

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, Mahbubur 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 Ahemd, Prof Dr Emajuddin Ahemd and Justice AFM Abdur Rahman were also present.

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 Hijbut Tahrir leaders

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Leaders of Hijbut 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 Hijbut 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 Minhaj 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 Baree Helal and General Secretary Shafiq 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 Irshad Hossain, Mohammod Ali Khokon, Lt. Col. (Retd.) M A Latif Khan, Anowar Rashid, Sabina Samad, Riaz ur Rahman, Shahab Uddin Khan, Ziaul Amin, Ummey J Khan and Zahiduzzaman Faruque.



PHOTO: STAR

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

'Fight against repression, misrule unitedly'

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

people can practice their respective religion," she said, adding that Bangladesh became independent for all as people of all faiths made great sacrifices for the independence.

"Let us pray today so that the nation could get rid of grenade and bomb attacks, repression, killing, rape and militancy," Hasina said.

Earlier, Hasina along with the Archbishop cut a Christmas cake. The Christian leaders also greeted the opposition leader with a Christmas card and a bouquet.

AL leaders Obaidul Quader, Abdul Mannan, Aktheruzzaman and Dr Hasan Mahmud were also present.

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.

SWID SCHOOL

Protest against move to construct apartment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Guardians of the students of a SWID-run school for the intellectually disabled yesterday held a rally on the school premises at Eskaton in the city yesterday to protest the authorities' decision to construct an apartment on the school compound, including the playground.

They said that the authorities of the Society For the Welfare of the Intellectually Disabled Bangladesh (SWID-Bangladesh), Ramna Branch, have taken the initiative in the name of income-generating project, ignoring the interest of the students with intellectual disability.

But the SWID authorities denied the allegations, saying that the playground will remain intact and the classes will be held at its office building adjacent to the school.

Meanwhile, the guardians urged the government and the donor associations to look into the matter and take necessary steps.

They alleged that the authorities have already handed over the property to a land developer for construction of apartments.

"Even we were not informed of it. They were more interested in their own benefit," said Alea Sultana, a guardian who is also a teacher of the SWID.

When the demonstrators tried to march towards the road outside, the SWID authorities intercepted them.

When contacted, Nurul Islam, senior executive officer of the SWID, said that during the construction work, the playground would be separated for the students.

Death anniversary of Chunnu today

Today is the 10th death anniversary of Zahid Hossain Chunnu, former convener 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 snatchers 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 Shilpakala 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.

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 6:39am 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

DHAKA TODAY

Mezban & Chittagong festival

Chattagram Samity-Dhaka organises its annual feast 'Mezban' and Chittagong Festival where residents of Chittagong in Dhaka will join. Venue: Women's Sports Complex, Dhanmondi. Time: 9:00am to 3:00pm.

Premier show

Dhaka Photographic Institute (DPI) organises a premier show of a documentary film titled 'Andhokarer Jatri'. Venue: DPI office, Kazipara, Mirpur. Time: 5:00pm.

Discussion

Bangladesh Shishu Sangathan Okya Jote will hold a discussion and cultural programme to mark the Victory Day. Venue: Bangabandhu Memorial Museum, Dhanmondi. Time: 4:00pm.