

UPCOMING GENERAL ELECTION

Call to nominate honest people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday laid emphasis on nominating honest and dedicated people in the upcoming general election to establish human rights and eradicate poverty from the country.

They urged all the political parties to nominate honest and dedicated candidates in parliamentary election to keep the democratic process on track.

The discussion titled 'Nomination of the candidates and monitoring of the national election' was organised by 'Bangladesh Manobadhikar Sammunay Parishad (BMSP) to mark the World Human Rights Day at WVA auditorium in the city.

Expressing concern over the deployment of army in the country, M Hafizuddin Khan, former adviser to caretaker government, said the present situation does not demand army's deployment.

He said there is no qualitative changes in nominating honest candidates due to reluctance of the political parties in this regard.

Though the civil society members are demanding reforms in political system like registration of parties, reduction in election expenditure and audits of their accounts, the political parties are not paying any heed to them, he added.

Holding the politics responsible for the current crisis, Hafizuddin said the quality of politics in the country has decayed due to absence of transparency and

accountability of the political parties.

The country is now passing through a crucial period as its independence and sovereignty has been questioned, and that is why the upcoming election is very

important, he said.

Hafizuddin urged the election observers to carryout their duties carefully and impartially so that a free and fair election can be held.

ASM Shahjahan, another former adviser to caretaker govern-

ment, said those, who can invest more, are getting the nomination instead of honest and dedicated people.

Though making the Election Commission (EC) independent and nominating honest candidates are

the two preconditions for a credible election, no political parties want to do that, he said, adding, the political parties never do anything beyond political interests.

He said reform in political parties is a must, and proposed for keeping an option of 'No vote' in the ballot paper.

In a keynote paper, BMSP President AHM Noman proposed an 'election caretaker council' comprising representatives of all political parties, professional bodies, NGOs and civil society members to make the EC independent, neutral and powerful.

He also called for initiating a process where the voters can nominate the candidates.

Dr Zahrul Alam, director of Election Working Group (EWG), said nominating honest and dedicated candidates is the prerequisite for holding a free and fair election.

There is no alternative to nominate good and benevolent people who can eradicate poverty and establish human rights in the country, he said.

Z A Shamsul Haque, a retired joint secretary, said though the political parties are speaking against corruption, they are now trying to take the corrupt persons into their folds.

Moderated by Zillur Rahman of Channel i, the discussion was also addressed by Advocate Muhammad Shamsuddin and representatives of different NGOs.



PHOTO: STAR

Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka unveils the plaque of the old Dhanmondi Road No 10 renamed after language veteran Kazi Mahbul Haque in the city yesterday. Language veterans Abdul Matin and Gaziul Haque were also present.

Hotel boy shot dead, 7 hurt by extortionists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A hotel boy was shot dead and seven others were bullet-hit by extortionists at two separate city hotels yesterday.

Witnesses said a group of youths went to Hotel Meghna International at Moghbazar at around 11:30am and inquired the employees about the owner.

As they failed to give information about the whereabouts of the owner, the youths sprayed bullets indiscriminately on them, leaving Amir Hossain, 38, dead on the spot.

Monir Hossain, 32, Tara Mia, 42, Alamgir Hossain, 30 and Kabir

Hossain, 35 received injuries at the incident and they have been sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for treatment.

The injured employees said the extortionists, left the hotel shortly after the shooting, came to collect toll from the owner.

As police rushed there, an anonymous caller made two phone calls to the hotel received by a policeman.

Sub-Inspector Masud said the caller made the call to threaten the hotelier and also informed that similar occurrence took place at Hotel Sunrise of Malibagh Chowdhurypara.

Three youths opened fire on

the employees of the hotel, as they failed to say the whereabouts of the employer leaving three people bullet-hit.

The injured-- manager Subol Babu Das, Rafiqul Alam and Akhter-- were rushed to the DMCH. Later, Akhter was released from the hospital after he was given first aid.

The injured said the extortionists demanded toll two months back from the owner, who refused to pay it.

Two cops-- Inspector Nurul Islam and Sub-Inspector Alamgir-- were killed at Hotel Sunrise in a gunfight with the criminals in 2004.