

Ensure internal democracy, expel criminals

Speakers urge political parties at discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday called on the political parties to ensure internal democracy and expel the criminals from the parties for a free and fair election.

Only reforms in the caretaker government and the Election Commission (EC) are not enough to ensure free elections, they said.

Academics, leaders of professional bodies and non-government organisations and senior journalists took part in the discussion on 'Minimum national programme: Guideline and commitment for changes', organised by the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) in the city.

Lack of accountability in every sector is a major problem of governance in the country, said Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, a noted economist.

"Teachers are not accountable in the classrooms and doctors in hospitals," he said, adding that "What we are witnessing everywhere is just power game."

Prof Ahmad called for restoration of the 1972 constitution to ensure

development of the country. "We will have to find out ways to reactivate the 1972 constitution."

Echoing the views of Prof Ahmad, writer Shahriar Kabir and Prof Ajay Roy said the national programme for development should be drafted on the basis of the 1972 constitution, which upheld the spirit of the Liberation War.

Shahriar Kabir regretted that the religion-based politics gave the birth of fanaticism in different countries across the world, including Bangladesh.

Dr Badiul Alam Majumder of the Shujan (citizens for good governance) said criminality in politics and misrule are the key problems facing the country.

Apart from the electoral system, reforms in the political parties are also a must for a free and fair election, he observed.

About the reform agenda of the mainstream opposition parties, Dr Majumder said, "It is not a complete one. It cannot be complete without the reforms in political parties."

Dr Sadeka Halim of Dhaka

University said called for transparency in the activities of political parties.

In most cases, people remain in dark about the decision-making process of political parties, she added.

Shaktiprod Tripura, organising secretary of the Parbatya Chattagram Jono Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), demanded that parliamentary seats be reserved for indigenous women.

JSD President Hasanul Haq Inu, who moderated the discussion, stressed the need for formation of a national government with the participation of all sections of the society.

Major General (Retd) KM Shafiqullah, Dr Qazi Kholiquzzaman, Prof Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah, Prof Harun-ur-Rashid, Prof Mohammad Hossain Mansur, Editor of The Bangladesh Observer Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Dr Rashed-e-Mahbub and Dr Quamrul Hasan Khan also spoke.

ASSAULT OF BIDHAN

Police to seek court permission to probe Rab allegation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police will seek court permission today to probe Rab allegation against a garment factory owner of assault of a Rab official in Uttara Friday night.

The accused, Abu Bakar Sultan Bidhan, who suffered multiple fractures in Rab beating for protest.

Ashraf's colleagues from Rab-1 rushed there, picked up Bidhan from their office and beat him up, fracturing his leg bones.

The Rab earlier filed a general diary (GD) against Bidhan with Uttara Police Station, claiming that he (Bidhan) had assaulted a Rab officer.

Investigation officer Sub-Inspector Abu Sayeed told The Daily Star that he would seek court permission today to begin investigation.

"We need court permission to launch probe into any allegation made through GD," he said. Doctors are yet to begin treatment of Bidhan's fractured bones.

"We've kept him in traction. We'll plaster the bones tonight after examining reports of x-ray and other tests," Doctor Khaled, who was on duty at Central Hospital, told The Daily Star yesterday evening. Bidhan's wife Tania Sultana Joya said his entire body got swollen and he was groaning with acute pain.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) yesterday condemned the Rab attack on Bidhan, a younger brother of Sathkira JSD General Secretary Sheikh Obaidus Sultan Bablu, over a trivial matter. The JSD demanded exemplary punishment to the Rab men involved in the attack.

The High Court bench of Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman and Justice Mainul Islam Chowdhury, on April 17, had rejected the writ petition observing that the petitioner can approach the president for constituting the Supreme Judicial Council for investigating the allegations against judges, including the chief justice.

Abdus Salam Mamun then applied to the president for directing the chief justice to constitute the Supreme Judicial Council in this regard.

Abdus Salam Mamun Sunday told BDNEWS that he did not get any reply to his application from the President. Mamun in his petition alleged that the chief justice had not recommended his confirmation 'out of sheer wrath against him', which is contrary to the constitution.

Rab torture on an elderly man Friday night on Jasimuddin Road in Uttara, is now being treated at Central Hospital in Dhanmondi.

Bidhan, owner of Harness Level Industries Ltd in Uttara, was pushed by a Rab official who introduced himself as SP (superintendent of police) Ashraf. This prompted him to shove Ashraf in return, said Bidhan.

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Guests offer munajat at the inaugural ceremony of the construction work of Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital (AMCH) at Uttara in the city yesterday.

Prices of essentials beyond purchasing capacity

PM, commerce minister's observation not right, Consumers' Society President Kazi Akram says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A famine-like situation has been prevailing in the country as prices of all essential commodities have gone beyond the purchasing capacity of common people, said Kazi Akram Uddin Ahmed, president of Bangladesh Consumers' Society, yesterday.

He also criticised the remarks of the prime minister and the commerce minister, saying that their observation on price hike was not right.

While the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) in its report showed that the prices were spiralling, the prime minister and the commerce minister see no price hike, Kazi Akram said at a press conference in the city.

According to the report of TCB, the price of rice has increased 5.26 percent, lentil 7.77 percent, potato 11.76 percent, onion 25 percent and garlic 7.77 percent in the last one month. Powdered milk saw a price hike up to 77 percent.

Besides, prices of Rui fish increased 8.33 percent and hilsa 15.15 percent during the period. Sugar, meat and salt are also selling at a higher price, the TCB report said.

Kazi Akram also blamed the government for the devaluation of taka against US dollar.

He urged the government to take necessary steps to check the selling of adulterated and chemical-laced foods and date-expired medicines, calling for action

any generous help can be sent to C/O Abul Hossain, Savings Account No 5642, Rupali Bank, Maghbazar Branch Dhaka.

Shimul is now undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Kolkata. His family has already spent Tk 2 lakh for his treatment, and requires another Tk 4 lakh to complete the treatment.

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Urs Mubarak

The annual Urs Mubarak of Fakhru'l-Muhammed Hazrat Moulana Abdul Ghafoor (R.A) will be held tomorrow (Tuesday) July 19 at 78 Shantinagar in the city, says a press release.

On this occasion, the Quran Telawat will start 10:00am and Doa at 12:30pm followed by distribution of tabarak.

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Construction of Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first phase of construction work of Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital (AMCH) was formally launched in the city yesterday.

Md Sahabuddin Ahmed, founder-chairman of the Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited, inaugurated the construction work of the proposed ten-storey building as the chief guest at Sector-10 in Uttara in the morning.

The hospital will provide modern treatment facilities for the cancer patients. The poor can avail themselves of the opportunity free of cost.

Speaking on the occasion, Sahabuddin said, "We are happy to be a part of this project and our organisation will extend more cooperation, if needed."

Dutch-Bangla Bank donated Tk 4 crore for the construction of the hospital.

Kazi Rafiqul Alam, chairman and chief executive of Dhaka Ahsania Mission, said, "The hospital is being built with the donations and it will operate on a 'no-loss, no-profit' basis. We hope to offer free treatment to the poor patients who will receive quality treatment as any other patient."

Yeasin Ali, managing director of the Dutch-Bangla Bank, said the bank will continue to extend all possible assistance to the hospital management as part of its social commitment.

The Dhaka Ahsania Mission took the initiative to construct the 500-bed hospital, which will be the first full-fledged specialised hospital in the private sector in the country, having all modern equipment and facilities for cancer treatment and detection.

The Mission has also been operating a 42-bed hospital in Mirpur since 2000, which has a cancer detection centre. It also expects to establish cancer detection centres in five other divisional headquarters in phases.

National Professor Dr MR Khan, Chairman of ABC Group Engineer Saifuddin Ahmed Chowdhury, Secretary General of Dhaka Ahsania Mission Md Ziauddin, Director of Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital Prof MA Hai and Quamrul Islam Siddique were also present at the ceremony.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia laid the foundation stone of the hospital on July 7 last year.

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48 lawyers made AAG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Forty-eight lawyers were appointed assistant attorney general (AAG) to the Supreme Court (SC) yesterday and most of them are allegedly loyal to the government.

With the latest appointment, the number of AAGs at the SC rose to 107.

Sources said although the existing AAGs mostly remain inactive, the appointment was made to please the pro-government lawyers. The pro-government lawyers have long been lobbying for the appointment, the sources added.

An AAG draws a salary of over Tk 27,000 per month with free telephone service and other government benefits.

The AAGs however claim they cannot work due to a lack of office space at the court.

The sources said the number of pending cases at the SC has reached to over 7 lakh as the government lawyers often do not attend their hearing.

TENGRATILA BLOWOUT Memo to PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sylhet Division Development Action Council yesterday submitted memorandum containing a seven-point demand to the prime minister.

The demands included compensation from Niko, judicial investigation into Tengratila gas blowout, punishment to those responsible for the blaze and cancellation of all unequal agreements.

The council led by Advocate Abed Raza, president of the central committee of the council, submitted the memorandum to the prime minister's office after a rally at Muktangan in the city.

Earlier addressing the rally, he said Sylhet has been playing a significant role in the national economy since the independence, but it is still burning as the government remains indifferent to gas blowout.

He said, "If the government does not meet our demand we will stage demonstration in front of all the embassies of our country."

Zakaria Khan Chowdhury, former advisor of late president Ziaur Rahman, said despite knowing that Niko is an inexperienced oil drilling company, the government gave the contract to serve the interests of the vested quarters.

He urged the government to stop all the activities of the foreign oil companies.

Council Organising Secretary Syed Khalilur Rahman, JSD leader Prof Md Shafiq, Student leader Fazlur Rahman Khan, and President of Jalalabad Samity Allama Mustafa also addressed the rally.

CHEATING CASE Bidisha's bail extended

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday extended the ad-interim bail of Bidisha, estranged wife of former military ruler HM Ershad, in a case filed for cheating him after marriage.

Judge Mohammad Rafiqul Islam of the Dhaka District and Sessions Judge's Court extended the bail until August 18 following a petition filed by the defence lawyers.

Bidisha was present in the court yesterday during the hearing.

Earlier on June 16, the same court granted Bidisha ad-interim bail until yesterday following a criminal appeal filed against the rejection order of the lower court.

Bidisha was arrested on June 4 after her former husband filed the case. She was freed from prison after 23 days on June 27.



Sacheton Mobile Phone Grahak Samaj stages a demonstration at Shahbagh in the city yesterday demanding T&T connectivity with other cellphone lines and reduction in call charges.

'Over 45pc school students have no knowledge about HIV/Aids'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 45 percent school students, teachers and guardians in the capital have no knowledge of HIV/Aids, reveals a survey report at a workshop in the city yesterday.

The workshop on 'Baseline survey report on HIV/Aids among the school going and out of school students and their teachers and guardians in Dhaka City' was held at the National Press Club.

Life, a UN associated NGO, in collaboration with NASP, MOHFW, Unicef and the government, organised the workshop.

The report said 48 percent students, 45 percent teachers and 54 percent guardians in the capital have no knowledge of HIV and Aids.

Quoting a government statistics, the report said an estimated 7500 people are HIV infected, 465 are HIV positive, and 87 are Aids patients while 44 people died of Aids in the country.

It said 8.2 percent school students are sexually harassed in any form and five of them by known persons, the report mentioned.

The survey was conducted on 863 students, 118 teachers and 128 guardians in 13 Bangla

medium schools, two English medium schools and four cyber cafes in the city in last 11 months.

"About 42 million people in the world are infected by Aids and 70 million men, women and children may die of HIV/Aids in the next 20 years," said Amirul Islam, programme officer of Life, while presenting the report.

Dr Fatima Parveen Chowdhury, line director of national Aids and director of CME, called upon all to avoid abnormal sexual behaviours, and follow the religious teachings with a view to safeguarding them from Aids.

"HIV can be transmitted from one body to another through blood, semen, vaginal fluid and breast milk. The transmission can also take place through unprotected sex (anal, vaginal and oral), blood transfusion, needle and syringe sharing, and from parent to child during pregnancy," said Kamrul Islam Sony, founder and chairman of Life.

Kazi Ali Reza, officer-in-charge of Unicef, Dr Rokhsana Reza, project officer of Unicef, and Dr Rezoan Hossain Bhuiyan, associate professor of department of Geography & Environment were also present.

Rapist threatens victim's mother

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged rapist is threatening the mother of the victim for withdrawal of the case filed with Kafur Police Station.

A three and a half years old girl was raped by a 16-year-old neighbour Imran Hossain Iqat on June 17 at West Bhashantek in the city.

"She is still suffering from infection," said Bilkis Begum, a gynaecologist of the One-Stop Crisis Centre (OCC) at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). She said the girl will have to stay in the hospital for few more days and needs several tests.

Guardian of Iqat said it will take a little money to free him from the allegation, as they are influential, victim's mother said.

She demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment to the culprit.

Iqat is still on the run. The investigation officer said they are trying their best to arrest the culprit and is not informed about the threat to the family of the victim.

Unity of Islamic forces stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of different Islamic fronts at a roundtable yesterday called for forging a greater unity among themselves.

The roundtable on 'Importance of Islamic Unity' was organised by the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) at a city hotel.

Presiding over the discussion, former chief election commissioner Justice Abdur Rouf stressed the need for unity among the Islamic fronts.

Foy's LAKE

Signing of agreement postponed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The signing ceremony for a tripartite agreement on Foy's Lake management was postponed yesterday as the state minister for civil aviation and tourism could not turn up due to unavoidable reasons.

The signing ceremony for the agreement among the Concord Entertainment Company Limited, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation and Bangladesh Railway was scheduled to take place at a city hotel at 12:00 noon.