

# No plan for electoral reforms

Moudud tells publication ceremony

## STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has no plan to bring any reform to the electoral system, said Law Minister Moudud Ahmed at a book launching ceremony yesterday.

But if the next caretaker government thinks that the electoral system needs changes, it may bring about reforms through ordinance, he added.

Organised by the Academic Press and Publishers Library (APPL), the publication ceremony of the book titled 'Reminiscence of few decades and problems of democracy in Bangladesh' by Justice Chowdhury ATM Masud was held at a hotel at Gulshan in the city.

Speaking as the chief guest, Moudud called on all to take part in a dialogue on how to strengthen the election commission and give more freedom to it.

There is no alternative to a free and fair election, he said, adding

that it is a matter of regret that those who lost the elections are now raising question about the fairness of the election.

The law minister also said that a very bad culture has been established for the last 15 years that the parties who fail to secure majority seats in national elections are reluctant to join the parliament.

Joining the parliament and taking part in the debate is a must for strengthening democracy, he added.

About the book, Moudud said the author, Justice ATM Masud, has presented a clear picture of the politics of the subcontinent through his well-documented and balanced book.

The next generation will be benefited much from this book, he added.

Brig. (Retd.) Prof Abdul Malek, secretary general of the National Heart Foundation, said this book is very important for the present and future generations as the

writer provides insights into the struggles of the student leaders who worked for other people.

He also said that tolerance is an essential part of democracy.

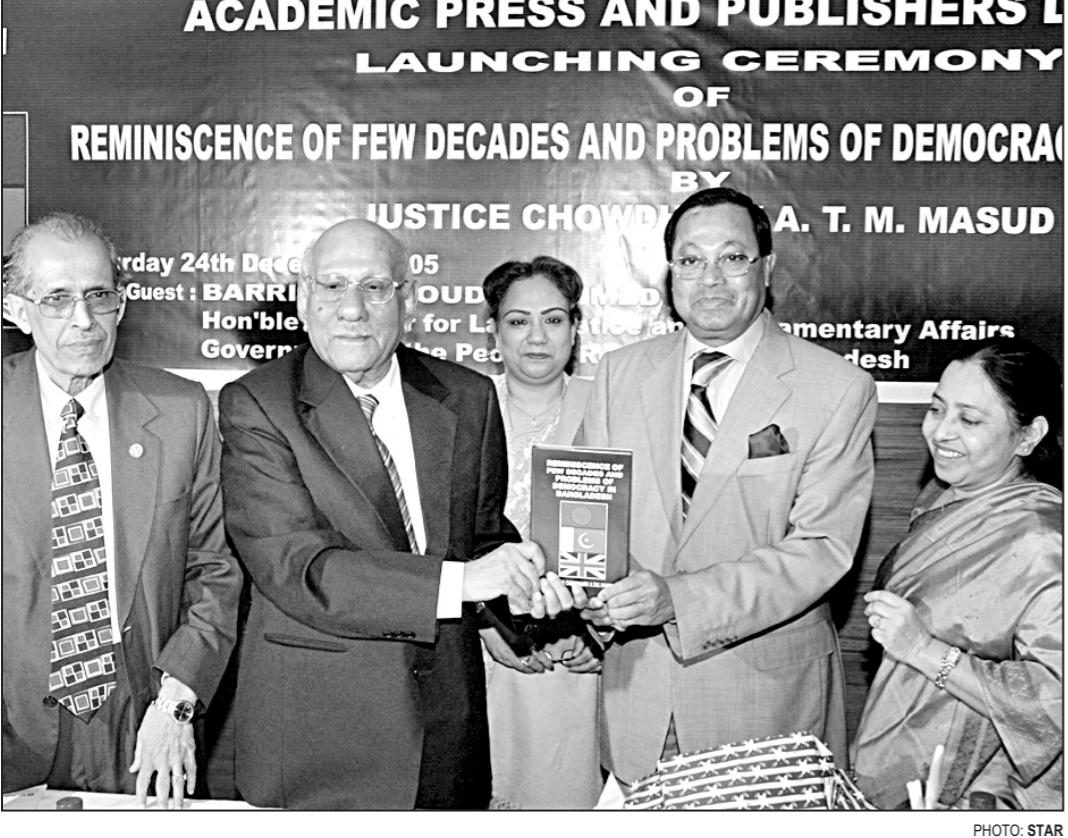
Barrister Harun ur Rashid, former ambassador to the United Nations, journalist Sadek Khan, Sirajul Hossain Khan, Dr Sirajul Islam, Shahinur Rahman, and Justice Salma Masud Chowdhury, daughter of Justice Masud, also spoke at the ceremony, presided over by APPL Chairman Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley.

Former chief justice ATM Afzal, Chief Election Commissioner MA Aziz, chief adviser of the last caretaker government Justice Latifur Rahman, Press Council Chairman Justice Abu Sayeed Ahmed, British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury, Editor of The News Today Reazuddin Ahmed, Prof Dr Emazuddin Ahmed and Justice AFM Abdur Rahman were also present.

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Law Minister Moudud Ahmed launches a book titled 'Reminiscence of few decades and problems of democracy in Bangladesh' by Justice Chowdhury ATM Masud at a city hotel in the city yesterday.

## Death anniversary of Chunnu today

Today is the 10th death anniversary of Zahid Hossain Chunnu, former convenor of Jatiyatabadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangstha (Jasas), says a press release.

On this day in 1995, he died of heart attack while trying to escape from the snatches at Manik Mia Avenue in the city.

Chunnu got involved in student politics at the beginning and later joined the cultural arena and played a vital role in the anti-autocracy movement. He was the cultural affairs secretary of BNP central committee from 1993 till his death. He was also a member of Bangladesh Film Censor Board and Shilpkarala Academy.

On the occasion, Jasas and different organisations chalked out elaborate programmes. Jasas will lay wreaths on his grave at the Banani Graveyard and offer fateha at 9:30am today. It will also hold a discussion and a doa mahfil at the city BNP office at Naya Paltan at 3:30pm.

Zahid Hossain Chunnu Memorial Foundation will arrange Qurankhwani at the Banani Graveyard this morning. Members of the Foundation will also place wreath and offer fateha.

## Badaruddin Chowdhury

Today is the 18th death anniversary of Badaruddin Chowdhury, father of Mahbubuddin Chowdhury, secretary general of the National Association of Unesco Clubs in Bangladesh, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad and doa mahfil will be held at his old Dhaka residence at Faridabad after Zohr prayers today.

## Borhanuddin Khan

Today is the 5th death anniversary of eminent social worker and businessman Borhanuddin Khan (Panna Mia), says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his residence at Galimpur, Khanhati, Nowabganj, after Asr prayers today.

Friends, relatives and admirers have been requested to attend.

## 'Change attitude towards women'

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a national conference yesterday called for changing attitude towards women and raising social awareness to ensure gender equality.

They also called for mainstreaming gender issues into government policies. They said the media can play an important role in protecting women's rights at family, social and state levels and in promoting good governance.

The Gender Trainers' and Activists' Core Group (TCG) organised the two-day conference at the BIAM auditorium in the city yesterday to discuss the gender issues and the challenges and to find out ways to overcome the hindrances.

Total of 421 representatives from government, non-governmental and rights organisations took part in the plenary session yesterday, the last day of the conference.

They presented a number of recommendations, including ensuring participation of women in decision-

making process, raising voice against domestic violence, increasing women's mobility and coordinating activities of the government and civil society to implement field level experiences.

Human rights activist Advocate Sultana Kamal, Director of CAMPE Rasheda K Chowdhury, Advocate Zead-al-Malum, Rights Advisor to Manusher Jonno Rina Roy, Special Correspondent of ATN Bangla Munni Saha and Chief News Editor of Channel i Shah Alamgir spoke on the occasion.

Journalist Munni Saha said there is a tendency that people think 'gender' is an issue related to only women.

"Even who works with gender issues also treat us as women in our professional arena," she said.

Expressing concern over the rise of militancy in the country, she said when women are being empowered through micro-credit programmes, the militants trying to cover them with veil.

## WEATHER TODAY

### Light to moderate fog likely

#### UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours till 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may also occur over the river basins of the country during early morning, Met Office said, predicting that night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Highest temperature 28.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chittagong and lowest 12.3 degree Celsius at Dinajpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:18pm today and rises at 6:30am 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	26.8	16.5	84	65
Chittagong	28.5	19.2	70	75
Rajshahi	27.0	13.0	84	76
Khulna	27.0	15.6	90	67
Barisal	26.6	15.5	100	91
Sylhet	28.3	13.7	61	67
Cox's Bazar	28.0	19.4	86	81

## One stabbed to death in city

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An unidentified man was stabbed to death at Pallabi in the city last night.

Police said three to four youths stabbed the man aged about 50 indiscriminately near the Islami High School at about 9:45pm.

Local people found him lying on the road in an unconscious state and sent him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Police said the victim was a drug peddler of Lalbagh area.

"His fellow traders killed him following a feud over the illegal trade," the duty officer of Pallabi Police Station said quoting one Al Amin, who was arrested soon after the incident from the area along with a knife.

## AL-BNP politics not for Islam or people

### Say hijab Tahrir leaders

#### BDNEWS, Dhaka

Leaders of Hijab Tahrir Bangladesh yesterday strongly criticised both BNP and Awami League for, what they said, not serving the interest of Islam, the people and the country.

They said the recent rise of militancy was a part of the imperialist plot to grab Bangladesh's natural resources. They also called for establishing a Khilafat-based governance system.

The leaders were speaking at the national conference on 'National Resistance against Bomb Attacks' organised by Hijab Tahrir at the Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh.

Joint coordinators Dr Sayeed and Qazi Morshedul Haque, Public Relations Secretary Maulana Mamunur Rashid spoke at the first session titled 'Conspiracy against state: Failure of AL and BNP.'

Publicity and Media Secretary Mustafa Minajah chaired the session, moderated by central committee member Mamunur Rashid Ansari.

"AL and BNP use Islam to take advantage in the elections, but they did not do anything for the sake of Islam," Qazi Morshed said.

He also said, "The bomb incidents are created by the enemies of Islam."

"The imperialists want to grab Bangladesh's huge natural resources and the militants are making grounds for foreign invasion," Morshed added.

The speakers pointed their fingers at the neighbouring countries, saying that some collaborators acted at the instigation of the imperialist forces to destabilise the country through creating misconceptions about Islam.

## INTRA-PARTY CLASH JCD expels 5 DU leaders

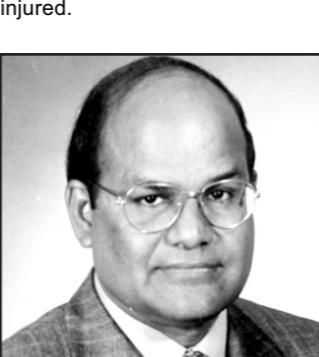
### DU CORRESPONDENT

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student wing of the ruling BNP, yesterday expelled five of its Dhaka University leaders for their involvement in anti-organisational activities on the campus.

The expelled leaders are Maniruzzaman Rezin, Anisur Rahman, Kazi Muktar Hossain, Ikhtiar Kabir and Mahbubur Rahman Palash.

The JCD President Azizul Bari and General Secretary Shafail Bari Babu approved the decision.

They took the decision following an intra-party clash on the DU campus on December 20 leaving 25 JCD leaders and workers injured.



## Mannan re-elected Gulshan Club president

S M Abdul Mannan was re-elected president of Gulshan Club on December 23, says a press release.

Mannan is a civil engineer and founder director of Mercantile Bank and Global Insurance Company.

Members of the executive committee are Irfan Hossain, Mohammad Ali Khokon, Lt. Col. (Retd.) M A Latif Khan, Anwar Rashid, Sabina Samad, Riaz ur Rahman, Shahab Uddin Khan, Ziaul Amin, Umme J Khan and Zahiduzzaman Faruque.



Awami League President Sheikh Hasina cuts a Christmas cake at her Sudha Sadan residence in the city yesterday.

## President, PM, opposition leader greet Christians

### Bss, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina in separate messages yesterday felicitated the Christian community of Bangladesh on the occasion of the Christmas Day.

The president in his message said the ideals of Jesus Christ are full of people's welfare and sacrifice. "These ideals inspire the people to follow the path of peace and welfare," he said.

He said Bangladesh is a country of communal harmony and "we all have to uphold the tradition."

He said the Christian community, besides performing their own religious rituals peacefully, have been working for the development of society and education, which is very praiseworthy.

He hoped the efforts of the Christian community would continue for building a happy and prosperous Bangladesh.

In her message, Khaleda Zia said that Jesus Christ had devoted his life for truth and justice. "His message and ideals could bring peace in this volatile world," she added.

She said Bangladesh is a unique example of communal harmony and religious tolerance. "People belonging to all faiths enjoy total freedom and perform their rituals," she added.

"There is no minority in Bangladesh, all are equal. Everybody plays a significant role in national development," she said.

She expressed the hope that the Christmas festival would further strengthen the existing religious fraternity, amity and social ties.

"It will inspire all to work together for national development," she said.

BDNEWS adds: Awami League President Sheikh Hasina in a message said the aim of Jesus Christ was to meet the basic needs of the human being, ensure safety of life, justice and peace and establish a society free from all forms of oppressions.

Jesus Christ became a great personality in history for his sacrifice, perseverance, simple lifestyle and self-restraint, she added.

## Christian leaders meet Hasina

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

#### Leader of the Opposition Sheikh

Hasina yesterday said the repression of minority people have started soon after the BNP-Jamaat alliance government took office.

Thousands of minorities have been ousted from their homes and still they could not return to their houses due to persecution by the ruling party men, she said.

Hasina, also the Awami League president, was speaking with the leaders of Bangladesh Christian Association as they met her at her Sudha Sadan residence in the city on the occasion of the Christmas Day.

More than 50 members of the association led by its President Promod Mankin MP and Secretary General Nirmal Rozario met the leader of the opposition. Archbishop of Dhaka Paulinus Costa was also present.

The AL chief called for fighting against all forms of repression, misrule and misdeeds unitedly with a view to establishing human rights.

She also urged the people of all walks of life to be united being imbued with the spirit of Liberation War and build Bangladesh as a non-communal and democratic country.

Hasina, also a former prime minister, wished a happy Christmas to all Christians all over the world.

"We believe in a society where

## Non-govt pry teachers demand national