

Jamaat roots must be wiped out

Liberation war affairs minister tells event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Effective state-sponsored steps must be taken to wipe out the roots of Jamaat-e-Islami, as the party engages in politics in the name of religion, said Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Huq yesterday.

"Communalism and politics in the name of religion must be banned in the country to implement the philosophy of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman," he said.

The minister made the remarks while speaking as the chief guest at a discussion titled "Bangabandhu's political philosophy versus politics in the name of religion", held at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh seminar room in the capital.

The event was organised by Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee to commemorate the 48th death anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

"In this country, Jamaat-e-Islami has killed people for doing politics in the name of religion. They have deep roots. Effective state-sponsored actions must be taken to wipe them out," asserted Mozammel.

Chairing the discussion, Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee President Shahriar Kabir reiterated his demand

for setting up a judicial commission to identify all the masterminds behind the killing of the Father of the Nation.

He also advocated for restoring the '72 constitution to establish a non-communal democratic Bangladesh in light of the spirit of the Liberation War.

Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee Vice President Shyamoli Nasrin Chowdhury demanded upholding the spirit of secularism in running the state.

Former Supreme Court Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik said many Jamaat-Shibir members and fundamentalists have infiltrated Awami League and administration, who must be identified and resisted.

He also demanded legal action against the ones spreading propaganda on social media in favour of convicted war criminal Delwar Hossain Sayedee, who died on Monday.

Eminent historian Prof Dr Muntahir Mamun called for a cultural movement to resist fundamentalists and communal forces in the country.

Lawmaker and human rights activist Aroma Dutta, eminent writer Prof Muhammed Zafar Iqbal, and Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee assistant general secretary Prof Nuzhat Choudhury also spoke at the discussion.



Young skaters, covered in mosquito nets, glide from Jatiya Press Club to Shahbagh in the capital to raise awareness on the current dengue situation. Around 40 such skaters participated in the rally, organised by Search Skating Club and Aariz Foundation. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

VIOLENCE CASE

20 BNP, JCD activists acquitted, one jailed for 4yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday acquitted 20 leaders and activists of BNP and Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal – including former JCD president Abdul Kader Bhuiyan Jewel and general secretary Habibur Rashid Habib – in a case filed over vandalising vehicles and torching an auto-rickshaw in front of Shilpakala Academy in 2013.

The court, however, sentenced Abul Kalam Azad, a BNP activist, to four years in jail as the charges brought against him were proved.

Dhaka Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court pronounced the judgment in presence of 15 accused in the case.

Soon after the verdict, lawyer Mohi Uddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star that the case was filed only to harass them. So, they were acquitted, the lawyer added.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 12 prosecution witnesses, including complainant of the case.

According to the case, a group of 40 to 50 leaders and activists – including Jewel and Habib – gathered in front of Shilpakala Academy to observe hartal on March 12, 2013. At one stage, they vandalised several vehicles and torched an auto-rickshaw.

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Man arrested in Dhaka over rape of 4-year-old

UNB, Chapainawabganj

Rab yesterday arrested a man in a case filed over the rape of a four-year-old girl in Chapainawabganj.

The arrestee is Kausar Ali, 39, of Choupukuria area of Nachol upazila of the district.

A joint team of Rab-5 and Rab-1 arrested him from Dhaka's Badda area on Thursday afternoon. Rab-5 commander Lt Col Riaz Shahriar confirmed this at a press briefing at Rab-5's Chapainawabganj camp.

Kausar, on August 12, raped the victim in his house, said the Rab official.

When the incident came

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No 'back to school' for slum children

NGO-run institutions struggling to stay afloat amid fund crunch; dropout, child labour on rise

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and NILIMA JAHAN

Despite being of school-going age, 12-year-old Sayem and his siblings – Siam, 8, and Sadia, 6 – are out of school at present.

The children live in Sat Tola slum in the capital's Mohakhali area, home to around 5,000 families.

Sayem had dropped out after completing second grade in an NGO-run school, which shut down after the pandemic. The situation is same for many other children as most NGO-run schools in their neighbourhood had closed down due to the pandemic.

Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE) has been operating seven learning centres in the area under their Out of School Children Education Programme since December 2021. However, Sayem and his siblings could not be enrolled in these centres due to various complications.

Under this programme, students were enrolled in the first grade in batches of 30 in 2021. The enrolled students were promised completion of primary education over a span of 42 months with a shortened syllabus.

"The current batch is in third grade now. If the project is extended, then my children will be able to enroll with a new batch once the present lot completes fifth grade," said Selim Sheikh, a day labourer and father of the three.

However, Selim intended to enroll his children at a nearby government primary school rather than waiting for this project to end... but could not do so due to financial strains.

"The educational expenses for all three children posed a financial concern for us," he said.

Although the exact number of primary education dropouts due to the pandemic is yet to be ascertained, Annual Primary School Census report prepared by the Directorate of Primary School said the number of school-going children fell from 2,15,51,691 in 2020 to 2,00,90,057 in 2021 – meaning 1,461,634

NGO projects drive slum education, but the operations end with the project timeline. A coordinated database of needs with NGOs could help address this gap.

IQBAL HOSSAIN
Education Manager
Out of School Children Programme,
Unicef

Managing students in these centres is challenging as almost half of the children dropped out during the pandemic. These students are now uninterested in returning to classrooms since they are already earning.

SHIRIN SULTANA
Teacher
BNFE learning centre

students dropped out of elementary schools in 2021.

Fortunately, 10-year-old Ibrahim Khalilullah, was able to get admission in second grade to a government-run school in Mohakhali Wireless area this year, although he was supposed to be in the fifth grade by this time.

Ibrahim used to go to Ananda School, an NGO-run school that closed down in 2020.

Ananda provided school supplies and a stipend of Tk 1,800 every six months, which helped both guardians and children, said Aleya Begum, Ibrahim's mother.

"Now, we spend a minimum of Tk 2,000 per

month on Ibrahim's transportation, tuition, and other expenses. Sending our children to such schools is getting difficult for many. If more schools like Ananda existed, many slum children could receive an education," she added.

Additionally, only eight of 18 BNFE learning centres in the capital's Bhashantek slum are currently operational, said locals.

Bayzid, who only completed second grade, has been directly affected by the closure of the centres. He has been working with a vegetable vendor for the past two months, earning Tk 4,000 per month, which he contributes to his family's house rent.

A rickshaw-puller by profession, Bayzid's father's income is insufficient to support their family of six, while his mother has to stay invested at home among daily chores and taking care of her infants.

"Bayzid has been supporting us with the rent for the last couple of months, which is a great help. It seems unlikely for him to continue studies," said Rokhsana, his mother.

Bayzid's eight-year-old sister is also currently out of school.

School closures have led to an increase in child labour, with many children becoming conductors of human-hauliers, shop assistants, and more, said Shilpi Ashraf of Bhashantek slum.

While visiting the Karail slum recently, 12-year-old Rasel was found sitting with his baby siblings while his mother, a domestic help, was out to work.

His school, Ashar Alo, closed during the pandemic and never reopened, causing Rasel to drop out after completing second grade.

Since Rasel's addict father does not contribute to the family, his mother has to earn their daily bread while he looks after his younger siblings, said Rasel's grandfather.

"Rasel stood first in second grade and was admitted to third grade, but he had to drop out. It's unlikely that he will be able to return to school," said Rasel's grandfather.

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An significant portion of a road beside the IDB Bhaban in the capital's Agargaon, ignoring a 'no parking' sign. While illegal parking has been a persistent issue, such careless actions adds to pedestrians' woes. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Bangladesh shocked at losses in Maui wildfire

Momen sends letter to Antony Blinken

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen has written a letter to US Secretary of State Antony J Blinken, expressing his deep sadness over the loss of lives and destruction of property caused by a catastrophic wildfire in the Hawaiian Island of Maui, US.

"I convey our deep condolences and heartfelt sympathy to you and through you to the families of the victims and all those affected by this natural disaster. We wish the injured early recovery and pray for the salvation of the

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Fear grips AL Says Mirza Fakhrul

SAJJAD HOSSAIN and MD ABBAS

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the faces of Awami League leaders have dried up in fear and there are no more smiles left on their faces.



"Watch TV, there are no more smiles like before. And those who have built homes abroad are now trying to figure out how to save those," he said while addressing a rally ahead of a mass procession at Doyaganj intersection in the capital.

BNP organised the mass procession as part of its three-day programme to press home its one-point demand for holding elections under a non-partisan neutral government.

Accusing the ruling Awami League of looting the country, Fakhrul said they have turned Bangladesh into a mess, leaving nothing behind.

"They have now found another place – the pension scheme. They have devised another ploy to steal people's money. They want to hold elections by stealing that money. But people won't let that happen this time," he added.

Claiming the AL government was scared, Fakhrul said they have realised the United States has imposed visa restrictions on individuals involved in corruption and those who obstruct free and fair elections.

He said American people, organisations, and human rights groups have called upon their government institutions to organise a hearing on Bangladesh for rights violations and lack of democracy.

Thousands of BNP leaders and activists joined both processions of Dhaka north and south which

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BNP having a 'picnic party'

Quader on the party's movement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Claiming that BNP wants to foil the upcoming national election, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said they would keep an eye on whether the international community impose sanctions and visa policies on those who want to bar a peaceful election.

"Awami League wants a peaceful election while BNP wants to foil it. BNP is a terrorist party, carrying out fascist activities in the name of movement," said Quader at a discussion.

Chhatra League's Dhaka University unit organised the event, commemorating August 15 victims, at the university's Teacher-Student Centre.

Quader said, "We are waiting to see whether sanctions or visa policies are enforced against those who do not want peaceful elections and commit arson attacks."

Terming BNP's one-point movement 'unimportant', Quader said, "How long will the picnic party continue in the name of BNP's movement? Go to Pakistan if you want a caretaker government."

He also criticised the interest of foreigners in the internal affairs of Bangladesh.

"Why are the foreigners so interested in the politics of Bangladesh and not in other countries?" said Quader.

BCL president Saddam Hussain, general secretary Sheikh Wali Asif Enan and general Secretary of BCL DU unit Tanbir Hasan Shaikat also spoke at the programme, presided by DU unit president Mazharul Kabir Shayon.

