

RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY

Ratify UN Convention

Disabled people's body urges government

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday demanded immediate ratification and implementation of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) that was adopted by UN General Assembly on Wednesday to protect the rights of 65 crore persons with disability across the world.

In the press conference organised by National Alliance of Disabled People's Organisations (NADPO), the speakers said prompt ratification and successful implementation of "Comprehensive and integral international convention on the protection and promotion of the rights and dignity of Persons With Disabilities (PWD)" would eradicate all kinds of discrimination between PWD and non-

disabled persons.

President of NADPO Abdus Sattar Dulal said the convention is a historic achievement of prolonged struggle and hard work.

He urged the government, the media, organisations working with disabled people and representatives of the civil society to work together in order to ratify the UN convention.

A total of ten per cent population of the country are persons with disability and the government has the responsibility for their welfare, said Dulal, adding the ratification of the convention is a must to ensure human rights of the persons with disability.

The ratification process has already started and the convention would be opened for signature on March 3, 2007 and it would be effective after being adopted by at least

20 countries, the speakers said.

The convention also recognised the need to promote and protect the human rights of all persons with disabilities and importance of international cooperation for improving the living conditions of persons with disabilities in all countries.

It would promote non-discrimination, participation, accessibility, equal opportunity and dignity to the physically and mentally challenged people and would ensure equal rights of around 65 crore persons with disability across the globe, the speakers said.

Secretary General of NADPO Jahangir Alam, Senior Vice President Shawkat Hossain Bhuiyan and National Executive members were also present at the press conference.

Bangla website on deprived children launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ichchey Media Group launched a Bangla website www.ichchey.org yesterday in order to let people know more about deprived children.

The Group, supported by Save the Children Sweden-Denmark, is involved both in print and electronic media with a view to establishing the rights of the children who are being deprived.

However, the website is basically developed by a group of children who received training from INCIDIN Bangladesh.

While introducing the home page of the website, Mamun, website member of Ichchey, showed that the website contains child related news including rights, problems, repression, entertainment and appeal for help.

Mamun hoped to complete the entire site within the next four to six months.

Cristine Z Jeppensen, programme manager of Save the Children Sweden-Denmark, inaugurated the website at Ramna Restaurant in the city.

Speaking on the occasion, Ershad, member of computer department of Ichchey, said that the Group aims to expose the overall condition of the children of the country and inspire all to take initiatives to help them.

Ichchey also aims to make way for children who do not get chance to take part in media specially the underprivileged ones, he added.

Explaining the background of the initiative of a Bangla website, Sabrina Kanim Murshed, information officer of Child-led Organisation and Advocacy, Save the Children Sweden-Denmark, said Ichchey members participated in creating a website in Danish focusing child labour in Bangladesh in 2005.

During that time, Ichchey members realised most of the children of Bangladesh are being deprived of the news about them since it was not in Bangla, she added. And that's why they developed this new site.



The stage Jamaat-e-Islami built to hold a rally on the occasion of the Victory Day causes huge traffic congestion on the road in front of the North gate of Baitul Mokarram Mosque in the city yesterday.

MIGRANT WORKERS

Annan urges govts to ratify UN Convention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan yesterday urged all the countries to sign and ratify the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families to provide rights and protection to all migrants.

In a message on the eve of the International Migrants Day, he said evidence of migration's potential benefits is mounting, but unfortunately, the experience of migrants has evolved in less positive ways.

"Rising number of migrants are being exploited and abused by smugglers and traffickers. Others suffer discrimination, xenophobia or racism, while in some instances they are demonised as a burden on their host societies even when

objective assessments suggest otherwise," Kofi Annan said.

On the occasion, Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) reiterated its call to recognise domestic work as work and uphold the rights of all migrant workers to form or join associations to recognise for collective bargaining and to be free from situations of forced labour and discrimination.

It also called for an immediate stop to all crackdowns on migrant workers in an undocumented or irregular status, especially in Malaysia and South Korea.

"In many instances, crackdowns and forced deportations have resulted in serious injuries and sometimes even death and suicides among migrant workers," a statement of MFA said.

Australian scholarships to help build capacity: Foskett

UNB, Dhaka

The scholarships to Bangladeshi students each year by Australia will help Bangladesh build capacity in key areas like education, public health, water management, gender, public policy and diplomacy, said the Australian High Commissioner in Dhaka.

"Australia is very pleased to be assisting Bangladesh develop its human capital by offering 79 talented men and women scholarships to Australia's world-class universities," Douglas Foskett told a pre-departure ceremony in the city yesterday.

Congratulating the scholarship awardees, Foskett said Bangladesh and Australia attach high priority to human resource development as a critical way to promote poverty reduction and economic development.

Foskett said the programme is an excellent opportunity to reinforce the already strong relations between the two countries.

"Australia's partnership with both government and non-government agencies ensures the scholarship programme will meet institutional capacity strengthening objectives. On their return from Australia, the awardees will be able to contribute significantly to their workplaces and the country as a whole," Foskett said.

He said they will join 48 other Bangladeshis already studying under the Australian Development Scholarship (ADS) programme in Australia.

Five killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

At least five people were killed in separate road accidents in Dhaka and Narsingdi on Saturday and yesterday.

Our Staff Correspondent adds: Three people, including two college students, were killed in separate road accidents in the city on Saturday night.

The dead were identified as Belal Hussein, 24, and Jainul Abedin Tipu, 24.

The accident took place at around 9:00pm in front of the Baishakhi gate of Ramna Park when driver of the motorbike lost

control over the steering and hit the island.

A passenger bus ran over the victims as they fell from the motorbike, leaving them critically injured.

Belal and Tipu were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where they succumbed to their injuries.

Meanwhile, Rajibul Islam, 25, identified as a sweeper, was crushed under the wheels of a vehicle near Jatrabari at around 3:30am.

Rajibul died on the spot. His body was sent to Sir Salimullah Medical College Morgue for autopsy.

UNB from Narsingdi reports:

Two cattle traders were killed and three others injured when a truck plunged into a roadside ditch at Ghorashal Bagdi early yesterday.

Police said two traders died on the spot as an Ashuganj-bound truck from Naogaon skidded off Narsingdi-Gazipur road and fell into a ditch at about 6:30am.

Identity of the deceased could not be known immediately. The injured were admitted to Sadar Hospital in "critical condition".

Police recovered and sent the bodies to the morgue.



ABM Golam Mostafa, Maidul Islam, Maj Gen (ret) Abdul Hafiz Malik and Brig Gen (ret) M Shahjalal join Awami League presenting a bouquet to AL President Sheikh Hasina at her Dhanmondi office in the city yesterday.

Warrant of arrest against Inqilab editor, 2 reporters

UNB, Manikganj

A magistrate's court yesterday issued warrant of arrest against editor of daily Inqilab AMM Bahauddin and two reporters for failing to appear in a case despite repeated summons.

The counsel for the petitioner said Bahauddin and two reporters of the daily deliberately ignored the orders issued on June 11, July 16, August 22, September 19 and November 9 to appear personally before the court.

Magistrate Atul Sarkar yesterday issued the warrant of arrest.

Bahauddin and the reporters were accused in a case filed by a district Jamaat leader for publishing "false, malicious and motivated" reports in the Inqilab on March 9 under caption "rise of JMB under shelter of Jamaat", "success of Rab diminished by a quarter".

The daily published another report on March 11 under caption "JMB launched the attack after meeting with Jamaat", said the petitioner.

Adolescent girl found dead in Rajbari

UNB, Rajbari

An adolescent girl was found dead in a bamboo cluster in suburban College Para area yesterday.

The dead was identified as Mukti, 14, a resident of New Colony of College Para.

Family sources said Mukti went out of her house at 8:00pm on Saturday to collect a prize that she won in a competition held in observance of the Victory Day. But she did not return home since then.

Later, her body was found hanging from a tree in a nearby bamboo cluster yesterday morning.

Police suspect the girl might have been violated before the murder.

President's Parade at BMA Wednesday

UNB, Dhaka

The President's Parade marking the commissioning of the gentlemen cadet of the 55th BMA Long Course and 26th BMA Special Course will be held at the Bangladesh Military Academy (BMA) at Bhatiyari in Chittagong on Wednesday.

On the occasion, a special train will run between Chittagong and Bhatiyari railway station for the invited guest.

The special train will leave Chittagong railway station for Bhatiyari at 6:30am on Wednesday and Bhatiyari railway station for Chittagong at 2:00pm on the same day.

'No alternative to continued growth in industries'

BSS, Dhaka

Adviser for Industries Prof M Moinuddin Khan yesterday said there is no alternative to continued growth and increased productivity in the industrial sector for changing the socio-economic condition of the country.

The adviser said this while inaugurating the 'Dhaka divisional small and medium industries entrepreneurs development training' programme at Biam auditorium as the chief guest yesterday morning.

Organised by the SME Cell of the Industries Ministry, the training programme was chaired by secretary of the ministry Dr Md Nurul Amin

while BSCIC Chairman SR Osmani, Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Bank M Nazrul Huda and Prof Montajuddin Ahmed of Economics Department of Dhaka University were present as special guests.

Additional secretary of the Industries Ministry Dr Mohammad Ayub Miah and deputy secretary Yamin Akbari, among others, also spoke on the occasion.

Emphasising the need for setting up the labour intensive SMEs, instead of heavy industries, Prof Moinuddin said it would help create employment opportunities and alleviate poverty.

Advance EU team in city to watch polls

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, EU Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner in a statement said successful and credible elections would be a positive contribution to the long-term stability of Bangladesh.

The coming election will be the most monitored polls ever in the history of Bangladesh with around 400 international observers coming to see it.

The EC official said the team will stay in Bangladesh until the day of election and their activities would include training of local election observers.

Of the remaining EU observers, a 40-member team will be arriving on December 26, European Commission Head of Delegation in Bangladesh Stephen Frowein said recently.

The third EU team comprising

some 100 observers will arrive a few days before the polling day. This team will stay even after the end of the election and not only monitor the election, but everything related to election.

Another 30-member team from the diplomatic missions of EU countries in Dhaka would also monitor the election, said the EC official.

The European Commission on Thursday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Election Commission to facilitate monitoring the pre- and post-election situation.

They will soon sign another MoU with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to facilitate the visit of the election observers with regard to their visas and other related formalities.

OBSERVER MISSION'S AIM EU Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner has said that

successful and credible elections would be a positive contribution to the long-term stability of Bangladesh.

"I have decided to deploy an Election Observation Mission (EOM) to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the entire election process," Ferrero-Waldner said.

"In the current very difficult and tense situation in the country, it is essential to ensure that the elections conform to international standards in order to increase confidence in the democratic process," he said, according to an official release of the EC Delegation.

Ferrero-Waldner mentioned that the forthcoming parliamentary elections are the most important in Bangladesh since 1991 when eight years of military rule came to an end.

Hasina puts voter list correction first

FROM PAGE 1

Golam Mostafa, former minister and BJP-Matin leader Maidul Islam, and a former lawmaker from the same party Sirajul Islam Chowdhury joined AL yesterday along with former army officials Maj Gen (ret) Abdul Hafiz Mallick and Brig Gen M Shahjalal.

Hasina at the programme alleged that the immediate past BNP-Jamaat-led government did not hold by-elections for three seats in the parliament in Dhaka, Dinajpur and Comilla constituencies within the constitutionally stipulated 90 days. Those seats remained vacant for more than 90 days although the constitution makes it binding to hold by-elections within 90 days of a vacancy, she said asking, "Where was the constitution then?"

Hasina also said the people will resist any attempt to hold a premature election in the name of stipulated 90 days without properly correcting the voter roll.

"The next general election must be held following correcting the updated voter roll and on a new schedule. People will not accept any thing else," she said adding

that President Iajuddin Ahmed and BNP-led four-party alliance will be held responsible if anything untoward happens in the course of protesting the 'conspiracy to hijack the people's right to vote'.

"The president assumed the office of chief adviser violating the constitution and since then he has been working to implement the blueprint of BNP-Jamaat-led alliance for rigging the upcoming election," said Hasina adding, "The election schedule was announced without properly updating and publishing the voter list. It's another violation of the constitution. And now they (BNP-Jamaat) are using the constitution as an excuse to hold the election prematurely."

Hasina said the drive for voter roll correction is not being carried out properly. "Names of our leaders and workers have not been registered on the voter list rather many of their names have been deleted from the list in many parts of the country," she said asking, "Is it not a violation of the constitution?"

Referring to the 1996 election she said, "Good sense should prevail upon Khaleda Zia as she

knows about the consequences of holding a unilateral election. The people won't accept a one-sided election even if it takes place within the stipulated 90 days in the name of constitutional obligation."

Referring to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's comment that if AL goes to power it will sack 100 army officers, Hasina said it was not AL but BNP who dismissed thousands of officials from the government services. The AL chief also urged the armed forces to work for protecting the people's voting rights rather than guarding the 'thieves and looters of BNP-Jamaat-led alliance'.

Hasina also alleged that a surreptitious move is on to pit the armed forces against the people. The AL president instructed her party activists to take all out preparations for the next election while taking part in the 'ongoing movement for electoral reforms'.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil conducted the programme where Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Motia Chowdhury and Obaidul Quader were also present among others.

Lawyers protest remarks about army

BSS, Dhaka

Lawyers of the Supreme Court yesterday condemned and protested the remarks of foreign diplomats and ambassadors about Bangladesh army and internal politics.

Terming 'unexpected' and 'beyond their jurisdiction', 103 lawyers in a joint statement said Bangladesh is an independent and sovereign country, and the army of the country are engaged in protecting the independence and sovereignty.

They said the Bangladesh army has been playing praiseworthy role in the global peace keeping missions and helping reconstruct the war-affected countries, besides playing their part in all national disasters imbued with the spirit of professionalism, discipline and patriotism.

The lawyers said the government has deployed the army ahead of the forthcoming elections, as in the past, to maintain law and order, recover illegal arms and ensure a congenial atmosphere so that the voters can exercise their franchise in a fearless environment.

They urged the diplomats to refrain from making interference in the internal politics of the country.

The signatories to the statement included Gias Uddin Ahmed, Fakhrul Islam, MAbdullah, Gias Uddin Mithu, Moshulul Alam, Farid Uddin Khan, Tajul Islam, Shahin Ahmed, Tanvir Parvez, Tanvir Ahmed Al Amin, Belayet Hossain, Saifur Rahman, Golam Nur Tarun, Mahmud Hasan, Rais Uddin Ahmed, Golam Mahmud, Jalal Uddin Bhuiyan, Yusuf Ali and Shahjahan Kabir.

Obituary



Mahbub Anwar, chairman and managing director of Reckitt Benckiser Bangladesh Limited, passed away at United Hospital at

Gulshan in the city on December 14 at the age of 81, says a press release.

Mahbub, also the past chairman of Foreign Investor's Chamber of Commerce (FICCI), Chittagong Chamber of Commerce (CCC) and Rotary Club, left behind his wife, 3 sons and 4 daughters.

He was buried at his family graveyard at Natmura at Bashkhali in Chittagong.

Reckitt Benckiser employees condoled his death.

Tayeba Khatun

BSS, Dhaka

Tayeba Khatun, wife of Maulana ABM Shamsul Haque and mother of Ahmed Selim Raza, senior sub-editor of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), passed away due to a cardiac arrest at the Birdem Cardiac Centre yesterday at the age of 70.

She is survived by her six sons and one daughter.

Tayeba will be buried at her family graveyard at Chaoura village under Kaliganj upazila today.

BNP sees conspiracy

FROM PAGE 16

BNP Secretary General said, "Trust the people and participate in election. We will accept the election result if the people vote you and you have to accept if the people vote us."

"People will not forgive you if the democratic process is hindered due to your activities," he told the Awami league-led 14-party combine.

Beating drums, waving multicoloured placards, banners, fustoons, the national and party flags and portraits of late president Ziaur Rahman, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and their son Tarique Rahman, enthusiastic BNP supporters from different parts of the city joined the procession.

The procession caused heavy traffic jam in Motijheel, Paltan, Press Club, Mouchak, Malibagh and Moghbazar areas.

Mannan Bhuiyan said the BNP-led alliance will make the country poverty-free and establish democratic society if the people vote them again in the next election.

Bhuiyan said the Awami League government destroyed all the democratic right of the people and killed a large number of freedom fighters after the liberation. Ziaur Rahman reinstated the freedom of the press and judiciary and established multi-party democracy in the country, he added.

Describing the achievements of the BNP-led four-party alliance government, he said, "We have tried to serve the people in last five years. But it is not enough. We have to do more for poverty reduction and make the people self-sufficient".

"I hope people will give the chance to serve them by voting us again," he said, adding that they will give priority on poverty reduction and improving the law and order situation if they are voted back to the power.

Urging the party leaders and workers to make Tuesday's grand rally at Paltan Maidan a success, he said, "This is our last big rally in Dhaka before the election and our Chairperson Khaleda Zia will give you the direction from there."

Presided over by Dhaka City Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khokha, former ministers, lawmakers and party central leaders were also present at the rally.

DHAKA TODAY

Lecture

Prof Timothy DeVgood will give a lecture on "Why do birds sing?". Venue: Zoology Department, Dhaka University. Time: 10:00am.

Art exhibition

An art exhibition organised by Shilpangan will be inaugurated. Venue: Shilpangan, House No #26, Road No #3, Dhanmondi. Time: 4:30pm. T

Citizens' dialogue

Jatiya Nagarik Forum will hold a citizens' dialogue titled "Present Bangladesh: Responsibility towards national flag and map". Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00am.

Seminar

Welfare Association of Repatriated Bangladeshi Employees (WARBE) and Bangladesh Ovbashi Mahila Sramik Association (BOMSA) organise a seminar to mark the International Migrants Day. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00am.

Workshop

Nari Maitree organises a workshop titled "HIV/AIDS and youth: Role of university students". Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 9:00am.

Launching ceremony

Unicef will launch "The state of the world's children 2007 report". Venue: Marble Room, Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Time: 11:00am.

Seminar

Brac University organises a seminar titled "From Alexander Graham Bell to jawed Karim- an ongoing revolution". Venue: Seminar room, Brac University. Time: 3:30pm.

Annual general meeting

The 5th annual general meeting and installation ceremony of All Community Club will be held. Venue: Community hall of the Club. Time: 6:00pm.



Rise in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may also occur over the river basins of the country during early morning. Met Office said in a forecast. It said that night temperature may rise slightly over the country.

Highest temperature 30.1 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Dhaka and lowest 11.5 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:15pm today and rises at 6:36am tomorrow.

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

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in celsius	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	30.1	16.5	68	55
Chittagong	29.0	17.3	72	77
Rajshahi	27.5	14.1	87	75
Khulna	27.0	14.8	85	76
Barisal	28.0	14.2	80	80
Sylhet	29.6	15.2	57	57
Cox's Bazar	29.0	17.7	40	77