

Anarchy prevails in health sector

Speakers tell AL roundtable

DU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday said the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition government has destroyed the country's health and medical education sector through corruption, irregularities and politicisation.

They said the government has proved its inefficiency and irresponsibility in the management and development of the health sector.

The roundtable on 'Coalition government's anarchy in health sector' was organised by Awami League (AL) sub-committee on health and population affairs at the National Press Club in the city.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, former Dhaka University vice-chancellor Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, Vice-president of Bangladesh Bar Council Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud, President of Bangladesh Swadhinata Chikitsak

Parisad Prof AFM Ruhul Haque and Secretary General Prof Iqbal Arsalan and former president of Bangladesh Medical Association Prof Dr Rashid-e-Mahboob attended and spoke at the roundtable.

Abdul Jalil said the government has established anarchy in the health sector through appointing politically affiliated persons at every hospital and medical college including country's lone medical university Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

He said to eliminate disarray, irregularity, corruption and politicisation in the health sector and to improve the quality of healthcare service in the country, a pro-people government is a must.

"A pro-people government is possible only through a free and fair election and for that we proposed reforms in electoral process," Jalil added.

He urged people to join the 14-

party opposition alliance to boost its reform movement and said no election will be held without reforms.

In a written statement, AL Health Secretary Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin said the AL government had taken up plans for bringing back discipline and development in the health sector through a health policy, but the coalition government cancelled the policy and took initiatives to formulate a fresh one which is yet to come to light.

After the establishment of BSMMU during the AL period, quality of postgraduate medical education was much improved, but the present government has undermined the image of the university in a planned way.

The university has now become a dumping station where the government had appointed doctors and officials whimsically, he added.

Hasina in Tungipara

UNB, Gopalganj

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina along with her family members arrived at Tungipara, their ancestral home, yesterday afternoon on a three-day personal visit.

On her arrival, Hasina, also Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, placed wreaths at the mazar of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and offered feteha.

Hasina's daughter Saima Wajed, son-in-law Mashrur Hossain, younger sister Sheikh Rehana, Rehana's daughter and son, AL Industrial Affairs Secretary Lt Col (Retd) Faruq Khan MP, Jubo League Chairman Jahangir Kabir Nanak and Swechchhasebak League General Secretary Pankaj Devnath accompanied the opposition leader.

A Qurankhani will be held at the Bangabandhu's mazar complex this morning and a milad mahfil after Zohr prayers.

N'ganj-bound train derails in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rail communication between Dhaka and Narayanganj remained snapped for about three hours after a train derailed at Gandaria in the city yesterday morning.

Two compartments of a Narayanganj-bound local train veered off the track at 5:45 am, said officials at the railway control room.

However, there was no casualty. The train service on the route resumed after the two compartments were salvaged.

ROW OVER TRANSFER OF TEACHER

15 students hurt in clash at Kushtia Tech College

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

At least 15 students were injured in a clash with police at Kushtia Technical School and College yesterday.

Police also arrested five students during the clash.

Sources said a group of students went to principal's room to discuss the transfer of an English teacher from the institution at about 2:30pm.

But Principal Rezaul Haq allegedly misbehaved with them.

The angry students started agitation on the campus.

The principal called police to bring the situation under control.

A police team rushed to the institution and tried to calm the students but failed.

At one stage, police charged baton on the students leaving 15 injured and arresting five.

The injured Mirazul, Shamim, Rabiul, Tanveer, Kakon, Sutu, and Bairagi were admitted to Kushtia General Hospital.

The arrestees are Masum, Razu, Raseel, Sanu and Ifitir.

The students submitted a memorandum to the deputy commissioner (DC) demanding cancellation of the transfer order of the English teacher and punishment of the principal for his misbehaviour.

A source claimed that the English teacher was transferred as he was vocal against alleged malpractices of the principal.

A tense situation was prevailing in the institution.

Additional policemen were deployed there.

Khulna AL warns against mass arrest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Leaders of Khulna Awami League (AL) have warned of severe consequences if any mass arrest takes place ahead of the road march programme.

The warning came from a rally in the city yesterday.

The opposition's six-day-long road march programme begins tomorrow.

Meanwhile Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) has taken up necessary preparations to go into action against the disruptive elements during the road march.

An official of special branch (SB) said a list has been prepared for suspected persons.

If necessary, they will be taken into custody ahead of the road march, he added.

He however denied the allegation that the names of the leaders and activists of 14-party opposition alliance have been listed as disruptive elements.



PHOTO: STAR

Safe Food Movement forms a human chain at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding an end to the use of toxic chemicals for growing vegetables and ripening fruits.

BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF TAJUDDIN OBSERVED

'Bring killers to justice'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The best way to pay tribute to Tajuddin Ahmad, the first prime minister of the country, and all martyred national leaders is to bring the killers to justice, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

It will be a shame for Bangladesh, as a nation, to commemorate them without bringing their killers to book, they said.

Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote organised the discussion on the life and works of Tajuddin at the National Press Club in the city to mark his 81st birth anniversary.

The politics nowadays has become criminalised, said former law minister Abdul Matin Khasru, adding that the situation would not have been the same if Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Tajuddin Ahmad had been alive.

The farsightedness and wisdom of Tajuddin had helped achieve independence, he said.

Supreme Court Bar Association President Barrister Amir-Ul Islam said Tajuddin has dedicated his life to the cause of Bangladesh.

Despite the limited resources of Mujibnagar government, he successfully mobilised opinion of international community in favour of the liberation struggle, Amir-Ul Islam said.

Awami League Presidium Member Amir Hossain Amu said that the killing of Bangabandhu and four national leaders, dropping secularism from the constitution

and recent attacks on AL President Sheikh Hasina and pro-liberation intellectuals are all part of a conspiracy that started just after the birth of Bangladesh.

He also said, "Bangabandhu's leadership coupled with Tajuddin Ahmed's wisdom and statesmanship brought us independence; now it is the duty of AL leaders and activists and all progressive forces to reach the fruits of independence to the common people."

Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, editor of The Bangladesh Observer, said

that there are two ways to honour our slain leaders: one is to bring the killers to justice and the other is to uphold their ideologies in society.

Prof Fazlul Huq, chief advisor to Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote, Dhaka district, chaired the meeting while Organising Secretary of Krishak League MA Karim, Organising Secretary of Bangabandhu Ainjibi Parishad Mozammel Huq and AL leader Siddiqur Rauf Khan also spoke.

Three killed in Tangail road accidents

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

At least three people were killed and 10 others injured in separate road accidents in Sadar and Kalihati upazilas in Tangail yesterday.

The victims were identified as Saidul Islam, 20, of Bera in Pabna, Md Belal Miah, 45, of Sherpur in Bogra, and Saiful Islam, 35, of Sadar upazila in Tangail.

Police and witnesses said a North Bengal-bound truck from Dhaka rammed into a parked cement slab-laden truck on Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Link Road at Elenga in Kalihati at about 2:00am, throwing it into a ditch.

Saidul and Belal who were on

the cement slab-laden truck died on the spot while 10 others were injured as cement slabs fell on them.

Local people rushed the injured to Tangail General Hospital. Later, police recovered the bodies and sent them to Tangail Hospital Morgue for autopsy.

The other victim, Saiful, was run over by a Dhaka-bound speeding bus on Tangail-Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Extension Road at Rashulpur at around 8:30am. He died on the spot.

The police sent the body to Tangail General Hospital morgue.

Two cases were filed with Kalihati and Tangail Sadar Police Stations.



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil speaks at a roundtable on health sector at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left are Abdul Mannan and Prof AK Azad Chowdhury and on his right are Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin and Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud.

All eyes on Thaksin as Thailand goes ahead with polls

AFP, Bangkok

Thailand's decision to go ahead with new polls in October is a step toward easing months of political turmoil, but the question remains whether Premier Thaksin Shinawatra will run again, analysts said.

Thailand breathed a sigh of relief Friday after revered King Bhumibol Adulyadej endorsed the election date on October 15, ending months of speculation over

when the polls would take place.

"The new elections will help clear up the uncertainty. Everyone needs to participate because it's very important to get Thai politics back to normal," said Dana Dillon, a senior analyst at the Heritage Foundation in Washington.

The October polls are expected to be a showdown between Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai party and the main opposition Democrat Party, which boycotted snap elections on April 2.

"One of the ways to get out of this crisis is to have a fair and free election that is acceptable to all parties," said Panitan Wattanayagorn, a political science professor at Chulalongkorn University.

"Before, we were not even sure the elections would take place. Now at least one uncertainty is gone and we are one step closer to the solution," he said.

Thaksin had called snap polls three years early in a bid to halt street protests demanding his ouster over alleged corruption after his family sold 1.9 billion dollars in telecom stock without paying taxes.

His party won the vote, but the victory was undermined by the opposition boycott. Just two days after the April polls, a tearful Thaksin announced he would step aside and handed the reins of

government to his deputy.

But the 56-year-old billionaire politician formally returned to office in May after the Constitutional Court invalidated the last election, clearing the way for new polls that the king approved last week.

Thaksin has yet to say whether he will run in the upcoming elections and seek the premiership when parliament convenes after the polls.

If he assumes office, Panitan warned the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), which led anti-Thaksin protests earlier this year, could return to the streets.

"This is a major issue. PAD argues that Thaksin has resigned from the post and promised he would not return to office. Therefore, (if Thaksin accepted the premiership), he would be held accountable for that," he said.

"They will begin public campaigns against the prime minister to force him to stay away from politics," Panitan said.

On Saturday, the English-language daily Bangkok Post said Thaksin would not accept the premiership after the October elections and supported Thai Rak Thai party deputy leader Pongthep Thepkanchana as his successor.

But the Heritage Foundation's Dillon said Thaksin could come back as a new premier.

WEATHER TODAY

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may rise slightly over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 33.9 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Bogra and lowest 23.0 degree Celsius at Sandwip.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:46pm today and rises at 5:25am 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	32.6	26.5	73	71
Chittagong	31.6	24.5	76	83
Rajshahi	33.8	26.2	89	82
Khulna	33.2	26.0	88	74
Barisal	31.5	25.4	88	81
Sylhet	32.9	25.7	80	88



PHOTO: STAR

Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote organised a discussion on the life and works of Tajuddin Ahmad at the National Press Club in the city yesterday to mark his 81st birth anniversary. From left are Barrister Amir-Ul Islam, Prof Fazlul Huq, Abdul Matin Khasru and Siddiqur Rauf Khan.

'Expedite research on minor crops'

Bss, Gazipur

Agriculture Minister MK Anwar yesterday asked the authorities to further expedite research works and extension programmes on minor crops to increase production, considering their growing demand in the country.

"Despite an increase in the production of rice during the last couple of years, we are still lagging behind in producing different minor crops such as ginger, garlic, onion, chilli and pulses against their local demand," he said.

The minister was inaugurating as the chief guest a three-day training course on knowledge Bank-based Aman Rice Production at Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI).

Expressing satisfaction over onion production, he hoped that the country is likely to be self-sufficient in onion production within the next two years. "It would not be impossible to boost production of other minor crops if we can ensure optimum use of knowledge in this regard," he added.

Referring to the newly introduced electronic rice knowledge bank, the minister suggested that the scientists of BRRI should update data of the bank regularly. "Otherwise, this effort will not bring any fruitful results for the users."

Presided over by Director General of BRRI Dr M Mohiul Hoque, the function was also addressed by Director General of Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) Ibrahim Khalil,

IRRI Representative Dr Noel P Magor, Chief Scientific Officer of BRRI Dr Mosharrar Hossain and Director (Research) of BRRI Dr MABaki.

Rice Knowledge Bank is an electronic knowledge hub to communicate updated rice information to extension agents and farmers.

The BRRI scientists said that the knowledge bank would help reduce knowledge gap between researchers and farmers. The web-based BRRI Rice Knowledge Bank contains 210-page fact sheets under 29 modules for Boro and Aman rice.

The minister also inaugurated the newly established BRRI Gene bank on the BRRI campus.

PROF TAHER MURDER Arrest of killers demanded

Chief suspect Salehi sits for exams

RU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Rajshahi University (RU) unit, yesterday staged a demonstration on the campus demanding arrest and punishment of the killers of Prof S Taher Ahmed.

Prof Taher, a founding teacher of Geology and Mining department, was killed on February 1 at his flat at night.

At a rally in front of the central library premises, BCL leaders demanded resignation of Vice Chancellor Prof Altaf Hossain for allowing Islamic Chhatra Shibir leader Salehi to appear at master's examinations.

Mahbub Alam Salehi, president of RU ISC unit, is a key suspect in Prof Taher murder case.

BCL leaders blasted university authorities and police administration for not submitting charge sheet after five months.

They said teachers, students and officials feel insecure on the campus, as they do not have any security.

They also said teachers, students and employees of the campus have long been agitating for arrest of the killers of Prof Taher and Prof Muhammad Yunus, but there has been little progress in investigation into murders and the killers were not arrested yet.

They demanded proper probe into the murder and submission of the charge sheet soon.

BCL leaders also protested what they said 'illegal' appointments in many departments violating university rules.

They threatened to launch a tougher agitation if the authorities do not stop such 'illegal' appointments and allow Salehi to appear at master's examination.

BCL RU unit General Secretary Ayan Uddin, leaders Zahid and Rashidul Islam also spoke at the rally.

Call to make PR profession more effective

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

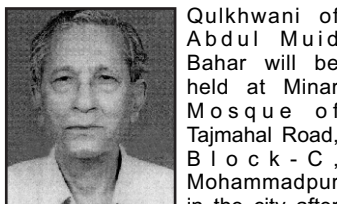
Bangladesh Public Relations Association (BPRA) organised a discussion at its office at Tophkhana road in the city to mark its 27th founding anniversary yesterday.

Speaking at the discussion, Dr Golam Rahman, professor of Mass Communication and Journalism Department of Dhaka University, urged all to take proper steps to make the public relation profession more effective for combating the upcoming challenges.

He also suggested that time-befitting training programmes should be taken for development of their professional skills.

Sarwar Alam, secretary general of Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) Information Association, emphasised increasing the intra-communication of the public relation officers.

Quikhwani



Quikhwani of Abdul Muid Bahar will be held at Minar Mosque of Tajmahal Road, Block-C, Mohammadpur in the city after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

Bahar died at Eastern Hospital in Dhaka on Thursday.