

Kerry calls for concerted efforts to tackle bigotry, violence

EXPRESSING CONCERN THAT Xulhaz was brutally murdered for being gay and founding a magazine showing pride in that identity, US Secretary of State John Kerry on Tuesday said they are taking steps with partners globally to reduce the violence transgender people face in various parts of the world.

He said this while addressing the Gay and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies' Pride at State Event in Dean Acheson Auditorium in Washington, DC.

He termed Xulhaz Mannan, a local employee of USAID, as a "champion" of human rights who was hacked to death at his apartment in Dhaka on April 25 this year.

Kerry said they have to keep moving forward, and that is why they are engaged at every level of leadership through their embassies, with their global partners - in a concerted diplomatic effort to push back against bigotry, against violence in all of its forms, according to US Department of State.

Govt plotting to give away Bangladesh's control: Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday alleged that the current "unelected and illegitimate" government was conspiring to hand over to another country authority over Bangladesh, which has become devoid of democracy and turned into a police state.

"Now we are worried whether we have our sovereignty as our people can not do anything without any hesitation and fear," she told an iftar organised by Doctors' Association of Bangladesh (DAB) in the capital's Ladies Club.

The plot was initiated through the BDR carnage in 2009 shortly after the Awami League-led government came to power and only people irrespective of race and religion can resist any conspiracy and ensure public security and rule of law, she said.

She alleged that Border Guard Bangladesh could not

Dr Saiful new Buet VC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has appointed Dr Saiful Islam, a professor of the electrical and electronic engineering department at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) as its vice chancellor.

The post of VC has been vacant since Prof Khaleda Ekram died on May 24.

Besides, Prof Nasrin Ahmed, immediate past pro-VC of Dhaka University; and Dr Md Akhtaruzzaman, dean of the arts faculty, have been appointed as pro-VCs of DU. Prof Nasrin was reappointed as pro-VC as her term ended on June 9.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid confirmed The Daily Star about the appointment.



A rickshaw passes through a waterlogged road while water enters into a nearby shop as Sylhet city's Dariapara was submerged following a brief shower yesterday, apparently due to poor and inadequate drainage systems. The photo was taken at 2:00pm. PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

BID TO END EXTRA-JUDICIAL KILLINGS 34 eminent citizens seek immediate steps

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirty-four eminent citizens last night issued a joint statement protesting and demanding immediate government steps to stop extrajudicial killings.

They alleged that detained suspects were being killed one after another under police custody in the name of investigations into targeted killings.

"...every citizen has the constitutional right to get the shelter of the law...this extra-judicial killing cannot be acceptable in any way," read the statement.

They stated to be stunned and saddened over the murders of authors, bloggers, publishers, foreigners, priests, religious leaders, university teachers, theatre activists, LGBT activists and a police official's wife.

"We expect police to be very active in arresting the masterminds, the alleged militants-terrorists. But it does not mean police will carry out extrajudicial killings," it said.

It said 22 suspects fell victim in the last three weeks, including Golam Faizullah Fahim, the alleged attacker of a Madaripur teacher, in police custody and Shariful, a suspect in the murder of blogger-writer Avijit Roy, in an alleged gunfight.

It also termed ominous the shooting dead of one "at jail gate in front of security staff" in Jessore after his release on bail and handing over of bamboo to locals by superintendents of police in Chuadanga and Satkhira.

The Daily Star could not verify the claims immediately.

The signatories are Dr Shahdeen Malik, Dr Tofail Ahmed, Prof Dr Perween Hasan, Prof CR Abrar, Prof Firdous Azim, Prof Asif Nazrul, Prof Shahnaz Huda, Dr Shapan Adnan, Dr Shahidul Alam, Dr Bina D'Costa, Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury, Dr Faustina Pereira, Farida Akhter, Afsan Chowdhury, Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua, Barrister Sara Hossain, Advocate Kamrun Nahar, Anish Barua, Zakir Hossain, Nur Khan Liton, Lubna Marium, Razia Quadir, Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmed, Safia Azim, Muktasree Shathi Chakma, Rahnuma Ahmed, Nasrin Siraj Annie, Leesa Gazi, Rezaur Rahman Lenin, Maheen Sultan, Hana Shams Ahmed, Tasaffi Hossain, Trimita Chakma and Shireen P Huq.

Some NGOs shifting from fundamentals

SAYS LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS PROFESSOR CITING DIFFICULT POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT, DISRUPTIVE DONOR ROLES

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Difficult political environment, disruptive role of some aid donors and weaknesses in leadership and management contributed to a section of NGOs in Bangladesh moving away from their fundamental approaches, said a London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) professor yesterday.

"NGOs such as Proshika, Gonoshahajjo Sangstha and Samata were at their peak during the 1990s and early 2000s. However, they have now mostly faded from view, or evolved into organisations primarily engaged in microcredit delivery work," said the professor, David Lewis.

The professor of social policy and development and head of social policy department was delivering a public lecture on "The Decline of Radical Development NGOs in Bangladesh" in the auditorium of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh.

Prof Lewis said he used the term "radical NGO sub-sector" because these organisations were, and in some cases still are, concerned with addressing the structural causes of poverty, gender equality and social justice.

Expressing concerns over the decline, Dr Lewis said the NGOs were concerned with grassroots rural social mobilisation approaches which were distinct from the more common NGO roles of credit delivery, services and contracting work.

He said the difficult political environment made them vulnerable to co-opt while the donors' disruptive practices either neglected them in favour of more mainstream NGOs or over-funded them, creating rapid expansion that damaged and in some cases helped destroy them.

The leadership and management weaknesses reduced their accountability, he added.

Saying this decline was not however inevitable, he pointed out that an organisation such as Nijera Kori was still working effectively in the radical tradition.

This example shows that the radical NGO tradition is still possible if an organisation makes the "right" decisions -- keeping close the grassroots, building proper management systems, and resisting donor offers to over-expand and scale up too fast, he added.

ULAB Vice-Chancellor Prof Imran Rahman delivered the welcome address.



David Lewis

Move to evict Khasis protested at Bela event

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Speakers yesterday at a workshop in Sylhet city called upon the government to withdraw eviction notice against Khasi people in Nahar Punjee of Moulvibazar.

Organised by Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela), the workshop was held at a city hotel, chaired by Sveda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bela.

"We expect that the civil administration will work to ensure people's rights. The government should take initiative about people whose lives are in danger and save the forest," she said.

Advocate Shahidul Islam Sahin, former president of the Sylhet District Bar Association, said, "It's the Khasi people's ancestral right to live on the land, which is

also recognised by UN's universal rights declaration of human rights."

He said everybody should be aware so that misuse of natural resources can be prevented and mishandling of forests, hills and water resources be stopped.

Prof AZM Monjur Rashid of forestry and environment department of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, and Jamal Uddin Ahmed, divisional commissioner of Sylhet, were also present.

On May 30, Moulvibazar District Administration issued a notice to some 700 Khasi people living in two villages collectively known as Nahar Punjee, to vacate the 150 acres of the 250-acre punjee area by June 12. The authorities accused them of illegally occupying 150 acres of government land and cultivating betel leaf there.

Journo leader Shawkat Mahmud freed on bail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Journalist Shawkat Mahmud, BNP chairperson's adviser and president of a faction of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists, was released on bail from Kashimpur Jail in Gazipur yesterday.

Senior Jail Superintendent Prashanta Kumar of Kashimpur Jail-2 confirmed it.

On June 14, the High Court granted him ad-interim bail for six months in three vandalism and arson cases filed last year on charges of vandalising vehicles, setting fire to them and blasting Molotov cocktails during the BNP-led alliance's agitation.

He was detained in August the same year.

Coastal areas to get 5 lakh new silos

Cabinet body on purchase okays food ministry's proposal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to set up 5 lakh household-level silos in flood and cyclone-prone coastal areas to help people store food, food grain and seed during and after natural disasters.

The cabinet committee on purchase yesterday approved the proposal from the food ministry to award the work to the bidder. The World Bank will finance the project.

According to the proposal, the silos will be set up in 63 upazilas in 19 districts. Madina Polymer Industries Ltd will supply the silos at Tk 68.86 crore.

To be manufactured in Bangladesh, the household-level silos, or grain storage bins, are specially designed 70-litre food-grade plastic bins with a watertight lid that prevent water intrusion from surges and floods. The bins can hold about 70 litres of food, food grain and seed.

The government also decided to appoint Dhaka-based Development Project Design & Services for identifying beneficiaries, training them and distributing the silos. The firm will get Tk 17.16 crore.

The cabinet committee on purchase also approved a power, energy and mineral resources ministry proposal on the use and implementation agreement of the LNG terminal to be set up on the Moheshkhali island in the bay to handle LNG imported from Qatar.

Petrobangla will pay about \$90 million a year to use the planned LNG terminal of US-based Excelerate Energy, as the government seeks to speed up the import of gas to meet growing demand. As per conditions, Excelerate Energy Bangladesh Ltd will supply 500 million cubic feet of gas a day for 15 years.

NEWS IN brief

DU admission tests begin Sep 23

DU CORRESPONDENT

Admission tests for the first-year honours courses of Dhaka University under 2016-17 academic session will begin on September 23, said a press release.

The decision was taken at a deans committee meeting yesterday with DU Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique in the chair.

Admission tests of 'Kha' (B) unit will be held on September 23, 'Cha' unit on September 24, 'Ga' (C) unit on September 30, 'Ka' (A) unit on October 21 and 'Gha' (D) unit on October 28.

Man dies falling from building while trying to escape Rab raid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man died falling from a building while he was trying to flee through climbing down a pipe during a raid in the capital's Uttara on Tuesday night, said Rab.

Mohammad Arif, 35, died at a hospital, said Akramul Hassan, operations officer of Rab-1. A pistol and two rounds of bullets were recovered from the six-storey building at sector-4, he claimed. A case was filed against seven persons with Uttara Purbo Police Station, said Officer-in-Charge Abu Bakar Mia.

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue yesterday for an autopsy.

DU mechatronics engineering dept gets new name

DU CORRESPONDENT

The name of the newly opened Mechatronics Engineering Department of Dhaka University has been changed to "Robotics and Mechatronics Engineering" after a new course has been launched at the department.

The department started on September 8 last year, said a press release.

The decision was taken at a syndicate meeting on Tuesday with DU Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique in the chair. Prof Hafiz Muhammad Hassan Babu of Computer Science and Engineering has been made chairperson of the department, it added.

Iftar for Ctg journo in Dhaka held

UNB, Dhaka

Chittagong Journalists Forum, Dhaka (CJFD) yesterday hosted an iftar party in the capital for its members.

CJFD president Saif Islam Dilal, general secretary Shamim Jahangir, its former presidents and senior journalists were present.

Leaders of Chittagong Samity, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ), Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) and Economic Reporters Forum (ERF) also attended the iftar party.

Advertisement for 'IMPACT Journalism Day' featuring logos of various international newspapers like L'Economiste, China Daily, Le Figaro, and others. It promotes a special supplement on Saturday, June 25, celebrating journalism that brings hope and inspiration to 120 million readers.

Advertisement for 'STAR WEEKEND' featuring a collage of news photos and headlines. The main headline is 'A WILD STRUGGLE TOWARDS HOME' about a train commuter. Other headlines include 'SEARCH OF EQUALITY' and 'DIGGING INTO THE HEART'.