

Face-off at Dhaka University campus

Muktijuddho Moncho, Chhatra Adhikar Parishad call coinciding programmes

DU CORRESPONDENT

Activists of Muktijuddho Moncho and Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Adhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad faced off on Dhaka University campus yesterday, as the two organisations called separate programmes at the same venue at the same time.

Muktijuddho Moncho called a protest rally demanding Ducus Vice-president Nurul Haque Nur's removal from his post over graft allegations, while the other organisation, which led the quota reform protests, announced a demonstration protesting the Citizenship (Amendment) Act of India at the base of Raju Memorial Sculpture at 12pm.

Witnesses said, around 60 activists of the Moncho led by its President Aminul Islam Bulbul and General Secretary Al Mamun took position in advance around the venue.

As soon as a procession led by Nur reached the area, the Moncho activists started shouting slogans and moved to Raju Memorial Sculpture.

Parishad activists also took position at the base and shouted counter slogans, and a heated exchange between the groups ensued.

Some members of proctorial team asked both groups to leave the spot but none paid heed.

Later, Muktijuddho Moncho activists left the spot complying with the request -- from two assistant proctors -- of not holding any protest at the base of Raju Memorial Sculpture.

After staying there for nearly half an hour, Nur and his associates brought out a procession from the spot which went through DU campus, Press Club and Shabbagh areas.

Over 100 Moncho activists, this time equipped with iron rods and sticks, followed the procession to Shaheed

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Activists of Muktijuddho Moncho and Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Adhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad face off in front of Raju Memorial Sculpture at Dhaka University. Inset, Moncho activists walking with sticks in their hands. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

BGB's role key in protecting sovereignty: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) to put a stop to trespassing, drugs and goods smuggling, and human trafficking by performing their duties properly.

Addressing the parade of BGB Day 2019 at its headquarters in the city, Sheikh Hasina appreciated BGB, saying the force stands by people during any crisis like natural disasters and even the recent Rohingya crisis, alongside protecting the Bangladesh border.

On modernising BGB, the PM said, "We've adopted Border Guard Bangladesh Vision 2041."

She said the government started the construction of 317-kilometre borderline ring road in three hilly districts -- Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban, for intensifying security on the border and improving the socioeconomic condition of people in remote areas.

Sheikh Hasina said some

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Maj Gen Zainul Abedin's janaza today

UNB, Dhaka

The body of Prime Minister's Military Secretary Major General Mia Mohammad Zainul Abedin Bir Bikram was brought to Dhaka last evening.

"His namaz-e-janaza will be held at Dhaka Cantonment's central mosque at 10am on Thursday (today)," said Rashedul Alam Khan, assistant director of Inter Services Public Relations Directorate (ISPR).

Zainul Abedin breathed his last on Tuesday at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore at the age of 59. His body arrived yesterday evening, and was kept at Combined Military Hospital (CMH).

After the namaz-e-janaza, his mortal remains will be taken to his village home in Chunoti of Satkania upazila by helicopter for burial around noon.

Born on January 1, 1960 in Satkania of Chattogram, Maj Gen Zainul Abedin

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Govt bodies contributing to air pollution

Environmentalists allege, seek specific action plan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rather than reducing air pollution, government institutions actually contribute to it, environmental activists alleged at a press conference in the capital's Kalabagan yesterday.

At the programme, activists from Poribesh Bachao Andolon (Poba) and Bangladesh Resource Center for Indigenous Knowledge (BARCIK) observed that institutions such as the city corporations, Rajuk, and some relevant ministries worsen the quality of air through unplanned development activities, including random road and sewer line repairs and metro rail construction.

These sources are among the greatest pollutants of Dhaka, along with brick kilns, unfit vehicles and heavy industry, the speakers said citing research.

They urged the government to immediately come up with a specific action plan to check air pollution, which has recently become a major health concern for the city's inhabitants.

"After Delhi, Dhaka will be addressed as a 'gas chamber' soon if pollution keeps rising..." said Poba Chairman Abu Naser Khan.

Presenting a keynote paper on the current situation of air pollution, Poba Secretary Fardous Ahmed Uzzal said Bangladesh is one of the countries with high number of air pollution-related deaths of children.

About 1.4 lakh people die from various diseases caused by air pollution every year, he said citing a study.

The government is supposed to work on reducing air pollution, but it does the opposite, he alleged.

"Pollution could be reduced significantly if the government's development activities were undertaken with caution," said Fardous.

Among others, Poba General Secretary Abdus Sobhan, BARCIK Director Syed Ali Biswas and Coordinator Jahangir Alam also spoke at the press conference.

Why import cattle meat?

HC show-causes govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday questioned the legality of the government's decision to import cattle meat, in spite of surplus production in the country.

The court issued a rule asking the government to explain in four weeks why the decision should not be declared illegal.

In the same rule, it asked the respondents to show cause why they should not be directed to ensure the standard and quality of the production of cattle meat and food in the country.

Secretaries to the ministries of commerce, fisheries and livestock, and religious affairs; and director generals of Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institution (BSTI) and department of livestock have been made respondents to the rule.

The bench of Justice FRM Nazmul Ahasan and Justice KM Kamrul Kader came up with the rule, following a writ petition filed by one Mosabbir Hossain, a Brahmanbaria resident, seeking necessary order on respondents not to open import of cattle meat.

In the petition, Mosabbir prayed to the High Court to direct respondents to take initiatives to make the cattle farms capable of exporting meat from all districts of the country.

Mosabbir submitted the petition to the HC recently, saying the decision of importing cattle meat without having any proper testing system in place is unreasonable, and highly alarming for public health.

In the petition, he included an opinion of Bangladesh Dairy Farmers' Association (BDFFA) General Secretary Shah Emran who reportedly said in September, "Import of beef will be discouraging for farming of dairy and beef, and affect the aspiration to be self-sufficient in milk and meat".

Another worker dies of burns

Death toll in Keraniganj factory fire now 20

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another worker injured in the December 11 fire at a Keraniganj plastic factory died yesterday, raising the death toll to 20.

Sohan Rana (19), who sustained 50 percent burns, died at Sheikh Hasina National Burn and Plastic Surgery Institute in the city around 11:45am, said Coordinator Dr Samanta Lal Sen.

Four more injured are on life support at the institute while eight are in critical condition at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, doctors said.

Hailing from Jamalpur district, Sohan was the youngest among three siblings. "My brother died due to the factory owner's negligence. We demand just punishment," said his elder brother Sazu Mia.

Sazu said Sohan began working at the factory just a week before the fire incident. "He was a student at a local college in Jamalpur. He came to Dhaka on December 3 and joined the factory to work alongside studying," he said.

Meanwhile, leaders of different worker and labour rights organisations yesterday visited the ravaged factory and exchanged views with its workers and locals.

During the visit, they demanded exemplary punishment for those responsible for fire incidents, including the ones in Keraniganj and Gazipur, and proper compensation for the victims' families. They also demanded that the authorities concerned identify such risky factories.

The plastic factory at Chunkutia had been operating without permission for years. It had a single gate for entry and exit and no emergency exits whatsoever, said survivors and fire officials.

Locals alleged that the authorities concerned turned a blind eye to the lack of safety measures at the factory even though it had been producing disposable plastic cups and plates for around 10 years.

Keraniganj upazila administration sealed it off on Friday.

Relatives of the victims demanded stern action against the factory owner, Nazrul Islam, who is on the run, for failing to ensure safety and better work environment.



Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Aurangzeb Chowdhury along with other officials inspects a warship at Jiangnan Shipyard in Shanghai. China officially handed over two frigates to Bangladesh Navy at an event yesterday. Among others, Deputy Commandant of Eastern Fleet of Chinese Navy Rear Admiral Bai Yaoping was present at the ceremony.

PHOTO: ISPR

Hold brokers accountable

Speakers tell seminar on safe migration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Authorities have to hold brokers accountable after bringing them under the purview of law, to ensure safe and orderly migration of women workers, said activists yesterday.

Errant recruiting agencies should also be punished for bringing misery to the lives of female migrant workers, they said at a seminar marking International Migrants Day.

Karmojibi Nari organised the seminar in association with Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) and UKaid, at the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

In most cases, female migrant workers seek overseas employment through brokers and remain unaware of recruiting agencies, said WARBE Development Foundation Chairman Syed Saiful Haque. However, the country's law does not recognise brokers, he said.

Due to the dependency on brokers, female migrant workers find it hard to get legal assistance after facing abuse, said Hassan Imam, managing director of Center for Development Communications (DEVCOM) Ltd.

Abused migrant workers often do not have required documents with them because of lack of awareness. This makes it hard for them to get

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Sangram editor sent to jail after remand

JNU CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent Abul Asad, editor of Bangla daily Sangram, to jail in a case filed over circulating provocative report and sedition.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Baki Billah gave the order, rejecting a bail petition. Yesterday, police produced Asad before the court on completion of a three-day remand.

On December 14, a Dhaka court placed Asad on remand in the case. Afzal Hossain, a freedom fighter, filed the case with Hatirjheel Police Station under Digital Security Act.

Police took Asad into custody on December 13 after a mob vandalised the office of the daily, over publishing a report

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