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Food support for families in need if BNP comes to power

Says Tarique

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said if BNP can come into power with public mandate in future, they will introduce a "family card" against which food support will be provided to people per their needs.

"My plan is... we will specify the number of families in Bangladesh. We will give a family card to every family from the state," he said.

The BNP leader raised his plan while virtually addressing a public rally at Kishoreganj Old Stadium in the district.

Tarique Rahman said the family card will be given against the name of the mother or homemaker in a family, and this programme will initially start in the rural areas and then expand gradually to the urban areas.

Under the card, every family will be provided with a certain amount of required food items every month, he added.

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Protesting the recent upsurge in incidents of mob violence throughout the country, a human chain was formed in front of the National Museum in Shahbagh yesterday. Speakers demanded that all incidents of mob violence should be investigated and those involved should be held accountable.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

We're exporting hilsa to India, not sending as gift

Says Rizwana

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, adviser to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, clarified yesterday that hilsa is not being sent to India as a gift. It will be exported, with the Bangladesh government receiving the export revenue.

She emphasised that the export value is significant and should not be underestimated.

The adviser made these remarks to journalists after visiting the regulators of Muchhapur closure area in Companiganj, which was damaged by floods last month.

The adviser further said that although a decision has been made to export hilsa, the fish has not yet left Bangladesh.

"The price has already increased, so it's not accurate to say prices will rise further due to export. This matter is under the government's consideration," she added.

Addressing broader issues, she said, "Those who seek hilsa have supported anti discrimination movements from the other side. We must recognise that we have many topics to discuss with our neighbours, and we should not let minor issues hinder dialogue."

During the visit, Nurul Alam Sikder, convener of the Companiganj upazila BNP, accused Abdul Quader Mirza,

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Farewell to a 13-yr-old martyr

Shot by police on August 5, Ratul dies after 49 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Thirteen-year-old Junayed Islam Ratul joined a victory procession in Bogura on August 5, after hearing that Sheikh Hasina had fled the country. Little did he know that this march for freedom would cost him his life.

As the procession approached Bogura Sadar Police Station, police opened fire on the crowd.

Ratul, a sixth-grader at Path Public School and College, was hit by gun pellets that pierced through his body, leaving him critically injured.

Ratul was rushed to a local hospital that night before being transferred to the National Institute of Neuroscience and Hospital in Dhaka, where he fought for his life for over a month.

Despite extensive efforts to save him, he succumbed to his injuries yesterday at 4:00am, said his father, Ziaur Rahman.

Later that day, Ratul's body, draped in the national flag, was brought to the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka at 4:30pm, where many gathered to pay their last respects to the young martyr.

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SITUATION IN CHT

'Must have peace, stability in the hills'

Says GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiyo Party Chairman GM Quader yesterday expressed deep concern over the recent unrest in the three hill districts -- Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban (Chittagong Hill Tracts), and emphasised the need to maintain peace and stability in the region at all costs.

The JP chief made the remarks during a meeting with leaders of the Jatiyo Matsyajibi Party and the Jatiyo Hawkers Party at his office in Dhaka's Banani.

GM Quader said, "I don't want to see bloodstains on the green hills. We are all Bangladeshis, and we believe in unity and harmony. We cannot allow the tourism industry and economic potential of the hilly areas to be jeopardised."

No new reports of violence

UNB, Khagrachhari

There were no reports of new violence in Khagrachhari till yesterday morning -- the last day of the 72-hour blockade called by indigenous students and activists protesting the recent violence in the district.

Although long-distance bus services remained suspended, there was presence of inter-district vehicles.

Commuters, however, alleged that motorcycles and autorickshaw drivers were charging extra fares, taking advantage of the blockade.

Khagrachhari Sadar Police Station's Officer-in-Charge Abdul Baten Mridha said patrolling by the army, Border Guard Bangladesh, and police was ongoing to maintain law and order. The presence of students at the educational institutions was thin compared to other days due to the blockade.

Rangamati's Baghaichhari Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shirin Akter said over 1,000 tourists stranded in Sajek have not been brought back yet as movement of vehicles from the spot remained suspended due to security reasons.

The blockade was called on Friday by indigenous protesters under the banner of Jummo Chhatra-Janata Parishad based in Dhaka in response to recent violent incidents in Khagrachhari and Rangamati.

The United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) supported the protest.

US stands with all Bangladeshis

Says Charge d'affaires LaFave

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The USA stands in support of the indigenous communities and all Bangladeshis, recognising their rich cultural heritage and invaluable contributions to the nation's identity, said US Charge d'affaires Helen LaFave yesterday.

She made the remarks after the meeting with the CHT Affairs Adviser Supradip Chakma at the latter's office.

She said rights of the indigenous communities and all Bangladeshis must be respected and upheld, ensuring they are free from discrimination, marginalisation, and violence. An inclusive and just society defends the voices and rights of its most vulnerable populations.

Form commission to reform health sector: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Alongside the previously formed six reform commissions, the interim government should have also formed a commission to restructure the health sector, said experts at a meeting in the capital yesterday.

The programme titled, "Health Sector Reform: Citizen's Perspective", in the capital's Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific auditorium was organised by Alliance for Health Reforms Bangladesh.

We are at a crucial point with opportunities for reform. While consensus on some issues is lacking, we are working towards change. Reducing out-of-pocket expenses for patients is a key priority.

PROF NAZMUL HOSSAIN
DG of Directorate of Health Services

Prof Nazmul Hossain, director general of the DGHS, said, "We are at a crucial point with opportunities for reform. While consensus on some issues is lacking, we are working towards change. Reducing out-of-pocket expenses for patients is a key priority."

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Country needs inclusive reforms

Speakers tell dialogue on ending discrimination

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women from all backgrounds, regardless of caste, creed, or religion, should be included in decision making for national progress and to end discrimination, said speakers at a dialogue in the capital yesterday.

Titled "All are Equal", the session was organised by ActionAid Bangladesh and brought together over 20 participants, including activists and representatives from indigenous communities, people with disabilities, sex workers, and women's rights advocates.

The discussion focused on the need for state reforms and inclusive development in the wake of recent student protests.

Nishitha Zaman Niha, coordinator of Boishommo Birodhi Chhatro Andolon, stressed the importance of addressing rural women's rights to bridge societal divides.

"We need a Bangladesh free from discrimination and state oppression," she said.

Anowara Begum, representing women farmers, highlighted wage

discrimination and limited access to markets. "Women farmers lack land rights and face inadequate sanitation facilities. We need a discrimination-free society and a 'farmer's card' to access services and benefits."

Khilon Robidas of the Bangladesh Robidas Forum in Gaibandha raised concerns over the discrimination faced by Dalit communities, especially women and children.

"People mock them due to their distinct dress, marking them as members of the community," he said.

Nilofa, secretary of the sex workers network, called for justice and protection for sex workers, citing ongoing physical and mental violence.

Puchainu Marma from the SUSHIL project in Bandarban highlighted the struggles of indigenous communities in the hill tracts, calling for land rights and security under the new government.

Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh, urged for the issues of discrimination to be addressed during ongoing reforms.

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Vegetable vendors have taken up this entire footpath, leaving no space for pedestrians to walk. Many people in the background can be seen walking on the road as a result. The photo was taken in the Azimpur area yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

MA Mannan denied bail, sent to jail

UNB, Sunamganj

A Sunamganj court yesterday sent former planning minister MA Mannan



back to jail after rejecting his bail petition in a case filed over the attacks on students and people during the recent student-led movement in the district.

Sunamganj Speedy Trial Tribunal Judge Nirjan Mitra passed the order after hearing the bail petition, said the plaintiff's lawyer Mashuk Alam.

Law enforcement agencies arrested the former minister from his residence in Shantiganj area under Jagannathpur upazila in Sunamganj on September 19.

He was accused in the case filed by one Hafiz Ali, brother of a victim who was

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