

Defeated forces still active

Says Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged all to work together being imbued with the spirit of Liberation War as the defeated forces are still conspiring against the country.

"Today, I've read in the newspapers that the country's literacy rate is below 50 percent. Why does our literacy rate remain at this negligible state even after 38 years of independence? The defeated forces in the past didn't allow Bangladesh to attain its cherished development. Their conspiracy against people is still on," she said.

Hasina, also the Awami League President, was addressing a discussion marking the historic 'Mujibnagar Day' at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the afternoon.

Describing the importance of the Mujibnagar Day, the prime minister said Bangladesh had been successful in attaining their independent and sovereign state under the able and visionary leadership of the Mujibnagar government. "But, the dreams and expectations of the people for which they fought the war could not yet be materialised."

Hasina said the anti-liberation forces killed Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and four national leaders, and imposed military rule, disrupting the advancement of democracy. "Today, when a democratic force has come to power after a long wait, the defeated forces are not sitting idle," she said.

Hasina termed the December 29 parliamentary polls as a "revolution" and said the people with their mandate have manifested their love for democracy.

She told the party leaders and activists that the people have reposed their trust and confidence in Awami League through their mandate in the elections. "Now your duty is to work hard to uphold the trust of the people on us. We'll have to stand by the people and help them remove their various problems."

About the current electricity and water crises, the prime minister said the government is aware of the problems and crises of the people. "We must remove the problems. Our main election pledge was to reduce the prices of essentials. We've been able to bring the prices of rice and some other essentials," she said.

Sheikh Hasina said new power plants

need to be set up to remove the electricity crisis. "Some time will be needed to set up new power plants. We're working hard to solve the electricity crisis," she said.

Hasina blamed those who ruled the country for the last seven years for the present crisis of electricity and water.

She said the BNP-Jamaat alliance and the caretaker governments did not add even one MW of electricity to the national grid although it had been increased to 4300 MW from 1600 MW during the past AL government.

Hasina regretted that the four-party alliance government halted the construction work of the Syadabad and Pagla water treatment plants, pushing the city dwellers into the present water crisis.

She said Awami League has got another chance to serve the people and build Bangladesh in line with the spirit of the 1971 liberation war.

"You (party workers) should realise that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and AL's ideology is to sacrifice for people," she said.

Party senior leaders Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sen Gupta and Matia Chowdhury also spoke.



Bangladesh Garments Sramik Trade Union organises its 4th central conference at Muktangan in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Hijacked car of Nanak's PS recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective Branch (DB) of police yesterday recovered the hijacked private car of Matiur Rahman, private secretary of state minister for LGRD and Co-operatives Jahangir Kabir Nanak, from Chenguria village in Jessore.

Miscareants hijacked the car on April 12 in the capital's Uttara firing shots at driver Faruque Hossain.

Sources said DB personnel recovered the vehicle at the house of Matiur Rahman, a Bangladeshi expatriate in the USA, at Chenguria village following the information given by Sirajul, arrested in the city two days ago.

The DB members suspect that Matiur's son Hirok was involved in the hijack. Earlier, a stolen motorbike was seized from his possession.

Abu Bakkar Siddiq, officer-in-charge of Abhaynagar Police Station, told The Daily Star that the car was taken to Chenguria village for selling it on the black market.

Sonargaon Hotel Sramik Union executives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Md Manzurul Haque and Abdul Mati Baksh have been elected president and general secretary of Sonargaon Hotel Sramik O Karmachari Union recently, says a press release.

Other office-bearers are first vice-president -- Salah Uddin Muhammad Noman; second vice-president -- Harold Look Gomes; and joint secretary general -- Md Monir Hossain.

SSKOP sit-in today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sangbadik-Sramik-Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SSKOP) will stage a sit-in in front of the Ittefaq Bhaban in the city today to press home their demands for steps to address the prevailing crises at the daily Ittefaq, the Bangladesh Observer, the daily Dinkal and the Janakantha, says a press release.

MEMORIAL MEETING ON PROF HUMAYUN AZAD

Call to bring attackers to justice

DU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said Prof Humayun Azad in his entire life fought against fundamentalism and communalism to establish a progressive society, and he died following series of brutal attacks by fundamentalists.

They also demanded the Awami League-led grand alliance government bring the attackers to book.

The speakers also called on the government to root out fundamentalism from the country.

They said this at a meeting organised by Humayun Azad Sangsad in memory of Prof

Azad at TSC intersection on the Dhaka University campus.

Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon, MP, said Prof Azad was able to disclose the worst characters of fundamentalists. So, steps will have to be taken so that nobody like him ever comes under such ghastly attacks by fundamentalists.

Prof Anwar Hossain said Prof Humayun Azad himself told that it would be found out who attacked him if Jamaat leaders Matiur Rahman, Nizami and Delwar Hossain Sayeedi are interrogated. It could not be done then, but it is possible now, he added.

Prof Rafiqullah Khan said,

"The Awami League government has to take steps to free the country of fundamentalism. We expect that the country would be free of fundamentalism within next six months."

The speakers demanded the authorities declare the TSC road island as Humayun Azad Square and hang his picture at Bangla department.

Prof Azad was found dead in an apartment in Munich in Germany on August 12, 2004. Earlier on February 27, unknown assailants brutally attacked him in a bid to kill him on the campus when he was returning from the Amar Ekushey Book Fair.

Seminar on stem cell therapy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cardiac surgeons at a seminar yesterday said that stem cell therapy would bring a dramatic change in treatment of various diseases, including cardiac ailment, cancer and Parkinson's disease.

Biogene Pharma Ltd, a leading pharmaceutical company, introduced the hi-tech stem cell therapy at the seminar titled 'Clinical seminar on the stem cell therapy' yesterday.

Prof Dr M Jalaluddin, former director of the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD), chaired the seminar while Prof Khwaza N Mahmud of NICVD, Lau Man Fai, general manager, and Dr Xiao Lin, medical director, Miltenyi Biotec Asia Pacific Private Ltd of Singapore, partner of Biogene Pharma Ltd, were present as special guests.

Biogene Pharma Ltd Chairman Md Shafaitul Islam was present as the guest of honour.

Stem cell therapies can also be applied in bone marrow transplants, said the experts.

Stem cells are found in most multi-cellular organism. They are characterised by the ability to renew themselves through mitotic cell division and differentiating into diverse range of specialised cell types.

Acid attack on woman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Jasmine Akter, 25, daughter of late freedom fighter Moyaj Uddin received serious burn injuries as miscareants threw acid on her on Thursday night.

Jasmine hails from Nariapara village under Netrakona Sadar upazila in the district, police said.

Locals said Jasmine was on her way back home from her relative's house at Horinakanda.

When she came near her house a group of miscareants from the same village led by Abul Kalam and Saddam Hossain threw acid on her.

Seriously burnt Jasmine was sent to Netrakona Sadar Hospital and later shifted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

A case was filed with Netrakona Police Station in this connection.

No one had been arrested till filing of this report.



Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at many places over Rajshahi and Chittagong divisions and at a few places over Barisal, Dhaka, Khulna and Sylhet divisions in the next 12 hours as of 06:00pm today.

Day temperature may fall by 1-3 degree Celsius over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:21pm today and rises at 5:34am tomorrow.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 35.6 degree Celsius was recorded at Rajshahi and the lowest of 23.5 degree at Rangpur.

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	30.6	26.8	73.7	6
Chittagong	30.0	24.5	89	97
Rajshahi	35.6	26.3	80	58
Khulna	30.2	26.5	92	80
Barisal	28.0	26.2	97	93
Sylhet	30.7	26.0	75	80
Cox's Bazar	29.2	24.6	97	95



Seminar

Department of Marketing of Jagannath University organises a seminar on 'Advances in international business studies and leadership excellence in Asian nations'. Venue: Jagannath University conference hall. Time: 10:30am.

Seminar on teaching methodology

Centre for Development Research holds a seminar on 'teaching methodology'. Venue: RC Majumder auditorium, DU. Time: 10:30am.

Roundtable

The weekly Naya Arthonity organises a roundtable on current crisis and prospect of jute industries in Bangladesh. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

Reception

Writers Foundation Bangladesh will accord a reception to Adviser to the Prime Minister Prof Dr Alauddin Ahmed. Venue: Poet Sufia Kamal Auditorium. Time: 4:00pm.



Prof Muzaffer Ahmad speaks at a seminar titled 'Climate change: Its impact on health and environment' at Dhaka Reporters' Unity yesterday. On his left are Sirajul Islam Molla and Dr Monirul Alam and on his right is Dr SK Roy.

PHOTO: STAR

Consider climate change issue while preparing budget

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday stressed the need to consider the impacts of climate change while preparing the national budget.

The seminar titled 'Climate change: Its impact on health and environment' was organised by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium.

"The impacts of climate change should be considered during the preparation of the national budget and we have to think about our role in tackling the climate change," said Bapa President Prof Muzaffer Ahmad.

"Not only developed coun-

tries, we are also destroying the environment in many cases," he said.

"The cycle of rain has been changed in the country as we have destroyed our water bodies, canal and rivers," he added.

Prof Muzaffer also underscored the need to give more attention to save rivers, canals and water bodies, and said the amount of money allocated for excavation of rivers is less than 30 percent of the amount allocated for road communications in the national budget.

Dr SK Roy of ICDDR,B said that as a huge amount of industrial waste is being dumped in the rivers and other water bodies, the num-

ber of cancer patient has increased enormously.

Dr Manirul Alam, a scientist of ICDDR,B, said the growth of population must be controlled as the land will be reduced due to climate change.

Besides, there must be huge plantation of trees and campaign to stop tree felling to preserve the environment, he added.

Dr Manirul also apprehended that due to climate change there will be outbreak of various diseases in epidemic form.

Prof Hafizur Rahman Karzon, and M Sirajul Islam Molla also spoke at the seminar.

'Set up haematology dept at every medical college'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a programme yesterday put forward some recommendations, including awareness building programme, establishing haematology department at every medical college and providing Haemophilia patients with required facilities.

They said this at a press conference jointly organised by Bangladesh Society of Haematology and Haemophilia Society of Bangladesh at the National Press Club in the city on the occasion of World Haemophilia Day.

Haemophilia is a genetic

disorder in which a patient bleeds excessively. Usually, males are the active sufferers, while females are the carriers with the risks of having one such patient in every 10,000 of the population.

Speaking as the chief guest, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) Vice Chancellor Prof Pran Gopal Datta assured that BSMMU will help such patients.

He called on the doctors' fraternity to serve the patients for the sake of the humanity.

Prof ABM Yunus of Haematology department at BSMMU presented a

keynote paper where he placed some recommendations, including awareness of the disease and establishing sustainable infrastructure with trained manpower.

He also suggested withdrawing all sorts of VAT and revenue from anti-haemophilia factor injection and supplying the medicine to the poor.

A comprehensive haemophilia care centre should be set up in the city, he said, adding that the well-off class of the society should extend their hands towards haemophilia patients.



PHOTO: STAR

Residents of Nazimuddin Road in old part of Dhaka stage a demonstration yesterday demanding that the local drug peddlers be brought to book.

Tk 660cr projects to reduce poverty

UNB, Dhaka

Social Development Foundation (SDF) is implementing three important projects involving \$101 million (Tk 660 crore) with a view to reducing poverty and rebuild and rehabilitate disaster-hit localities, as around 5.6 crore people still live at or below the poverty line.

The projects are 'Social Investment Programme Project' (SIPP), 'Flood Restoration and Recovery Assistance Programme' and 'Notun Jibon Cyclone Recovery Programme'.

SDF, an autonomous organisation established by the government in 2001, is implementing the projects with assistance from World Bank to rehabilitate the people affected by cyclone and flood, SDF officials said.

SIPP is being imple-

mented in Jamalpur and Gaibandha districts, reaching benefits to over two million poor people. It follows community driven development (CDD) approach where the community identifies their requirements and dictates the planning to meet their needs.

Under the project, village institutions have so far been formed in 922 villages of the districts through inclusion of women, youths and the poorest. It has reached over 190,000 poor households and mobilised them into 14,274 small livelihood groups (Jibikayan Groups) that engage in savings and internal lending.

"Even in the face of rising food prices and two subsequent floods in 2007 that destroyed household incomes, these groups have accumulated savings amounting to Tk 50 million and pro-

vided Tk 33 million as small loans to their group members to finance income-generating activities," said an SDF official.

As the current operation of SIPP has shown success, the government is now preparing a follow-on project to SIPP -- Empowerment and Livelihood Project (SIPP II) -- for Rangpur, Kurigram, Nilphamari and Dinajpur districts. "The work for implementing SIPP II is going on in full swing," the SDF official said.

The poverty rate in Nilphamari, Rangpur and Kurigram districts -- often hit by 'monga' -- is over 60 percent, according to official statistics.

SDF along with Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) is implementing the 'Flood Restoration and Recovery Assistance Programme' in the districts devastated by floods in 2007.

Physiotherapy confce begins at DU

DU CORRESPONDENT

With the slogan 'Skilled hand, swift healing', a two-day international conference on physiotherapy began at Dhaka University yesterday.

Prof Julian Web of Melbourne University, Australia inaugurated the conference at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhavan of Dhaka University.

A number of physiotherapy experts from the UK, the USA, Canada, Singapore, Belgium, India, Pakistan and Nepal presented papers on the occasion.

The experts said that pains in waist, neck and backbone could be healed by manual therapy without any kind of surgery or electrical equipment or medicine.

Obituary

BSS, Dhaka

Shah Mohammad Ali, joint secretary of Ministry of Post and Telecommunication and a freedom fighter, passed away due to heart attack at United Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 55.

He was buried with state honour at Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals Graveyard after namaz-e-janaza at Gulshan Jame Mosque.

Post and Telecommunication Minister Raziuddin Ahmed Razu, BTRC Chairman Brig Gen (ret'd) Zia Ahmed, BTCL Managing Director Habuazzaman, and Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka Mohammad Zillar attended the janaza, among others.

Post and Telecommunication Minister Raziuddin Ahmed Razu expressed deep shock at the death of Mohammad Ali.

Prof Husne Ara Kamal

DU CORRESPONDENT

Prof Husne Ara Kamal, former director of the Institute of Social Welfare and Research, passed away due to a cardiac arrest on Thursday, says a press release.

She left behind her husband, three daughters and a host of relatives to mourn her death.

Her qulkhani will be held at House-10, Road-8, Gulshan-1 in the city after Asr prayers on April 24.

Manindranath Ghatak

BSS, Dhaka

Manindranath Ghatak, father of senior staff reporter of the daily New Nation and former publicity secretary of Dhaka Union of Journalists Amiya Ghatak Pulak, passed away due to old-age complications at his Rangpur residence on Thursday night at the age of 82.

Dhaka Union of Journalists President Shah Alamgir and General Secretary Omar Faruque expressed shock at the death of Manindranath Ghatak and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The 38th death anniversary of Lt Col Md Abdul Qadir, a martyr of the Liberation War,

was observed yesterday.

On the occasion, his family organised a doa mahfil for the salvation of the departed soul.

Lt Col Abdul Qadir was commissioned in the Corps of Engineers in 1949.

The Qadirabad Cantonment in Natore was named after him in recognition of his role in the Liberation War. The government also issued a commemorative postage stamp in memory of him as one of the martyred intellectuals.

Ajit Kumar Datta

METRO DESK



The second death anniversary of late Ajit Kumar Datta, ex-chief accountant of

The Bangladesh Observer and a valiant freedom fighter, will be observed today, says a press release.

Special prayers and recitation from the Geeta will be held at his residence at 23 Shrish Das Lane (Laxmibazar) in Dhaka on the occasion for the salvation of the departed soul.