



An uprooted flame tree (krishnachura) that collapsed on a fence and the adjacent street on Dhaka University campus during Sunday's nor'wester which rampaged through many parts of the country, leaving at least four people dead and three others missing, destroying hundreds of houses, trees, and electricity poles as well. Story on page 10.



PROF REZAUL KILLING

Public university teachers strike in protest

DU CORRESPONDENT

Public university teachers yesterday wore black ribbons while observing a countrywide three-hour work abstention from 10:00am and a one-hour sit-in from noon demanding an immediate trial over Prof AFM Rezaul Karim Siddiquee's murder in Rajshahi city's Shalbagan area on April 23.

The Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association (FBUTA) leaders are scheduled to join a protest rally at Rajshahi University (RU) today and hand over a memorandum to Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal tomorrow demanding justice and security for university teachers.

Addressing a programme FBUTA and Dhaka University Teachers' Association organised at Dhaka University's Bottola, FBUTA President Farid Uddin Ahmed said, "The state's detective branches and law enforcement agencies showed their failure after the recent consecutive killings."

"If they can not ensure security for people, they have to resign," he said.

In RU, over 300 teachers, students and cultural activists went around the campus in a procession in silence and joined a rally at "Mukul Mancha", a platform taking Prof Rezaul's nickname.

His daughter Rizwana Hasin Shotovi urged for a quick trial and requested keeping the agitation going, "otherwise ensuring justice will be impossible".

Rajshahi University Teachers' Association President Prof AFM Rezaul, said, "It is mysterious that there is no sign of progress in the investigation although 10 days have passed since the murder."

The students brought out a procession carrying four coffins, symbolising the murder of four RU teachers in the past 12 years. Later, over 200 teachers staged the sit-in.

Chittagong University Teachers' Association General Secretary Prof Sukanta Battacharjee advocated for capital punishment to stop recurrence of such murders.

Prof Muhammed Zafar Iqbal said, "The security situation of the country is not as good as it looks...because our coworkers are in fear of their lives...are now frightened because they are liberal, culturally involved and some of them used to write."

Teachers of the Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Begum Rokeya University and Sylhet Agriculture University also observed the day's programmes.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Mujibur Rahman Fakir passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Capt (ret'd) Mujibur Rahman Fakir, ruling Awami League (AL) MP from Mymensingh-3 (Gouripur) and a freedom fighter, died of cardiac arrest at a Mymensingh hospital yesterday morning, aged 69. He left his wife and three daughters.

Parliament adopted an obituary motion paying for the salvation of the departed soul and to express deep condolences to the bereaved family.

President Abdul Hamid expressed deep shock at the demise of Mujibur. Participating in the obituary motion, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, among others, expressed deep shock at his demise and termed his death a great loss for the country and also for the AL.

Born in 1947, Mujibur served as the state minister for health during the previous tenure of AL. He was made chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on health after being elected MP in the 2014 election.

He founded the Nasima Nursing Home in Mymensingh city; reports our Mymensingh correspondent.

His first namaz-e-janaza was held after Jhr prayers at Mymensingh town's Eidgah ground yesterday.

Home boss

FROM PAGE 4 social media which bigots were using to issue threats and intensifying intelligence activities to contain and stop the breeding of militant activities.

Reminding to show "zero tolerance" towards militancy, he asked to gather concrete information of tenants, floating people and strangers of respective areas.

The meeting saw discussion on the killings of bloggers, publishers and people with different opinions, and was apprised that trial of one out of 11 blogger killing cases had been held, three were under trial while the remaining were being investigated.

Different criminal incidents were reviewed including abductions, killings, extortion, women and children trafficking and arms and narcotics recovery.

The meeting viewed that the overall situation was better in the last quarter (January to March) compared to that in the previous one, says a press release.

Minorities helpless in country

Says Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Unity Council

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The state, administration, political parties and civil society do not stand for protecting the rights of minorities, Bangladesh Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Unity Council claimed yesterday.

"We are helpless. We want to draw attention of the government, political parties and conscious people of the society for protecting our rights," Rana Dasgupta, the council's general secretary, told a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Minorities routinely come under attack during all elections, both local and national, said a statement.

The council urged all parties not to nominate candidates in Union Parishad polls who may act against the interest of minorities.

"If you nominate such people, we will be compelled to boycott the

polls and look for an alternative," said Dasgupta, reading out the statement.

On April 22, the council claimed that at least 10 religious minority people were killed, 366 injured and eight women raped in Bangladesh from January to March this year.

Replying to a question whether the Islamic State (IS) is involved in the killings and attacks, he said yesterday, "We do not know whether IS exists in Bangladesh or not. But the militants, who have similar opinions as IS's, are conducting militant activities in the country."

Minorities come under attack both for political and communal reasons, he said, adding that in most cases, local leaders of both ruling and other political parties joined hands to grab lands of the minorities. Repression on minorities is recurring due to impunity, he viewed.

"We could not get peace and relief during the BNP-Jamaat tenure. Similarly, we can't sleep in peace and relief today."

The statement cited recent incidents of repression.

In Tangail, a Hindu tailor was hacked to death in Gopalpur Upazila on April 30.

In Pirojpur, Ashis Kumar Baral, a newly elected chairman of Jolabari UP under Nesarabad upazila, came under attack on March 21.

The statement said in Jessore, minorities of Pashapol UP in Chougachha upazila and Prembagh UP in Avoyonagar upazila were in fear because two ruling party men, who were involved in minority repression, were contesting the polls for the chairman post.

It added that attacks also took places recently in Munshiganj, Sylhet and Shariatpur.

Refund deposit with interest to workers not going to Libya

SC directs recruiting agencies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday directed the recruitment agencies concerned to refund the money with 10 percent interest deposited by 74 Bangladeshi workers for going to war-torn country Libya in the next three months.

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment will take steps for recovering the money from the agencies if they do not do so within the stipulated time, said the apex court.

The four-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha also stayed a High Court order that asked the foreign ministry to issue no-objection certificates to the 74 workers for going to Libya.

The bench passed the order after disposing of a petition filed by the government seeking a stay on the HC order.

The HC came up with the order on April 3 this year following a petition collectively filed by the persons, who got work permits and visas for going to Libya, challenging the legality of a foreign ministry order that on November 19 last year imposed restriction on Bangladeshi people to travel and go to the war-affected country.

KSA donates dates for poor students

CITY DESK

The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSrelief) of Saudi Arabia donated 792 tonnes of dates for poor students of some disaster-prone districts in Bangladesh.

The dates will be distributed among 3.9 lakh children of the areas in Gaibandha, Kurigram, Satkhira and Bagerhat through take-home rations under school-feeding project of United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

Fahad Al-Osaimy, director of Emergency Aid at KSrelief, handed over the dates at a ceremony in Dhaka on Sunday. WFP Representative Christa Räder was present too.

Journos again

FROM PAGE 3

Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), spoke as the special guest. A faction of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) organised the discussion with its president Shaban Mahmud in the chair. The PM's media advisor called upon all the journalists to be united to realise their demands.

NEWS IN brief

Slovenia consulate opens in Dhaka

CITY DESK

Republic of Slovenia has opened its consulate in the capital on Thursday, inaugurated by Commerce Minister Tofael Ahmed.

Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia in New Delhi Jozef Drogenik is visiting Bangladesh to present his Letter of Credence to the president.

Diplomats, government officials and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

Freshers' orientation held at NSU

CITY DESK

The orientation ceremony of Summer-2016 session of newly enrolled undergraduate students of North South University (NSU) was held on its campus at Bashundhara in the capital on Saturday, said a press release.

MA Kashem, chairman of NSU Board of Trustees, attended the programme as the chief guest with its VC Prof Atiqul Islam in the chair.

The programme concluded with a cultural event.

MIST robotics competition held

CITY DESK

The daylong Inter University Robotics Competition 2016, organised by Military Institute of Science and Technology (MIST) Robotics Club, was held at the institute in the capital on Saturday, participated by students of more than 35 universities and colleges.

Shyam Sunder Sikder, ICT secretary, posts, telecommunication and information technology ministry, was present at the inauguration programme as the chief guest, where Dr Muhammed Zafar Iqbal, head of department of CSE, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, was the special guest.

The Daily Star was the media partner of the event.

Hasina calls for good relations

FROM PAGE 3

Bangladesh Srinivas B Reddy, President of Bangladesh Employers Federation Salauddin Quasem Khan, Jatiya Sramik League President Shukkur Mahmud, also spoke.

Labour and Employment Secretary Michail Shipar delivered the welcome address.

She said the government has taken steps to set up 100 economic zones for further industrialisation and creating more employment, and would provide all utility services like electricity, water and gas.

Calling upon the industrialists, she said, "If you establish mills and factories here and there by destroying agriculture land, we won't provide any utility services."

The premier said the amended labour act is being implemented for the welfare of the workers and employees.

"We have enhanced the minimum wages for the garment workers to Tk 5,300 from Tk 1,662, a 231.25 percent hike," she said.

Hasina said her government is determined to implement the multipurpose steps for the labour policy and welfare of the workers in line with the articles 15, 28, 38 and 40 as well as the ILO Convention. She said the fixation of minimum wage and wages re-fix process would continue keeping consistency with the living cost, inflation and growth rate.

"We have given an approval for constitution of the National Wage and Productivity Commission for the workers of state-owned mills and factories," she said. Later, she enjoyed a cultural function performed by the workers.



Students stretcher a peer into safety as part of an emergency drill at Tejgaon Government Girls High School in the capital yesterday. The fire department taught the pupils basic skills and techniques on how to respond to emergencies like fires and earthquakes.

PHOTO: STAR

Respect for media freedom declining

FROM PAGE 3

Mass Media Policy 2015, draft of the Broadcast Act-2016, draft of the Press Council Act's amendment, and some recommendations in the draft to the press council by the Bangladesh Law Commission, that may curb the press freedom.

"The development and positive change of the society cannot be ensured without having scopes of independent and non-biased information and views," he observed.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

in a message said, "Press freedom and the free flow of information are necessary not only to inform citizens about the goals, but also to hold their leaders accountable for fulfilling the pledges..."

The UN declared May 3 as World Press Freedom Day in 1993.

Meanwhile, speakers at a seminar in Dhaka University observed that media can play significant role in proper implementation of Right to Information (RTI) Act-2009, to ensure people's rights to ask information of the government and other stake-

holders' activities.

Chief Information Commissioner Dr M Golam Rahman said, "It's the government's responsibility to take the people's right to consideration."

He was addressing as the chief guest at a seminar, "Journalists' Access to information: RTI Act-2009," organised by Mass Communication and Journalism department at Social Science Faculty, marking the day.

Dr Shamsul Bari, chairman of Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB), gave a keynote speech.

Condemned war criminal Nizami's

FROM PAGE 4

Appellate Division of the SC headed by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha.

Other three judges of the bench are Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana, Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Hasan Foez Siddique.

On April 10, the bench fixed today for hearing the petition.

On March 29, Nizami's lawyers filed the petition praying to the apex court for his acquittal.

The International Crimes Tribunal (ICT)-1 on October 29, 2014 handed down the death penalty to Nizami on four charges of war crimes, including murdering intellectuals during the war.

The 71-year-old was also awarded life imprisonment on four other charges.

The SC on January 6 this year upheld his death sentence on three charges and life term imprisonment on two other charges. The ICT issued death warrant against him hours after the SC had released its full verdict on March 15.

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