50
Cox's Bazar	31.3	17.8	57	61