

Bhuiyan renews call for talks

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General and LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday urged the opposition to sit across the table to resolving current political problems to ensure a free and fair general election.

"I urge the leaders of 14-party combine, let us resolve the political problems through discussion so that the next general election is held in a free and fair atmosphere," he said while speaking at the installation ceremony of newly elected office bearers of Crime Reporters Association of Bangladesh (CRAB) at the National Press Club in the city.

Bhuiyan said after the next election the winner will form the government while the losers, accepting the people's verdict, will cooperate with the government being in the opposition.

About the police torture on journalists in Chittagong during Bangladesh-Australia cricket match, he said the incident was disgusting and those involved will be put on trial.

"Insha Allah, justice will be done...No one will be spared," he added.

Supporting crime reporters' demand for risk allowance, the LGRD minister said wages of journalists and government employees should be increased.

"The size of employees may be decreased, but the wages should increase," he added.

Commenting on newspaper reports that some party workers accused of criminal charges were given job in the police department, Bhuiyan said most students during their education life either belong to Chaatra League, Chhatra Dal or Chhatra Union and if a student can prove his competence he will get the job.

"But after getting the job if he is proved guilty actions would obviously be taken against him," he said, adding that during Awami League rule false charges were brought against BNP workers.

Describing law and order as indispensable for overall development, the minister said if the law and order situation is okay there will be economic developments and more investments will come and democracy will get institutional shape.

Laying emphasis on cooperation between police and crime reporters he said, "If police do not give the reporters minimum information about any incident they (reporters) will write novels."

Congratulating the newly appointed CRAB officials, he said investigative reports can unravel crimes and help catch the criminals, but the reports should be objective.

About the ransacking of cars a few days ago during a clash between police and opposition workers in the capital, Bhuiyan said those who did this are workers of political parties, but despite their attack on police, they showed patience.

He asked the inspector general of police (IGP) to extend professional cooperation to reporters.

Former law minister Abdul Matin Khasru said media can be credited for the existence of minimum democracy in the country.

He said, "If we can work rising above party limitations, the country will be more prosperous."

Saying that police belong to no political party, rather they belong to people, Khasru said, "The country needs a professional police force...We could not have it yet owing to politicisation."

He said time has come to enact law ensuring right to information, as people have the right to know what the police and the government are doing.

About police torture on journalists in Chittagong, Khasru said it does not require 15 days to take actions against the responsible persons for the incident.

The state minister for home affairs and IGP could take instant actions against the guilty persons by visiting the scene and going through the video footages, he added.

"One must not be allowed to commit terrorist act while being in police force," he said, adding, "Today or tomorrow they (responsible) will be tried in the country."

Admitting that both police and journalists face risks while discharging their duties, IGP Abdul Quayyum stressed on more cooperation between police and crime reporters.

Praising journalists for their role to combat militancy after August 17 serial bombings, he said police have fairly controlled the problem.

Stressing the need for more budgetary allocation for the police department, Quayyum informed that very soon 1200 personnel, mostly officers, would be appointed in the force.

Harun-ur-Rashid Khan Monnu MP, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner SM Mizanur Rahman and former and current CRAB leaders spoke on the occasion.

Punish those using chemicals in foods

Save Environment Movement demands

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a rally yesterday called upon the authorities concerned to stop using chemicals and colours in all sorts of foods including fruits, vegetables and fishes.

They also demanded exemplary punishment to those who are involved in such heinous acts.

The speakers said colours which are harmful to health, are being used in seasonal fruits including mango, banana, jackfruit and litchi.

They said poisonous chemicals are also being used in vegetables and fishes.

The rally was organised by Save Environment Movement at the Fine Arts Institute of Dhaka University.

Addressing the rally Abu Naser, convenor of the movement, said by taking poisonous foods people are attacked by various diseases which ultimately tells upon their health and wealth.

Presiding over the rally Ifma Hossain, general secretary of Peace, expressed concern over the absence of any active institution or law to check the use of chemical and colour in foods.

Ifma also criticised the role of Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institution (BSTI) in checking the standard of processed foods.



PHOTO: STAR

Save Environment Movement forms a human chain in front of the Institute of Fine Arts of Dhaka University demanding steps to stop using chemicals and colours in food items.

Moderated by Executive Director of Ushika Ibnul Saeed Rana, the rally was also addressed by Chairman of Gorky Welfare Foundation Dr Jesmin Ara Sathi and Chairman of Sylhet

Division Development Council Abed Reza, said a press release.

Earlier, a human chain was formed to press home the demands.



PHOTO: STAR

Students of Dawn Grammar School perform dance at a cultural evening at Russian Centre for Science and Culture in the city yesterday.

10 injured as sweepers clash in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least ten people were injured during a clash between two groups over an election of a local sweepers' club at Hajeribagh in the city yesterday.

Of the injured, five were rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) while others

admitted to a local clinic.

Injured Fatema Begum, a sweeper of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) said, "Two rival groups attacked each other suddenly when the voting was going on peacefully for reasons unknown." She said at one stage someone hacked my head with machete.

Sources said, around 900 DCC sweepers came for voting in the election of Ashar Alo Jubo Shangha, a sweepers' club, in Gonoktuli City Colony.

The clash began between the two groups one led by Jamshed and another by Abul Latif groups at around 12:00 noon.

International Mother's Day tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

International Mother's Day will be observed in Bangladesh tomorrow as elsewhere in the world.

The day will be observed to honour mothers through giving gifts and greetings.

The earliest Mother's Day celebrations can be traced back to the spring celebrations of ancient Greece in honour of Rhea, the Mother of the Gods. During the 1600's, England celebrated a day called "Mothering Sunday". Celebrated on the 4th Sunday of Lent, "Mothering Sunday" honoured the mothers of England.

In the United States the Mother's Day was started in 1872 by peace activist Julia Ward Howe, who was horrified by the carnage and suffering of the Civil War and wrote a proclamation calling on women to unite and oppose war.

Families of soldiers who were killed in war, Iraqis, and many others will join together on Mother's Day to oppose the war. CODEPINK and others are holding a number of actions all over the US to honour women.

There will be events in California and nationally to observe the effects of war and of immigration on mothers. Code Pink National will be holding a continuous 24-hour vigil in Washington, DC from May 13 to 14 outside the White House.

Julia Ward Howe wrote the Mother's Day Proclamation in 1870, as a call for peace and disarmament. Howe failed in her attempt to get formal recognition of a Mother's Day for Peace.