

Ensure democratic rights

Fakhrul urges govt
STAFF CORRESPONDENT



BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday called upon the government to ensure democratic rights of political parties and widen the scope to practice those instead of trying to eliminate the opposition in a bid to defeat militancy.

"A combing operation was conducted to subdue the opposition... we have heard they may launch another drive... you have failed to suppress BNP by unleashing repression over the last eight years. That is why you are now taking fresh repressive measures," he said.

Fakhrul was addressing a discussion Zia Parishad organised in Nayapalton's Bhasani auditorium in the capital in memory of former Dhaka University vice chancellor Prof Maniruzzaman Miah who passed away on June 13 at the age of 81.

Fakhrul said, "Do not play with fire and come back from this dangerous path. Walk in the right path of democracy allowing political parties to do politics. Militancy will be defeated to democracy if its (the latter's) closed doors and windows are reopened."

He alleged that the government in the pretext of democracy has established a one-party rule and that the media and government officials were now playing a partisan role forgetting their responsibility towards the country and its people.

He said the government has been suppressing those hold dissent or alternative views either by sending them to jail or implicating them in false cases.



People painfully contort their bodies and risk their lives and their children's going through a gap in the railing on the road between Gawsia Market and New Market in the capital yesterday, ignoring the safety of a footbridge right above their heads.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Donate buses to educational institutions: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday reiterated her call to the affluent section of people and business organisations to donate buses to educational institutions to solve the transportation problem of students.

"If the well-off section of people comes forward, the demand of the schools and colleges that have no buses will be fulfilled. So I urge the rich to donate buses to the educational institutions," she said.

Sheikh Hasina said this while handing over 10 buses to 10 educational institutions.

While talking about the selection of Proyas Specialised School for donation of buses, Sheikh Hasina said her government had special attention to the physically-challenged children to bring them back to normal life.

She thanked Ifad Autos Ltd for the donation of buses to 10 educational institutions, and hoped that other business organisations would be encouraged to do the same.

She handed over the keys of the buses to the principals of the educational institutions at a function at her official residence Gono Bhaban in the afternoon.

IFAD Autos Ltd, a sister concern of the IFAD Group Bangladesh, and India's Ashok Leyland Company donated the buses.



Democracy sent into exile

Alleges Khaleda on International Day of Action Against Repression
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday said "a monster militant force" has arisen in the country as the government has sent democracy into exile through its cruel oppressive policy.

"Bangladesh's democracy is now confined. Terrible misrule is going on here. Numerous opposition men including those of BNP were subjected to killings, enforced disappearances, abductions and secret killings since the present government assumed power," she said.

"Besides, newspapers and television channels are being shut down one after another so that opposition's voices are not heard," Khaleda said in a statement marking "International Day of Action Against Repression" today.



3 lakh new taxpayers next year: Muhith

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government aims to increase the number of total taxpayers to 15 lakh by adding 3 lakh new taxpayers in the next fiscal, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said yesterday.

Before end of the tenure of the present government, the taxpaying population should rise to 20-21 lakh, he told a post-budget discussion, organised by Bangladesh Study Trust (BST) at the Jatiya Press Club.

Muhith shared the target after some discussions pointed to the present number of taxpayers of 12 lakh, who account for less than one percent of the total population.

The number should be much higher, said participants.

Mohammed Farashuddin, former governor of Bangladesh Bank, quoted international management firm Boston Consulting Group as saying that the country had more than one crore of population with an annual income over \$5,000.

"Then why is the number of taxpayers so

small?" he said.

"It is shameful for a country," said AK Abdul Momen, chairman of BST, referring to the small taxpaying population.

Muhith said he was very hopeful about the youths whom he saw crowding at tax fairs every year to pay tax.

But the problem lies with implementation of the new VAT law, which envisages an automated VAT administration and collection system.

The problem will be solved if businessmen keep records and accounts properly, said Muhith who backtracked from enforcing the law from July this year.

The new timeline is July 2017.

Muhith said the government planned to give electronic cash registers or accounting machines at subsidised rates to businesses so that they could keep records of transactions easily.

He also called for investment, saying entrepreneurs would get required gas by 2019 as the government would LNG terminals to import gas.

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12pc people still at arsenic risk

LGRD minister tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twelve percent people are still at risk of arsenic contamination, Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Minister Khandker Mosharraf Hossain told the parliament yesterday.

He also discussed the steps

taken by the government and the ongoing and upcoming projects to mitigate the crisis while replying to MPs' queries.

Quoting a government survey, Mosharraf said, 14.5 lakh tube wells contaminated out of 50 lakh in 271 upazilas in 2003 and there were excessive arsenic in 29 percent of tube wells.

MITIGATION MEASURES

- 3 lakh water sources set up in last 15 years
- Safe drinking water ensured for 122 municipalities
- Water supply increased to 88pc from 82pc

- Now installing 63,000 safe water sources
- 37 rural piped water supply schemes, 14,000 water points
- Project for 155 municipalities for pipeline water supply taken
- Another project mullied

TRADE, COMMERCE

Bangladesh, Slovenia agree to cooperate

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and Slovenia yesterday agreed to cooperate in areas of trade, energy, science and technology, agriculture and light industries.

Praising Bangladesh's spectacular growth in agriculture, textiles, pharmaceuticals and energy, Slovenian leaders underlined that the two countries could collaborate in renewable energy and power generation, small scale high-tech industries and other sectors.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam, who is now on a three-day official visit to Slovenia, yesterday called on Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia Karl Erjavec and President of the Slovenian National Assembly Milan Brglez.

He exchanged views with a group of Slovenian businessmen and investors who were already in the process of exploring business opportunities in Bangladesh.

During his meeting, Slovenian Foreign Minister Karl Erjavec termed the visit by the Bangladesh state minister and the signing of the MoU important milestones to consolidate further the relationship between the two friendly countries in the political, economic and other fields.

The Slovenian minister requested Bangladesh to explore using Slovenian port which is a gateway to the Central Europe.

The "Copper Port" of Slovenia is currently being used by Asian countries.

Bangladesh Ambassador to Vienna Mohammed Abu Zafar was present during the meetings.



There was no respite from the sun for people travelling on foot yesterday when the temperature reached a maximum 35.7°C in the capital as per Bangladesh Meteorological Department. The photo was taken on Mirpur Road.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Death anniversary

FROM PAGE 4

Suhrawardy Udayan on March 26, 1992 awarding the Jamaate-e-Islami supremo with capital punishment.

After leading the movement for two and a half years, eminent writer and social worker Jahanara Imam breathed her last due to cancer on June 26, 1994.

Different socio-cultural organisations will observe the day through various programmes.

Poet and architect Rabiul Hussain said Jahanara Imam had united all pro-liberation forces through the Gono Adalat, he added. The trial of top war criminals is taking place following the course of her movement, he added.

Jahanara Imam was born in Murshidabad of West Bengal in India on May 3, 1929.

Her book "Ekattorer Dinguli" (Diary of Ekattor) is a documentation of the Liberation War.

Increase border watch to curb drug trafficking

DNC, Promises Medical roundtable told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday stressed waging a movement against drug abuse to eliminate the menace from the society.

Pointing that most of the drugs are smuggled into Bangladesh from the neighbouring countries, they said instead of considering one or two big hauls as a success it was more essential to increase surveillance at the access points.

Public and private sector collaboration as well as psychological counselling for the abusers are also required, they added.

The Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) in collaboration with Promises Medical Ltd, a centre for rehabilitation, arranged the event in the capital marking International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking today.

DNC Director Nazmul Ahsan Majumder said the Yaba menace has increased alarmingly in the last one year.

Anti-drug campaigner Arup Ratan Chowdhury said most of the illegal drugs are produced in the neighbouring countries.

"It is essential to enhance surveillance at the access points," said Barrister Shamim Haider Patwary.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said they have taken initiatives to re-arrange the DNC. A modern laboratory will be established and the DNC intelligence will be provided with proper training, he said, adding, scanners and dog squads will be provided to Border Guard Bangladesh.

State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Meher Afroze Chumki, Gonoshasthaya Kendra Trustee Zafrullah Chowdhury, Khandaker Rakibur Rahman, director general of narcotics, and Shahedul Islam Helal, chairman of Promises Medical Ltd, also spoke.

Adulterated ghee seized in Ctg

Factory sealed off
STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A mobile court of Chittagong District Administration yesterday seized a huge amount of contaminated ghee after conducting a drive at an unauthorised factory in BSCIC Lane at Bayezid of the port city.

During the drive led by Executive Magistrate Md Anisul Islam, the gawa ghee was found inside the factory that had no name of its own.

The factory used to sell the ghee using the brand names "Tasty Gawa Ghee" and "AP-1 Gawa Ghee", said Anisul.

A total of 1,118 cans of ghee and about two mounds of chemicals were seized from the factory, which was later sealed off.

Bangladeshi youth

FROM PAGE 3

"I came to your country in search of work. But like my country I did not get any job here. I cannot return home. So arrest me."

Bashirhat Officer-in-Charge Debashish Chakraborty described the incident to journalists.

Before facing the court yesterday, Dipankar told journalists that he had left home with Tk 2,500 in Bangladesh currency. Middlemen at Swarnapagar border took Tk 2,100 from him as "fees" for crossing over to India. He exchanged the remaining Tk 400 for Indian Rupees 350.

Dipankar maintained bare subsistence with Rs 350 for the last one month and looked for work. Finally he was left with no money to pay the middlemen at the border to return to Bangladesh.

Dipankar said he was afraid of arrest and torture by Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and India's Border Security Force (BSF).

Govt to bring more

FROM PAGE 3

students to 20 percent by 2020 and to 30 percent by 2030. "We will have to raise their number to 60 percent," he said, adding that gender equality was ensured in the education sector. Now there are some 51 percent female students at primary schools, 53 percent at secondary schools and 45 percent at the higher educational institutions, mentioned the minister.

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