

Hasina for joint efforts to curb maritime crimes

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the neighbouring countries to come forward to curb various maritime crimes as it was not possible for a country to do so.

"It's not possible for a country to curb these crimes ... it's possible to root out these crimes through unified efforts and this is indispensable."

The PM said this while inaugurating the 14th Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting (HACGAM) 2018 at the Hotel Radisson in the capital.

It is essential to ensure the safe plying of water vessels in the sea for communications and trade as 90 percent of foreign trade of Bangladesh is done by sea transportation, Hasina said.

"Though regrettable, in our maritime boundaries, human trafficking, illegal arms trafficking, unreported and unregulated fishing, piracy, armed robbery and many more illegal activi-

ties often take place."

Hasina mentioned that not only the local criminals but also those from the neighbouring countries were also involved in the criminal activities. The criminals also use sophisticated technologies and machinery in committing their crimes.

Pointing out sovereign rights of Bangladesh over huge sea areas after winning the maritime boundary cases against India and Myanmar, she said there was an abundance of resources there. "If we can extract these resources several generations in the future will be benefited ... this will also play a huge role in our economy."

The PM said the government had formulated Blue Economy policy for the safe and environmentally sustainable use of resources. "We've started our work to implement this and I believe this will play a significant role in the development of Bangladesh."

About the importance of ocean, Hasina

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AL leaflets areas near rally venue

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Hours before Jatiya Oikyafront's maiden rally on Registrar's office ground in Bandarbar area, ruling Awami League men from across the city started gathering in processions at Court Point, around 100 feet away from Oikyafront's venue.

By 11:00am, the Court Point saw an assemblage of 500 AL and Chhatra League leaders and activists -- all flocked to distribute leaflets, a programme organised in an apparent bid to counter the Oikyafront rally.

Around 10 senior leaders of the party, including AL Organising Secretary Misbah Uddin Siraj, Sylhet city AL President Badruddin Ahmed Kamran, and city AL General Secretary Asaduddin Ahmed, distributed leaflets among people.

By 11:30pm, about 10,000 leaflets were distributed in the event organised by AL's Sylhet district and city units, party activists said.

The text on the leaflets, printed by central AL, called upon people to be cautious about conspiracies against the country and to vote for "boat", the AL electoral symbol.

"Remain alert about the conspiracy against the country to continue Bangladesh's progress; cooperate with leader Sheikh Hasina to build a developed and prosperous Bangladesh," was the title of the leaflet.



A procession of Sylhet city and district units of Awami League crossing the Court Point area yesterday morning.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Khaleda

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illness is pain in her joints due to rheumatoid arthritis, Prof Jalil said, adding, though the pain still prevails her condition is stable.

PRISONER SINCE FEBRUARY

The former prime minister has been in jail since February 8. She was convicted in a graft case and is behind bars in connection with several other cases.

The BNP has been campaigning for her release since February. Its leaders allege that the government is trying to keep Khaleda away from the national elections expected in December.

Earlier, her personal doctors who met her in jail said she suffered a "mild stroke" on June 5. Before that, she was taken to BSMMU for checkup in April.

Finally, after a series of events that included a High Court ruling, Khaleda was taken to BSMMU on October 6 from Dhaka's old central jail.

Cops go after BNP men

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Asked about the BNP's allegation of detaining its leaders and activists yesterday evening, Golam Kawsar Dastagir, assistant commissioner of Kotwali zone of Sylhet Metropolitan Police, said, "We are picking up some people for questioning."

BNP men were also arrested in Chattogram and Satkhira.

The law enforcers in Chattogram arrested 14 BNP leaders and activists from a residential hotel in Amtal area on Tuesday night while they were holding a meeting ahead of the next meeting of the Jatiya Oikyafront, the newly floated alliance of the BNP and several other parties, scheduled for Saturday.

The alliance is, however, yet to get the Chattogram Metropolitan Police's



A part of the crowd attending the Oikyafront rally in Sylhet yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Unite for fair polls

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election under a nonpartisan interim government, and dissolution of parliament and deployment of the army before the polls.

Rejecting the ruling party's claims of carrying out massive development work in the country, Dr Kamal said some people received the fruits of development, but not all the people of the nation. "It cannot be called development. We want development of the 16 crore people and thus we have to be united."

He thanked the people for attending the rally overcoming various obstacles.

Addressing the rally, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said, "We will restore democracy and our voting rights through a peaceful movement."

Through this movement, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and other detained political leaders would be released from jail before the announcement of the election schedule, he said.

He said the government must resign, parliament should be dissolved and the Election Commission reconstituted before the polls schedule is

announced. Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) should not be used in the polls, he added.

"We will not allow digital election rigging."

Yesterday's rally was the first public appearance of the alliance since its formation on October 13. All top leaders of the alliance were on stage.

The BNP men thronged the venue in small processions around 1:00pm. Many of them came from adjacent districts. A large number of them carried banners, festoons and placards demanding release of Khaleda Zia.

Huge banners were seen hung in the meeting area demanding withdrawal of cases against BNP leader Tarique Rahman and other senior leaders of the party.

An Awami League procession with about 500 people went by the venue around 12:45pm without any untoward incident.

Before the rally, top leaders of the election-oriented alliance offered fete at the shrines of Hazrat Shah Jalal (RA) and Hazrat Shah Paran (RA).

Speakers at the rally that began at 2:00pm, alleged that the alliance leaders and activists were obstructed at

different places so that they could not join the rally. Vehicular movement was restricted and buses were checked, they said, adding that even three-wheelers were stopped.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President ASM Abdur Rab alleged that the country was in the grip of robbers and the people should unite and take to the street to realise the seven-point demand and free the country from the clutches of the robbers.

"The government is provoking us to become violent. You have to have patience. We will wage a peaceful agitation," he said.

BNP standing committee member Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain said the government wants to hold another lopsided election like that of 2014 fearing a crushing defeat in the upcoming polls.

"We will contest the election and form the peoples' government ..."

Another standing committee member of the party, Moudud Ahmed, said the government would be forced to go for a negotiation with the opposition parties in the face of a tough anti-government movement.

The former law minister said they

would prepare a whitepaper on the government's corruption when they assume power.

Nagorik Oikya Convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna urged the government to hold dialogues with the opposition parties.

"If it is not done, we know how to oust a government."

He claimed that the government was hatching a conspiracy to have another "walkover election" like that of the January 5, 2014. "We don't want to create any chaotic situation. But, we will never allow the government to go unchallenged this time."

Zafurullah Chowdhury, one of the key people of the Oikyafront, asked people to raise their voices for a general election under a non-partisan interim government.

Oikyafront leader Sultan Md Monsur Ahmed, also a former Awami League leader, said the government must resign before the announcement of election schedule. He and Mostafa Mohsin Montu ended their speeches chanting "Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu".

Sylhet city Mayor Ariful Haque Choudhury chaired the event.

Vote AL to power for another term

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"When they have been tried and the verdict has been announced, they must serve the sentence one day," she said, adding, "They will be punished no matter wherever they hide."

Hasina said there was no doubt that Tarique and his mother BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia were involved in the August 21 grenade attack and Tarique's father Ziaur Rahman had a hand in the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on August 15, 1975.

Replying to another supplementary

question from AL lawmaker Sagufta Yasmin, the prime minister said she always faces her political rivals politically.

"Under no circumstances, I retreat from facing any political rival politically. We face them politically."

Pointing to Oikyafront, the newly floated political alliance led by the BNP and several other parties, the PM said, "I welcome those who forged the political alliance as I think everyone has the right to do politics."

"Now different parties have forged

alliances and they will take part in the election. It will strengthen the foundation of democracy."

Hasina, however, noted that some people in the alliance had "anti-women and indecent sentiments". They do not have the patience and the intension to make sacrifices for the people, she said.

"If the people seek justice for anyone involved in militancy, terrorism and drug trade, or they utter indecent words, it is the duty of the state to try them. We are trying them and will continue to do so," she added.

Bullet-hit body found in Teknaf

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Police yesterday recovered the bullet-hit body of a youth from Leda village in Teknaf of Cox's Bazar.

Mufiz Alam, 30, son of late Lal Miah of the village, was found dead in Mohehshkhaliya Para Marine Drive of Teknaf Sadar around 4:00am.

Teknaf Model Thana police also recovered five locally made guns, 20 bullets and 5,000 yaba tablets from the spot.

Officer-In-Charge Pradip Kumar Das said Mufiz was an identified yaba smuggler and stood accused in several cases.

Police said they were first alerted to a gunfight between two groups on Marine Drive. However, as soon as they reached the scene, the miscreants fled.

Teknaf Model Thana Sub-Inspector Shariful Islam filed two cases under the arms and narcotics act in this connection.

Prothom

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the country, 16,183 took part in the survey, which had an equal male-female ratio. A multi-staged stratified cluster sampling method was applied for it and it was conducted in all divisional cities and 184 places in selected municipalities and villages.

According to the NMS-2016 survey, 23.7 percent of the people aged 15 and above regularly read the newspaper. There are around 180 mentionable newspapers and 200 magazines in the country.

The survey had found that Prothom Alo had 53 lakh readers daily while the number stood at 66 lakh in 2018. Another 10 lakh readers go through its online version daily, according to data from Google analytics.

The newspaper's website was also recorded to be the most popular among all Bangladeshi sites, along with being the number one Bangla language website in more than 200 countries and regions in the world.

Besides, around 1.39 crore people follow Prothom Alo on Facebook, making it the 73rd most followed newspapers on the platform.

The Bangla Daily is going to celebrate its 20th founding anniversary on November 4.

Mainul sued

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In the case statement, Sumona said Mainul dishonoured all women, including her, by calling Masuda "a person of loose morals" during a live talkshow.

Meanwhile, another defamation case has been filed against Mainul in Mymensingh.

Mymensingh Judges' Court lawyer Rasheda Tahmina lodged the case yesterday with the court of Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Rozina Khan in the district, reports our correspondent there.

Accepting the case, the court

ordered a judicial inquiry into the incident and asked for submission of the probe report within October 31, said Md Yunus Ali, the court inspector.

With these two, Mainul has now been facing at least nine cases since the talk show was aired on October 16. He faced a lot of flak for the remarks on the journalist.

Masuda filed a case with the Court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Muhammad Asaduzzaman Noor in Dhaka. Besides, Jamalpur Jubo Mohila League Convener Farzana Yasmin Lita

filed another case in Jamalpur with the Court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Soleiman Kabir.

Mainul got an ad interim bail on Sunday in the two defamation cases.

The other cases were filed in Rangpur, Cumilla, Bhola, Brahmanbaria and Cox's Bazar over the same issue. Courts in Brahmanbaria and Cox's Bazar have issued arrest warrants for Mainul.

Mainul was arrested on Monday night in connection with the defamation case filed in Rangpur. The next day, a Dhaka court sent him to jail after detectives produced him before it.