

Resist fatwa to ensure women's rights

Rights activists urge political parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Holding a free, fair and peaceful election soon is the first and foremost task of the nation, women's rights activists said at a discussion yesterday.

Reforms are a must not only for the election but also for establishment of the people's rights, they said.

They also urged the political parties to resist all kinds of activities of the fanatics such as issuing fatwa (religious edict), which curb the women's rights and freedom.

Karmojibi Nari, an organisation of working women, arranged the discussion on 'Women's agenda for current politics' at the National Press Club, with former adviser to the caretaker government Advocate

Sultana Kamal as the key speaker.

The rights activists also demanded direct election to the reserved seats for women in parliament and restoration of the Women Development policy of 1997.

They also called on the political parties to give nomination to women candidates for at least 10 percent of parliamentary seats in the national election.

They demanded that one-third posts at every level be earmarked for women who will be recruited on the basis of merit.

"The political parties have been surrendering to religious conservatism. A strong network of women should be formed so that they could make society and political parties aware of the fact that using religion for political gains could not bring them more votes," Sultana Kamal said.

Criticising the political parties, she said it is not clear to them (parties) what they are doing and why.

Barrister Sara Hossain, Nasimun Ara Huq Minu of Nari Sangbadik Kendra, Mahfuza Khanam of Peshajibi Nari Samaj, Afroza Haque Rina of Jatiya Nari Jote, Hazera Sultana of Nari Mukti Sangsad, Mitali Jahan of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association and Lina Chakrabarti of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) also spoke at the discussion moderated by President of Karmojibi Nari Shirin Akhter.

They also demanded full ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), introduction of uniform family code, ensuring women's participation in the election as voters and candidates and an end to all forms of violence against women.

They also called on the political parties to incorporate the issues regarding women's rights in their election manifestoes and not to renege on their promises.



PHOTO: STAR

Karmojibi Nari, an organisation of working women, organised a discussion on 'Women's agenda for current politics' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. From left are Nasimun Ara Minu, Shirin Akter, Advocate Sultana Kamal and Barrister Sara Hossain.

'Restriction on media to hamper democratic process'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The state of emergency curbing people's fundamental rights and restricting free flow of information will hamper democratic way of finding solution to political crisis, said Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal leader Comrade Khalequzzaman in a statement yesterday.

The political crisis, including killings of people, damaging of economy and public sufferings, was created for President Iajuddin Ahmed's taking over the charge of chief adviser to caretaker government by not following all the options of the consti-

tution, he said.

Demanding withdrawal of the state of emergency, Khalequzzaman said people's fundamental rights must be upheld and an environment for fair election should be created soon.

Five Left Party also criticised the state of emergency saying that it will not give any permanent solution to the crisis created by rampant corruption and politicisation by the political parties.

Criticising the restriction on the freedom of speech, the party leaders said this fundamental rights must be restored immediately.

Bangladesh Workers' Party

(Abbas-Saiful) President Khondoker Ali Abbas and General Secretary Saiful Haq, in a statement, said the ongoing political crisis must be solved politically.

They said there is no scope for creating a congenial atmosphere for the election suspending the fundamental rights of people.

They called for immediate withdrawal of the state of emergency and formation of the new caretaker government with credible persons.

Bangladesh Chhatra Federation and Bangladesh Chhatra Moitree also condemned the declaration of the state of emergency in the country.

Brac gets SAFA Best Account Award

BSS, Dhaka

The South Asian Federation of Accountants (Safa) has awarded Brac with the Best Presented Account Award for the year 2005 in the "Non-Government Organisation" category.

The award, given on the basis of evaluation of Brac's annual audit report for the year 2005, which was forwarded to Safa by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB), says a press release yesterday.

The award will be distributed at a ceremony in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Safa is a sub-regional body of accountancy institutes from the member countries of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, which received the status of Saarc apex body in 2002.

Emergency hailed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A number of organisations yesterday hailed the declaration of a state of emergency by President Iajuddin Ahmed and his resignation as the chief adviser to the caretaker government.

In separate statements, they said the move has saved the nation from the greatest crisis and confrontational situation.

They also said the emergency is an effective measure to ensure security of the people and their property and to keep the economy on track.

The organisations are Bangladesh Primary Teachers' Association, Human Rights Review Society, Sammilita Islami Jote, Sacheton Jubo Samaj and Bangladesh Finished Leather, Leather Goods and Footwear Exporters' Association.

Pro-BNP commissioner, 2 other top criminals held in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Members of Bangladesh Army and Rapid Action Battalion yesterday arrested three top terrorist-suspects including a ward commissioner in the city.

Moniruzzaman Sharif, a BNP adherent commissioner of ward no 19, had been absconding for last few days as he was accused in several criminal cases.

Moniruzzaman was picked up by the members of law enforcement agencies when he returned home at around 5:00am.

Other arrestees are BNP adherent former Damkura union chairman Shahjahan Ali and Damkura cattle hat trader Majdar Rahman.

The army members also raided the houses of BNP adherent ward commissioner Mostaq Hossain Ratan and Awami League adherent Al Mamun.



PHOTO: STAR

Binod Bihari Chowdhury, veteran leader of anti-British movement and a close associate of Masterda Surya Sen, garlands the bust of Masterda on the JM Sen Hall premises in Chittagong yesterday to mark his 73rd death anniversary. Masterda was executed by the colonial regime in 1934.

4 children of a family burnt alive in Comilla

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

Four children of a family were burnt alive in a fire in Chandina upazila of the district on Thursday.

The dead were identified as Abu Sufian, 2, Salma, 7, and Saleha, 10, --all children of poor rickshaw puller Mohor Ali of Karikhal village of Chandina and the other child Rumi,

13, was his niece.

Police sources and villagers said Mohor went to a doctor with his wife keeping the children under lock and key. As they returned, they found the house burning and children dead.

The cause of fire could not be known, but it might have originated from kerosene-lamp, sources added.