

Contribute to nation building

President urges all

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman yesterday called on the countrymen to contribute from their respective positions to the nation building being imbued with the spirit of patriotism.

He made the call while hosting a reception for the members of the Hindu community at Bangabhaban, marking Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the community.

On the occasion, Zillur greeted the countrymen, including the Hindu community.

Describing Bangladesh as a secular country, he said people of all religions in the country could perform their respective rituals peacefully in a brotherly atmosphere.

"Mutual tolerance, respect and brotherhood are our perpetual tradition," he said, adding that our country needs to go forward towards economic progress and development by upholding this tradition.

In the reception, Zillur welcomed the guests at Bangabhaban and exchanged greetings with them.

State Minister for Religion Affairs Advocate Shahjahan Miah, diplomats including High Commissioners of India, Nepal and Sri Lanka to Bangladesh attended the reception.

Besides, distinguished personalities including principal of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, judges, editors, academics, freedom fighters, senior journalists, lawyers, doctors, businessmen, artistes, high civil and military officials and retired government officials attended the reception.



Hindu devotees on a boat in the Buriganga near Wiseghat in the city immerse the image of Goddess Durga into the river yesterday, the concluding day of the five-day long Durga Puja.

PHOTO: STAR

Fakhrul trashes Suranjit's remark

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Acting Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday dismissed Awami League leader Suranjit Sengupta's recent remark that it is pointless to try to make a dead tree bloom.

The BNP leader said people know how to keep a dead tree, which symbolises the abolished caretaker government system, alive. People with their struggle will keep the tree alive; they will nurse it and make it bloom again, he told reporters as he visited an ailing leader of the party in the city's Islamic Hospital.

Fakhrul said a good impression would prevail upon the government if it restored the caretaker government provision to fulfil the aspiration of people by holding the next election under a caretaker administration.

Bir Bikram Matiur Rahman dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Matiur Rahman, Bir Bikram and Nikli upazila unit BNP president, died of cardiac arrest at a hospital in Dhaka yesterday. He was 64.

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

He will be buried with a state honour at West Pukurpar graveyard after a namaz-e-janaza on Nikli central Eidgah premises after jumah prayers today.

Afzal Hossain, local lawmaker and advocate Fazlur Rahman, president of district BNP, expressed deep shock at the death of the freedom fighter.

Stand against anti-liberation forces: Quader

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League Presidium Member Obaidul Quader yesterday urged the pro-liberation forces to stand against the anti-liberation forces to build a non-communal Bangladesh.

"Communalism is a huge poisonous tree. It was not born overnight. Communal politics in the country began with the killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975 and now it has grown up as a terrific poisonous tree and is expanding its roots," he said.

Quader was addressing a discussion organised by Bangali Jatiyatabad Parishad at Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU).

He said communal politics have taken its roots due to divide among the freedom fighters.

Criticising the recent remark of Opposition leader Khaleda Zia to play the final match against the government, Quader said: "There is every possibility for her (Khaleda) to suffer a suicidal goal in the game."

Chaired by Parishad president Abdul Haque Sabuj, the discussion was addressed, among others, by Dhaka Mahanagar AL general secretary Mofazzal Hosain Maya, AL leaders M Abdul H Manik, Foyaz Uddin Miah and Sheikh Bazlur Rahman.

Eight die in road accidents

METRO DESK

Eight people were killed and 21 others injured in road accidents in Dhaka, Dinajpur, Noakhali, Brahmanbaria, and Feni yesterday and Wednesday.

Our staff correspondent reports: A nine-year-old schoolboy died after being hit by a pickup van at West Agargaon in the city yesterday.

The victim, Mohammad Jasim, a student of class III, was son of Khokon Mia.

The father said Jasim was standing beside a rickshaw they just got off in the area. Suddenly the pickup van from a nearby garage hit his son from behind. Jasim was declared dead in Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Ziauzzaman, officer-in-charge, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police

Station, said the pickup van was driven by an 18-year-old boy. Police arrested the boy and seized the vehicle.

Meanwhile, a private car knocked down Yasin, 20, a carpenter of Moghbazar, at Badda in the city yesterday, killing him on the spot.

The youth was riding a bicycle to his workplace at Badda, said Mahbubur Rahman, officer-in-charge, Badda Police Station.

Our Dinajpur correspondent says: An Adivasi woman and her daughter died as a truck hit an improvised three-wheeler they were riding at Rampur intersection on Dinajpur-Panchagarh highway Wednesday night.

Jaba Murmu, 30, wife of Niranjan Mardi of Mukundapur village in Kaharol upazila, and her

three-year-old daughter Shonati Mardi were bound for a temple to celebrate Durga Puja.

Locals caught the truck driver Illias and handed him over to Birganj police.

Our Noakhali correspondent reports: Two people were killed and 21 others injured in a bus-truck collision on Sonaimuri-Laksam road in Naotola area under Sonaimuri upazila yesterday.

One of the deceased was identified as Shahjahan, 60, driver of the truck. Identity of the other victim could not be known.

Police and witnesses said Shahjahan succumbed to his injuries in Noakhali General Hospital.

The other injured were taken to Noakhali Medical College Hospital

and other local clinics.

Our Brahmanbaria correspondent adds: A teenage boy was killed after being knocked down by a truck at Maddyapara in Brahmanbaria municipality area Wednesday night.

The victim, Kawser Mia, 16, was son of Sher Ali of Tholiara village in the sadar upazila.

Police said the truck hit Kawser and injured him seriously. He died on the way to Brahmanbaria sadar hospital. Locals seized the truck but the driver escaped.

A Feni correspondent reports: Two people were killed as a covered van rammed into a CNG-run auto-rickshaw in Silonia area on the bypass of Dhaka-Chittagong highway in the district yesterday.

Identities of the deceased could not be known immediately.



A few bamboo poles are the only warning sign of a gaping hole on Dhaka-Aricha road near Savar Bazar, leaving oncoming traffic exposed to the risks of accidents at any moment. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: STAR

BNP's road march

FROM PAGE 1

Later the party postponed its Chittagong road march scheduled for October 25-26 due to Hajj and Eid-ul-Azha.

A coordination committee led by party's standing committee member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain has already held several meetings with central and district leaders concerned to make the programme a success.

All steps have been taken to make the road march a success, Mosharraf told The Daily Star. He hoped it will create a momentum for the ongoing anti-government movement.

Members of the committee left the capital for Sylhet yesterday. They will hold preparatory meetings today and look after the preparation work.

"We have asked all the local units from capital to Sylhet to take all out measure for the programme," mentioned a member of the committee, adding the party's central office has

already conveyed the message to local units.

Party's Organising Secretary Elias Ali said they have already booked a record number of hotels and resthouses in Sylhet for the entourage of the chairperson. Khaleda, though, will stay at the district circuit house.

Meanwhile, the party high-ups have decided to extend the October 18-19 road march towards Rajshahi for a day. As per the revised plan, the road march will conclude at Chapainawabganj instead of the divisional headquarters.

Defying protests from BNP and its allies, parliament in July adopted the 15th amendment to the constitution to abolish the caretaker system and allow general election under an elected government.

BNP alleged the constitutional changes are meant to make sure the Awami League-led alliance stay in power forever.

Disaster management law on the cards

FROM PAGE 20

through embankments to make way for saline water to enter shrimp enclosures. This consequently contributed to heavy flooding during cyclone Aila, but no action could be taken against the people responsible.

This happened because the present standing order on disaster, which defines the roles of the government and non-government entities on disaster management, does not permit any legal action, they said.

Amid predictions of

intense and frequent disasters like floods, cyclones, tidal surges, river erosion, water logging, droughts linked with the climate change, the authorities concerned have moved to enact the much-needed law, the officials said.

The present Disaster Management Bureau neither has the power nor the capacity to coordinate disaster-related activities.

The draft law proposes establishing a disaster management department/authority to coordinate

the activities of the ministries and non-government and development partners. It also suggests setting up a national training and research institute and preparing a voluntary force for disaster management.

The Inter-governmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change recently termed Bangladesh as one of the most vulnerable and endangered countries in the world with regard to climate change.

According to the Global Climate Risk Index 2010, an average of 8,241 people died each year in 244 cases of extreme weather conditions in Bangladesh with the damage amounting over \$2 billion a year and a GDP loss of 1.81 percent during 1990-2008.

Oxfam, an international humanitarian organisation, says that climate-change induced disasters like cyclones, salinity, storm surges, river and coastal erosion are hampering the lives and livelihoods of at least 2 crore people, while about 2

lakh people are becoming homeless every year in Bangladesh.

According to a seismic zoning map prepared by the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, 43 percent area of Bangladesh is rated as high-risk zones for earthquakes. The 6.9 magnitude earthquake, which occurred on September 18 with its epicentre in Sikkim, has intensified the fear of earthquakes.

Wadud said studies on Ways of Climate Adaptation and Training are imperative to

strengthen the national capacity to manage disasters.

He said the law would allow the public officials to acquire properties or land, if required, to reduce the impacts of disasters. He also added that designing the strategies to reduce damage by natural disasters is a major goal of the law.

The draft law suggests creating a Tk 100-crore national fund for disaster response, relief and rehabilitation works. Local government bodies will also create funds to meet emergency

relief operations.

Under the law, the authorities concerned will have options to immediately release money from emergency funds if needs arise. Under present arrangements, releasing money even for emergencies requires the finance ministry's permission.

Ziaul Hoque Mukta, policy and advocacy manager of Oxfam Bangladesh, said a law is a must to ensure proper and timely assistance for people affected by disasters.



Human chain

Amra Muktijoddhar Santan will organise a human chain; Venue: in front of Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:00am.

Human chain

Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sangskritik Dal will organise a human chain; Venue: in front of Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:30am.

Discussion

Jatiya Nari Samik Trade Union Kendro will hold a discussion; Venue: 23/2, Topekhana road; Time: 4:00pm.

Programme

Kendria Kanchi-Kanchar Mela will organise a programme; Venue: its premises; Time: 11:00am.

Poetry recital

Muktadhara Abritti Charcha Kendra