

Bangladeshi expats should have voting rights

Says Dr Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The issue of participation of Bangladeshi expatriates with dual citizenship in the national elections should be clarified, eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain said yesterday.

If a Bangladeshi, after becoming a citizen of a second country, can participate in the election of that country, why should it be a problem for them to take part in the election of their country of origin? he questioned.

Dr Kamal was speaking as the chief guest at a discussion on 'The rights of expatriate Bangladeshis' organised by a Canada-based Bangla weekly 'Deshe Bideshe' at the National Press Club.

As the restructuring of the Election Commission is going on, it is high time for Bangladeshi expatriates to strongly demand that they

be included in the electoral roll, Dr Kamal said.

He also assured them of his support to their demand.

He also said that expatriate Bangladeshis are playing a significant role by sending a huge remittance and mobilising opinion against corruption and militancy.

Nazrul Islam Mintoo, chief editor of Deshe Bideshe, said Bangladeshi expatriates have long been demanding their voting rights, but no governments paid any heed.

"Wherever we are, we want to enjoy the rights as a citizen," he said and urged the caretaker government and the Election Commission (EC) to ensure that the expatriates can cast their votes even when they are staying abroad.

Former state minister for foreign

affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury said Bangladeshi expatriates should have the right to take part in the national elections.

The expatriates have to be united to realise their demand, he added.

Chief Editor of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangsita (BSS) Zagul Ahmed Chowdhury said granting voting rights to Bangladeshi expatriates would inspire them to contribute more to the country.

Filmmaker Fuad Chowdhury, who now lives in Canada, said the country could attract expert and talented Bangladeshis through giving them the right to vote.

Abu Taher, executive editor of New York-based 'Shaptita Bangla' and Tajul Mohammad, editor of Deshe Bideshe, also spoke.

National Poetry Festival Feb 18-19

DU CORRESPONDENT

National Poetry Festival 2007 will be held on February 18-19 on Dhaka University (DU) campus with the expected participation of around 200 poets.

Poet Syed Shamsul Haq will formally inaugurate the two-day festival dedicated to poet Shamsur Rahman on DU Central Library premises that morning, said Habibullah Siraj, convener of the festival organising committee, at a press conference yesterday at Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) of DU.

This year the slogan has been set from a verse of poet Shamsur Rahman - Poetry: Returns time and again to new procession.

Apart from native poets, a good number of foreign poets from India and Sweden are also expected to participate in the fair.

Expected poets from India include Nirendranath Chakrabarti, Shankha Ghosh and Samarendra Sen Gupta.

As an extension of the festival, an exhibition will also be held where renowned artists like Amur Islam, Quayum Chowdhury and Rafiq Nabi will draw the pictures for some of the country's famous poems by Shamsur Rahman, Syed Shamsul Haq, Rafiq Azad and other eminent poets.

The exhibition will begin on February 17 at Gallery Chitra.

Registration of the aspirant poets is going on at TSC and will continue until February 18. Interested poets will have to submit two self-written poems while registration.

Council President poet Rabiu Hossain, General Secretary Samudra Gupta, Aslam Sani, Dr Mohammad Samad, Mohon Raihan, Golam Kibria Pinu, Rabindra Gop and others were present at the press conference.

DU convocation on Feb 28

DU CORRESPONDENT

The 43rd convocation of Dhaka University (DU) will be held on February 28, says a DU press release.

At the convocation, the university will confer honorary degree of Doctor of Laws on Nobel Peace Prize winner Prof Muhammad Yunus who will be present as the convocation speaker.

The decision was taken at a meeting held on February 7, with Vice-chancellor Prof SMA Faiz in the chair.

The convocation was scheduled for December 24, 2006, but it was postponed following objections from student organisations and teachers.

About 7,600 students will receive certificates at the convocation.

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