

Terminate political recruits for fair polls

Says Civil Service Samannoy body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Civil Service Samannoy Committee at a meeting in the city yesterday applauded President's speech that called upon the members of the civil service to perform their duty impartially.

To achieve the objective, the committee suggested some proposals including cancellation of all contractual appointments in public administration, termination of persons appointed on political consideration and formation of probe committees to investigate all irregularities in the administration. It also suggested restoration of

financial discipline in the civil administration and rehabilitation of officials victimised due to politicisation of administration.

The meeting also called upon all officials and employees of the republic to discharge their functions impartially to ensure a free and fair general election.

Committee President Engineer Md Nurul Huda chaired the meeting attended by Vice-president Dr Mosaddek Ahmed, General Secretary Agriculturist Md Nazrul Islam and Joint General Secretary Dr Shaheed Motaahar Hossain.

India enshrines Buddha's remains after 2000 years

REUTERS, Mumbai

Thousands of Buddhists gathered in Mumbai on Sunday to lay to rest part of the ashes and bones of Lord Buddha in a ceremony resurrected after almost 2000 years.

Monks in flowing orange robes chanted hymns from scriptures as the remains were lowered into a shallow pit on top of a 90-ft high stone dome, as part of celebrations to mark the 2,550th anniversary of the spiritual leader's enlightenment.

Organisers of the ceremony said

this was the first time in around 2,000 years that Buddha's mortal remains were being enshrined.

"The relics now kept in this magnificent pagoda came from an ancient dome discovered during an archaeological expedition in south India in early 1900s," Acharya SN Goenka told reporters.

After Buddha's death, his remains were divided and kept in eight separate domes built by his disciples across Asia.

They were later taken by Buddhist convert Indian emperor Asoka, who placed them in many smaller domes about 2000 years ago.

Rampage on BOU premises condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Open University Teachers' Association (BOUTA) yesterday condemned the incident of rampage on the BOU premises by a group of processionists who were carrying oars and sticks.

BOUTA President Md Moynul Islam and General Secretary Md Chenggish Khan in a joint statement urged authorities to take legal steps against the responsible people and ensure security of people's lives and property.

BSMAU admission date rescheduled

The date of admission for MS and Ph.D. courses in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University (BSMAU) has been rescheduled due to unavoidable circumstances, says a press release.

As per the new schedule, admission will take place on November 8 and orientation will be held on the following day instead of November 1 and 2.

All classes of BS, MS and Ph.D. will start from November 12 instead of November 5.

Qulkhwani



The qulkhwani of Engr Md Muniruzzaman Pathan, managing director of Maxwell Engineering Works Ltd, will be held at his house at 144, Shantinagar Road in the city at 4:15pm after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

Pathan passed away at a hospital in the United States while undergoing treatment on October 13 at the age of 63.

He left behind his wife, one son and one daughter.

Buet graduate Pathan had been engaged in oil and gas pipeline construction for more than three decades.

Shankar's Int'l Competition for children opens

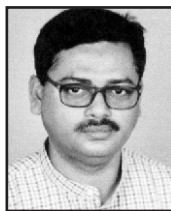
Shankar's International Children's Competition in painting and writing for the year 2007 is open now, says a press release.

Children who were born on or after January 1, 1991 are eligible for this competition and it is open to children all over the world.

There is no entry fee. Competitors are free to choose the theme/subject for their paintings/drawings/writings.

Details of the competition including brochures can be obtained from the High Commission of India, House No. 2, Road No. 142, Gulshan-1 (Tel: 8820243-7 Ext 250) or the Indian Cultural Centre, House No. 25, Road No. 96, Gulshan-2, Dhaka (Tel: 8850141-42).

Obituary



KG Haider Mukul, a veteran freedom fighter, passed away at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital in the

city on October 25 due to a brain stroke at the age of 56, says a press release.

During the War of Liberation, he was the general secretary of Greater Mymensingh Chhatra Sangram Parishad and the Chhatra League.

He took part in the war and later trained the freedom fighters at Meghalaya border training camp.

Mukul, son of late Khandker Abdul Khaleque, was laid to rest at his hometown Mymensingh after two namaz-e-janaza -- one at Dhaka University central Mosque and the other in Mymensingh.

He left behind his wife Prof Dr Selina Akhter Jahan, only son K Farhan Tapu and a host of relatives and friends to mourn his death.

A doa mahfil will be held at his residence at 319 Elephant Road, Dhaka, after Asr prayers on November 3.



RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

Political commitment a must to check repression

Speakers tell view exchange meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a meeting yesterday stressed the need for political commitment to check possible repression on religious minority groups and women before, during and after the upcoming general election.

They also called for accountability at different levels of administration so that the officials concerned remain alert to violence against minority people.

The meeting on resisting violence against religious minority communities including women before, during and after the election was organised by Nari Pakkha at its office in the city.

In her welcome speech Mahin Sultan, convener of Nari Pakkha,

said this is the high time to take initiative to check violence against the people of minority groups ahead of the election.

Mahin urged the administration for taking necessary steps in the light of the experiences of previous general election in 2001.

Prof Amena Mohsin of international relations department of Dhaka University called for political commitment to resist violence against religious minority groups.

Presenting a survey Farida Yasmin of Nari Pakkha said people of religious minority communities from 60 districts were the victims of repression during the general election in 2001.

Of them, 188 women were

raped, 27 killed and 22 tortured, she added.

Golam Kibria of the Prothom Alo underlined the need for creating pressure on the administration to take steps to stop possible repression on minorities.

Khairuzzaman Kamal, executive director of Bangladesh Manobadhikar Sangbadik Forum, said people from politically weak groups also become the victims of repression.

Director of Bangladesh Development Partnership Centre Sharif A Kafi, Rina Roy of Nari Pakkha and Rekha Saha of Steps Towards Development also spoke.

DHAKA TODAY

Photo exhibition

Russian Centre of Science and Culture will organise the inaugural ceremony of a photo exhibition titled 'President of the Russian Federation Vladimir V Putin' to mark the 35th anniversary of Russian-Bangladesh diplomatic relations. Venue: Russian Centre of Science and Culture. Time: 4:30pm.

Workshop

Bangladesh Homeworkers Women Association (BHW) and Homenet Bangladesh will jointly organise a workshop on statistical induction of home based workers. Venue: Shawminvar Bangladesh, Lalmatia. Time: 9:30am.

Roundtable

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal will hold a roundtable on 'Anticipated reforms and prevailing electoral management' to mark its 34th founding anniversary. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00am.

Pro-AL docs' body chief's room torched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of pro-BNP Doctors' Association of Bangladesh (DAB) allegedly torched the room of the chair of Biochemistry Department at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) yesterday.

Chairman of the department Prof Iqbal Arslan is also the president of pro-Awami League Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad (SCP). He was not in his room during the incident.

The DAB members numbering 12 entered the department at 12:35pm on the third floor at B Block, also threatened the employees, broke into the room and torched it after pouring petrol, police said.

Prof Iqbal told The Daily Star that unruly DAB men also beat doctors and employees of the department and looted important papers and personal files.

"Provocative speeches of former prime minister Khaleda Zia and her son Tarique Rahman, and the direction of BSMMU Vice Chancellor and former DAB president Prof MA Hadi and General Secretary AZM Jahid Hossain prompted the miscreants to set fire to my room while I was away

to attend a meeting with Awami League President Sheikh Hasina," said Prof Iqbal.

"A quarter is trying to implicate me in the incident of clash that took place on Saturday between the SCP and DAB activists, though I was not involved in it", he added.

Prof Hadi, however, denied the allegation brought against him by Prof Iqbal.

NSU exams suspended

BSS, Dhaka

North South University (NSU) has suspended its graduate and undergraduate examinations until November 3 due to unavoidable circumstances.

All the scheduled classes will resume on November 1, a NSU press release said yesterday.

A journey on Iraq's roads of death

REUTERS, Baghdad

When my wife and I decided to celebrate the Eid holiday with relatives in the town of Samarra, we never imagined we would spend hours praying not to die.

Eid marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan and, for Muslims, stands for joy and cheer marked by family visits. For Iraqis like me this year, it became another brush with death.

Before leaving Baghdad on the 100-km (65-mile) journey north, we had packed the car with gifts for relatives we had not seen since the bombing of the al-Askariya mosque in Samarra.

The golden-domed shrine is revered by Shi'ite Muslims and its destruction on February 22 proved the spark that lit a firestorm of sectarian revenge killings.

One of the gifts was a white scarf my wife had bought to put on the grave of her elder sister. Soon after the bombing, black-clad Shi'ite militiamen dragged my sister-in-law from her home in

Baghdad and shot her dead simply for being a Sunni.

"Last Eid my sister was very happy with the white scarf I gave her. This Eid I want to make her happy with the same gift, but inside her grave," my wife kept saying.

The joys of travel were not to last long. About 80 km (50 miles) from Baghdad, we were suddenly stopped at a police checkpoint just outside the Shi'ite town of Balad.

"Where do you think you're going? Don't you know that gunmen are targeting every car that passes Balad? Go home and stay alive," a policeman armed with an AK-47 assault rifle yelled in my face.

Just as we parked by the roadside, a barrage of machinegun fire broke the silence. Fearing for their lives, the occupants of some of the waiting cars turned back. An old man told me the only safe place for an Iraqi was in his own home.

Two hours later, the policeman gave the all-clear and within a few km we reached the scene of the battle.

Two police cars were destroyed and thousands of spent bullet casings covered the road. Further on, stores that once were crowded with shoppers stood burned out or deserted.

Balad used to be a peaceful town surrounded by palm groves and orchards. Over Ramadan, it consumed itself in a passion of sectarian bloodletting. Sunni militants slaughtered 14 Shi'ite workers, sparking yet more revenge attacks.

GHOST TOWN
It took us seven hours to reach Samarra and when we got there we found a ghost town.

Black banners mourning the victims of Iraq's chaos hung from walls. One proclaimed the martyrdom of two Sunni brothers killed in Baghdad. Another told of a policeman blown up by a bomb with his wife and two sons.

WEATHER TODAY

Light rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light rain is likely to occur at one or two places over Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere, Met Office said, predicting slightly fall in day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 33.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chittagong and lowest 18.9 degree Celsius at Srirangal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5.20pm today and rises at 6:05am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	Max 30.0 Min 23.2		65	62
Chittagong	33.5	25.0	77	81
Rajshahi	31.0	21.0	75	79
Khulna	29.0	23.5	77	84
Barisal	29.8	22.4	97	90
Sylhet	32.6	21.1	67	75
Cox's Bazar	33.0	25.0	76	75

Dhaka gingerly steps into normalcy again

FROM PAGE 1

The most striking event yesterday was people's rush to Dhaka. Millions of people who had left the capital for Eid-ul-Fitr holidays were in a desperate drive to come back to Dhaka.

Bangladesh Railway control room sources said they had started train services, but Suborno, Mahanagar, Joyontika, Egara Sindhur, and Jamuna express trains were delayed. Each train had to carry four times more of its capacity.

Gabtol bus terminal sources said the passenger turnout was so full to the brim that there was almost no room for people to walk, as people started coming back to Dhaka from the southern region.

Our Barisal correspondent said the launch terminal there was so full to the brim that there was almost no room for people to walk, as people started coming back to Dhaka from the southern region.

Bangladesh Launch Owners Association sources said in the last three days they operated their services with a very few passen-

gers, but as soon as the blockade was withdrawn people started heading to their destinations.

A few garment factories started production yesterday but the president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) expect the situation to be normal from today.

BGMEA President SM Fazlul Haque told The Daily Star, "The amount of loss in the last three days is over Tk 1000 crore. We failed to maintain shipment deadlines and the buyers are now asking for air shipment which would increase the loss by two-fold". BGMEA delegates will meet the president, who is also the caretaker government chief, shortly and if he does not take any measure to solve the crisis the association will seek legal actions, the association president said.

BGMEA however hailed the withdrawal of blockade and expects full-fledged production from today.

At Chittagong port, loading and unloading started from yesterday evening as the blockade and hartal in Chittagong had been called off. The

Chittagong Port chairman said 75 vessels were trapped in congestion, which is the highest in recent times. The port chairman held a meeting with all concerned parties yesterday and over the next one month all quarters concerned including the customs commissioner, chamber president, and C&F agents promised to continue working even on holidays to recover the loss.

Trade was completely at a halt in the last three days. The land port authority expected to start operating from today. Over a thousand trucks stood in a row on the other side of the border.

Following unrest at Hili Land Port, section 144 was imposed there to restore normalcy, bringing loading and unloading to a complete halt. Abu Nur Rashed, assistant customs commissioner told the Daily Star that although they kept the office open, trade was at a standstill on both Bangladesh and Indian sides.