



Makeshift shops occupy a significant portion of the street from Mirpur Muktijoddha Market to the Mazar Road area in the capital, creating obstacles to vehicular traffic. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

MK Alamgir evil spirit of Yahya-Tikka

Says Sadeque Hossain Khoka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Vice Chairman Sadeque Hossain Khoka yesterday branded Home Minister MK Alamgir an evil spirit of Pakistani generals Yahya Khan and Tikka Khan.

"He needs to be trampled on the streets for his irresponsible remarks centring the collapse of Rana Plaza," he told a rally before BNP's Naya Paltan central office in the capital.

Addressing the rally, BNP leader Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina helped Sohel Rana, owner of Rana Plaza, escape as he was a Jubo League leader, and was "trying to fool people" by arresting Sohel's relatives.

The nine-storey building collapsed on April 24 killing, so far, more than 350 workers employed in five garment factories housed in it.

The BNP-led 18-party opposition alli-

ance organised yesterday's rally demanding arrest of those responsible for the collapse, release of BNP leaders from jail and restoration of the caretaker government system.

Khoka said earlier they had termed Alamgir "a third class goon" in Awami League.

But after hearing Alamgir's comment on the collapse, it can be said that he had descended on Bangladesh as the evil spirit of Yahya and Tikka who had carried out atrocities during the Liberation War, he said.

Khoka said Alamgir ridiculed the deaths by remarking that hartal supporters brought down the building by banging on a pillar.

Even Awami League leaders strongly criticised Alamgir, calling him a mad man, for his careless remark. "It is not enough to brand him as mad. Appropriate measures will be taken against him for his misdeeds if the 18-party alliance returns to power," he said.

Hefajat wants to grab power

Says Inu

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

Kushtia

Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu yesterday alleged that Hefajat-e-Islam's movement was not to protect Iman (belief) but was rather a political one to "grab power using sentiments of Islam-loving people".

"A few mollahs suddenly appeared on Bangladesh's soil with some demands which have no relation with the masses and even to the constitution," he told a meeting in Kushtia's Bheramara upazila.

The upazila administration organised the meeting, among religious leaders, teachers, local government leaders and professionals, in its auditorium.

Inu said Hefajat should try to implement their demands after coming to power through people's mandate.

Hefajat's 13-point demand includes capital punishment for maligning Allah, Islam and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and scrapping of the women development and education policies.

ILIAS ALI'S DISAPPEARANCE

BNP calls hartal for tomorrow, Tuesday in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Sylhet city BNP had called hartal in the city for Tuesday before the party's district unit called another hartal in the district for tomorrow demanding rescue of party leader M Ilias Ali.

The city BNP unit, at a press conference yesterday, said it would enforce the strike for eight hours instead of earlier announced daylong duration.

MA Haque, president of the city BNP, said HSC examinations would remain out of the hartal purview.

The party's district unit President M Ilias Ali, also former lawmaker, has been missing for over a year.

The city unit called the hartal on April 21.

The district BNP announced the daylong hartal at a meeting on April 24, said Organising Secretary Ali Ahmed.

SAVAR BUILDING COLLAPSE

PM's adviser pledges punishment for culprits

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An adviser to the prime minister at the BBC Bangladesh Sanglap yesterday pledged punishment for the culprits responsible for the Rana Plaza collapse that killed over 350 people in Savar, but an opposition leader was quite sceptical about the delivery of justice.

The debate was created after Yakub Ali from the audience raised the question, "Who will take the responsibility of too many lives lost in the Rana Plaza tragedy in Savar?"

"It is hundred percent certain that justice will be dispensed," said HT Imam, health adviser to the premier. "Many are expressing doubts over justice, as no actions were taken in the past. But we want to set an example this time," he said.

BNP standing committee member MK Anwar said, "We cannot expect justice where convicted criminals get relief. The rule of law is required to do justice."

Atiqul Islam, president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), said the persons responsible whoever they were should be punished. He also asked, "Why the land owner is not arrested yet?"

Fahmida Khatun, research director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), identified the lack of governance, "criminalisation of finance" and weakness in implementing the rule of law as the major reasons behind the incidents like Rana Plaza.

All the panellists at the dialogue in the capital's Biam Auditorium agreed that the latest incident would leave a short-term impact on the country's main export earner as foreign buyers would be more cautious about outsourcing apparels from Bangladesh.

Even, they feared, many of them in the short term might try to shift from Bangladesh to countries such as India, Vietnam and Myanmar and that the disaster would negatively impact the duty-free entry of Bangladeshi garments both to the US and the EU markets.

Jamaat-Shibir in 'last attempt' to foil war crimes trial

Muhith tells reception for freedom fighters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday said Jamaat-Shibir men were in their "last attempt" in foiling the ongoing trial of war criminals and they had a political party with them.

Khaleda Zia is the ameer of the party, he said, asking BNP activists to give immediate thought into whether they wanted to remain with those involved in unleashing terror or with the country.

Muhith was addressing as chief guest a reception for 36 decorated freedom fighters of Sylhet region, organised by Janata Bank in a Sylhet city hotel.

Of the freedom fighters, 15 were alive, nine had embraced martyrdom during

the Liberation War and 12 had passed away.

Stating that all-out efforts have been ongoing since February to create anarchy across the country, he urged freedom fighters to forge a greater unity among the pro-liberation forces.

The government cannot just play the role of a silent spectator when the enemies are engaged in destroying the country. "The country was freed at the cost of a lot of blood and we must resist the enemies of the motherland at any cost," he said.

At present 1.5 lakh freedom fighters are getting allowance and the Awami League took measures to raise facilities for them, said Muhith.

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