

Military rulers spoilt youths to cling to power

PM tells National Youth Day function

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said military rulers in the past spoilt the country's youth community handing them drugs, arms and illegal money in their bid to perpetuate their usurped power.

"The military dictators pushed the young people towards evil paths to satisfy their own perverse purposes. The rulers grabbed state power and used them to cling to power," she said.

The PM said this while inaugurating the National Youth Day function organised by Youth Development Directorate (YDD) at Osmani Memorial Hall in the city.

Hasina deplored that Bangladesh could not attain its cherished development and prosperity even after 38 years of independence as the military rulers did not allow democracy to run uninterrupted in the past.

"Our youths played the strongest role in various democratic movements of the country, including the liberation war of 1971 and the 1952 language movement. We want to bring the glory of the youths back. We want to turn Bangladesh into a modern digital one by 2021 by making proper use of their strength and talent."



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina hands over a crest to a self-employed youth at a function at Osmani Memorial Hall in the city yesterday. Youth Development Directorate organised the event marking the National Youth Day.

Hasina also blamed the last BNP-Jamaat government for widespread corruption in the country that also destroyed the young ones through their degeneration.

"The young people had been used by the rulers of the BNP-Jamaat alliance as an instrument of making illegal money," she said.

"By the rulers of the BNP-Jamaat alliance, the young people had been used as the instruments of making illegal money," she told the function in a swinging criticism of her political opponents.

The PM told the young community that there is no need to make illegal money harming the country's interests.

She called on the youths to come forward to building a corruption- and drug addiction-free society in a turn-around from the past perversity.

Hasina said the government has taken up various programmes for development of the youth community, as it believes that self-reliant youths can change a country and bring its cherished prosperity.

Awami League's (AL) election pledge for arranging employment opportunity for one boy or girl from each family of the country and said that, in this regard, the government has already approved National Service Policy, she added.

Under pilot programmes of the policy, youths having higher educational degrees aged 18-35 will be employed under 10 specific modules after three months' basic training.

The PM said temporary employments have already been created by involving the unemployed youths in the nation-building programmes.

Hasina said the national service programme following the results of the pilot projects will be extended to upazila and district levels.

A total of 10 youths, who were successful in becoming self-employment taking assistance from YDD, were given awards by the premier at the programme.

State Minister for Youth Ahad Ali Sarkar chaired the function where Secretary of the ministry Mahub Ahmed, Director General of YDD Fakhru Islam and National Youth Award winners Nahid Sultana Tripti and Zakir Hossain also spoke.



Comrade Barun Roy passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Comrade Prasun Kanti Roy, popularly known as Barun Roy, an anti-British movement veteran and organiser of the liberation war, passed away due to old-age ailments at his house at Hasonnagar in Sunamganj yesterday morning at the age of 88.

The veteran politician left behind his wife Shila Roy, a son and a host of relatives, friends and admirers to mourn his death.

His father Karuna Sindhu Roy was also a renowned politician and member of the then Assam Legislative Assembly.

Born in 1921 in a Zamindar family at a remote village in Beheli, Jamalganj, Barun Roy dedicated his life to ensuring welfare of common people.

Barun, who did his BA from Sylhet MC College, was the president of Sylhet district Chhatra Federation in 1947.

He suffered imprisonment several times during the British rule and also during the Pakistan regime.

He was elected a lawmaker in 1954 from Jukta Front and in 1986 from eight-party alliance.

A frontline organiser of the liberation war in 1971, Barun played a major role in the Sylhet region at that time.

Hundreds of people paid their last respects to him when his body was kept at the Sunamganj Shaheed Minar before his cremation at night.

Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith expressed deep shock at the death of Barun Roy.

In a condolence message, he said Barun played a vital role in all the progressive movements in the country. The nation will remember him forever for his active role in the liberation war.

In another condolence message, Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran said, "We have lost a true friend of the masses. Roy had dedicated his life to the welfare of the poor, especially peasants and fishermen."

Workers Party of Bangladesh, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Gono Forum, 11-party, Bangladesh Trade Union Centre, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Communist Kendra, Sammilito Samajik Andolan, Bangladesh Gonoatantrik Ainjibi Samity and Mani Singh-Farhad Smriti Trust also expressed deep shock at the death of the veteran revolutionary leader.

Nurjahan Islam

DU CORRESPONDENT



6:00am yesterday at the age of 75, says a press release.

She left behind her husband, a son, a daughter and a host of relatives to mourn her death.

She was buried at Banani graveyard after namaz-e-janaza yesterday.

Her qulqhwani will be held at House No. 20, Road No. 62, Gulshan-2 in the city after Asr prayers on Friday.

Sultana Rahman

METRO DESK



Sultana Rahman, a writer and wife of late Prof Habibur Rahman, passed away at a city hospital on Monday at the age of 85, says a press release.

She is survived by her one daughter and two sons.

She will be laid to rest at her family graveyard after namaz-e-janaza in Chhunati of Satkania in Chittagong after Asr prayers today.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to pray for salvation of her departed soul.

Ban UPDF, withdraw army: Shantu Larma

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jyotirindra Bodhipriyo Larma, chairman of the CHT Regional Council, yesterday urged the government to ban anti-peace accord organisation United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), saying that the armed cadres of this group is carrying out terrorist activities in the hills.

He also urged the government to immediately stop 'Operation Uttaran' in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. It will not be possible to implement the CHT peace accord unless the UPDF cadres are dealt with firmly and the military is pulled out of CHT, he added.

Jyotirindra Bodhipriyo, also known as Shantu Larma, said this at a view exchange meeting with journalists on the 12th anniversary of CHT peace accord at a city hotel. Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council organised the event.

Shantu Larma, also the chairman of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), pointed out that the people of CHT had to endure military domination in the last 12 years while the activities of the armed cadres of UPDF are creating obstacles to implementing the peace accord.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord was signed in December 2, 1997 between the government and the PCJSS to pave the way for establishing peace in the hills.

Instead of only reshuffling various commit-

tees, the government must show their sincerity by announcing a clear roadmap to implement the peace accord, Shantu Larma said.

He stressed that the powers, status and working area of the CHT Regional Council should be clearly laid down as stated in the accord. However, the election of the council is yet to take place. Empowering the regional council is a precondition to settling land dispute.

It is also necessary to prepare an acceptable voter list by identifying original residents of the hill tracts who are now the minority in their own home, he mentioned.

Speaking at the meeting, human rights activist Shahriar Kabir called for restoration of the secular spirit of the constitution and also the constitutional recognition of the ethnic minorities.

Prof Sadeka Halim said land disputes in the CHT should be settled immediately. It is the main source of crisis in CHT. About 22 percent of Adivasi households in CHT were evicted from their homesteads at least once in their lifetime, she said.

Sanjeeb Drong, general secretary of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, Prof Mesbah Kamal, Prof Dr Dalem Chandra Barman, Dr Samsul Arefin, M Hamid, executive director of RTV, Syed Abul Maqsood and members of the regional council KS Mong, Nurul Alam and Gautam Kumar Chakma also spoke.

Be forward-looking in developing hybrid crops

Matia urges scientists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury yesterday urged the scientists to be progressive and forward-looking in developing and extending hybrid and genetically engineered crops to meet the increasing demand for food.

"I appeal to the scientists -- don't adhere to conservative school of thoughts. You are here not to give scientific fatwa," she said at a discussion marking the Saarc Charter Day organised by the Saarc Agriculture Centre at Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) in the city.

Hybrid crop is a reality today and the debate on it should be over, the minister said, adding: "Have some imagination of the future. Think of three million people being added to the population annually."

Her remarks came at a time when productivity of the existing varieties, especially of rice, remains almost stagnant. However, many do not support hybrid crops. They say cultivation of hybrid crops will lead to elimination of indigenous varieties and make agriculture totally dependent on multinational companies.

During the Boro season, around 10 lakh hectares of land are brought under hybrid rice cultivation, the yield of which is higher by, on an average, two metric tonnes than local high yielding varieties per hectare.

The problem regarding hybrid rice cultivation, for now, is that a large amount of seeds has to be imported. However, the government is trying to develop hybrid varieties locally, officials said.

Matia Chowdhury said the government will surely remain careful about any negative

effects of hybrid technologies.

Dr Mangala Rai, secretary of the Department of Agricultural Research and Education, India, said that with the farmland declining and population increasing, there is an urgent need for a boost in food production.

"But, productivity cannot go up without agriculture being profitable," he said, adding that efficient management and investment in research and development are of utmost importance.

Around 50 percent of people are dependent on farming, but farm workers' wages are six times lower than that of the industrial workers. This gap must be reduced to end poverty, he said.

Agriculture Secretary CQK Mustaq Ahmed, BARC Executive Chairman Dr Wais Kabir and Saarc Agriculture Centre Director Rafiqul Islam Mondal also spoke.

Govt set to introduce new disaster signal system

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will soon introduce new disaster signaling system, which will mention the areas that may be affected by disasters so that people of the areas concerned can take necessary precautions to save lives and properties.

Traditionally, the met office used to put signals, which were meant mainly for the sailors and the vulnerable areas were not pointed out.

"Now people will know of the areas that may be affected. This will help people reduce damages by natural disasters," said Food and Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzaque at the launching ceremony of a booklet titled 'New signal system for cyclone and weather and mass disaster

warnings' at the conference room of the ministry yesterday.

Conventionally, there were 15 signals for the natural disasters, but under the new system there will be only eight signals.

Sometimes, it is seen that the cyclone speed is so high that some signals are ignored to shift to the higher signals. Now the signals have been redesigned in a way that will help the coastal people understand the signals easily, said an official at the ministry.

As the officials and people concerned need to be habituated with the new signaling system, the government with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will organise training programmes on it before introducing the new signaling

system early next year, food minister said.

Food Secretary Mokhesur Rahman chaired the programme while officials of the ministry, Red Crescent Society, met office and experts concerned were present.

Azimpur Girls' School reunion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A reunion of Azimpur Girls' School and College will be held on January 23.

The school authorities requested the interested former students to register their name by January 5, says a press release.

A souvenir will be published on the occasion and the interested students are also requested to submit their writings by January 5.

WAR CRIMES TRIAL

Committee to monitor setting up of tribunal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday formed a four-member committee to monitor the overall activities of setting up the tribunal and other offices to try 1971 war criminals.

The law ministry issued an office order in this connection, says an official handout.

ASSM Zahirul Haque, deputy secretary to the law ministry, will head the committee. Other members are Deputy Secretary Md Zabid Hossain and senior assistant secretaries Bikash Kumar Saha and SM Ershadul Alam.

The government has decided to shift the existing offices from 14 Abdul Gani Road buildings, where the tribunal and other offices for the trial will be set up, to Janata Tower at Karwan Bazar.

'Communal forces out to destroy democracy'

DU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a commemorative meeting yesterday said communal as well as fundamental forces are trying to foil the cultural movement in a bid to destroy the base of democracy in the country.

Once the cultural movement of a country is foiled, it is easy to destroy the democracy and the rule of law, they said, adding that the deadly attacks on cultural organisations one after another in recent years are alarming.

Bangladesh Udichi Shilpigosthi organised the meeting on the Dhaka

University campus to pay respect to the memories of its two activists -- Khaza Haider and Sudipta Pal Shelly -- of Netrokona unit who were killed in a deadly bomb attack in 2005.

The speakers demanded that culprits and patrons of the attack be identified and put behind bars immediately. They also demanded punishment to culprits of bomb attacks on other cultural programmes and political killings.

Nuh-ul-Alam Lenin, publicity secretary of Awami League, said the government is committed to uprooting militancy, communalism and fundamen-

talism and establishing the spirit of the liberation war.

Communist Party of Bangladesh General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim said it is easy to fulfil the parochial political interests once the culture in a country is ruined.

He demanded that the main culprits and patrons of the attack be identified and punished.

Sammilita Sangskritik Jote General Secretary Golam Kuddus, Chhayanaout leader Dr Sarwar Ali and former Udichi president Hasan Imam also spoke at the programme with Udichi President Golam Mohammad Idu in the chair.



Begum Rokeya Day today

UNB, Dhaka

Begum Rokeya Day, commemorating Begum Rokeya's pioneering role in advancing the causes of women in this subcontinent, will be observed in the country today.

Women and Children Affairs Ministry and various socio-cultural organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes to observe the day.

President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages paying rich tributes to Begum Rokeya on the occasion.

In his message, the president recalled the first step Begum Rokeya had taken for awakening the Muslim womenfolk in the British India through education in an adverse environment.

Prime Minister in her message said Begum Rokeya showed the women the enlightened path of education overcoming different obstacles.

HC asks govt to include 159 FP officers in cadre service

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed the government to immediately include the jobs of 159 non-cadre family planning officers in the cadre service with seniority.

The High Court bench of Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana and Justice Md Shamsul Huda came up with the directive upon a writ petition jointly filed by the non-cadre officials.

The petitioners' counsel Barrister M Badruddoza told The Daily Star that following the HC verdict his clients will get seniority and promotion from 1995, when the posts of the family planning officers were divided into two categories -- cadre officials and non-cadre officials.

He said the then government classified 464 posts of the family planning officers without any lawful authority as some 230 officials, out of 464, were given cadre status, depriving 234 others.

A total of 194, out of 234 non-cadre officials, filed a writ petition with the High Court in 2002 challenging the government action dividing the post, he said, adding that 159, out of 194 petitioners, are now in the service.

DVD of Muktijuddha Protidin launched

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called for presenting the true history of the 1971 War of Liberation before the new generations, blaming the anti-liberation forces for distortion of history.

She made the call while she was launching the DVD of a programme titled 'Muktijuddha Protidin', being aired on private television Channel-1, at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) yesterday.

Hasina said after the killing of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on August 15 in 1975, the anti-liberation forces distorted the country's history.

Launching the Muktijuddha Protidin programme presented by Nasir Uddin Yusuf Bachchu, she said it created interest in the new generation to know the true history of the War of Liberation.

"New generation will be enlightened with the spirit of the liberation war by such programmes," she said.

She called for continuing the programme and said, "I myself watch the programme with much interest and advised its presenter many times about the programme."

Recalling their jail life during the liberation war, Hasina said her younger brother Sheikh Jamal joined the War of Liberation fleeing from the confinement.

She said the common people had extended their cooperation to the freedom fighters by risking life and their contribution would have to be projected before the new generation.

Finance Minister Abul Mal Abdul Muhith, Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad, advisers to the PM HT Imam and Dr Moshir Rahman and State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Captain (Retd) Tajul Islam were present.

Orientation for journo to cover JS debate

METRO DESK

An orientation for journalists to strengthen their capacity in monitoring discussions in the parliament on electoral manifesto and commitments related to achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was held in the city yesterday, says a press release.

Management and Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) in cooperation with Parliament Journalists Association (PJA) organised the programme.

During the course, journalists were briefed on the basics of MDGs, its reflection in the national budget and the ruling party's compliance of election manifesto and commitments related to it.

Shahjahan Sardar, Asish Saikat, president and general secretary of the PJA, and Hasibur Rahman, executive director of MRDI, spoke at the programme.

A total of 22 journalists from print and electronic media participated at the programme.

DHAKA TODAY

Cartoon exhibition
Transparency International Bangladesh organises an anti-corruption cartoon exhibition. Venue: Zainul Gallery, Faculty of Fine Art, Dhaka University. Time: 4:00pm. The exhibition will continue till December 16 from 12:00noon to 8:00pm daily.

Lecture
Asiatic Society of Bangladesh organises Prof Muhammad Nurul Karim Memorial Lecture 2009. Venue: Society auditorium. Time: 4:30pm.

Seminar
Dhaka Ahsania Mission organises a seminar to mark World AIDS Day. Venue: Biam Foundation. Time: 10:30am.

Discussion
Bangla Academy will hold a discussion to mark Rokeya Day 2009. Venue: Academy seminar room. Time: 4:00pm.

Publication ceremony
Grameenphone Ltd organises the publication ceremony of 'Muktijuddha Shohid Chikitshokor Jibonkosh and Muktijuddha Shohid Chikitshokor Poribar Shomabesh'. Venue: Bangabandhu International Conference Centre. Time: 3:00pm.

Seminar
Governance Coalition, a platform of 43 non-government organisations, organises a seminar on social safety network. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

View exchange meet
Campaign for Good Governance

organises a view exchange meet on the development of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

Founding anniversary
Amra Surjomukhi organises a programme to mark its 34th founding anniversary where National Professor Kabir Chowdhury will be accorded a reception. Venue: National Museum auditorium. Time: 6:00pm.

Meeting
A meeting of the ex-students of Chittagong Govt Muslim High School will be held. Venue: Chattagram Samity conference room, Topkhana Road. Time: 6:30pm.

Discussion
National Credit and Commerce Bank will hold a discussion to pay tribute to the memories of its former chairman Meer Zahir Hossain. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4:00pm.

Launching ceremony
The launching ceremony of 'The invisible people: Poverty and resiliency in the Dhaka slums' and 'The invisible people of Bangladesh: Reflection of poverty' will be held. Venue: Nabab Nowab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban auditorium. Time: 11:00am.

Debate
The Concord - Prothom Alo 3rd Buat Debating Club Debate Championship will begin. Venue: Buat auditorium. Time: 5:00pm.

| WEATHER TODAY | | | | |
|---|------------------------|------|------------------------|---------|
| Temperature may fall | | | | |
| UNB, Dhaka | | | | |
| Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today. | | | | |
| Light to moderate fog may occur over the country during midnight till morning. Met Office said. | | | | |
| Night temperature may fall slightly over the country during the period. | | | | |
| The sun sets in the capital at 6:12pm today and rises at 7:30am tomorrow. | | | | |
| Country's highest temperature 28.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 11.3 degrees Celsius at Rajshahi and Chuadanga. | | | | |
| 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 | 27.1 | 15.4 | 87 | 59 |
| Chittagong | 26.0 | 16.7 | 98 | 85 |
| Rajshahi | 27.4 | 11.3 | 88 | 75 |
| Khulna | 27.0 | 14.8 | 78 | 75 |
| Barisal | 27.5 | 13.5 | 90 | 82 |
| Sylhet | 27.3 | 15.5 | 75 | 83 |
| Cox's Bazar | 28.7 | 18.2 | 80 | 77 |