

'Politicisation puts union level democracy at stake'

Animator training helps rural people attain self-reliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Politicisation, influence of ruling party lawmakers and subsequent corruption have put democracy at union level at stake.

The lowest tier of local government is losing its traditional grandeur over hindrances to development.

Yet out of social responsibility, local people at some unions are using their own merit and resources to achieve a transparent and accountable local government.

This was revealed by union parishad (UP) chairmen, members and local people while talking to a group of newsmen from different national dailies and electronic media during a two-day visit to Maria, Sardaha and Shilmaria unions of Rajshahi.

They said the achievement of their unions that they earned following one to four-day animator (Ujjibok) training in last three years could be an example for others.

The Hunger Project is developing the animators for imparting training to volunteers who mobilise others for self-reliant development and gender equality.

The animators told the reporters that they themselves were moved by the enthusiasm of the local people to transform their villages and end their own despair, hunger and poverty.

Chairman Sazzad Hossain of Shilmaria union parishad under Puthia upazila said his union has achieved 100 percent success in sanitation and birth registration, 93 percent in adult literacy and 71 percent in general education.

"Ninety-five percent children of my union now attend primary schools and all people are now aware of nutrition, health, evil effects of dowry and child marriage," he added.

He said there is an avayaranna (sanctuary) for birds at Pachamaria village of the union where some 5000 guest birds always stay and a reading centre where around 100 people come everyday to read newspaper.

"All these developments have taken place thanks to 139 trained animators who mobilised their communities for self-reliant," said Sazzad.

"Political parties spend more than the annual budget of a union like Shilmaria on decoration over visit of their party leaders. Under this situation, people should act themselves," said eminent littera-

teur Hasan Azizul Haque.

"UPs are now almost ineffective institution due to politicisation. Development funds are usurped by lawmaker and their henchmen," said Motiur Rahman, chairman of Sardaha UP under Chorghat upazila while exchanging views with local elite and journalists.

Motiur himself took animator training and along with 400 male and female animators, is working to alleviate hunger and poverty.

Chairman Abul Hossain Sardar of Mougachhi union under Mohonpur upazila alleged discrimination in development allocations over political consideration.

But hundreds of trained individuals are now engaged in changing their own fate as well as the society gradually, he added.

Extortionists stab bank officer, his brother in Munshiganj

UNB, Munshiganj

A gang of extortionists stabbed a bank officer and his brother at Purbo Deobhog in the town yesterday, leaving them critically injured.

The injured were identified as Ashrafuzzaman Mokhter, 28, an officer of Uttara Bank, and Ahsan Habib Monir, 26.

Police said some local youths demanded toll from Ashrafuzzaman who was constructing a building in the area. As he refused to pay toll, the youths stabbed him and his brother around 12:00noon.

The injured were first rushed to Sadar Hospital and then shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital as their condition deteriorated.

Mumbai blasts condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh-Bharat Sampriti Parishad has condemned the serial bomb blasts in Mumbai that killed about 200 people and injured several hundreds, says a press release.

In a joint statement, Parishad President Justice KM Sobhan, Vice President Advocate MA Bari and General Secretary Dr Nim Chandra Bhoumik said such incidents might cause instability in the entire subcontinent through fuelling fanaticism.

They urged all democratic forces and peace-loving people to work together against terrorism.

Gold smuggler held by CID

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) arrested a gold smuggler and recovered 39 Tola gold ornaments and Tk three lakh cash from Mouchak intersection in the city on Wednesday night, says a CID press release.

CID team led by Gias Uddin, inspector of east zone, arrested the smuggler Alim Uddin alias Md Ali, 42, following the confession of Abu Hanif Hawlader, leader of a gang of gold smugglers.

Ali was a mere employee of a jewellery shop but smuggling has seen him emerge as the owner of 'Ali Silver House' at Mouchak market.

36 Khulna ward committees of Jubo League dissolved

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

All the 36 ward committees of Jubo League under five thanas of Khulna metropolitan city including Khulna city committee were dissolved on Thursday evening.

A new convening committee will be formed on Monday, said central organising secretary of the party Md Mahbul Alam Hiron.

We have taken this action failing to reunite two rival factions which were often locked in clashes, said the central organising secretary.

'Alliance govt will be forced to accept reform proposals'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Workers' Party of Bangladesh yesterday at a meeting said the BNP-led coalition government would be forced to accept the reform proposals before handing over the power to the caretaker government.

They also urged the 14-party opposition to take stern programmes by uniting the mass people of the country.

Workers' Party organised the meeting with its President Rashed Khan Menon in the chair.

They also emphasised collecting money from the people in

order to stop use of black money in the election.

Reviewing the election preparation for selected 40 seats, the leaders said the victory would be achieved if the 14-party contest the election unitedly.

They also said the people have lost trust in the BNP-Jamaat government.

They said the people have to be organised and aware of the changes in national and public life that are stated in their 23-point demand.

Party leaders from different divisions also participated in the meeting.

Eight shops gutted, 20 injured in Patuakhali fire

UNB, Patuakhali

A devastating fire ripped through the Power House market in the town on Thursday night, destroying eight shops and injuring at least 20 people, including five fire fighters.

Fire Brigade sources said the fire started at a petrol shop, owned by Abul Mia, at about 11:45 pm and soon engulfed nearby shops following the explosion of petrol drums.

The fire fighters with the help of local people extinguished the blaze after two hours of frantic efforts.

At least 20 people were injured during the explosion and while trying to put out the fire. Three of the injured -- Abu Mia, Saïd and Mohammad Mamun -- were sent to a hospital in Barisal in critical condition while 11 others to Patuakhali General Hospital.

Obituary

Ohider Nesa, mother of Aiyub Bhuyian, chief reporter of the daily Bhorer Kagaj, passed away on July 11 due to old-age complications at her house in Feni at the age of 90, says a press release.

She left behind one son, four daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn her death.

She was buried at her family graveyard at Nurpur in Fulgazi.

In a statement yesterday, Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) President M Shaiful Karim and General Secretary Shahed Chowdhury expressed condolence at her death.

Mizanur Rahman Titu

BSS, Dhaka

Mizanur Rahman Titu, president of Rajbari district Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), passed away at Padma General Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 30.

Titu, also a member of central committee of JCD, had been suffering from cancer, a party press release said.

He is survived by his parents and wife.

JCD president Azizul Bari Helal and general secretary Shaiful Bari Babu expressed deep shock at the death of Titu.

Selina Haq

BSS, Dhaka

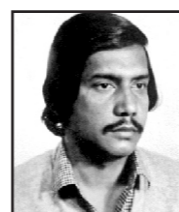
Selina Haq, wife of Ekramul Haq, a former journalist and retired income tax officer, passed away on Thursday night at the age of 48.

She had been suffering from lung cancer.

Selina is survived by her husband, two sons and one daughter.

She was buried at Mirpur Section 11 Graveyard.

Death anniversary



Today is the sixth death anniversary of Advocate Kader Sarker, pro-vice president of Rajshahi University.

Central Students Union and senate member of the university, says a press release.

He was also the general secretary of Bogra district Krishak League.

On the occasion, a Qurankhwani and halquayezikr will be held at his village home in Joypurhat.

Friends, relatives and admirers have been requested to attend the programme and pray for the salvation of the departed soul.



Female workers are peeling fibres from water-soaked jute plants at the landowners' fields for which they will receive the jute sticks only as remuneration. The picture was taken from Mawa in Munshiganj yesterday.

GB honours five senior doctors

JU CORRESPONDENT

Five senior doctors were honoured for their contribution to medical science and teaching at a function at Gono Bishwabidyalaya (GB) in Savar yesterday.

The function was organised in connection with the celebration of the 8th founding anniversary of the university.

Justice Mohammad Habibur Rahman, chief advisor to former caretaker government, gave away gold medals to the recipients.

Five students of GB also received crests for their outstanding achievement.

The honoured doctors-cum-teachers are Prof Dr Kazi Shamsul Huq, Prof Dr Johora Begum Kazi, first female doctor in the subcontinent, Prof Dr S I M G Mannan, Prof Dr A K Bakhtier Hossain and Prof

Md Shamsuzzoha.

The five students are Dr Md Zakir Hossain, Dr Tanvir Ahmmad, Dr Aklima Akter, Dr Kazi Nuruddin Ahmed and Dr Dilshan Zahan.

Speaking as chief guest on the occasion Justice Rahman urged the doctors to serve the patients with missionary zeal.

"Many countries have laws preserving the rights of patients to move legally if there is any misbehaviour or wrong treatment by doctors. Similarly there are criticisms and allegations about the way many doctors treat patients in our country. So they must perform their jobs with more dedication," he said.

"Many of our age might find that most of our dreams were shattered. But the youths have to keep dreaming until they materialise some of them," said Justice Rahman.

"Education is to enhance the quality of life, but the objective will remain unfulfilled if quality of education is not ensured in private universities," said Prof Dr M Asaduzzaman, chairman of University Grants Commission.

"We must perform our duty sincerely and give due respect to worthy sons of the soil who are making significant contribution to the development of the country," he added.

Vice-chancellor of GB Prof Dr Abul Kashem Chowdhury, Prof Dr Jafarullah Chowdhury, Prof Dr M R Khan, Prof Dr Mohammad Shahidullah, dean of society-based medical college at GB and Dr S A Hafiz were on the occasion.

A cultural programme was held in the afternoon.

Token strike for gas in Rajshahi today

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi Gas Andolon Parishad, a social body, called 15 minutes token strike from 11:00am today demanding supply of gas through pipeline in Rajshahi city in the tenure of the current government.

Rajshahi Gas Andolon Parishad Convener Mahtab Uddin called upon Rajshahi people to make today's token strike a success.

The Parishad will also hold a rally at Shaheb Bazaar in the city in the afternoon on the same demand today.

Earlier, the Parishad observed several strikes in Rajshahi city on the same demand.

Meanwhile, the government has recently declared to supply gas in Rajshahi, which was approved by the Ecnech.

Prisoner dies of cardiac arrest at Joypurhat jail

BSS, Rangpur

A prisoner undergoing life imprisonment for murder in Joypurhat District Jail died of a massive cardiac arrest on Thursday night.

Jailer M Nazrul Islam said Nuruzzaman, 61, son of late Tofir Uddin of village Dhatalipur in Joypurhat, suddenly fell sick at about 8:30pm. He was rushed to Joypurhat District Modernised Hospital by the jail authorities.

After examining the patient, the doctors declared him dead. After autopsy, the body was handed over to his relatives yesterday.

Jail authorities filed an 'unnatural death' case with Joypurhat Sadar Police Station.

Discovery astronauts wrap up space station work

AFP, Cape Canaveral

Discovery's astronauts prepared Friday to inspect the shuttle for micrometeorite impacts before heading back to Earth from a crucial mission for US space ambitions.

The crew have used the shuttle's robotic arm to scan Discovery for possible damage caused during liftoff and NASA analysts found nothing that would prevent the spacebus from safely flying home on Monday.

But for the first time in a shuttle mission, the astronauts will conduct another safety check Friday before they pull out of the International Space Station to ensure that Discovery's heat shield was not cracked by space particles during just the second flight since the 2003 Columbia tragedy.

They will make one last inspection after they undock from the ISS Saturday.

"We are going to look at it one more time," Discovery pilot Mark Kelly told CBS News television from the ISS. "But based on what we have seen so far and on what the risk is, I think all of us feel really comfortable."

Before the inspection, the astronauts finished putting ISS trash and unused equipment into a container that they prepared to transfer into the shuttle's payload bay.

Weather Today section with a graphic and a table showing temperature and humidity for various cities.

Tk 9.7 lakh received in donation for AMCH in June

A total of over Tk 9.69 lakh was received in donations from 11 people and one organisation for Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital in June last, says a press release.

The total amount received so far stands at Tk 45 crore 30 lakh and 50 thousand which includes a general grant of Tk 10 crore from the social affairs ministry and an equipment grant of Tk 15 crore from the health and family welfare ministry.

The donors of June were Nishat Mahmood Tk 1 lakh, late Abdul Azim Tk 10000, Rabia Sultana Chowdhury Tk 1000, Md Rahmat Pasha Tk 5000, Anwar Matin Chowdhury Tk 1 lakh, Sirajur Rahman 1000, anonymous Tk 2 lakh, Jargina Ahmed Tk 50000, Arjumand Parveen Banu Tk 1 lakh, SN Abeda Begum Tk 50000, anonymous Tk 50000 and Adhayan Shishu Foundation Tk 3 lakh 2 thousand and 8 hundred.

Meanwhile, construction work of the hospital is progressing as scheduled. Presently the construction of the first floor is going on.

DHAKA TODAY section listing various events like Human chain, Literary meeting, Regular meeting, Annual General Meeting, Discussion, Seminar, and Inauguration.