

# Include physically challenged people in voter list

Speakers tell roundtable

## STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Physically challenged people must be included in voter list so that they can exercise their franchise without any hassles, said the speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

Highlighting the problems of people with disability and indifferent attitudes of previous governments towards them, they urged the caretaker government to solve their problems immediately.

The discussion titled 'Enabling the disabled to vote: ID card, legal provisions and other facilities' was organised by Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP), Institute of Hazrat Muhammad (SAW), Action on Disability and Development (ADD), Muslim Aid and Salvation for the Deserving (SFD).

Speaking on the occasion, Executive Director of DemocracyWatch Taleya Rehman said under the existing system there is no special arrangement for enabling the physically challenged and old people to cast their votes easily.

"It is time to prepare ramps and identity (ID) cards for those people," she said, adding the presiding officers

should know the number of physically challenged voters in their locality and the local government could be involved in the process.

In a keynote paper SFD Chairman Nasir-ur-Rahman Sinha, also a physically challenged man, said the government and NGOs are doing

some works for the welfare of physically and mentally challenged people, but these are not done in a systematic way.

He suggested preparing ID cards with four different colours for different types of people with disability and also stressed the need for special

education, health care, job quota and arrangement for their smooth movement in public places.

Zohurul Alam, president of NFOWD, said the people with disabilities are awfully stigmatised and coloured in the society.

Adviser to caretaker government Geeti Ara Safia Chowdhury, who was scheduled to attend the discussion, in a message termed the people with disability an integral part of the society and said the social welfare ministry has already directed the Election Commission (EC) to take necessary steps so that they can cast their votes.

The speakers said it is also important to train the officials concerned to deal with people of this group apart from commitment of the political leaders in this regard.

Founder of CRP Valerie A Taylor chaired the discussion where former adviser to caretaker government ASM Shahjahan, Country Director of National Democratic Institute (NDI) Owen Lippert, Director of Impact Foundation Bangladesh Monsur Ahmed Chowdhury and Monwar Hossain of the Institute of Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) were present.

Monwar Hossain speaks at a discussion titled 'Enabling the disabled to vote: ID card, legal provisions and other facilities' at National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left are Nasir-ur-Rahman Sinha, Valerie A Taylor and Enamul Haque.

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## PHULBARI COALMINE 'Disclose experts' report'

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A case was filed against an Air Force officer under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act by his wife yesterday.

Dina Farzana filed the case with Tejgaon Police Station accusing her husband Wing Commander Shahbaz Imtiaz Khan of torturing her, police said.

In the FIR (first information report), Dina, a lecturer at Lalmatia Women's College, mentioned that Shahbaz often put pressure on her to give him money from her personal account to buy a flat and visit abroad. She also said that she has given her a handsome amount of money on many occasions.

Dina also said her husband beat her up on December 12 last year.

She also mentioned that a few days after their marriage on June 2 last year, Shahbaz started behaving rudely with her without any reason.

## Wife files case against Air Force officer

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Concerned citizens yesterday urged the caretaker government to disclose the experts' report on Phulbari coalmine and take stern action against the persons who signed agreement with Asia Energy Corporation (AEC) for extraction of coal through open pit system and are now trying to revive the old project.

They also demanded investigation into all ill agreements, including Phulbari coalmine project with AEC and publication of a white paper on the gas and coal sector that they said would bring transparency in these sectors.

Citizens under the banner of Udbigna Nagarik Samaj yesterday organised a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity demanding full cancellation of Phulbari coalmine project.

Advocate Syeda Rizwana Hassan, director of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), Khushi Kabir, co-ordinator of Nijera Kari, and Kazi Hossain, chief executive officer of Nagarik Uddug, were also present at the press conference.

secretary of National Committee for Protection of Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Port, said it is the duty of the caretaker government to save Phulbari coalmine from the AEC as it is our national resource.

He also said an experts' committee has already submitted their report where they claimed that agreement with AEC on Phulbari project is not acceptable neither economically nor environmentally.

Former adviser to the caretaker government Advocate Sultan Kamal, also executive director of Aon O Salish Kendra (ASK), said the present caretaker government should take stern action against the AEC.

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Monwar Hossain, member

## 'Take steps to improve living standard of 5 lakh tea workers'

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday urged the caretaker government to take proper steps to improve living standard of 5 lakh workers and their families, popularly known as tea community, who had been living a miserable life in the country's tea estates for ages.

They urged the government to increase the wage of the workers and lease the abandoned arable land in the tea estates to them.

They were speaking at a seminar titled 'Life of Tea Community: Degraded Humanity' organised jointly by Bagania, a platform of the workers of tea estates, and ActionAid Bangladesh at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday.

Speaking as chief guest of the second session, former adviser to the caretaker government and human rights activist Sultan Kamal said human rights organisation could do little to improve the condition of tea community as tea estates are reserved areas and have limited access to outsiders.

Chief guest of the first session litterateur Selina Hossain said unless the workers were organised against all types of injustices done to them, their sufferings would not end.

General Secretary of Bagania Rambhajan Kainy in his keynote paper focused on the sufferings of the workers and their families.

A worker gets only Tk 30 a day and no payment on the holidays, he said. The women workers are not entitled to any maternity leave, he added.

For workers' children, there are several primary and high schools, but those are not sufficient to meet their demand, he said.

News Editor of Channel i Shah Alamgir and General Secretary of Research and Development Collective Mesbah Kamal conducted the seminar while acting editor of Shaptahik 2000 Golam Murtoza, Associate Editor of the daily Jugantar Sohrab Hossain, former president of Bangladesh Tea Workers Association Damini Goala, Chairman of Human Rights and Legal Aid Committee of Bangladesh Bar Council ZI Khan Panna also spoke on the occasion.

"Selim could have been able to smuggle over 500 litres of diesel to one Noor Majhi had he not been held by the security men," a source said.

Jamuna sources alleged that a section of staffs in collusion with some company officials and boatmen had long been involved in the racket but most of the time they manage to flee away.

When contacted, Jamuna Terminal Manager Kazi Monzoor Rahman, at first denied of any such incident but later admitted that such an incident occurred beyond the terminal area.

He also claimed that no Jamuna staff or operator was detained by security personnel for smuggling diesel.

The weather may remain dry elsewhere over the country during the period, Met Office said.

Light fog may occur over the river basins of the country during the late night until early morning.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period.

Highest temperature 30.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chittagong and lowest 15.2 degree Celsius at Rangamati and Srimangal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:52pm today and rises at 6:33am 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	25.6	19.0	76	59
Chittagong	30.0	17.6	72	72
Rajshahi	24.0	16.4	96	81
Khulna	26.0	17.0	82	70
Barisal	27.6	16.5	84	73
Sylhet	22.8	16.8	82	78
Cox's Bazar	29.2	19.0	81	70

According to fresh schedule, admission test will be held on March 9 at 3:00pm.

Application forms can be collected until February 28 from Janata Bank, DU TSC Branch and submission of the application forms will continue till March 1.

Relatives of a patient admitted to the Birdem hospital and died later brought allegation of negligence and irregularities of the doctors as well as the hospital authorities that allegedly led to the death of the patient.

At a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) yesterday, relatives of late Habibur Rahman Bhuiyan said he was admitted to the Birdem hospital on January 21 following a cardiac problem and was undergoing treatment under an associate professor of the Department of Nephrology.

The doctor operated the patient without the consent of the patient and his relatives and he was not examined properly, they alleged.

The doctors experimented over the patient but did not provide proper treatment, said son of Habibur adding that no attendants were found when the patient need badly.

Late Habibur was the chief adviser to Managing Director and Chairman of Abdul Monem Limited.

A written complaint was submitted to the director general of Birdem on Saturday in this regard.

They urged the authorities to take stern action against the employees, doctors and nurses, who were responsible for this death for their irregularities and negligence.

When this correspondent tried to contact, no comment was found from hospital authorities.

## IER admission schedule changed

### DU CORRESPONDENT

The schedule for admission in first year honours courses of the Institute of Education and Research (IER) at Dhaka University (DU) under the academic session 2006-07 has been changed, a DU press release said.

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