

JP forms human chain for steps to end violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders and activists of Jatiya Party formed a human chain in the capital yesterday demanding an end to violence including murder, rape and acid throwing immediately.

The human chain, which began at 10:00am, stretched from Shahbag area to Motijheel.

Hussain Mohammad Ershad, Jatiya Party chairman, along with his party leaders visited the whole chain in a mini truck.

Ershad said recently there has been a surge of crimes including murder, rape and acid throwing.

He urged all to resist culprits who are committing such crimes in society.

Ershad mentioned the murder of Biswajit Das and said his [Biswajit] mother asked why her son was killed even though he was not involved in politics.

ABM Ruhul Amin Hawlader, secretary general of Jatiya Party, and Jatiya Party leaders Kazi Zafar and Kazi Firoz

Rashid also spoke at the programme.

MALAYSIAN FUND FOR PADMA Talks 'far away' but it claims ongoing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While Malaysia yesterday claimed that it was having final discussions with Bangladesh on financing the Padma bridge project, relevant government officials in Dhaka said such discussions were still far away.

Quoting special envoy to India and South Asia Datuk Seri Samy Vellu, Malaysian official news agency Bernama reported that the final round of discussions on the RM 6.6 billion Padma multi-purpose bridge project was being held in Bangladesh.

"We expect a very favourable answer soon," Samy Vellu told Bernama.

When The Daily Star contacted a senior official of the communications ministry's Bridges Division, he said, "We are now exchanging information with Malaysia through emails to remove the inconsistencies in the country's financial offer. They gave us some clarifications but we are seeking further clarity."

He said the Bridges Division would prepare a summary on the Malaysian offer for the high-ups in the government. "Discussions will begin once the government instructs us to go ahead with the proposal," said the official, seeking anonymity.

He said no Malaysian team visited Dhaka in recent times. Officials of the finance ministry, Bridges Division and Economic Relations Division will be engaged in negotiations with Malaysia, he added.

Malaysia last year formally proposed to finance the US\$ 2.9 billion Padma bridge. But the Bridges Division could not evaluate the proposal as it was full of loopholes and inconsistencies.

Malaysia did not also reply to queries made by the Bridges Division for the removal of the loopholes.

However, Malaysia started communicating with the Bridges Division last month assuming that World Bank would not provide the loan.

Own funding to destroy economy

Say BNP leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government was staging a "cinema" after a one-year "drama" by stating that the Padma bridge will be constructed with its own funds, a decision which will destroy the country's economy, said BNP leaders yesterday.

As per economic experts, the government's decision will create huge pressure on the economy, BNP Standing Committee Member Nazrul Islam Khan told a rally organised by Bangladesh Sammilito Peshajibi Parishad before the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

The rally was organised demanding unconditional release of BNP leaders and withdrawal of false cases filed against them.

The government, on January 31, withdrew its request to the World Bank, the bridge project's lead financier, for US\$ 1.2 billion as loan for the US\$ 2.9 billion project.



Students take SSC exams at Ideal School and College at Motijheel in Dhaka yesterday morning.

PHOTO: STAR

366 shanties burnt to ashes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 366 shanties were gutted in a fire that broke out at Shahidertek Slum in the capital's Agargaon yesterday.

However, no casualty was reported as most of the slum dwellers were out working while some children and aged persons who were inside managed to escape on time, said witnesses.

On information, nine fire trucks from the fire service headquarters and Mirpur and Mohammadpur stations rushed to the spot and, after frantic efforts, brought the fire under control around 1:50pm.

Sher-e-Bangla Nagar police said they had shifted goods and three detainees of an adjoining police station to a nearby mosque.

One slum dweller, Abul Hossain, said some shanties and goods kept on an adjoining road by the slum dwellers for safety during the fire were looted.

Mohammadpur Fire Station Senior Station Officer Abdul Alim said some slum dwellers alleged that the fire spread from an earthen stove in the shanty of one Rashid around 12:20pm.

Rashid is one of 108 men who erected the tin and wood structures on government land and rented those out, he said.

A good portion of the shanties are situated over some wetlands, being filled with sand by a government organisation. Some slum dwellers said the shanties were deliberately set on fire to evict them and fill up the wetlands.

The fire service listed 366 families which lost nearly all of their belongings.

Viqarunnisa head's job extension challenged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court challenging the legality of extending service of Manju Ara Begum, acting principal of Viqarunnisa Noon School and College.

It said the service of any teacher after expiry of his or her 60 years cannot be extended as per an education ministry's notification. The special governing body of the institution extended Manju Ara's service on November 10

last year for next one year, as her 60 years expired on December 12.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA, BANGLAR CHOKH

Grieving family members of Sub-Inspector Shariful Islam Khan, inset, at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where his body was kept yesterday. The officer of Detective Branch of police was killed following an attack by a gang of robbers at Gazaria upazila in Munshiganj early in the morning.

HC summons ex-SC registrar on contempt of court charge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday summoned former Supreme Court registrar Iktedar Ahmed before it on February 10 in connection with a contempt of court petition.

Tarek MR Chowdhury, a Supreme Court lawyer, filed the petition yesterday accusing Iktedar of trying to damage the image of judiciary by writing an article to a Bangla daily.

The Dainik Nirapekkho on January 28 published the article written by Iktedar, Deputy Attorney General Amit Talukder told The Daily Star.

He said the article was about desperate greed, prevention of unjust conducts and appropriate enforcement of law.

The HC also issued a upon Iktedar to explain within 10 days why he should not be punished for committing contempt of court by writing the article.



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