

PM for change in mindset

Urges young bureaucrats to deliver for people

UNB, Savar

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the government officials to come out of their old mindset and be quicker in clearing files from their desks so that poor farmers do not suffer from any delay in the delivery of services.

"Poor farmers and hard-working villagers are being deprived of government services because of British and Pakistani period mentality of some members of the administration," she said.

Sheikh Hasina was addressing the concluding ceremony of the 44th Foundation Training Course of fresh cadre service officers at Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC), Savar in the morning.

She called upon the new civil service officers to work with sincerity, honesty and dedication for rendering best services to the people.

Administering a note of warning against corruption and irregularities by government officials, the prime minister said, "Don't indulge in corruption and don't tolerate any corruption by others."

Hasina said her government wants to establish a transparent, accountable and disciplined administration, as it is firmly committed to taking the nation forward, but it is not possible without the help of a well-trained efficient civil administration.

She said, "We need to build

such an administration by which Bangladesh will be able to celebrate its golden jubilee in 2021, as a developed country ensuring basic needs of the people.

Hasina said all the emerging challenges of the globalisation have to be tackled with sharp skill and aptitude to prevail in the international arena with our head high.

Reminding them about their responsibilities, the prime minister hoped that the resilient and hard-working Bangladeshi people will be able to make the "impossible possible" if they get their proper support.

Sheikh Hasina said her government is pledge-bound to turn Bangladesh into a "digital nation" because no one will be able to survive without technological knowledge.

Mentioning that there is no alternative to training, Sheikh Hasina said BPATC could play an effective role in changing the attitude of the civil service officials by incorporating functional subjects in their courses and curricula.

Chairperson of BPATC Board of Governor Finance Minister AMA Muhit, Rector Md Delwar Hossain and Adviser to Prime Minister HT Imam also addressed the ceremony.

Ministers, advisers to the prime ministers, state ministers, lawmakers, diplomats, educationists and high officials were present on the occasion.

2 killed

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The law enforcement personnel from Jhokka Bazar and Shilchhari army camp recovered ammunition including 16 rifle bullets, one pistol bullet, 193 empty bullet shells and parts of sub-machine guns after rushing to the spot on information.

However, they could not identify the deceased and the injured person as the feuding group concealed the casualties.

Sources said two armed gangs of PCJSS and UPDF were locked in a gunfight at Lulongchhari jungle around 9:00pm on Friday over securing control of the area.

The law enforcement authority conducted massive hunt to nab the armed activists of both the groups.

FAO Summit

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The prime minister, leading a high-profile government delegation to the summit, will fly to Rome via Dubai by a Bangladesh Biman flight in the morning.

In Dubai, she will attend the 11th International Aerospace Exhibition and hold a meeting with her United Arab Emirates (UAE) counterpart in the afternoon.

During her stay in Rome, she will take part in the inaugural function of the summit scheduled to be held at the FAO headquarters.

She will make her statement in the summit on November 16 in the afternoon.

The prime minister will also attend a roundtable meeting on "Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Challenges for Agriculture and Food Security".

Apart from this, she is expected to hold separate meetings with Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, FAO Director General Dr Jacques Diouf and Executive Director of World Food Programme Josette Sheeran.

Hasina will also meet Pope Benedict XVI at the Holy See.

She will attend a reception to be accorded to her on November 16 and will hold a meeting with Bangladeshis living in Europe and Italy at Cinema Teatro Orione on November 17. She is expected to return home on November 19.

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, Food Minister Abdur Razzak, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, will be, among others, in the prime minister's entourage.

EU not happy

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awareness building on torture and the OPCAT (Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture) was held in cooperation with RCT Denmark (Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims).

FM Masum, staff reporter of the New Age, while recounting his recent ordeal in the hands of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-10) personnel told the meeting that Rab men led by flight lieutenant Anisur Rahman stormed into his Jatrabari house in the morning of October 22 and beat him up on charge of drug peddling.

"They blindfolded me and took to Rab-10 headquarters to torture me further on a ridiculous fabricated allegation," said Masum.

He was set free in the evening following intervention by his senior colleagues, he said.

According to Odhikar's findings, at least 44 people were victims of torture in 2008 alone and a total of 74 people have allegedly been tortured by the law enforcement agencies during the past 10 months of the present government.

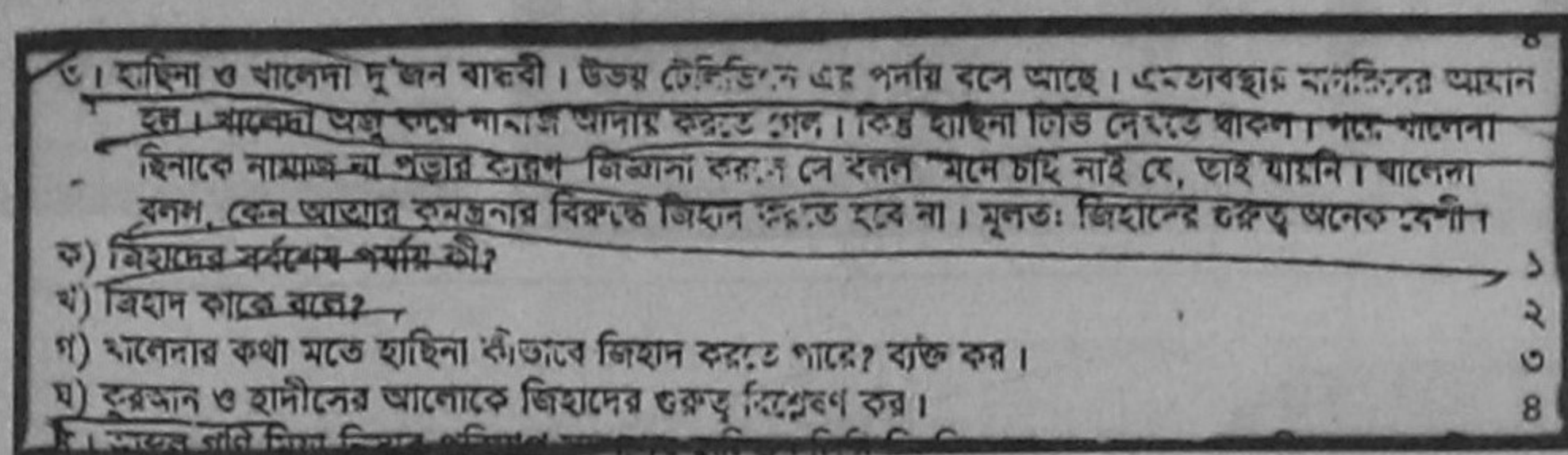
Article 35 of Bangladesh's constitution provides that no person shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment.

But there are well-documented allegations of torture by law enforcement agencies in Bangladesh as a routine practice to extract confessional statements from arrestees, said Odhikar member Dr Saira Rahman Khan.

Farhad Mazhar, Odhikar adviser, presided over the inaugural session of the daylong event.

A number of senior journalists and editors, Awami League lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta and BNP lawmaker Md Barkat Ullah Bulu among others attended the working sessions presided by Odhikar president Dr CR Abrar and treasurer Farida Akhter.

Teacher exposes his dark side



Part of the original question paper in Bangla.

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the school authorities to take instant steps against the teacher.

Headmistress of the school Sucharita Das filed a case with Double Mooring thana, and police arrested Tajalli.

The school authorities are also going to take departmental action including suspension of the teacher.

Sources said the question paper for the examination held on Thursday reads: Hasina and (leader of the opposition) Khaleda are two friends. Both are sitting in front of a television set. By this time, there was Azan for Maghrib prayers. Khaleda made Odu and went to say her prayers. But Hasina kept on watching the TV. Later, when Khaleda asked Hasina

about the reason behind her not saying prayers, Hasina said, "I did not go (to say prayers) because my mind did not prompt me."

Khaleda said, "Why won't we have to do Jihad (fight) against evil counsel of mind". In fact, Jihad has much more importance."

The other questions were - What is called Jihad; What is the last level of Jihad; According to Khaleda, how Hasina can declare Jihad - explain; Explain the importance of Jihad in the light of Quran and Hadith.

As the school was closed for weekend immediately after the examination, some guardians complained to the headmistress about the question paper.

Contacted, she said since

the hand-written question paper was put in a packet and sent to the press for printing to avoid question leak. So, they could not check the content of the question paper.

Asked about this, Headmaster of nearby Chittagong Collegiate School Md Aziz Uddin said, "Even if (official identities of) the prime minister and opposition leader were not mentioned in the question paper, the intention was obviously bad."

Meanwhile, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Md Zakir Hossain asked the school authorities to submit a report on the matter to the deputy director of secondary and higher secondary education, Chittagong.

Top outlaw killed

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On information, police of Karincha rushed to the spot and took the body to 24 Parganas Sadar Hospital.

Shahabuddin Khan, superintendent of police in Kushtia, yesterday told The Daily Star that they have informed the higher authorities in Dhaka about the matter.

According to the sources, the killing took place over rivalry between two factions of the outfit.

Different sources said Azibor and Obaidul recently came into conflict over the activities of the outfit.

One of Obaidul's family members said his wife was on her way to India to confirm the death.

Obaidul's rival Azibor, 58, is believed to be one of the founders of Gono Bahini. He was worried about Obaidul's recent activities including killing of his (Azibor's) cadres by decapitating.

In last several months, Obaidul oversaw a series of killings of his opponent Gono Mukti Fouz (GMF) cadres. His faction killed at least 11 GMF cadres -- five of them were decapitated -- between June 15 and August 19. Obaidul claimed responsibility for the killings by leaving notes in the name of "Lal Bhai" on the bodies. The group "Lal Bahini" evolved after his name.

The law and order in Kushtia deteriorated so much during June-August that it prompted the inspector general of police (IGP) and Rab director general (DG) to rush to the district on August 20. Rab and police jointly started a drive since then.

Out of 33 alleged cadres of different outlawed parties killed in "shootouts" with Rab and police, 18 were of Gono Bahini. As Azibor blamed Obaidul for such killing of men a conflict arose between them. They then fled to India.

According to sources, Azibor turned down Obaidul's proposal to bury the hatched

A pardon called

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pardon of sentences against Shahadab is an act of abuse of justice.

The president has granted clemency without following legal procedures, he said.

Delwar said convicted Sahadab, who had been on the run, did not surrender to the court or filed any appeal against the convictions.

Senior lawyer barrister Rafique-Ul-Huq said there is no legal bar for the president to pardon anyone's sentences in a case following the recommendation of the prime minister.

He said many convicts, who had not surrendered to the court, will now try to obtain presidential pardon.

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan said the president has pardoned Shahadab, son of ruling party leader Sajeda Chowdhury, under political consideration.

A special court on November 11 accepted a government prayer moved by public prosecutor Abu Abdullah for withdrawal of the convictions against Shahadab following the presidential clemency, he said.

He said Abdullah had no jurisdiction to submit a prayer to the court for withdrawing the convictions against Shahadab in two cases filed by ACC as he is a public prosecutor, not a counsel for ACC.

India 'positive'

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On the other hand, Bangladesh discussed allowing India to use Chittagong Port and designating Ashuganj as a new port of call under the Inland Water Transit and Trade Agreement.

Both sides agreed to resolve issues relating to Dahagram and Angarpota enclaves and Tin Bigha Corridor, according to a joint statement in New Delhi during Dipu Moni's visit.

The two countries also recognised the need to finalise the Teesta water-sharing agreement and agreed to begin Joint Hydrological Observations on the river immediately.

Mijarul said a technical team will meet this month and a draft accord on the sharing of Teesta waters will be sent to India before the prime minister's visit.

"This is a significant visit. We discussed different issues ahead of the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India," Nirupama told journalists after bilateral talks with Mijarul at the state guesthouse Padma. She said New Delhi attached highest importance to its ties with Dhaka.

Mijarul said India praised Bangladesh for its steps against terrorists, adding that he and his Indian counterpart stressed the need for resolving the outstanding border problems including killings on bordering areas as soon as possible.

Replaying to a question whether Bangladesh would give India multi-modal transit facilities via Ashuganj the foreign secretary said, "There was no mention of declaring Ashuganj as a port of call in the joint statement."

He, however, said any development could take place during the highest political level visits (prime ministers level visit).

In the afternoon, Nirupama called on Hasina at her official residence where they discussed in details the forthcoming visit by the Bangladesh premier to India.

Hasina will fly to New Delhi after attending the climate change summit in

Copenhagen. She will hold official meeting with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on December 19.

TALK WITH KHALEDA
BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia expressed her concern over the frequent killings of Bangladeshis by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) when Nirupama Rao called on her at her Gulshan office. She urged her to take steps to stop such killings immediately.

"They discussed bilateral issues. The opposition leader said her party wants to maintain a friendly relation with New Delhi," Khaleda's foreign Affairs Adviser Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury told reporters after the talk.

About India's planned Tipaimukh Dam, she hoped that India would not do anything that would harm Bangladesh. In this regard, Khaleda referred to her proposal to carry out an impact assessment survey of the dam.

The Indian foreign minister, in reply, assured that interests of both the countries should be safeguarded first before something is done.

3 Americans killed in Afghanistan

AFP, Kabul

Three Americans including two members of the Nato-led force in Afghanistan have been killed by homemade bombs, the military said yesterday.

The other casualty was a civilian worker, it said without giving further detail.

One of the soldiers died in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast in southern Afghanistan, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said in a statement.

"In a separate incident an Isaf service member and a civilian contractor, both from the United States, died in an IED strike in eastern Afghanistan," the statement said, without elaborating.

Friday's casualties bring to 470 the number of foreign soldiers killed in Afghanistan since the start of the year. More than half the dead are Americans.

20 more Lashkar men

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Mahbubur Rahman, additional deputy commissioner of the Detective Branch (DB) of police, said they have names of some medicine traders suspected to have been providing financial assistance to the LeT men.

He however would not divulge the names for the sake of investigation.

Manbubur said they have teamed up with other law enforcement agencies to hunt down the still-at-large LeT operatives.

They have also taken measures so none of the militants could slip out of the country.

Meanwhile, a DB team has seized a laptop, electrical circuits and several cellphone sets from the houses of detained LeT operatives Mohammad Ashraf Alia Zahid and Mohammad Monwar Ali.

The seizure was made following up information gleaned from the two arrested with another on Friday.

The three, all Pakistan nationals, were picked up from Tongi and the city's Uttara for suspected links to LeT.

Zahid and Monwar travelled between Bangladesh and Pakistan several times in last two years. They used to present themselves as tourists.

During their stay, they would often seek to have their visas extended. On failure to do so,

2 cattle markets

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11:00am following a long-standing conflict over two cattle markets between the people of Painer Bazar of Rajendrapur area and Hazi Bazar of Sirajdikhan under Munshiganj district.

Locals also said the two feuding groups were chasing each other with firearms, cock-tails, sharp weapons, sticks and rods covering about half square kilometre area of the highway at Sirajdikhan. Several gunshots were fired at the time, they added.

The passengers, especially the women and children, in the buses and private vehicles on both sides of the highway faced huge trouble during the time.

Local people said the two cattle markets, within one kilometre area, hold the weekly 'haat' on Wednesday which hampers the trading at both the markets. This is going for long and people of the two areas have been pushing each other to change the date.

On yesterday, Keraniganj upazila Chairman Shaheen's men assaulted Ali Akbar, the lessee of the cattle market at Sirajdikhan on his way to Dhaka. Hearing this, over five hundred people from Sirajdikhan gathered at Rajendrapur. Besides, people of Sirajdikhan also rushed to the spot, sources added.

Sources said an incident of firing took place on the same conflict at Painer Bazar cattle market on last Wednesday.

Keraniganj police said they did not charge batons or fire tear gas fearing the incident could get worse. They just calmed the situation down through discussion. Till filing of the report at 7:35pm no case was filed with the Keraniganj police station.

Nasa confirms

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"indicates the mission successfully uncovered water in a permanently shadowed lunar crater," Nasa said in a statement.

"The discovery opens a new chapter in our understanding of the moon," it added, as ecstatic scientists celebrated the landmark discovery.

"Yes indeed we found water and we did not find only a little bit but a significant amount," said Anthony Colaprete, project scientist and principal investigator for the 79-million-dollar LCROSS mission.

The data was found after Nasa sent two spacecraft crashing into the lunar surface last month to probe Earth's nearest neighbour for water.

One rocket slammed into the Cabeus crater, near the lunar southern pole, at around 5,600 miles (9,000 kilometres) per hour.

The rocket was followed four minutes later by a spacecraft equipped with cameras to record the initial impact, which sent a huge plume of material billowing up from the bottom of the crater, untouched by sunlight for billions of years.

"In the 20- to 30-meter (66- to 100-foot) crater we found maybe about a dozen, at least, two-gallon buckets of water. This is an initial result," Colaprete told reporters.

"We are ecstatic," he added in a statement.

"Multiple lines of evidence show water was present in both the high angle vapour plume and the ejecta curtain created by the LCROSS Centaur impact."

"The concentration and distribution of water and other substances requires further analysis, but it is safe to say Cabeus holds water," Colaprete said.

Peter Schultz, professor of geological sciences at Brown University and a co-investigator on the LCROSS mission, expressed hope that more water could be found on the moon.

"What's really exciting is we've only hit one spot," Schultz said.

"It's kind of like when you're drilling for oil. Once you find it one place, there's a greater chance you'll find more nearby."

Scientists had previously theorized that, except for the possibility of ice at the bottom of craters, the moon was totally dry.

Finding water on Earth's natural satellite is a major breakthrough in space exploration.

"It's very exciting, it is painting a new image of the moon," said Gregory Deloy of the University of California, hailing

it as "an extraordinary discovery."

He theorised that "one of the possible source of water is a comet."

"We're unlocking the mysteries of our nearest neighbour and, by extension, the solar system," said Michael Wargo, chief lunar scientist at Nasa headquarters in Washington.

"The full understanding of the LCROSS data may take some time. The data is that rich," Colaprete cautioned.

"Along with the water in Cabeus, there are hints of other intriguing substances. The permanently shadowed regions of the moon are truly cold traps, collecting and preserving material over billions of years."

Only 12 men, all Americans, have ever walked on the moon, and the last to set foot there were in 1972, at the end of the Apollo missions.

But Nasa's ambitious plans to put US astronauts back on the moon by 2020 to establish manned lunar bases for further exploration to Mars under the Constellation project are increasingly in doubt.

Nasa's budget is currently too small to pay for Constellation's Orion capsule, a more advanced and spacious version of the Apollo lunar module, as well as the Ares I and Ares V launchers needed to put the craft in orbit.

A key review panel appointed by President Barack Obama said existing budgets are not large enough to fund a return mission before 2020.

Hasina warns

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might go against the judiciary or give the opposition a chance to smear the government.

She said the government is resolved to redeeming the party's electoral pledge to root out corruption.

The committee members said the government should step up drive against those who had siphoned off huge sums of public money and amassed wealth through illegal means during the BNP-Jamaat rule.

They also stressed the need for applying anti-graft measures irrespective of political affiliations.

Resenting that the farmers did not get good price for rice, the meeting suggested the ministries concerned adopt a fresh strategy to ensure the farming community gets fair price for their produces.

The committee also finalised the party's Victory Day programmes.