

Caretaker govt needs to be redefined

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The system of caretaker government needs to be redefined in the present context of the country to make it more effective and acceptable to the people and the political parties, said the speakers at a seminar yesterday.

They said the country's judiciary is under the threat of politicisation after the introduction of the caretaker government to ensure a free and fair election.

The seminar on 'Caretaker government in Bangladesh: Problems and prospects' was organised by the American Institute of Bangladesh Studies (AIBS) in the city.

Presenting a keynote paper at the seminar, Dr M Obaidul Hoque, a senior research fellow of the AIBS, said some guidelines need to be framed to ensure transparency and

accountability of the caretaker government.

"Since the last retiring chief justice is appointed as chief advisor, there are chances of manipulating the judiciary by the party in power to make certain judge available for appointment as the head of the caretaker government," he added.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Hoque Inu said everybody accepted the idea of caretaker government with the hope that it would be able to ensure a neutral election.

"But the major political parties, who were defeated in last general elections, have brought allegation against the activities of the caretaker governments," he added.

Inu said the jurisdiction of the caretaker government over the administration and the armed forces must be defined to avoid

their manipulation.

He said the activities of the caretaker government need to be redefined through new political agreement.

Prof Syed Anwar Hossain of Dhaka University said there is difference between a caretaker government and an interim government.

He said the judiciary in Bangladesh was never free, but it is now politicised to take undue advantage from the caretaker government.

"There are flaws in our electoral system and as long as those flaws would remain, it will never be possible to hold a neutral election under any kind of government," Prof Hossain added.

Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelly, overseas director of the AIBS, presided over the seminar.



PHOTO: PID
Newly appointed Ambassador of Qatar Mohamed A Al-Abdulla paid a courtesy call on Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan at his office yesterday.

Financial assistance for Benin air crash victims under process: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zial told parliament yesterday that financial assistance to the families of the army officers killed in the Benin air crash is now under process.

Replying to Muhammad Giasuddin (BNP-Narayanganj) during the PM's question hour, she said the families of the victims would get the financial assistance from the government and the United Nations.

According to the PM, the follow-

ing would be the one time financial facilities:

US\$ 50,000 (Tk 29 lakh) for each as compensation by the UN.

Tk 7 lakh for each of the officers and Tk 3.5 lakh for the JCO from Army Family Security Scheme.

Amount equivalent to 18 months' salary.

Amount equivalent to 12 months' basic salary against the earned leave.

Fifty percent of due pension as commutation.

Dues from the foreign allowances (till discharging duties in the peacekeeping mission).

Tk 20,000 for each of the officers and Tk 15,000 for the JCO from the Army Welfare Fund, and

Deposited money from the future fund.

The PM further informed the House that the families of the victims would receive the following every month: Family pension and children allowance, allowance for wife and children from the Officers Family Welfare Fund and dearness allowance as per family pension.

The prime minister also said that steps have been taken to realise the money against insurance for the aircraft accident.

Convention of bio-diversity from Feb 9

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will underscore the need for conservation of its bio-diversity, intellectual property rights, and people's access and sharing on genetic resources at the Seventh Conference of the Parties (COP-7) of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) beginning in Kuala Lumpur on February 9.

This was disclosed at a pre-COP-7 meeting held at the World Conservation Union (IUCN) office in the city yesterday.

The meeting was convened to discuss issues and proposals for the upcoming 12-day convention.

The IUCN, which is presently developing the National Bio-diversity Strategy and Action Plan, organised the meeting chaired by its Country Representative Dr Amin Nishat.

The COP-7 priority issues included biological diversity of mountain ecosystems, the role of protected areas in the preservation of biological diversity, the transfer of technology and technological cooperation and the implementation of the target set at its sixth meeting to achieve a significant reduction in the rate of loss of bio-diversity by 2010.

President asks DCs to work for people's benefit

BSS, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday asked the deputy commissioners (DCs) to prove themselves as public servant through their works.

He hoped that the DCs should carry out their responsibilities at field level keeping close contact with people's representatives to the benefit of the people.

The president was addressing

the DCs who called on him at Bangabhaban in the city.

He told the DCs to give priority to human values when implementing the government's decisions.

The president said the government considers improvement of the law and order and elimination of crimes with special importance.

"You should play an active role in establishing the rule of law in the country," he added.

Prof Iajuddin reminded the DCs that everybody expect initiatives from them to eliminate poverty and crimes, establish good governance, protect environment, implement development programmes, empower women, and give institutional shape to democratic system of administration.

He underlined the importance of the role of the DCs in implementing the government's different development and welfare programmes.

Attack on Ctg housing society Residents demand arrest of killers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Agitating residents of Mohammad Nagar Housing Society and adjacent areas in the port city yesterday demanded immediate arrest of and punishment to the people involved in the January 25 attack.

A man was killed and two others were injured when the attackers raided the housing society under Bayezid thana.

The raid was aimed at occupying a disputed land, the residents said at a press conference at Chittagong Press Club.

They alleged that one Solaiman Alam was the mastermind and he had been involved in such practice for long.

He has also victimised many innocent plot owners of Mohammad Nagar and other housing societies by implicating them in false cases, they alleged.

The residents urged the deputy commissioner (north) of CMP to conduct a proper investigation into

the allegations and the January 25 attack that left one Alamgir dead.

They also demanded immediate arrest of those involved in Alamgir murder and withdrawal of the 'false' cases filed against them.

Sarwar Jahan Jamil, managing director of Mohammad Nagar Housing Society, read out a written statement at the press conference attended by around 100 local residents.

Captain (ret.) Abdul Malek, Muktijodha city unit Deputy Commander Kamal Uddin, Alhaj Shamsul Haq, Lieutenant (ret.) Tajul Islam, Nurul Amin, Harunur Rashid, Md Alam, Md Khairul Alam and President of Chhayanir Cooperative Society Nazim Uddin Chowdhury also spoke.

Australian help sought for metro rail system

BSS, Dhaka

Australian High Commissioner Lorraine Barker yesterday called on Communications Minister Nazmul Huda at his secretariat office yesterday.

During the meeting, the envoy discussed bilateral issues and matters of mutual interests, particularly development of the Bangladesh Railway, said an official handout.

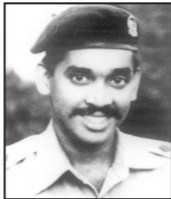
The minister said steps have been taken to introduce underground metro rail system in the capital to make city life more comfortable.

The minister sought cooperation from the Australian government in introducing underground metro rail system in the capital.

The Australian high commissioner expressed her government's keen interest in development efforts of Bangladesh, particularly in the development of Bangladesh Rail communications network.

They also discussed and exchanged views on procurement of locomotives for Bangladesh Railway.

Death anniversary



The 32nd death anniversary of freedom fighter Shaheed Lt. Selim Md Qamrul Hasan, Bir Pratik, will be observed tomorrow, says

a press release.

A discussion and milad mahfil will be held at Shahid Lt. Selim Shikshalaya at Modhubagh at 9.00am and at Uttara and 3.30pm.

Helen Chowdhury Rekha



Today is the second death anniversary of Helen Chowdhury Rekha, a pioneer of women's progressive movement and founder-

teacher of Chndranath Girls' High School, says a press release.

A religious programme will be held at her residence at Chhatak today.



Mild cold wave may continue

UNB, Dhaka

Weather will remain dry over the country in the next 12 hours till 6.00pm today.

The mild to moderate cold wave sweeping over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Barisal, Bhola, Comilla, Feni and Sitakunda may continue.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins in the early morning, Met office said.

Night temperature may fall slightly over Khulna and Barisal divisions and may remain nearly unchanged elsewhere over the country.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 27.0 degree Celsius was recorded at Teknaf and the lowest of 6.1 degree at Shimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:43pm today and rises at 6:40am tomorrow.

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

City/Town	Temperature In Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	23.0	10.7	68	46
Chittagong	26.4	14.2	61	40
Rajshahi	22.8	8.6	79	58
Khulna	23.6	11.1	83	69
Barisal	23.8	10.4	84	60
Sylhet	24.6	9.9	76	48
Cox's Bazar	25.8	15.6	52	57