

Form information commission to ensure good governance

Speakers tell dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Politicians, legal experts and civil society members at a dialogue yesterday suggested forming an independent information commission for proper enforcement of the proposed right-to-know law in order to ensure good governance and curb corruption.

The head of the commission and its members, not more than five, should be prominent and knowledgeable personalities and it should have its own budget and recruitment system to avoid government influence, they said.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) and Manusher Jonno Foundation jointly organised the dialogue on 'Good governance in Bangladesh and the right to information' at the Brac Centre in the city to mark the International Right to Information Day.

According to the draft law on right to information prepared by a few core groups under the supervision of Manusher Jonno Foundation, a judge of the appellate division of the Supreme Court should be the head of the commission.

Speaking at the dialogue, Awami League lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta said the post should be open not only to judges but also to all professionals.

"I strongly agree that the Right to Information Act is a must for ensuring

accountability," he said, adding that it will bring about a massive change in the governance, as the law would require the government employees to provide information to the people.

Appreciating the initiative, he said the law should be enacted on the basis of national consensus.

Dr. Atiur Rahman, chairman of Unnayan Shamunnay, said the law should have a provision that would require the public and the private institutions to provide, when demanded, the information when it comes to the question of survival.

"We don't want an information commission like the Anti-Corruption Commission or the Election Commission, which are dependent on the government for its budget," he said.

Barrister Tanjib-ul Alam, who presented the draft law, said that although the constitution does not clearly specify the right to know, a Supreme Court order has recognised the right to information.

He suggested that the Right to Information Act should be given priority in case of any contradiction with any sections of the Official Secrets Act.

The Right to Information Act and its enforcement are a precondition for ensuring good governance and curbing corruption, said Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, who chaired the programme.

The law can help reduce poverty

and the people can contribute to the governance when they have adequate information, she said.

Manusher Jonno Foundation initiated the drafting of the law on the basis of the working paper of the law commission and it is now gathering opinions of the stakeholders so that the people feel ownership of it, she added.

AL lawmaker Col. (Retd.) Faruk Khan, former law minister Abdul Matin Khasru, former advisor to the caretaker government Hafizuddin Khan, Advocate Sultana Kamal of Ain O Shalish Kendra, National Press Club General Secretary Shawkat Mahmud, woman leader Maleka Begum, Ferdous Akter Wahida MP and columnist Muhammad Jahangir also spoke at the dialogue moderated by TIB Executive Director Ifekharuzzaman.

At the programme, TIB Investigative Journalism Award-2006 was awarded to two journalists.

Senior reporter of the Ittefaq Abul Khair won the award in print media category for his series reports on food adulteration, while NTV senior correspondent Ahmed Sagar got the award in electronic media category for his series reports on corruption in administration.

The awardees were given Tk 50,000, a crest and a certificate each.

PROTEST AGAINST LOAD-SHEDDING



Jubo League man stabbed to death, mugger lynched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Jubo League activist was stabbed to death at Motijheel in the city yesterday afternoon.

Meanwhile, a mob beat a mugger to death and injured two others at Kafurl in the city and the police recovered the body of a youth from Tejgaon area yesterday.

The slain Jubo League activist was identified as Shohag Sarkar, 25, a driver by profession.

A gang of local hoodlums called Sohag out of his South Shajahanpur residence at around 1.45pm. They beat and stabbed him in front of a police outpost nearby.

Local people rushed him to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead.

Sources said he had a feud with

the ruling party activists, which might have been the reason behind the attack on him.

In another incident, a mob beat up Md Shamim and two others -- Saddam, 20, and Al Amin, 20, -- at South Ibrahimpur in Kafurl on charge of mugging at around 5.30am.

Doctor declared Shamim dead when he was taken to the DMCH while the two are undergoing treatment there.

In the third incident, the police recovered the decomposed body of Md Jewel from a bushy place on the Water Development Board office premises at Green Road at 1.30pm.

His mother Sahera Khatun said Jewel went to his in-law's house at East Razabazar on September 24 and he had been missing since then. The reason behind the killing could not be known.

'Foil bid to establish distorted history'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People of Bangladesh, unparalleled in vigour and valour, will foil any evil attempt to establish a distorted history 36 years after their glorious victory in the War of Liberation in 1971, said the leaders of Sammilita Nagorik Andolon at a rally yesterday.

The rally was organised by Sammilita Nagorik Andolon, a platform of pro-liberation forces, in front of the National Museum in the city to protest the broadcasting of a documentary titled 'Bangladesh, Amar Bangladesh' by Bangladesh Television recently.

Speakers at the rally condemned the evil attempt of the 'BNP-Jamaat Rajakar Jote' that used the state-run broadcasting system as a tool to screen a 'fabricated' history.

"Through this documentary the alliance government wanted to marginalise the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and exerted all their efforts to bring somebody at the front," they added.

Ramendu Majumdar, a prominent cultural personality, demanded that the names of the persons involved

with the documentary be made public.

Abdul Ahad Chowdhury, chairman of the Central Command Council of Muktiyoddha Sangsad, said the evil axis that tried to eliminate the name of Bangabandhu from the history of Bangladesh but failed, will be defeated this time also.

"We have lost a good number of freedom fighters, but many are still alive. If needed, with the rest we will go for another war," he added.

Former president of Bangladesh Kabita Parishad Dr Mohammad Samad, convener of Amra Muktiyoddhar Sontan Humayun Kabir, woman rights leader Shirin Akhtar, Vice-president of Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirml Committee Ferdousi Priyobhashini and President of Sammilita Sangskritik Jote Nasiruddin Yusuf also spoke at the rally presided over by Golam Qudus, secretary of Sammilita Sangskritik Jote.

Later, the Sammilita Nagorik Andolon tried to bring out a procession to lay siege to the office of the National Broadcasting Authority at Shahbagh, but police intercepted the procession.

Khaleda invites Hasina to iftar

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has invited Awami League president and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina to an iftar party at the Prodhannantri Bhaban on October 1.

Prime Minister's Assistant Press Secretary Mohiuddin Khan Mohan took the invitation card to Sheikh Hasina's Sudha Sadan residence yesterday evening. The card was received by the opposition leader's personal secretary Selina Begum.

Qulkhwani of Prof Aftab today

DU CORRESPONDENT

Qulkhwani of Prof Aftab Ahmed, a teacher of Political Science Department of Dhaka University (DU) and former vice-chancellor of National University, will be held at DU central mosque after Asr prayers today.

Relatives, friends, colleges, students and admirers have been requested to join the qulkhwani to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Prof Aftab died at Combined Military Hospital (CMH) on Tuesday following a cardiac arrest resulting in from blood clots' after struggling for life since assailants shot him in his residence on September 23.

Three unidentified youths shot him entering his Fuller Road residence, adjacent to the British Council on DU campus.

Beggar tortured by retired army officer in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

An elderly woman beggar became unconscious after a retired army officer tortured her in his house in Battala area of the city yesterday morning.

Police and witnesses said Mamta Begum, 50, entered the house of Major (Retd.) Oliul Islam Oli Bir Pratik at about 9.30am for begging.

But Oli suspected her to be a thief. He tied her to a pillar and beat her, leaving her unconscious.

Hearing the screaming of the victim, hundreds of people gathered in front of the house, disrupting traffic movement in the area.

On receiving information, police rushed to the spot, rescued the woman in an unconscious state and sent her to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

The police also took Major Oli to Kotwali Police Station.

No case has been lodged as of yesterday evening.

Different human rights organisations condemned the incident and demanded punishment to Major Oli.

Book launching ceremony

The launching ceremony of a book titled 'Understanding Terrorism in South Asia: Beyond Statist Discourse' edited by Prof Iltiaz Ahmed will be held at the BISS Auditorium at 1/46 Elephant Road, Eskaton at 10.00am tomorrow, says a press release.

The Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo, and Monohar Publishers, New Delhi, have published the book.

The launching ceremony will be followed by a discussion on 'Terrorism in South Asia'.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, will moderate the discussion while Mufleh R Osmany, chairman of BISS, will be present as the special guest.



Residents of different areas of the city go berserk yesterday in protest against unbearable power outages, resulting in clashes with the police. (1) Agitating people go on rampage in Mirpur section-10. (2) Hundreds of vehicles got stranded on Dhaka-Chittagong highway as the people block the road demanding uninterrupted power supply. (3) Two schoolgirls run for cover during a clash between the people and the police in Mirpur section-10. (4) A policeman fires a tear gas canister at protesters in Mirpur. (5) Agitating people block a road at Shanir Akhara. (6) A policeman clubs a pedestrian in Mirpur. (7) A policeman injured during the clash at Mirpur. (8) An injured protester. (9) Protesters set fire to a pick-up van of the electricity office at Dholair Par. (10) Demonstrators vandalise equipment at Desco sub-office at Mirpur.



Light to moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at most places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at many places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are expected at places during the period, Met Office said predicting slight fall in day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 36.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Srimongal and lowest 25.3 degree Celsius at Rangpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 5.48pm today and rises at 5:50am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	35.7	27.5	64	90
Chittagong	34.2	29.0	74	94
Rajshahi	35.5	26.6	79	79
Khulna	35.0	27.5	80	90
Barisal	35.0	27.0	77	93
Sylhet	36.4	27.1	66	60
Cox's Bazar	32.8	27.0	86	89