

Acting president Hamid visits Kishoreganj

Abdul Hamid yesterday visited his home constituency in remote haor area of Kishoreganj for the first time after being the acting President.

"I made my first public address in front of a huge crowd here in 1969 as a leader of Chhatra League, and after so many years today I came here to see the haor people in my first visit after being the acting President," he said while speaking at a gathering at Abdullahpur, a part of his constituency from where he (Hamid) has been elected as member of parliament for eight times.

"I said about principle and ideology of Bangabandhu in 1969 here, and after so many years today, I can confidently say that I have never deviated from my principle and ideology since then. I would like to uphold it till my death," he said.

"The President election will be held shortly. I don't know who will be the next President but I want to play my role as the acting president with dignity and honesty," he added.

The government is committed to improving living standard of poor haor people and has taken initiatives to provide electricity connection and building roads at all unions of the haor areas in phases, Hamid said.

Earlier, the Acting President laid foundation stone of a 2.3 km long village protection dam construction project implemented by of water resources ministry.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with Bangladesh's floor hockey team of autistic players in her office in the capital yesterday. The team has won gold medal in the Special Olympics World Winter Games, which took place in South Korea recently.

PHOTO: BSS

Ctg transport sector to go on strike April 9

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Goods carrying transport owners and workers in Chittagong yesterday announced to go on a 72-hour strike in Chittagong division from April 9 to press home their 11-point demand.

Leaders of "Chittagong Divisional Goods Carrying Transport Owner-Labourer Coordination Forum", a platform of Chittagong transport owners and labourers, announced the decision at a press conference at Chittagong Press Club.

Kazi Motahar Hossain, member secretary of the platform, said they would observe the strike from 6:00am to 6:00pm to materialise their demands.

He said they had observed a 24-hours strike to press home the press home the same demands on March 4.

A huge commotion has been created among transport owners and labourers as the government has not yet fulfilled the demands they had placed, he said.

Their demands include stopping looting, murdering and snatching on Dhaka-Chittagong highway, stopping extortion and harassment by highway police, reducing taxes and vat imposed on motor-parts' prices, stopping irregularities and harassment by Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) staff, and introducing income tax system instead of TIN certificate for the transport owners.

Sports complex for autistic athletes on cards: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon the affluent section of society and non-government organisations to come forward to contribute to the welfare of autistic children and intellectually challenged people.

She said the government would construct a sports complex for the physically challenged players.

The prime minister made the assurance when the gold medal-winning Bangladeshi players with intellectual disabilities in floor hockey in the "Special Olympics World Winter Games" met her at her office.

The game was held in the South Korean City of Pyeong Chang earlier this year.

Dr Shamim Matin Chowdhury, chairman of the Special Olympics, Bangladesh led the delegation.

After the meeting, PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed reporters.

Congratulating the winning players, Hasina said the participation of the people with mental and physical disabilities in

sports and cultural activities must be ensured.

She said when the country's normal players could hardly make such significant achievements in games and sports in international arena, the mentally and physically-challenged players brightened the country's image through winning more gold medals.

The prime minister said inspired by her daughter Saima Hossain Putul, the chairperson of National Advisory Committee, Global Autism Public Health Bangladesh, her government is implementing various measures for the welfare of the autistic and physically-challenged people.

The delegation members praised the prime minister for the initiatives of her government and her daughter to ensure welfare of the physically challenged people and autistic children and creating mass awareness in this regard.

The prime minister also honoured the winning team with Tk 1 lakh each of the 14 players and three coaches for their outstanding performances in the game.

PADMA BRIDGE GRAFT ALLEGATION Probe body submits report to ACC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission's probe body investigating the Padma bridge graft case has submitted its interim investigation report to the commission.

In the report, the probe committee said it is not possible to complete the investigation if the Canadian authorities do not help them in interrogating three Canadian citizens accused in the case.

ACC Deputy Director Mirza Zahidul Alam, also investigation officer of the case, said, "We submitted the interim report on Tuesday."

"We had to submit the report as according to ACC rules the stipulated 60 days for submitting the charge sheet ended on Tuesday," he added.

On December 17 last year, the ACC filed the case with Banani Police Station against seven persons including Canadian company SNC Lavalin's officials Mohammad Ismail, Ramesh Shah and Kevin Wales.

The others accused include former secretary of the Bridges Division Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, and Superintendent Engineer of Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA) Kazi Mohammad Ferdous.

Earlier, a case was filed with a Canadian court in this connection accusing Ismail, Shah and Wales among others.

An ACC source said the Canadian trial court will start hearing on April 8 and continue it till April 19, and during the period the verdict might be pronounced.

"To complete the case investigation, we will use certified copy of the Canadian court's verdict if we fail to interrogate the three accused Canadians," said Alam.

PETROL PUMPS IN BARISAL CITY Most don't have DoE certificate

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Owners of most of the petrol pumps in Barisal city are running their businesses without obtaining certificates from the Department of Environment (DoE), according to sources at DoE in Barisal.

As per rules, owners of the petrol pumps and refueling stations must take "no objection certificate" (NOC) from the department to do the business.

"They have to get clearance from us as they deal the business with environmentally hazardous materials," said DoE Barisal Office Divisional Director Sukumar Biswas.

On February 28, the DoE issued notices to owners of nine petrol pumps in Barisal city asking them to obtain the clearance soon, he said.

The pump owners were given a time frame of 15 days from the date of the receiving of the notification to submit applications to the DoE for the certificate, he added.

Sources in Barisal Divisional unit of Bangladesh Petrol Pump Owners Association said there are 11 petrol pumps in Barisal city.

Owners of different petrol pumps and filling stations alleged that different government agencies were putting pressures on them in the name of regulations without proper coordination among the agencies.

Admitting that most of the petrol pumps in Barisal city do not have the NOC of the DoE, Bangladesh Petrol Pump Owners Association Barisal Divisional unit Secretary Waliullah Khan said they were doing the business after taking licences from the Department of Explosives.

He said they were given licences on basis of the Bangladesh Petroleum Act, 1934, (amended in 2010) and the Bangladesh Petroleum Rules, 1937.

But the government has imposed DoE Act (Revised 2010) and Rules (Revised 2013) and Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission Act, 2003 on the petrol pumps to control those, he claimed.

According to the DoE rules, a petrol pump owner needs to a pay of fee Tk 50,000 to Tk 5,00,000 to get the clearance certificate, and for renewal of the certificate, a pump owner needs to pay around 25 percent to 50 percent of the total licence fee in a year, he said.

1 hurt as BCL factions clash at DU

DU CORRESPONDENT

Two factions of Surya Sen Hall unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League at Dhaka University clashed yesterday, leaving one activist injured.

Toki Hossain, a third year student of management studies and loyal to the hall unit President Mobarak Hossain, received first aid at the university medical centre.

The clash started soon after some activists belonging to the group of the hall unit Secretary Arefin Siddique beat Toki up at the hall gate in the morning.

Following the incident, activists of both groups armed with sticks and iron rods chased each other and exploded a cocktail inside the dormitory.

DU Acting Proctor Amzad Ali said Toki was assaulted over a previous feud. Over the incident, the university authorities decided to suspend Mahfuz, a first year student of population science, for one year from the university, he told The Daily Star last night.

Two first year students of the hall, including Mahfuz and Abir of philosophy, were expelled permanently from the hall unit BCL, said the unit secretary.

The hall unit also suspended three other students of the dormitory in this connection.



The Dhaka city unit of Hefajat-e-Islam, a radical Islamist organisation, brings out a procession in the capital yesterday in the run-up to its Friday long march. The photo was taken in front of the national mosque, Baitul Muqarram.

PHOTO: STAR

DEMAND FOR REMOVING INEQUALITIES AMONG ENGINEERS Diploma engineers warn govt of street protest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over three lakh members of the Institution of Diploma Engineers Bangladesh (IDEB) will take to the street if their two-point demand for removing salary and other professional inequalities with engineers holding bachelor degrees are not met by April, IDEB leaders said yesterday.

They said the Institution of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB) was conspiring to deny the rights of engineers with diploma degrees by requesting the authorities concerned to withhold the government recommendations in implementing their demands.

"The general secretary of IEB sent a letter to the housing and public works ministry last year, requesting them to not implement the recommendations that addressed our demands," said IDEB General Secretary of

Mohd Shamsur Rahman. Though the prime minister assured IDEB of implementing those, no measures have been taken to realise the promise, he told a press meet on IDEB premises in the capital.

IEB General Secretary Miah Mohammad Quayyum said the IEB opposed the recommendations as it included a 50 percent quota to be reserved for experienced engineers with diploma degrees at entry level positions in government jobs.

"As fresh graduates [with bachelor degrees] are hired for entry positions, we would see a decrease in graduate engineers being hired because of this quota," he told The Daily Star. The IDEB also demands that engineering service be divided into field and desk works when engineers with bachelor degrees will work at desk and engineers with diploma degrees will do field works.

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