'We have no place for wrongdoers'

Quader warns partymen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader has said those who extort, grab land or run drug trades using the party's identity do not have a place in the organisation.

Asking the party leaders and activists to follow discipline, he said, "If you want to be in Awami League, you must follow the party discipline. Sheikh Hasina works for the people as did Bangabandhu before her."

Quader said this while addressing a "peace rally" yesterday, organised by the Dhaka city (South) AL on the premises of Kamrangirchar Hospital, protesting the BNP-Jamaat's "terrorism and anarchy".

"Form committees with devoted activists. One bad person can damage the party's image...," he added.

Quader, also the road

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The once vast Bhairab river in Jashore's Noapara has now been reduced almost to a narrow channel due to extensive encroachment. With the river losing its navigability alarmingly fast, the district's commercial hub is on the verge of losing many businesses and employment. The photo was taken at the Noapara Bhairab Bridge yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Tigers take reins of forest station for 20 hours!

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Forest guards confined themselves to their station in Sarankhola range of Sundarbans for 20 hours as three tigers roamed the turf.

The big cats were first seen in the area under Supati Station around 3:00pm on Friday and stayed on the premises till 11:00am yesterday.

A wildlife expert said this was quite unusual behaviour for tigers as they are typically secretive and territorial.

Mohammad Shamsul Arefin, assistant conservator of forests (ACF) of East Sundarbans Sharankhola Range, told The Daily Star that two tigers first came to the Chandeshwar Forest Office area on Friday afternoon. They drank water from the pond and then lazed around the premises. Later another tiger joined them at night.

Arefin said the tigers generally come to drink water from the pond and do so inconspicuously,

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Investigate allegations of rights abuses against cops

HRW urges govt

UNB, *Dhaka*

Human Rights Watch has said the Bangladesh authorities should investigate recent allegations of enforced disappearances and torture, including by members of the Detective Branch of police.

"Bangladesh's Detective Branch has previously been implicated in allegations of grave human rights abuses by local human rights groups, including enforced disappearances and torture," Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia director at Human Rights Watch, said on Friday.

The New York-based rights watchdog said allegations of torture in Bangladesh are rarely investigated or prosecuted. Following a review in July 2019, the UN Committee against Torture described the Bangladesh police as a "state within a state," asserting that "in general, one got the impression that the police, as well as other law enforcement agencies, were able to operate with impunity and zero accountability".

Only one case of torture has ever been convicted under Bangladesh's Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act

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PRICE HIKE OF ESSENTIALS

The poor have their back against the wall

Rice, flour, soyabean oil prices soar by up to around 20 percent in a year

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Abdul Wahab, a security guard at an ATM booth of a private bank in the capital, works 16 hours a day.

He and his two sons earn a total of about Tk 40,000 a month, but his nine-member family is still struggling to make ends meet as living costs have surged.

	Jan 31-2022 (in taka)	Jan 31-2023 (in taka)
Rice (1 kg)	68	75
Flour (1 kg)	45	75
Soyabean oil (5-litre bottle)	780	880
Egg (per dozen)	114	135
Potato (1 kg)	18	30
Sugar (1kg)	78	120
Chicken (broiler 1 kg)	150	160
Beef (1 kg)	600	700

"We cannot even think of saving money. Rather, we sometimes need to borrow ... it becomes very difficult to meet daily expenses when any of my family members falls sick," Wahab said while eating rice and fried egg for breakfast at the resting room inside the ATM booth on Monday morning.

The 60-year-old, who earns Tk 12,250 a month, described how the situation worsened gradually in recent months.

The family's monthly expenses for house rent in Gandaria have gone up by Tk 2,000 from Tk 13,000 last month.

The expenses for food, school stationery, medicine and transport have also increased, said the security guard, adding that his family already cut the food intake to cope with the rising living costs.

"I've heard that the power price has gone up. I don't know how much more I will have to pay from next month for this increase. What more cuts do we need to make?" said Wahab.

He had to sell his clothing business in Sadarghat 10 years back. Finding no other source of income, he then had to start working as a security guard.

Like Wahab's, most middle- and low-income families in the country are forced to compromise on their standard of living due to high inflation.

The government on Tuesday increased the electricity price for the second time in a month.

According to a report of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB), middle-income people have suffered the most throughout 2022 as the average annual inflation rate was 11.08 percent in Dhaka city that year.

The study was prepared on the basis of monthly price data of 141 food items, 49 non-food products and 25 services. The data was collected from 11 markets in the Dhaka north and south city corporation areas.

Among the major items considered for the CAB report were rice, flour, pulse, bakery products, sugar, fish, eggs, domestic poultry, edible oil, imported fruits, vegetables, spices, tea, coffee, local and imported milk, washing

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EXTORTION MONEY

'DU BCL men' vandalise shop

DU CORRESPONDENT

Supporters of a Dhaka University Chhatra League leader have allegedly vandalised a shop at Bangabazar after its owner refused to pay extortion money last week.

The owner of the shop said after failing to extort him, Imdadul Hasan Shohagh, general secretary of Amar Ekushey Hall Chhatra League, called him on January 30 and said he wanted to see him.

The man, who owns a shop that sells water jars, told The Daily Star, "Imdadul hurled abuse at me and asked me to meet him. When I said I wouldn't, he threatened me with dire consequences. 'Do not call me over the phone if my men vandalise your shop'," the businessman quoted Imdadul as saying.

The shop owner also gave this correspondent an audio clip of what he said was the conversation between him and Imdadul.

"'Where are you? I have been looking for you. I want to see how powerful you are'," the shop owner said, quoting Imdadul.

When the owner told Imdadul that they could meet over a cup of tea at Gulistan, Imdadul got angry. When the owner asked Imdadul why they should meet, the BCL leader said, "Do I need to explain the reason over the phone? I have sent some boys... They will do whatever needs to be done."

The next day, a group of men went to the shop at Bangabazar and vandalised it, the businessman said.

"Before vandalising the shop, they demanded extortion money from me. They said everybody gave money and I should too."

Allegations of extortion against Imdadul also made headlines in March 2022 when he and several other BCL leaders reportedly asked several businessmen of Anandabazar to pay them Tk 10 lakh a

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Concrete traps CO2 soaked from air in climate-friendly test

REUTERS, *San Jose*

A California startup using rocks to soak up carbon dioxide from the air has teamed up with a Canadian company to mineralize the gas in concrete, a technological tie-up that is a first and they say could provide a model for fighting climate change globally.

UN scientists concluded that removing billions of tons of carbon dioxide already in the atmosphere, in addition to cutting current emissions, will be necessary to limit climate change. To do that, two things are needed: first, capturing carbon dioxide with nature or technology, and second, locking it up for centuries.

Companies are springing up to do both.

Heirloom Carbon Technologies delivered about 30 kg (66 lb) of CO2 collected from the air around its San Francisco Bay Area headquarters to neighboring Central Concrete, a Vulcan Materials' VMC.N subsidiary that on Wednesday incorporated the gas into new concrete. That's equivalent to tailpipe emissions of driving about 75 miles (120 km) in a car.

The joint effort between Heirloom and Canada's CarbonCure Technologies was the first time that carbon dioxide absorbed from the atmosphere using such Direct Air Capture (DAC) technology had been secured in concrete, where the CO2 will stay put for centuries, several scientists said.