

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 Sangstha (BSS) Zaglul 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 'Shaptahik 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 of the country.

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 Siraji, 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 Narendranath Chakrabarti, Shankha Ghosh and Samarendra Sen Gupta.

As an extension of the festival, an exhibition will also be held where renowned artists like Amirul Islam, Quayyum Chowdhury and Rafiqun 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 Chitrak.

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 Rabiul 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.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT Family level preparedness a must

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family level preparedness activities are important to fight disaster management and the whole community should be trained in disaster management as well as the administration, speakers said in a project launching ceremony yesterday.

Oxfam GB Bangladesh in partnership with Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness Centre (BDPC) and Friends in Village Development Bangladesh (FIVDB) will implement the project to enhance "The Building Construction Rules, 2006" as per last year's relevant gazette notification.

The activities will be implemented under the current 'Community Based Disaster Risk Management Project, Bangladesh' with the financial support of the European Commission Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid.

Under the project 1,600 posters, that summarise key points of the building construction rules and highlight the importance of their application, would be displayed in all relevant public stakeholders' offices. Five workshops will also be organised both in Dhaka and Sylhet City Corporations targeting 125 relevant service providers, the speakers said.

Tanja Berretta, project manager of Oxfam GB Bangladesh, Saidur Rahman, director of BDPC, Zahin Ahmed, executive director of FIVDB and Fayssal Kabir, project manager of Handicap Bangladesh, were also present.

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar

Power and Participation Research Centre will organise a policy seminar on 'Electoral reforms: Immediate priorities for maximum impact'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

Discussion

Bangladesh Sangbadik Forum will hold a discussion in memory of Wahidul Haque. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3:30pm.

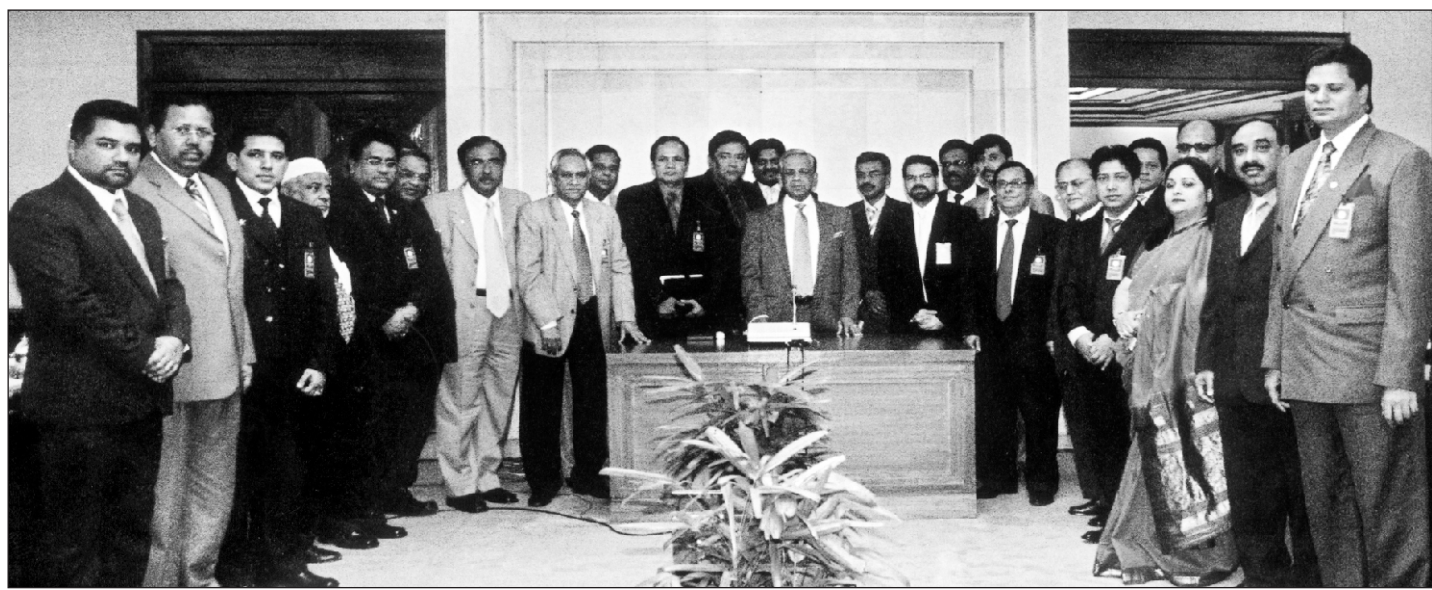


PHOTO: PID

Members of Board of Directors of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) pose for photograph with Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed at his office in the city yesterday.

AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK

Carry out probe, judicial process without delay IPU urges CG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), an international organisation of parliaments of sovereign states, has urged the caretaker government to ensure that the judicial process and investigation into the August 21 grenade attack on Awami League President Sheikh Hasina are carried out without any delay.

The IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians also suggested seeking assistance of international experts in this regard, if necessary.

The call came from the 116th session of the committee held in Geneva from January 15 to 18, according to a message received in Dhaka yesterday.

Referring to the report of a judicial inquiry commission and the present status of the investigation, the committee noted with dismay that no progress has been made in this regard.

It strongly recalled that it is the duty of all states to dispense justice and thus to conduct effective, independent and thorough investigations into any crime to identify the culprits and prosecute and punish them in accordance with the law.

The committee decided to continue examining the case at its next session to be held during the 116th IPU Assembly in April-May.

Case against Jugantor editor

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A defamation case against the editor, publisher and two journalists of the daily Jugantor was filed in the first class magistrate's court in Moulvibazar yesterday.

The accused are Editor Golam Sarwar, Publisher Salma Islam, News Editor (Name was not mentioned) and Moulvibazar District Correspondent MAMuhit.

The case was filed by Fayzul Karim Mayun, general secretary of the district BNP and chairman of Moulvibazar Pourasava.

'Promote food security, nutrition for women'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday called for promoting food security and nutrition for women in the country.

They said the rate of food insecurity and malnutrition remains high among the women although the overall food security situation has shown improvement across the world.

The seminar was organised by Food Security Journalists Network (FSJN) at the National Press Club in the city.

Food security means all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs for an active and healthy life, said Lalita Bhattacharya, a FAO nutritionist, while presenting the keynote paper on Food Security and Women.

"Policies and programmes that aim at increasing household income in order to improve household food security should target women as they are both food and care givers," she added.

Lalita also stressed the need for linking agriculture, nutrition and gender and consensus and commitment on the issue of promoting

these strategies.

Women are playing important role in food production with enormous social constraints and their role is often not evaluated, said President of Nari Sangbadik Kendra Nasimun Ara Huq.

She said agricultural research institutes should use women's knowledge in agriculture.

The speakers also highlighted the women's poor physical and socio-economical condition in spite of their contribution to food production.

They suggested training for women in crop and horticulture production, post-harvest operations, raising poultry and small livestock, fisheries production, food processing and other multi-sectoral approach to promote food security.

Terming the current food policy as gender insensitive the speakers said media could create awareness to remove discrimination in food intake of women.

World Food Programme (WFP) Representative Douglas Broderick, FSJN Convener Reaz Ahmad, Majeda Haque of UNDP, Naser Farid of FPMU and Usha Mishra of WFP were also present at the seminar.

Billboards removed, 10 ad firms fined in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A mobile court here yesterday removed hundreds of billboards and signboards set up illegally on footpaths and at different city intersections.

The court also fined ten advertising firms including Mrittika, Ad Valley, Ad Way and Sky Art Tk 2 lakh and 20 thousand for setting up billboards illegally on the roadside footpaths obstructing public movement, posing serious nuisance and creating vision pollution.

The court also seized over twelve large sized billboards, other structures and materials like generators that were kept or installed on the footpaths for alternative power supply.

During the drive, the court switched off a digital display board (giant screen) disconnecting its alternative power supply line at the GEC intersection.

The court led by Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Magistrate Md Munir Chowdhury conducted the drive at GEC intersection, Tigerpass intersection and Kazir Dewry area adjoining to Circuit House with the help of Chittagong City Corporation.

Munir told The Daily Star that the billboards and signboards also caused serious accident during natural calamities like storm and cyclone.

The court ordered all ad firms to remove their billboards within 24 hours for the sake of public interest.

Heroin worth Tk 50 lakh seized at Savar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized 500 grams of heroin worth Tk 50 lakh and several bottles of contraband phensidyl after checking a passenger bus at Savar early yesterday.

The Rab-2 personnel also arrested five alleged drug peddlers while checking the Dhaka-bound passenger bus from Rajshahi.

The Rab members set up a check post on Dhaka-Aricha highway at Savar following a secret information that a gang of drug traffickers are carrying a consignment of drug to the capital, says a Rab press release.

The arrestees are Mohammad Liton, Momin Hossain alias Babu, Aftab Hossain, Laxman Kumar and Birendra Nath.

Day-long bird fair at JU today

JU CORRESPONDENT

Zoology Department of Jahangirnagar University (JU) will organise a day-long bird fair on the university campus today in cooperation with Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Birds Club and Nature Conservation Club to create awareness among mass people about birds and biodiversity.

Vice Chancellor Prof Khandaker Mustahidur Rahman will inaugurate the programme at 9:30am.

The organisers will also honour Paul M Thomson, a researcher of Bangladeshi birds and biodiversity, for his contribution in raising awareness among people.

Different private and public universities and enthusiasts are expected to visit the fair and participate in the competition.

The day-long programme also includes different types of inter university competitions including bird sketching, speech, debate and quiz competitions concerning birds.

"As response from everywhere in the country including some remote areas are increasing gradually, we are optimistic about fulfilling our goal with the assistance of all," said Prof Mohammad Mustafa Feeroz, chairman of Zoology department.

285 sacks of spurious urea seized

STAR REPORT

The joint forces seized 285 sacks of spurious urea fertiliser after raiding different places in Dinajpur and Thakurgaon in the last couple of days.

They also seized 222 kg of date-expired jute seeds worth around Tk 1 lakh in Jhenidah on Wednesday night.

The joint forces arrested two people in this connection.

Besides, the law enforcers seized a huge amount of smuggled cosmetics and sub-standard food items from two shopping malls, Mina Bazar and Café and Café, in Khulna city on Wednesday.

They also arrested two people and fined two shopping malls Tk 50,000 each, reports our staff correspondent from Khulna.

The date-expired food items and foreign liquor were seized from Hoogly Bakery and Chistia Food Industries in the town.

Our correspondent from Dinajpur reported that the joint forces seized 85 sacks of spuri-

ous fertiliser from Ranishankoil upazila in Thakurgaon on Wednesday night.

In another raid, they recovered 200 sacks of spurious urea fertiliser from a warehouse at Tongua bazaar of Khanshama upazila in Dinajpur district on Tuesday night and arrested the warehouse owner Nazrul Islam.

Our Jhenidah correspondent adds Rab members raided Shahid Seed Store in the town on Wednesday night and seized 222 kg date-expired jute seeds.

They arrested the owner of the store Shahidul Islam during the raid.

Children's art competition

A children's art competition will be held today at the Liberation War Museum to mark the 38th death anniversary of Sergeant Jahurul Haque, a martyr of the 1969 mass upsurge, says a press release.

WEATHER TODAY

Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Light fog may occur over the river basins of the country during late night until early morning. Met Office said in a forecast.

It said night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Highest temperature 30.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Teknaf and lowest 14.8 degree Celsius at Tangail.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:50pm today and rises at 6:35am 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	24.7	16.8	81	86
Chittagong	27.8	18.5	84	77
Rajshahi	22.5	15.0	92	79
Khulna	27.5	17.0	90	96
Barisal	25.0	17.4	93	92
Sylhet	25.0	15.7	79	59
Cox's Bazar	27.9	17.8	73	62

BSF pushes in 9 Indians to Bangladesh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) yesterday pushed in its nine Bangla-speaking Muslim nationals through Gobindapur border to Bangladesh.

Quoting villagers, BDR officials said the BSF members of 57 Gobindapur camp earlier gathered them at the border at 4:00am.

They were identified as Liakat Ali, 32, Amili, 24, Salma, 10, Soheli, 7, Shimu, 5, Mihiuddin, 25, Lucky, 19, Khyrat Ali, 27, and Nashimon, 22.

BDR members of 15 battalion at Birampur picked up the Indian nationals in a nearby village Daudpur soon after they were pushed in.

The Indian nationals told the BDR personnel that they had been living in Delhi since last 20 years.

After three hours of the push in, the BDR pushed back them to India through the same border and remained on guard to thwart back any BSF move to push them again.

The BDR also reinforced their strength along the border, said sources.

On the other hand, tension mounted at Monhanpur border in Dinajpur as BSF of 72 Shamzha camp started building a road near 307 main pillar yesterday.

Tension escalated when BDR troops forced the BSF members to stop their road building work.

BDR officials urged their counterparts for a flag meeting to resolve the matter, but BSF yet to respond as of filing this report.

Obituary



Dr Rabeya Ahmed, a physician of Shatrurpur in Bogra and wife of late Engineer Kabir Uddin Ahmed of Raikely in Sylhet, passed away due to a cardiac arrest on February 7 at the age of 85, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at her residence in the city after Asr prayers today.

Death anniversary



Today is the 7th death anniversary of Md Abdur Rashid, one of the members of committee to formulate constitution of Bangladesh.

former Awami League leader and lawmaker, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani and milad mahfil will be held at his residence at Naina Nir, House No-36, Road No-1, Block-I at Banani in the city after Maghrib prayers.

Relatives and friends have been requested to attend the programme.

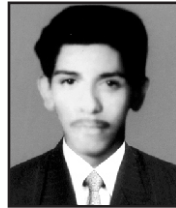
Belayetul Karim



Today is the first death anniversary of Belayetul Karim Chowdhury, a soil scientist, says a press release.

On the occasion, doa and milad mahfil will be held at his residence at House No #7, Road No # 20, Sector # 7 at Uttara in the city after Asr prayers today.

Nahidul Haque Khan (Titu)



Today is the 11th death anniversary of Nahidul Haque Khan (Titu), says a press release.

Titu, a student of Rajshahi University, was shot dead by the miscreants during the non-cooperation movement on this day in 1996.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held after Asr prayers at his residence at 574, Uttar Shahjahanpur in the city.

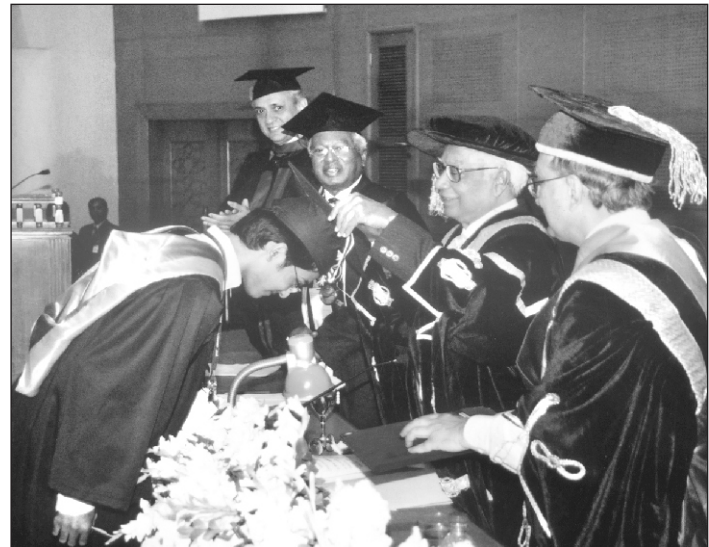


PHOTO: PID

President Iajuddin Ahmed gives away a medal to a student at the 2nd convocation of Brac University at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

the sake of the nation," he said.

Iajuddin also urged the authorities to take necessary steps to bring back the meritorious students and teachers home after taking higher degrees abroad.

He said the private universities are playing a vital role in disseminating higher education in the society and are accommodating a good number of students in the field of higher studies helping to stop flight of foreign exchange.

The President urged the University Grants Commission (UGC) to monitor the academic programmes as well as the atmosphere that are prevailing in both

private and public universities for ensuring quality education for all.

Congratulating the graduate students, Iajuddin said: "You have a great debt in the society and it is your time to repay your liabilities. I hope you will uphold truth over falsehood, justice

over injustice and honesty over dishonesty at the time discharging your duties wherever you are assigned."

"I trust the students of Brac University will be able to prove their worth in this competitive world," he said.

Ensure quality education to match competitive world

Iajuddin tells 2nd convocation of Brac University

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday called upon the private university authorities to come forward to provide quality education so that the students can match the competitive world.

"We want to make a knowledge-based society, where wisdom would be the main tool for the overall development," he said while addressing the 2nd convocation of the Brac University at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre.

President of Brac University Governing Body Fazle Hasan Abed and Vice Chancellor Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury were present at the programme with Dr Gowher Rizvi as the convocation speaker.

In the beginning of his speech, Iajuddin, also chancellor of the university, paid his deep respect to the unfading memory of the martyrs of the Language Movement and also prayed for salvation of the departed souls.

He reminded that competitive nature of the global economy and the digital divide pose challenges for the country, which can be responded only by harnessing skilled resources.

In this backdrop, universities have a great role to face the challenges of the 21st century by producing capable human resources, he added.

The President also called upon the authorities of the universities to make their institutions centre of excellence, where every student can get an ample opportunity to make them a worthy citizen.

"In this connection, I strongly suggest that we have to stop brain-drain for