

Unite to dislodge govt: Workers Party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Workers Party of Bangladesh (WPB) has urged all progressive political parties and people to be united to dislodge the BNP-led coalition government and form a 'pro-people' one.

"The existing anti-government sentiment among people will lead to a mass upsurge to topple the alliance government," General Secretary of the party Bimal Biswas said at a press conference yesterday at the party office.

The WPB stands for a people-oriented administration and an end to corruption for all round development of the nation, he said in a statement read out by him.

Bimal said a pro-people government should scrap 'anti-national pacts like SOFA and HANA'.

All production sharing contracts (PSCs) with international oil companies went against the interest of Bangladesh and those must be scrapped, and any move to export natural gas to India must stop, the party said.

About loan default, the party felt all assets of the big loan defaulters should be confiscated in the interest of the economy.

The WPB opposed privatisation policy of the government and stressed enactment of 'pro-worker laws' in line with the ILO convention.

"We want to free the education system from commercialisation and introduce a uniform education system," the WPB leader said.

The press conference was also attended by WPB President Rashed Khan Menon, Fazle Hossain Badsha, Quamrul Hossain and Abdus Sattar.



The Chirantan, an organisation of the children and juveniles, took out a colourful procession in Dhaka yesterday to mark the Victory Day.

Free life-saving drugs for TB patients

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Half a million of the world's poorest tuberculosis patients will benefit from free life-saving drugs under an agreement signed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Novartis, a pharmaceutical company, yesterday.

Under the agreement, Novartis will manufacture special patient kits containing fixed-dose combination tablets in blister packs. The design improves patient compliance and greatly reduces the risk of developing drug-resistant TB, which is far more costly and difficult to treat.

Novartis will donate the drugs to the Global Drug Facility, which is hosted by WHO and operated by the Stop TB Partnership. The facility has supplied procurement support and medicines to 2.8 million TB patients in 65 countries since its launching, says a press release.

The drugs will be provided over a five-year period to the countries, including Bangladesh, with support from the Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

TB kills almost two million people every year. In Africa, lack of access to quality drugs is a key constraint to fighting tuberculosis and the TB/HIV co-epidemic.

WHO Director-General Lee Jong-wook welcomed the agreement as a major contribution to TB control. "Novartis has taken a strong lead in fighting tuberculosis and we encourage other drug manufacturers to follow their example."

Daniel Vasella, chairman and CEO, Novartis AG, said the donation was one aspect of a multi-pronged strategy to help combat the disease.

Obituary

UNB, Dhaka

Alhaj Maulana AK Zainul Abedin, an eminent businessman and social worker, died of old-age ailments at Birdem Hospital in the city on Thursday night at 73.

A pioneer in transport business, Abedin was the founder president of Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samity and the Narayanganj Sarak Paribahan Samabai Samity.

He also worked as an adviser on transport sector for the ILO. He also worked as a field publicity officer of Wapda.

His career began as a school-teacher with Jessore Zilla School. He also taught at the Banglabazar Government Girls' High School.

Abedin was the first headmaster of Bangladesh Deaf and Dumb School.

He also played an active role in setting up many schools, madrassahs, mosques in different parts of the country.

Abedin, who hailed from village Dharkathi of upazila Swarupkathi in Pirojpur district, is survived by his wife, four sons, four daughters and a number of grandchildren.

His eldest son DK Fuad Hasan is a senior news producer of the BTv.

His qulkhani will be held at his Agargaon residence after Asar prayers on Monday.

ATM Mahbubur Rahman

Advocate ATM Mahbubur Rahman, acting general secretary of Comilla district (south) Awami League, died at a clinic in Dhaka in the early hours of yesterday at 52, says a press release.

He is survived by his wife, two sons and one daughter.

He was buried at his family graveyard at village Suagazi after a namaz-e-janaza at Comilla Town Hall.

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and AL President Sheikh Hasina expressed condolence at his death.

Rokeya Bari

Rokeya Bari, a teacher of Holy Cross College, died of cancer at Bumrungrad Hospital in Bangkok yesterday at 63, says a press release.

She is survived by her husband MA Bari, former chief engineer of Roads and Highway Department, four sons and two grandchildren.

Mizanur Rahman Masum

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Mizanur Rahman Masum, district correspondent of the daily Janakantha, died at his residence in Netrakona yesterday at 35, says a press release.

He had long been suffering from kidney ailments.

Masum is survived by his mother, one brother and two sisters.

He was buried at the Netrakona pousava graveyard.

Moulavi AT Alamgir

Moulavi AT Alamgir, father of Mufdi Ahmed, chief reporter of the daily Al-Amin, died in Dhaka on Thursday at 83, says a press release.

A teacher and social worker, he hailed from Khaturia village of Domar upazila under Nilphamari district.

He is survived by his wife, three sons, four daughters and a number of grandchildren.

He was buried at his family graveyard at his home village.

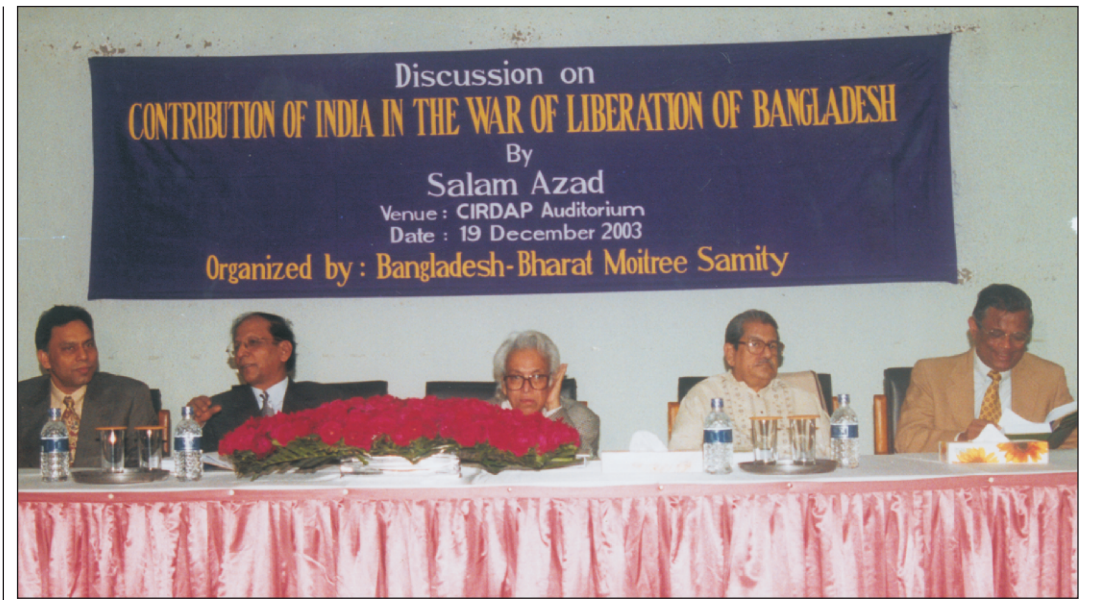


PHOTO: STAR

Participants at a publication ceremony of a book titled 'Contribution of India in the War of Liberation of Bangladesh' held at the Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. Poet Shamsur Rahman attended the ceremony as chief guest and Professor Anisuzzaman was special guest.

Book on contribution of India in liberation war launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a publication ceremony of a book titled 'Contribution of India in the War of Liberation of Bangladesh' yesterday paid homage to the Indian soldiers who sacrificed their lives in 1971 and thanked the people of India for their help in the war.

They also lauded the author Salam Azad for his effort and said the unique feature of the book is the casualty-list which is, for the first time, made available to the public.

The ceremony was organised by Bangladesh Bharat Moitree Samity at CIRDAP auditorium in the city.

Speaking as chief guest, Poet Shamsur Rahman said, "This book should have been written earlier.

However, we thank the author for his courage and effort that he has given for the book."

Professor Dr Anisuzzaman said, "It is a sad part of our history that we couldn't publish such a book earlier. At the same time, writing a book on the liberation war after three decades has also some positive sides. We can now get information which were not possible to get earlier and make them public."

Indian Deputy High Commissioner in Dhaka Dilip Sinha said, "I think India had done what it ought to have done as a friend in 1971."

Professor Durgadas Bhattacharya, former vice-chancellor of National University and Advisor of Bangladesh-Bharat Moitree Samity, said the book has 10 chapters and on each chapter an

independent book can be published.

He thanked the author for coming up with this courageous book and said it could be the beginning of publishing such books in future.

"The writing of the history of the liberation war of Bangladesh keeping India aside is not possible. On behalf of us, writer Salam Azad has taken the step" he said.

Former foreign secretary Mohiuddin Ahmed, Secretary of Bangladesh - Bharat Moitree Samity Aminul Hoque, and former ambassador Shirif Shikder also spoke on the occasion.

All the information of the book, published by Ankur Prokashoni, are supported and supplemented by photographs and necessary documents.

Sec 144 in Moulvibazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

The district administration imposes Section 144 from 9:00am to 9:00pm today in the municipal area here, following calls of separate meetings by the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) at the same venue.

The ICS, student wing of the Jamaat-e-Islami, called a meeting at

Chaumohana Square at noon in protest at the killing of its leader Almas Miah, a third-year student of Moulvibazar Government College.

The JCD called another meeting to protest an allegedly false case filed by the ICS against its leaders.

Almas was killed and seven others were injured in a gunfight between the JCD and ICS on the college campus on December 9.



Citibank NA has contributed Tk 1.5 lakh to the Liberation War Museum to encourage the young generation to read books on the history and heritage of Bangladesh. Photo shows Mamdudur Rashid, senior country operations officer of the bank, handing over the cheque to Dr Sarwar Ali, trustee and member secretary of the museum, at a ceremony in Dhaka recently.

Free treatment for cleft lip patients

Patients with cleft lip and palate will get free treatment under an arrangement at the Shaheed Suhrawardy Hospital and the Oral Surgery Department of Dhaka Dental College Hospital, says a press release.

A medical team from the Japan Cleft Palate Foundation will treat the patients from today to December 27. The team will also perform surgery on a limited number of patients.

Interested patients have been requested to contact Professor Motiur Rahman Molla, head of oral surgery department of Shaheed Suhrawardy Hospital, at 8.30am tomorrow.