

'Ensure right to vote of people with disability'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday urged the caretaker government to make special arrangements in the polling centres so that people with disability can exercise their franchise without any difficulty.

To avoid hazards in the polling centres, they called for separate queues for physically challenged people and provision for special ballots so that the visually impaired persons can cast their vote.

The discussion titled 'UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability' was organised by Action for Disability and Development (ADD) to mark the International Human Rights Day at the Social Service department auditorium in the city.

"Keeping 144 million physically challenged people out of the election process, we cannot expect to hold a free and fair election," said ADD Country Representative Mosharraf Hossain.

Speaking as chief guest Adviser to caretaker government Yasmeeen Murshed said the government is committed to the issues of physically challenged

people.

The caretaker government would take such steps as will enable the coming government to ratify the international convention on their rights, she said.

While presenting his concept paper, Mosharraf said the people with disability are deprived of getting mainstream education and urged the government to make arrangement for 'inclusive education' system for them.

Citing Indian policy for the physically challenged people, he also spoke for reserving five percent quota for physically challenged people in civil service and 10 percent for other jobs.

Prof Mizanur Rahman of Dhaka University, Director General of social services department Hafizul Islam, General Secretary of National Grassroots Disability Sangstha Habibur Rahman and General Secretary of National Council for Disabled Women Moyna also spoke on the occasion.

Earlier, hundreds of physically challenged people formed a human chain at Manik Mia Avenue and took part in a procession.

Create atmosphere to hold free, fair polls

Mahila Parishad leaders urge CG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad yesterday called upon the caretaker government to help create a congenial atmosphere to

hold a free and fair election and establish a democratic and non-communal Bangladesh where women's equal participation would be ensured.

They were speaking at a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city commemorating International Human Rights Day.

General Secretary of the Parishad Ayesha Khanam said women should take the right decision while casting their votes.

"Before voting for any political party, we should think whether they would promote our interest or not, whether they would curtail our right or not", said Ayesha.

Pointing to the fundamentalist forces, Ayesha said the spirit of the War of Liberation must be upheld and the constitution of 1972 re-established in the country at any cost. "We cannot accept anti-liberation forces governing the state affairs", she added.

Expressing concern over the holding of the national election, President of the Parishad Hena Das said they would establish their rights through persistent movements.

Rekha Chowdhury conducted the programme while Maleka Banu, Advocate Masuda Rehana Rosy, Advocate Debahoty Chakravarty and Parvin Islam spoke.

'42 pc people live in city slums'

Onneyshan, a local NGO, in association with Manusher Jonno foundation, organised a discussion in the city yesterday to mark the International Human Rights Day, says a press release.

Speakers said although Bangladesh is a signatory to the universal declaration of human rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, it has not been implemented in reality.

Nearly 42 per cent population of the capital lives in slums deprived of basic civic rights, they said.

People need to be united to ensure protection and delivery of their rights, they added.

The discussion was chaired by Sagufta Yasmin, executive director of Onneyshan. Among others, Commissioner Shaheda Tariq Deepti spoke on the occasion.

Residents of Kolwalapara, Gudaraghat, Bauniabad, Kalyanpur and Kalshi slums joined the programme.

Following the discussion, the organisation brought out a colourful procession that paraded the city streets.

IBA wins Battle of Minds 2006

Institute of Business Administration (IBA) of Dhaka University has won Battle of Minds 2006, a business case solving competition organised by British American Tobacco Bangladesh (BATB), held at Brac Centre Inn in the city on Saturday, says a press release.

Independent University Bangladesh (IUB) notched the second position while North South University (NSU) became third. The Daily Star was the media partner of the programme.

BATB Deputy Managing Director Golam Mainuddin was present as the chief guest and distributed prizes among the winners.

The event was judged by Aly Zaker, managing director & CEO Asiatic Marketing Communications Ltd, Enamul Karim Nirjhar, principal architect and CEO of System Architects and QM Shahed, head of Human Resources of BATB.

'Battle of Minds' started in 2004 and since then undergraduate students have been participating every year and showcasing their talents. This year 11 teams from 10 universities competed in a face off against each other through business plan presentations.

Grameenphone HSE Week begins

The sixth annual Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) Week of Grameenphone Ltd began yesterday, says a press release.

HSE Week is part of Grameenphone's ongoing process to promote awareness about health, safety and environmental issues throughout the company and in the society at large.

GP's vision "We are here to help" is very aligned to this year's HSE Week.

"Let us commit to make HSE a part of our day-to-day activities," Erik Aas, managing director of Grameenphone said in a message to the employees.

Deputy Managing Director Frank Fodstad inaugurated the HSE Week at the corporate head office.

HSE Week is being observed simultaneously at all GP Regional offices across the country. Regional offices in Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Barisal arranged their own programmes to observe the week. Blood donation, training programmes, seminars, workshops and quiz programmes will be arranged on the occasion.