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Will die if I am isolated from people PM urges SSF not to alienate her from countrymen

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the members of Special Security Force not to alienate her from the people as they are her strength.

"If I become isolated from the people, I would die," she said.

The premier made this remark while addressing a special darbar (gathering) arranged at her office, marking the 38th founding anniversary of the SSF.

She said she does politics for the people and work with them. "I've no other strength except the people. I move forward with the power of people," she added.

"So, you will have to pay attention so that I won't be isolated," she said, adding that SSF needs to deal with these matters sensibly.

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina cuts a cake on the occasion of the 38th founding anniversary of the Special Security Force at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday. PHOTO: PID

DU allocates only 2.12pc for research

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University authorities yesterday approved a Tk 945.15 crore budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year, while setting aside only Tk 20.05 crore as research grants.

The research budget was approved against 2,000 teachers of the university, meaning only Tk 1 lakh has been allocated per teacher. The allocation for the research grants is only 2.12 percent of the total outlay.

More than half of the budget will be spent on the salaries and pensions of teachers and staffers.

There are 60 research centres at the university. If the amount of grants is divided among them, each would get Tk 33.41 lakh for research work for a year.

Of the total outlay, around Tk 299.19 crore (31.65 percent) was allocated for salaries, Tk 218.43 crore (23.12 percent) for gratuity, and Tk 112.95 crore (11.95 percent) for pensions and retirement, according to the DU budget book.

Educationists have expressed dissatisfaction over such a paltry allocation for research grants.

Dhaka University Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury said, "Teachers are losing interest

in research. Society and the state's disinterest in creating new knowledge is responsible for this, as the allocation is very low. It is not only at Dhaka University. It is the same in all universities."

"Research requires concerted initiative. We lack that too. This

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SERAJUL ISLAM CHOUDHURY
Professor Emeritus at DU

is an ominous sign for society and the state. The interest in creating new knowledge should be increased among teachers, and the state should take initiatives for this," he added.

Put an end to custodial torture and mistreatment

Amnesty urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amnesty International yesterday called upon the Bangladesh government to end impunity for torture and other ill treatment by police and security forces, urging authorities to hold perpetrators accountable and ensure reparations for victims.

In a statement marking International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, the global rights group said impunity continues to prevail for police and security forces in Bangladesh despite the country ratifying the UN Convention Against Torture in 1998 and enacting the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act 2013.

There has only been one conviction under the torture law in more than a decade. In September 2023, the Bangladesh government reported to the UN Human Rights Council that 24 cases had been filed under the 2013 torture law so far, reads the statement.

Between January 2013 and May 2024, Bangladesh rights group Ain O Salish Kendra documented 138 deaths that were allegedly caused by physical torture by law enforcement agencies.

It also documented 923 deaths in jail custody that were reported in the media during the same period, reads the statement.

In a recent alleged case of drug possession, on June 2, SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

ACTION AGAINST CORRUPT PERSONS

'Role of ACC questionable'

Shahriar Kabir tells event marking 30th death anniv of Jahanara Imam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The role of the Anti-Corruption Commission in taking action against individuals being investigated for graft allegations is questionable, said war crimes researcher Shahriar Kabir yesterday.

He demanded that the ACC be held accountable.

"Why do the ACC's directions come after a person under their investigation flees the country? Why does the announcement of freezing bank accounts come after a person leaves the country?" questioned Shahriar, referring to former IGP Benazir Ahmed and former NBR member Matiur Rahman.

He was addressing a discussion commemorating the 30th death anniversary of Shaheed Janani

Why do the ACC's directions come after a person under their investigation flees the country? Why does the announcement of freezing bank accounts come after a person leaves the country?

SHAHRIAR KABIR

Jahanara Imam.

Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee organised the event at the National Museum in Dhaka.

Slamming the Bangladesh Police Service Association's recent protest SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

YUNUS CASE 2 SC lawyers challenge framing order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two Supreme Court lawyers have filed a petition with the High Court challenging a Dhaka court order that framed charges against Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus and 13 others in a case filed over misappropriation of about Tk 25.22 crore of Grameen Telecom Workers' Profit Participation Fund.

Lawyers Barrister Md Yousuf Ali and Advocate Jafrul Hasan Sharif, who are part of the 13 accused, submitted the petition to the HC on Tuesday.

In the petition, they said they have not committed any offence, but the trial court has delivered the charge framing order using a Google based AI tool, which is not permitted by the law. SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

KHALEDA'S RELEASE BNP to hold rally in Dhaka on Saturday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP will hold a rally on Saturday in front of the party's Nayapalton headquarters demanding the release of its Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

It will also hold rallies in cities and districts across the country on July 1 and 3 respectively to press home the same demand.

Party's Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir announced the programme after holding the party's joint meeting with the front and associate bodies at the party's central office yesterday.

"Khaleda Zia is seriously ill and her life is at risk. But she was denied better treatment showing legal excuses. That's why we announced protest programmes," the BNP secretary general said.

Khaleda Zia is undergoing treatment at the capital's Evercare Hospital since Friday. A pacemaker was implanted in her chest.

Earlier, when Khaleda went to Evercare Hospital on May 1 for a regular health check-up, doctors treated her at the CCU for two days.

The former prime minister, 79, has long battled various ailments, including liver cirrhosis, arthritis, diabetes, and issues related to the kidney, lung, heart, and eyes.

Since her conditional release from prison in 2020, the BNP chairperson has been receiving medical care repeatedly at the hospital under the supervision of a medical board headed by cardiologist Prof Shahabuddin Talukder.

'Forced into prostitution'

8 members of online sex racket held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department busted an online sex trade ring led by two medical students who forced women into prostitution under the guise of offering them lucrative jobs, modelling opportunities, and talent-hunting.

The victims, including underage girls, were tricked and coerced into taking inappropriate pictures and videos, which were then shared on social media.

As such, the gang was blackmailing hundreds of young women to participate in explicit activities, CID Chief Mohammad Ali Mia said during a press briefing at the CID Headquarters yesterday.

CID arrested eight individuals in this connection, including the two medical students, from Jashore, Satkhira, Chandpur, and the capital on Tuesday.

The arrestees are -- Mehdi Hasan, 25, a student of International Medical College; his cousin and main cohort, Sheikh Zahid bin Sujon, 26, a student of Ibn Sina Medical College; Zahid Hasan Kankan, 28; Tanveer Ahmed Deepto, 26; Syed Hasibur Rahman, 27; Sadat Al Muiz, 29; Sushmita Akhter Poppy, 27; and Naina Islam, 24.

They have earned crores of taka in the last seven years by creating adult content and providing related services on Telegram, WhatsApp, and Messenger, said the CID chief.

Initially, the racket advertised jobs through Facebook and other social media, posing as modelling agents or organising "talent hunt" competitions.

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Hajj returnees reunite with family members after landing at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

50 Bangladeshi hajj pilgrims died in KSA so far

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 50 Bangladeshi hajj pilgrims died in Saudi Arabia till yesterday morning.

Of the total deceased, 38 were male and 12 female, according to the Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh.

Most of them died in Makkah, according to the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Twenty-five of the deceased were aged between 60 and 70, according to the hajj portal of the ministry.

This year, hajj was observed on June 16.

As the hajj was performed amid intense heat, many pilgrims died due to heat-related illnesses, according to various local and international media outlets.

The pilgrims who die in Saudi Arabia are usually buried there.