

'Reforms of CG, EC a must for credible election'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said without reforms in the electoral and caretaker government system, it is not possible to hold the next general election in a credible way.

They said if the caretaker government system is not reformed, the 'mass support' in favour of pro-liberation forces would not be reflected in the general election.

The discussion was organised by Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee in the city.

Awami League (AL) presidium member Suranjit Sengupta said reforms in electoral and caretaker government system are imperative to hold the next general election in a transparent way.

Criticising the Election Commission for inviting too many political parties to discuss voter list, he said this move is aimed to deceive the countrymen.

Suranjit laid emphasis on updating the existing voter lists instead of making a new one.

Referring to recent incidents relating to Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad and his divorced wife Bidisha, the AL presidium member said the BNP has realised that a coalition with the Jamaat-e-Islami would not ensure its victory in the next general election.

"BNP has created division in Ershad's family in order to have his support in the election. But I can say Ershad would not hesitate to leave the BNP as he did not hesitate to divorce his wife for political gains," he observed.

Workers' Party General Secretary

Bimal Biswas also termed the reforms to caretaker government crucial for the next general election and opined in favour of updating the existing voter list.

He said the EC has invited name-only political parties to create 'confusion' among the people.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul-Haque Inu said the people would force the government to accept the caretaker government and EC reform proposals placed by the 14-party.

Justice KM Sobhan said extensive discussion is needed regarding the reform proposals.

Chaired by President of Nirmul Committee's advisory committee Prof. Kabir Chowdhury, the meeting was also addressed by acting president of the committee writer Shahriar Kabir, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Hena Das and Abu Osman Chowdhury.

ADR helps dispose of 7,974 cases in 2 yrs: Moudud

UNB, Dhaka

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed said some 7,974 cases were disposed of in last two years following the introduction of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) by amending the Civil Procedure Code.

Addressing a press conference at the conference room of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Ministry, he said the government realised default loans of Tk 2,359.89 crore during the period under the Ortha Rin Adalat.

Moudud said the government amended the Civil Procedure Code and initiated ADR on February 2, 2003 to infuse dynamism into the judicial system. "Since then, some 7,974 cases have been disposed of and 2,513, of them, in the current year," he said.

Another amendment to the Ortha Rin Act has helped bring transparency and pace in realising loans, he

said adding, "The amendment to the Civil Procedure Act and Ortha Rin Act has already created a new culture in the judicial system."

Since the act took effect on May 1, 2003, some 3,497 cases have been disposed of and Tk 2,359.89 crore realised. "Before bringing amendment to the law it was difficult to realise Tk 20 crore on an average a year," he said.

"Now the loan defaulters feel encouraged to pay back the money because of incorporating some strong provisions in the Act and the banks have also been empowered to sell out the mortgaged property against the loans in case of violation of rules by the borrowers," he said.

State Minister for Law Shahjahan Omar said media should play an effective role in building positive awareness among the people about the ADR as this is a very new concept.

Teletalk signs agreement with Banglalink

Full interconnections by first week of Aug

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Teletalk, the state-run cellphone company, signed interconnection agreement with the Banglalink yesterday ending the sufferings of its nearly 80,000 clients.

Teletalk Managing Director M Obaidullah and Banglalink Chief Executive Officer Lars P Reichelt signed the agreement on behalf of their respective companies.

Earlier, the Teletalk signed similar agreements with the three other mobile phone companies AKTEL, CITYCELL and GrameenPhone.

The Teletalk subscribers were constrained to reach mobile phones of other operators due to delays in signing interconnection agreements caused by conditions put forward by the private mobile phone operators.

However, sources said, it may take around a week for the Teletalk users to get access to mobile phones of the private operators.

Obaidullah said the interconnections are expected to be activated fully by the first week of August as it takes time to install interconnection link through two exchange cables with the private operators.

He said the signing of agreements with the private mobile phone operators would definitely generate enthusiasm among the users of Teletalk, which offers cheapest facilities compared to the other mobile operators.

The GrameenPhone (GP) is leading the mobile phone operators with more than 30 lakh subscribers, followed by AKTEL with two million, Banglalink with 500,000 and CITYCELL with 375,000 subscribers.



PHOTO: STAR
Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain greets Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury when he arrived at the conference of Chittagong district Gono Forum yesterday. The conference was held at the Muslim Hall in the port city.

DU officers set Aug 6 deadline to meet their 20-pt demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Administrative officers of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday threatened to abstain from their work again from August 7 to 9, if their demands are not met within August 6.

Dhaka University Officers' Association announced the programme yesterday at the end of their two-day work abstention programme to realise their 20-point demands.

The association leaders at a rally yesterday in front of the administrative building urged the DU authorities to fulfill the demands immediately. They also expressed their deep resentment at the authorities' inaction in this regard.

The main demands of the DU officers are allowing their representatives to attend all policymaking meetings of the university, elimination of salary discrimination and extension of retirement age to 65 years from existing 62 years.

University medical centre, libraries and other utility services will be kept out of the purview of the August 7-9 work abstention programme, says a press release.



PHOTO: STAR
Awami League presidium member Zillur Rahman speaks at the Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) meeting at the party's Dhanmondi office yesterday.

Bangladeshi physician dies in US

BSS, Dhaka

Dr Mirza Masood Ahmed, the only son of late Mirza Faiz Ahmed, Chief Engineer (Hydrology) of the then EPWAPDA, and Professor (ret'd) Masuda Ahmed of Eden Girl's College, passed away due to cardiac arrest at Fredericksberg, Virginia, USA on July 24, according to family sources.

Dr Ahmed, who did his MBBS in Dhaka, and MS and MD in the USA, had been practising in the states for about 12 years.

He left behind his mother and two sisters.

Isal-e-sawab for Dr Ahmed and Milad-e-Mahfil will be held at his Dhaka residence (House 16A, Road, 2, Dhanmondi R/A) after Asr prayers on July 29.

Relations, friends and admirers have been requested to attend and pray for peace of the departed soul.