

Seminar on state of democracy Good governance a must for peaceful society

Experts at a seminar yesterday said that the greatest challenge of the 21st century would be to maintain and sustain the culture of peace across the globe, reports BSS.

Three main components of democracy—accountability, transparency and good-governance should be established first for achieving a peaceful society, they observed.

The observation was made at a national seminar on "State of democracy in Bangladesh," organised by the Peace and Conflict Studies Department of Dhaka University at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS).

Vice-Chancellor Professor AK Azad Chowdhury inaugurated the two-day seminar, the first academic venture of the newly established department in collaboration with the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) of Sweden and the

University of Politics and International Studies of the University of Leeds of the United Kingdom.

The university is conducting research work in 10 emerging democratic nations. Two countries from Asia—Bangladesh and the South Korea have been chosen for the global study.

Dr Nalini Vittal from the University of Leeds gave a presentation at the inaugural session chaired by the Pro-vice-chancellor Prof M Shahadat Ali.

Chairperson of the Peace and Conflict Studies Department Professor Dalem Chandra Barmon, Professor of Mass Communication and Journalism Department of Dhaka University Dr Golam Rahman and Dr Tasneem Siddiqui of the Political Science Department also spoke on the occasion.

Vice-Chancellor Prof AK Azad Chowdhury said that democracy cannot be cultured and nurtured only by the social and political elite, but it requires the active participation of the common masses.

"As long as the gap between the have's and have not's remains,

democracy cannot get an ideal shape. If you can meet the basic needs of the people and give them better life, democracy could be established," he said.

Referring to Bangladesh, Prof Azad said that a unique system of caretaker government to hold the general elections in a free and fair manner has been developed through people's movement that can be taken as model for emerging democratic nations.

Dr Nalini Vittal from the University of Leeds in her speech said that people should run the country as the centre of democratic system lies with the people.

She said that policy makers of Bangladesh should consider the complex nature of the society in establishing democracy.

"Accountable governance is the pre-condition of democracy. People should actually get what has been described in papers like the constitution," she observed.

The inaugural session was followed by the first working session where presentation was made on "citizenship, law and rights" by the chairperson of the department.

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Khaleda demands release of Ctg Sramik Dal leader

By Staff Correspondent

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday demanded immediate release of Sramik Dal leader MM Nazimuddin in Chittagong and urged the government to stop filing "false" cases against opposition activists under the Public Safety Act.

In a statement yesterday, she said that the government arrested labour leader Nazimuddin under the PSA to cover up the failures of the ruling party.

She said the government, instead of curbing terrorism unleashed by cadres of AL, is arresting opposition leaders and workers on false charges to divert

Fraudulent practice for JCI membership

By staff correspondent

Bangladesh Junior Chamber (BJC) yesterday said a fraudulent practice for membership of the Junior Chamber International (JCI) has been detected.

In a press release the BJC said it has recognition of the JCI since 1996. The JCI is based in Florida in US.

But another organisation styled Junior Chamber of Bangladesh has been operating in the country for the last few years, misleading BJC members and other professional bodies.

It said a Senator from US is coming to Bangladesh today to hand over a cheque for about one million US dollars for development activities of the "unrecognised" JCI.

The BJC is representing Bangladesh in different world forums. It is also carrying out development activities and assisting its members in developing their careers, the press release said.

After BJC was recognised in 1996, JCI gave Bangladesh the status of National Organisation Member (NOM). Shiamunn Nahar (Lipi) is the official contact person for Bangladesh, it said.

The BJC has been formed by some black listed and expelled members led by one Nessar M Khan, it said.

The unrecognised body has been carrying out undesirable activities, which are confusing JCI, it added.

BNP high-ups

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Only former Dhaka City Mayor and President of BNP's youth front, Mirza Abbas and former minister Abdullah Al Noman attended the rally.

Speaking on the occasion, Mirza Abbas expressing his party's support to the Employees Association. He claimed that results of the last parliamentary election were manipulation and so his party could not form government.

"We were aware of the rigging. But we did not stop them as we wanted a peaceful election," Abbas said.

He said that in the next general election, they would not remain silent. He alleged that voters in the CBA election were being threatened not to vote for the Employees Association.

"Do not bow to threats. Resist them by all means and be ready to gouge out eye-balls of those who show red eyes. BNP will support you," Abbas said.

Abdullah Al Noman said that he has advised other party colleagues not to attend the rally due to press criticism. Other leaders did not turn up fearing criticism in the print media, he said.

He said that the press tried to interpret this rally as a meeting of BNP.



A two-day exhibition of Pakistani apple and date began at Sonargaon Hotel in the city yesterday. The High Commission of Pakistan organised the event.

Aman rice price fixed at Tk 1250 per quintal

The Food Planning and Monitoring Committee at a meeting yesterday fixed the price of Aman paddy at Tk 800 per quintal and Aman rice at Tk 1250 per quintal for the year 2000, reports BSS.

The meeting presided over by Food Minister Amir Hossain Amu, also fixed the production target of Aman paddy at 105 lakh metric tons while the procurement target of Aman rice at 2.50 lakh metric tons.

Businessman rescued, 3 held

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Oct 30: Police rescued a businessman on Sunday night who was abducted earlier in the afternoon from No 2 Raigat area of the town and arrested three abductors.

Police said, a group of terrorists kidnapped Abu Taher, 40, a small trader from Lalpur of Fatullah area, at gunpoint from in front of Diamond cinema hall at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday and took him to a house in Deobhog Akhra.

Later on the same day, when the kidnappers sent a note to Taher's wife Aleya Begum demanding a ransom of Tk 20,000 for his release, Aleya Begum promptly informed the local thana about the incident.

Following up the ransom note, police raided the house in Deobhog area at around 11 p.m., freeing Abu Taher and arresting three kidnappers Khokon, 22, Mahibub, 20, and Ranjan, 22.

— Star photo

Flood problem: Team visits India tomorrow

Star Report

be in the delegation.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Water Resources has completed selection of a 10-member parliamentary delegation that is scheduled to leave on a 15-day visit to India on November 1 to discuss the long-standing flood problem.

During their visit, the 10-member delegation which includes seven MPs and an official from the Water Development Board, will hold talks with the Indian Water Resources Minister aimed at finding a permanent solution to the common flood problem that affects the two countries almost every year.

The MPs in the delegation are: Anwarul Islam, Kazi Sekendor Ali and M A Bari of ruling Awami League. Advocate Harun Rashid, Dr Habibur Rahman and Golam Mohammad Siraj of opposition BNP, and Sharifuddin Ahmed of Jatiya Party. Additional secretary to the Water Resources Ministry, the director General of WDB and the PS to Chairman of the standing committee will also

The recent flood in the country's southwestern region will be reviewed in the meetings in India. The delegation will visit some dams in the India-Bangladesh border areas, sources said.

Israel warns Syria, Lebanon for violence along border

JERUSALEM, Oct 30: Israel's Deputy Defence Minister Ephraim Sneh warned today that Israel would hold Syria and Lebanon responsible for any escalation of violence along its northern border, reports AFP.

"Lebanon is a sovereign nation and we have reached the conclusion that (Syrian president) Bashar Assad has given the green light to Hezbollah," Sneh told public radio, referring to the fundamentalist Shiite Muslim guerrilla movement that fought Israel's occupation of Lebanon.

"We want one country should respect sovereignty of another. If one violates sovereignty of other, all should condemn it unitedly."

She called for unity of the Muslim Ummah, saying that "we can forge unity of the members of the OIC for mutual progress and prosperity."

Hasina invited the Kuwaiti Amir to visit Bangladesh which the Amir gladly accepted and said he wish to visit Bangladesh at a convenient time.

"We have very good and brotherly relations and this tie should be further strengthened," the Amir told Hasina.

Foreign Minister of the Prime Minister Abdus Azad, Labour Minister MA Mannan, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Dr S A Samad, Foreign Secretary CM Shafi Sami, Press Secretary Jawadul Karim and Bangladesh Ambassador in Kuwait Aminul Hossain Sarker were present.

Rickshawpullers

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Shyamoli, Agargaon and Kalyanpur areas were the main trouble spots where the protesters pelted stones and fought pitched battles with police intermittently, witnesses said.

The rickshawpullers and leaders later held a rally in front of the Shishu Mela and announced that they would continue to ply their vehicles on the road ignoring the government decision.

Later, a four-member team went to the Prime Minister's Office and submitted a memorandum to allow plying of manually driven three-wheeler on the Mirpur Road, sources said.

"We have very good and brotherly relations and this tie should be further strengthened," the Amir told the Bangladesh premier.

Foreign Minister Abdus Azad, Labour Minister MA Mannan, Principal Secretary Dr SA Samad, Foreign Secretary Jawadul Karim and Bangladesh Ambassador Aminul Hossain Sarker were present.

PDB

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Marubeni-Sithe stayed away from negotiations on different pretexts, resolution of controversial Kafo issues being one of them. Marubeni is one of the leading stakeholders and main contractors of Kafo.

After repeated reminders and deadlines, Marubeni recently returned the IA, PPA and GSA to PDB.

According to sources close to the project, Sithe has abandoned the project on the ground that financing the Meghnagar 2 was not possible until 2004 due to the government's priority agreements with AES.

Marubeni was also aware about the difficulty of financing its project but has taken a strategy to negotiate at a slow pace with PDB until such time the financing is possible, sources said.

Foreign ministry

From page 1
NBR officials in releasing goods and also forging exemption certificates for this purpose has been instigated as well.

A foreign ministry official, who was in charge of issuing exemption certificates, has already been suspended.

The ministry has also started an internal investigation into the matter.

Meanwhile, NBR sources suspect that more containers would come through the diplomatic channel very soon. They also suspect that some smugglers have already changed their route following the recent confiscation.

The NBR, however, has decided to keep an eye on all customers

BNP rally at Paltan

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After the meetings, City BNP President Sadek Hossain Khoka MP told newsmen that the party would hold its scheduled public meeting at Paltan Maidan on November 7 in a "peaceful manner" and hoped that the government would not push BNP towards taking tougher programmes.

He said BNP sought permission to hold the programme at Paltan Maidan about a month back and held several meetings with the authorities, assuring them that it would bear the responsibility for any damage to the preparations for the Bangladesh-India Cricket Test there. The cricket match begins on November 10.

BNP then talked to the Mayor to allow it hold the public meeting at Manik Mia Avenue, but to no effect, he said.

Under this circumstances, BNP has no alternative but to hold its meeting at its earlier announced venue of Paltan Maidan, he said.

City BNP General Secretary Abdus Salam said, "We are going ahead with the preparation for the grand rally at Paltan Maidan."

They said Paltan Maidan is a venue designated for public meetings and no government can deny in the print media, he said.

Sources said the party is planning to announce tougher

3 more villages flooded

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Oct 30: With the inundation of three more villages, the overall flood situation in Pratapnagar union in Assasunipara aggravated today.

During the last two days, at least 11 villages were inundated in Pratapnagar union when an embankment by the side of the river Kabobad near Kaunia gave in to tidal surge on Saturday.

The flood water entered through Nakna beel and submerged three villages today and eight villages yesterday.

The affected villages are Dharcharati, Mandabazar, Gokulnagar, Nakna, Sataktangi, Shirpur, Sripur, Kalyanpur, Khajra, Shirpur, Pratapnagar and Kuri Khunia.

Interviewing the locals, the district administration and Islamic Foundation found the news valid and accordingly informed the committee.

After reviewing the messages, the Moon Sighting Committee decided that the Shabán month began October 29 and therefore the holy Shab-e-Barat will be observed on November 11, said a press release.

The defence argued the case well. It was a lengthy argument. We hope that Nawaz Sharif is eventually acquitted, said Shah.

Sharif is currently in prison in a 16th Century Attack Fort in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier province where anti-corruption courts have been set up to hear charges of corruption and abuse of power against the former prime minister and several of his former colleagues.

Shab-e-Barat

From page 1
October 29, the committee asked the DC and Islamic Foundation, Nilphamari, to check genuineness of the news on emergency basis.

Sharif's six co-defendants in the case were acquitted. The prosecution also lost its appeal to overturn their acquittal.

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Indian daily lauds new tide in Dhaka-Washington ties

A leading Indian daily, The Statesman, yesterday appreciated the outcome of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent visit to the United States at the invitation of President Bill Clinton, reports BSS.

The previous round of talks this year sputtered over North Korea's insistence on compensation for Japan's often brutal 1910-45 occupation and Tokyo's demands for information on Japanese citizens allegedly abducted to North Korea to train them.

North Korea broke off earlier talks on ties eight years ago after angrily rejecting Tokyo's demands to track down 10 Japanese citizens allegedly abducted by North Korean agents. Negotiations resumed in April, but North Korea has continued to deny abducting anyone.

While refusing to confirm whether the abduction issue was raised Monday, the Japanese official said negotiators opened an in-depth discussion into Tokyo's colonial past and how Tokyo could compensate property and other claims related to the occupation.

Indicating the importance that the United States now attaches to Bangladesh under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina, the paper said,