

Strengthen democracy, bring transparency

Seminar urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar in the city yesterday urged the government to form independent anti-corruption commission, appoint ombudsman and separate the judiciary from the executive to strengthen democracy in the country.

They also called upon the government to initiate inquiries against the ministers who are accused of corrupt practices in a bid to bring transparency in its activities.

The seminar on 'Bangladesh politics: Current state and future direction' was organised by Bangladesh Political Science Association at RC Majumder Arts auditorium of Dhaka University.

Taking part in the discussion, Barrister Mainul Hosein said, "We cannot strengthen our democracy if we appoint party-men in administration, police department and

judiciary."

He urged the prime minister to take firm steps to make the government more accountable to the people.

Former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University Prof Emajuddin Ahmed said instead of increasing the number of members, the government should take initiative to make the present parliament functional.

"What is most important is to make parliament effective where members of both the treasury and the opposition benches will discuss the national issues leaving aside their confronting politics," he added.

He said in a democratic system, parliament should be the centre of all debates and street agitation like hartal and strike can do no good to people.

Former caretaker government

advisor M Hafizuddin Khan said democracy without accountability is totally meaningless.

Emphasising the role of standing committees to ensure accountability of the government, he said, "We cannot call a parliament effective when it's committees do not run properly".

Association President Prof M Ataur Rahman said civil society cannot replace political parties but they can co-operate with each other on different issues.

Owen Lippert, resident director of the National Democratic Institute, presented a paper titled 'Coalition building in Bangladesh politics.'

He said in building coalitions, the policy positions of the parties must be taken into consideration.

Prof Aftab Ahmed and Prof Harun-ur-Rashid Pathan also spoke at the seminar.



PHOTO: STAR

Jatiya Party Chairman and former president HM Ershad addresses a grand rally of the party at Paltan Maidan in the city yesterday.

Ershad calls for unity to end misrule of govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former president and Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad yesterday called for a greater unity of people and political parties to free the nation from the misrule of the government.

"About 12 to 14 people are being killed everyday as if we are living in the valley of death," he said at a public meeting at Paltan Maidan.

Expressing grave concern at the killing of journalist Manik Chandra Saha, bomb blast at the shrine of Hazrat Shahajalal (RA) and the murder of a police sergeant in Dhaka, Ershad said the law and order situation has worsened alarmingly.

Placing a 12-point demand, the JP chairman called on the government to meet those immediately. Otherwise, the JP activists will realise the demands at any cost for the sake of the nation, he warned.

If his party returns to power, Ershad said, corruption and crimes would be rooted out within three

months, the Upazila system would be reintroduced and the closed mills and factories would be reopened.

The JP would also establish good governance and separate the judiciary from the executive, he added.

The former president said he handed over the power for establishing democracy, but it still remains a dream.

Democracy does not exist when parliament remains ineffective, he added.

The former president also said that his party carried out wide-ranging development works during its nine-year rule.

Advocating his proposal for a system of provincial governments, Ershad said a centralised government could not solve the multifarious problems facing the people.

12th National Immunisation Day today

UNB, Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a bid to keep Bangladesh free from polio, the first round of 12th National Immunisation Day campaign will be carried out today to vaccinate more than two crore under-5 children.

The second round of vaccination will take place on February 29 to eradicate the deadly disease that usually infects children under five through contaminated drinking water.

Around 50 thousand field workers and six lakh volunteers would administer polio vaccine to children at 1.20 lakh centres, said Health Minister Dr Khondoker Mosharraf Hossain yesterday.

Apart from polio vaccine, vitamin A capsule will be administered to children in the second round to protect them from night blindness.

In separate messages on the occasion, President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia urged the people to make the vaccination drive a 'success'.

Hasina gives money to Sylhet blast victims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday gave Tk 10,000 to the families of three people each who were killed in the bomb blast at the shrine of Hazrat Shahjalal (RA).

Fathers of Shafique Miah and Safar Ali and wife of Gani Miah received the money.

The money was handed over at a simple ceremony at the house of Sadar thana AL Convenor Mofizur Rahman at Salutikar.

The district and city AL leaders, on behalf the party chief, also handed over Tk 10,000 to each of three seriously injured who are now undergoing treatment at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

Obituary

Moslemuddin Sheikh, father of Sher Ali, advertisement manager of The Daily Star, died of old-age complications on January 16 at the age of 90.

A renowned social worker, he was the founder of a Digholkandi Primary School, madrassah, mosque and Eidgah in Pabna.

His kulkhwani will be held at his residence at Digholkandi, Pabna,

Sultana Anwara Begum

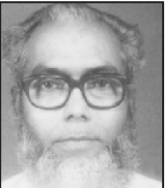


Sultana Anwara Begum, a senior teacher of Willes Little Flower School, died of kidney ailments on Friday, says a press release.

He had been serving as librarian at the school for 28 years.

A condolence meeting will be held at the school auditorium at 12.00 noon today.

Afsaruddin Mollah



Alhaj Afsaruddin Mollah, a former teacher of Mohammadpur Government Boys' High School, died of cancer on January 13 at the age of 75, says a press release.

He is survived by his wife, three sons, one daughter and grandchildren.

A doa mahfil will be held at his residence at 1274 East Shewrapara, Kafrul, after Maghrib prayers on January 19.

Kazi Atahar Uddin



Kazi Atahar Uddin, executive director of Elite Group of Industries, died of a cardiac arrest yesterday, says a press release.

He was also a freedom fighter and Rotarian.

He is survived by his wife, sons and a daughter.

DHAKA TODAY

Art exhibition

The opening ceremony of a painting exhibition titled 'Along the Rivers' by Hans Rudolf Benda, a Belgium-based German painter, will be held. Venue: Exhibition Hall of the Goethe Institut, Dhanmondi. Time: 2.00pm. The exhibition will remain open till January 29 from 2.00pm to 8.00pm daily except weekends and holidays.

Oriental painting exhibition

The inaugural ceremony of a solo oriental painting exhibition by Cacoly will be held. Venue: Dhruvad Gallery. Time: 5.30pm. The exhibition will remain open till January 27 from 10.00am to 8.00pm daily.

Film show

Academy Film Society will screen an American film titled 'West side story'. Venue: Society auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

Certificate giving ceremony

The certificate giving ceremony of Prachyanat School of Acting will be held. The students will present a performance titled 'Romeo and Juliet: Sundry Collages'. Venue: Natmondol of Dhaka University. Time: 5.30pm.

Talk

Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit of Dhaka University organises a talk on 'The illicit movements of goods and people in the age of globalisation'. Venue: Advanced Centre for the Study of Social Sciences, Behind the Arts Building. Time: 12.00 noon.

Meeting

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina will have an opinion sharing meeting with cultural activists of the country. Venue: House-51/A, Road-3/A, Dhanmondi. Time: 4.00pm.

Mourning procession

Dhaka University Journalists' Association will take out a mourning procession to protest the killing of Manik Chandra Saha, a noted journalist of Khulna. Venue: Aparajeo Bangla. Time: 12.00 noon.

Protest rally

The Communist Party of Bangladesh will hold a protest rally demanding trial and punishment to those responsible for all bomb blasts in the country. Venue: In front of the party office. Time: 4.00pm.



LGED Chief Engineer Md Shahidul Hassan and Director General of Department of Livestock Services Dr Salehuddin Mahmud exchange MOU documents after signing it in the city recently. Under the MOU, the livestock services department will provide technical support to LGED's community-based resource management project being implemented in Sunamganj, Habiganj, Kishoreganj and Netrakona districts.