

Ensure women's equal rights to politics

Speakers demand at Anannya roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women's rights activists at a roundtable yesterday called for reforms in the political and electoral systems to ensure women's equal right to politics.

They also urged the political parties to nominate more women candidates in the general election to give women a stronger voice in parliament.

Anannya, a fortnightly magazine for women, organised the roundtable on 'Reforms in election system and political sphere: How equal rights for women can be reflected?' at the National Press Club.

Ayesha Khanam, secretary general of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, said the political parties must have every intention of ensuring representation of women in parliament.

She called on the women's organisations to continue dialogue with the political parties to strengthen their voice.

Criticising the indifferent attitude of the political parties, Ayesha Khanam said, "Our political parties consider the demand of women from their own point of view."

Women's leader Khushi Kabir said the women's right to direct election to the reserved seats must be protected by law.

Without bringing reforms to the existing political culture, it would be difficult to ensure women's equal rights both in parliament and in the political parties, she added.

Salma Khan, chairperson of Cedaw committee of the United Nations and Bangladesh, said women should be included in the discussion relating to political reforms.



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League leader Motia Chowdhury speaks at a roundtable at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On her left are Advocate Sultana Kamal and Anannya Editor Tasmima Hossain.

She also suggested that new constituencies should be created out of the big constituencies and those should be reserved for women.

Awami League leader Motia Chowdhury said political parties are not willing to give nominations to women candidates, as they don't want to take risk.

Apart from reserved seats, political parties should give nominations to more women candidates for the general seats, she said.

Women's rights activists Maleka Begum said women leaders who are associated with big political parties consider women issues from the male point of view.

Criticising the opposition political party for boycotting parliament, she said, "The parliament members who

are not attending the session should not receive their salary and other benefits."

Barrister Rabeya Bhuiyan called for raising the number of seats in parliament and reserving one-third of seats for women.

Tasmima Hossain, editor of the Anannya, presented a concept paper in the roundtable. She demanded that women be included in the current discussion regarding debate about political reforms.

Presided over by Advocate Sultana Kamal, the roundtable was also addressed by Advocate Sigma Huda, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal leader Shirin Akhter, Shegufa Yasmin of Awami League, Barrister Tania Amir and Lina Chakrabarti of Communist Party and women's rights activist Farida Akhter.

'Enact tougher laws to curb adulteration of food'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB) yesterday called on the government to enact tougher laws including death sentence as maximum punishment in order to prevent food adulteration.

Hailing the ongoing drive against the adulteration of food items, the HRPB leaders urged the government to formulate a comprehensive law, replacing all the existing laws in this regard.

It is a matter of grave concern that the unscrupulous traders are now even producing spurious life-saving drugs, said its President Advocate Manzur Morshed at a press conference at the National Press Club.

If the widespread practice of food adulteration is not checked immediately, the future generation would suffer from many complicated diseases, he warned.

He also urged all to come forward to combat the growing problem.

Ekhlas Uddin Bhuyian, Lutfar

Kabir, Asaduzzaman Siddique, Shaheen Ara Laily, Selim Newaz Chowdhury, Jahangir Hossain and Aiub Khan were present at the press conference.

BLUE FOR PEACE Govt protecting killers

Alleges AL leader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bringing the killers of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria to book will not be possible during the regime of the four-party alliance government, Awami League president member Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury said yesterday.

There is a doubt that this government will take any measure to track down the killers as the government itself is patronising crimes, she added.

Sajeda was speaking at the 'Blue for Peace' programme initiated by Asma Kibria, widow of the former finance minister, in front of Kibria's residence at Dhanmondi in the city.

When the whole world has raised voice for the trial of the killers of Kibria, the government remains totally indifferent to it, Sajeda said.

The anti-liberation forces have become active again to eliminate the intellectuals as in 1971, she observed.

The AL leader also alleged that the government is also giving protection to the killers of Bangabandhu and four national leaders.

The Awami League must ensure the trial of all killings, if it is elected to power, Sajeda asserted.

Asma Kibria, Kibria's four sisters, Sharifa Mosabbir, Safia Rahman, Fouzia Shahed and Ashrafi Siddique, Rina Sultana Kibria, Mahila Awami League leader Faridun Nahar Laily, Mahmuda Begum and Joli Kabir took part in the programme.

Kibria, also an AL lawmaker, was killed in a grenade attack in his hometown Habiganj on January 27.

BRRRI develops two new rice varieties

The Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRRI) has developed two new rice varieties named BRRRI dhan44 and BRRRI dhan45 recently for cultivation in the Aman and Boro seasons, says a press release.

BRRRI dhan44 can be cultivated like BR11 in the Aman season and it is tolerant to tidal submergence in the southern part of the country, covering 0.8 million hectare. The yield of BRRRI dhan44 is 4.5 metric tonnes/ha that is 1 tonne/ha more than that of BR11.

The yield of BRRRI dhan45 is 5.5 metric tonnes/ha that is 0.5 metric tonnes/ha that is more than that of BRRRI dhan28, a popular Boro variety. Its stem is strong enough to keep the rice plant standing upright even at the time of stormy weather.

The seed of new varieties will be available to the farmers from the next Boro and Aman seasons. BRRRI has already developed 45 modern rice varieties. These varieties are cultivated in 70 percent of the total rice areas of the country and contribute 80 percent to the total rice production.

In 1970-71, the total rice production was 10.97 million metric tonnes, but in 2003-04, it has increased up to 26.19 million metric tonnes. This has been possible due to BRRRI developed modern rice varieties and technologies, extension activities and efforts of our toiling farmers. The scientists hope, the newly developed rice varieties will meet the long time demand of the people, and contribute much to increase the rice production and ensure food security of the country.

MA Gani, a retired customs official, passed away due to cancer at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in the city at the age of 80, says a press release.

He left behind his five sons and three daughters to mourn his death.

Nazimuddin was buried at BAF Shaheen Graveyard at Tejgaon yesterday after namaz-e-janaza at BAF Tarmac. Chief of the Air Staff Air Vice Marshal Fakhru Azam, senior BAF officers and relatives attended the janaza.

MA Gani

He left behind his five sons and three daughters to mourn his death.

Ahmad Taufiq Chowdhury

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Alhaj Ahmad Taufiq Chowdhury, former national Amir of Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, passed away at Lab Aid Cardiac Hospital in the city on July 10 at the age of 74, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, one son, three daughters, seven grand children and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

He was buried at Ahmadiyya Graveyard of Mymensingh after a namaz-e-janaza at Ahmadiyya Graveyard Mosque in Aqua.



PHOTO: STAR

'Blue for Peace' programme initiated by Asma Kibria, widow of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria, was organised at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday.

PERSONAL INFORMATION ABOUT CANDIDATES IN POLLS

'Implement HC directives properly'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Electoral experts yesterday underscored the need for proper implementation of the High Court directives regarding personal information of the candidates in parliamentary election to help the voters elect the right person as their representative.

The Election Commission (EC) will have to initiate proper steps in this regard, making the contenders provide required information in accordance with the High Court directives, they said at an opinion exchange meeting organised by Sujon, a civic body for good governance, at its office in the city.

"The voters must be empowered with adequate information about the candidates to make election free from criminalisation, black money and violence," said ASM Shahjahan, a former adviser to a caretaker government.

"The objective of the High Court directives is to enable the common people to have a clear idea about

the contenders," he said, adding that democracy cannot survive in the reign of criminals, black money and violence.

According to the HC directive issued on May 24, the aspiring candidates have to provide a set of eight personal information, including educational qualification, whether they are accused in criminal cases, wealth statement, bank loan status and sources of income of the candidates and their dependants.

Dr Shahdin Malik, a Supreme Court lawyer, said the EC can bring the deviant candidates in the election to book by making rules in line with the High Court directives.

Dr Badiul Alam Majumdar, member secretary of Sujon, suggested initiating steps for a comprehensive reform in the political parties and the process of nominating the candidates in the polls.

He also said the registration of the political parties with the Election Commission should be made man-

datory. "The Election Commission must exercise its full authority to hold elections in a free and fair manner," said Badiul Alam, who is also the country representative of The Hunger Project.

The participants in the discussion also underscored the need for empowerment of the Election Commission with adequate fund, manpower and logistics supports.



Dhaka to become uninhabitable by 2030 : Tariqul

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Environment and Forest Minister Tariqul Islam yesterday said the Dhaka city will become uninhabitable by 2030 if crash programmes are not taken to protect its environment.

He said total population of the city will reach about 2.5 crore by the time.

If it happens Dhaka city has to be declared abandoned, he added.

He said this while he was speaking as the chief guest at a view exchange meeting at the Jatiya Press Club.

Environment Secretary Jafar Ahmed Chowdhury presided over the meeting entitled 'Draft Bangladesh National Programme of Action for the Protection of the Coastal and Marine Environment from land-based Activities', organised by Directorate of Environment (DoE).

State Minister for Environment and Forest Jafarul Islam Chowdhury, DoE Director General Khan Ibrahim Hossain also spoke at the meeting. Director (Technical) Riazuddin Ahmed presented different aspects of the draft work plan.

Tariqul said the developed countries are responsible for the 97 percent environmental pollution across the globe.

India has left a bad impact on the environment of Bangladesh constructing Farakka Barrage, he said.

The countries that are responsible for environmental pollution of the world should be exposed in the international arena and everybody should come forward in this regard.

Elderly cultural activist killed in road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N' ganj

Shanti Ranjan Mukherjee, 70, a sports and cultural personality of the district, died in a road accident at Chamber Road in the town yesterday.

Witnesses said a speeding bus hit the rickshaw in which Shanti Ranjan was returning to his residence at about 2:00pm. He fell to the ground and died instantly.

Following the accident, locals damaged at least 12 vehicles and set the killer bus afire.

Police clubbed the agitating people and brought the situation under control. They recovered the body and sent it to Narayanganj Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

President of Kendriya Natya Sangsha (central theatre forum), Shanti Ranjan Mukherjee stepped into 70 yesterday. He was the former general secretary of Narayanganj District Sports Association and member of the puja and mandir committees.

Sports and cultural activists of the district mourned the death of Mukherjee at a meeting at Narayanganj Press Club yesterday. They demanded arrest of the bus driver and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.



Moderately heavy falls likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at most places over the country till 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy falls are also expected at places during the period, Met Office said predicting slight rise in day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 34.6 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Khulna and Jessore and lowest 23.5 degree Celsius at Hatiya.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:34pm today and rises at 5:33am tomorrow.

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	31.7	25.8	95	74
Chittagong	30.0	25.2	87	87
Rajshahi	31.4	26.0	88	80
Khulna	34.6	27.6	90	73
Barisal	34.0	24.1	100	89
Sylhet	33.8	26.8	78	82
Cox's Bazar	28.2	25.4	93	96



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikya Parishad stages a demonstration in the city yesterday to mark the 'Day against Discrimination and Repression'.

DHAKA TODAY

Roundtable
The Centre for Studies in Social Transformation organises a roundtable on 'Energy Security in Bangladesh'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00am.

Musical session
Srijan, a cultural organisation, will hold a musical session where the participants will sing the songs by Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam and Sukanto. Venue: Sanskriti Bikash Kendra, Paribagh. Time: 7:00pm.

Shrabon fair
A Shrabon fair, including discussion and cultural programme, will be held. Venue: Gopibagh 3rd lane. Time: 4:00pm.

Launching ceremony
The Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts will hold the launching ceremony of a book titled 'Hamiduzzaman Khan - A Modern Sculptor'. Venue: Bengal Shipalay, Dhanmondi. Time: 6:00pm.

Musical evening
Rabirashmi, a cultural organisation, will hold a musical evening on Tagore song. Venue: National Museum. Time: 6:15pm.

Workshop
Biam Foundation and Jubo Academy will hold a workshop on 'Youth Participation in Millennium Development Goals' to mark the International Youth Day. Venue: Biam foundation auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

Rally
The Dhakabasi and the Future Leaders'

Humayun Azad's anniversary of death today

DU CORRESPONDENT

The first death anniversary of eminent writer and Dhaka University Professor Dr Humayun Azad will be observed today in the city and at his village at Rarikhal in Munshiganj district.

Different organisations have chalked out programmes to observe the day.

Prof Humayun Azad was found dead in an apartment of Munich in Germany.

To mark the occasion Humayun Azad Commemorative Committee will organise a discussion at the conference room of the DU Business Studies Faculty. Mohammad Ali will present a keynote paper at the discussion with Poet Shamsur Rahman in the chair.

A similar programme will also be held at Rarikhal High School.

Jamir Ahmed Jamu

Today is the fourth anniversary of Jamir Ahmed Jamu, former vice president of Narayanganj district Awami League, says a press release.

On the occasion, milad mahfil will be held at Hridom Plaza at 55/1 BB Road in the Narayanganj town after Zohr prayers today.

31pc of indigenous people do not have house

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twelve percent of indigenous households have been forced to sell their lands or tricked out of their lands by vested quarters, according to a study conducted by Care Bangladesh and Gram Bikash Kendra (GBK).

The study also showed that 31 percent of indigenous people do not have house and 61 percent do not have any cultivable land.

The findings of the 'Northwest Indigenous Livelihoods Study 2004' were presented at a seminar in the city yesterday.

The study focussed on the livelihood challenges of the indigenous people living in the northwestern part

of the country. Most indigenous people lost their lands during the period from 1970 to 1980 and the vested quarters gobbled up the lands through making false document, said M Zakaria, technical coordinator of Livelihood Monitoring Project of Care Bangladesh, while presenting the study.

Indigenous women are socially vulnerable and the incidents of discrimination against and harassment of them at workplaces are on the rise, he said.

The study also revealed that seven percent of the households has one woman each, who fell victim to rape in the last year.

It also said 81 percent of the

households depend on traditional health practices and indigenous people have little confidence on upazila and district hospitals.

According to the findings, 86 percent of the indigenous children are enrolled in primary schools, but only 64 percent of them completed the primary level of education.

"About 75 percent of indigenous parents are unaware of pre-school education and the Bengali language is a barrier for indigenous children since they speak native dialects in their homes," said Arifa S Sharmin, Manager of external relations of Care.

Bhupen Das, project officer of GBK, also spoke.