

New nation

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of 'murky areas' that should be cleared by the government.

Naeem Mohaimen demanded quota in the public service for the ethnic and religious minorities to increase their representation in the policymaking.

He thinks some solid research should be carried out on minority representation in education and the public sector.

Naeem then observed that the youth must be alert to the "sophisticated recruitment methods being used by the Islamic fundamentalists at different private universities".

Mahfuz Rahman, director of Ice Technologies and Services Ltd, said that the ongoing measures seeking to bring about positive changes in politics must last long if they are to be effective.

He however noted that the changes have been 'over-dramatised' and in some cases, 'too selective'.

Fahim Shahed, a faculty of American International University Bangladesh, lamented the state of education in Bangladesh and observed that teachers can no longer command respect from their students as they have stopped being a 'role model' because of their corruption.

Iresh Zaker, an advertising executive, said that more and more youth should join politics and this should be facilitated by the provision

of greater incentives.

Zafar Sobhan, assistant editor of The Daily Star, said the young people should be encouraged to think critically to question policies and practices.

He said this should be done to challenge the hierarchical social system in the country, whereby the young are expected to listen and not have a voice.

Shumon Jahan, an academic, said education should be one of the key areas to look at in efforts to restore trust in politics as it is essential for the youth to play a role in the future of Bangladesh.

Shahnor Wahid and Brig Gen Shaheedul Anam Khan of The Daily Star were present at the roundtable moderated by the daily's Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam.

Mahfuz Anam said Bangladesh has two sides—degenerative that includes the politics, economics, bureaucracy and students politics and the regenerative that includes the private sectors, entrepreneurship, journalism and the young professionals, who have enormous potential.

"It now depends on us which Bangladesh will win," he said reminding the participants that the nation's greatest asset is its history of political struggle.

Describing the urge of the people at grassroots level for liberty and democracy as brilliant, he said he hasn't seen such anywhere in the world.

"What we regret, however, is our failure to institutionalise democracy," he added.

He observed that there is a culture of theoretical discussions, but the individuals at their level do not practise those in their life.

The others who also spoke at the roundtable included Independent University of Bangladesh (IUB) Professor Omar Rahman, JCI Member NM Kabir, Rotary Club of Uttara President BM Shoab, independent researcher Mahrukh Mohiuddin, banker Mesbah U Ahmed, news anchor Mishu Rahman, social worker Shahana Siddiqui, Brac University lecturer Rubaiyat Hossain, and Aftab M Khurshid of JCI.

"I am paying rich tribute to the memory of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and seeking blessings for the departed soul," the chief adviser wrote in the visitors' book kept in the monument complex.

Fakhruddin also offered 'munajat' seeking divine blessings for the departed soul of Bangabandhu born in 1920 at Tungipara.

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Army Chief Lt Gen Moeen U Ahmed, Naval Chief Rear Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam and Air Force Chief Air Vice Marshal Fakhru Azam, among others, accompanied the chief adviser.

The Awami League (AL), its front organisations and different socio-cultural organisations also observed the day in a relatively simple way due to the state of emergency.

The day's programmes started with an AL delegation placing wreaths at Bangabandhu's grave at Tungipara and his portrait at Bangabandhu Bhaban in the city. Besides, fataha was offered at the mazar.

A three-member delegation led by Sheikh Hasina's Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury visited Tungipara and laid wreath at the grave of Bangabandhu.

Different socio-cultural organisations placed wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu.

The national and party flags were hoisted atop the AL offices and its front organisations across the country.

Cell phone operators

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want to hold a series of discussions with the mobile phone operators to determine various modalities through which Bangladesh will get a higher level of revenue from them," said the source.

Explaining the significance of this meeting, another source said that back in 1996 when the 15-year agreements with GrameenPhone, Aktel and Sheba Telecom (there was already a 20-year agreement with City Cell) were being finalised, the government told the phone companies that they should give it 15 percent of their revenue.

But under the influence of the then telecom minister Mohammad Nasim and a high official of the ministry, the AL government inserted a set of options for the mobile companies in the agreements.

As per these options, the mobile companies may pay the government 15 percent of their revenue or (A) pay four lakh dollars and one percent revenue annually in the first five years (B) pay eight lakh dollars and one percent revenue annually in the next five years (C) pay 16 lakh dollars and one percent revenue annually in the last five years.

"This was absurd. Because four lakh to 16 lakh dollars plus one percent revenue sharing is nothing compared to 15 percent revenue sharing," notes the source.

Taking advantage of such an uneven set of options, the mobile companies opted for whichever benefited them most. With very little client base, Sheba Telecom paid 15 percent of its revenue while fast growing GrameenPhone and Aktel opted for the first option and then for the second one, thus paying very

Indoor politics

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the declaration of the state of emergency.

He also said the main agenda of his government is to restore a proper democratic environment in the country through holding a free and fair election.

The BBC World Service Trust and the BBC Bangla Service jointly organised the discussion moderated by KamalAhmed of BBC Bangla Service.

Replying to a question over the present caretaker government's activities being legitimised by an elected government, Adviser Mainul said he does not believe in the very idea.

"We have already attained legitimacy of our work through the laws under the emergency rules," he said in an apparent response to AL President Sheikh Hasina's recent speech.

Prior to leaving for the US on Thursday, Hasina said if voted to power, her government will give legitimacy to the present government's activities.

Terming Hasina's speech completely "political", Mainul said giving legitimacy to the caretaker government's work is not legal and that they are not taking her speech as usual.

Muhtith, also a former finance minister, said the caretaker government, which was supposed to hold the election within the constitutionally stipulated 90 days, could be in power for many days. The AL will only legitimise the caretaker government's activities beyond those 90 days.

Hafizuddin said questions of giving legitimacy to the caretaker government will be raised after observing its activities until the end.

Nijera Kori Coordinator Khushi Kabir, who also attended the discussion, said there is a need for the caretaker government's activities being recognised by a future elected government, without which these activities will be treated illegal.

Asked by the audience whether Hasina's visit to the US is temporary or an exile, the law adviser said it will depend on whether the AL chief returns to the country or not.

The three other speakers, however, said they believe Hasina's visit is not an exile.

"But a radical change will obviously come in politics and there will be no chance for resorting to corruption in the name of politics," Mainul said, adding that the government will bring all corrupt politicians to book and will not allow them to continue politics if proved to be corrupt.

He said they will also not allow the black money holders to contest in the elections. "We will bring changes in politics only to create a chance for the honest and devoted politicians, who will work for the country and its people, and establish good governance," he said.

Both the AL and BNP leaders said it would be good for the caretaker government to hold the elections soon.

Hafizuddin hoped that the next election will be held after two years "when the popularity of the government will go down to zero level".

Muhtith said, "The caretaker government assumed power in one winter and it should not go beyond another winter to hold the election."

Adviser Mainul said those who plundered hundreds of crores of taka through politics want the election to be held as early as possible so that they could engage in corruption again, grab land and accumulate black money. He said holding elections is the duty of the Election Commission, not the caretaker government.

On formation of the National Security Council, Mainul said the government has plans to do it but has not yet decided on any concrete form of it. The formation of the council is obviously not to be in power for a long time, he added.

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Ctg port

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Powertec Limited, the private operator of the exclusive terminal, told this correspondent on Thursday.

The main problem we are facing now is not getting export container timely. We have six persons who trace out export bound containers from the 14,000-15,000 containers dumped at the port."

Sometimes, it takes several hours to find out one container from a sea of empty containers at the yards. This is another cause of delay in sailing ships with export cargo.

He said the shipping agents placed a list of 555 empty containers to be loaded in the ship but only 200 might be finally loaded as the agents intentionally placed a long list.

Passing the CCT, this correspondent entered into the General Container Berth, the main terminal of the port, at around 12 noon when he saw QC Wisdom from Singapore that had anchored at jetty number 13 at around 10:30am was waiting for unloading of 450 TEUS containers on board.

"There is a schedule of starting unloading of containers from the ship at 4:00pm. But we do not know when it will start finally," said Mahbubul Alam, chief officer of the ship.

The loading and unloading activities mainly depend on gang booking of the dock workers who work in three shifts, he said, adding, "If we miss a shift then we have to wait for the next shift that starts after eight hours."

Besides, the importers are less interested in unloading cargo as they fear that the government may seal off their godowns if a huge quantity is found," Mahbub said.

There is no gantry crane at the main terminal. The cranes on board the ship mainly handle loading and unloading activities. But the crane is operated by a port operator or an operator appointed by stevedoring agency.

The container handling by the ship cranes is done in a very slow pace. Only 10-12 containers can be handled per hour.

The jetty No 12 is vacant as some repair work is going on there. The port welding workers said their job is very risky but the port authorities do not provide them with any safety equipment.

"Even we cannot hire a boat when we repair the guarder hung with the jetty. Many of us often get injured during welding work but the authorities do not care for us," said Abdul Mazed, leader of the repairing team.

At jetty number five, local flag carrier ship Banga Bort anchored at 11:00am but the unloading of cargo did not begin as of 4:00pm.

Feeder vessel Sea Master-1 had arrived the day before after waiting for seven days at the outer anchorage while the cargo handling activities were yet to start.

"We could not anchor the ship in last seven days due to lack of berthing space," said Rotofo Roda, second officer of the ship. The ship came from Singapore with 450 TEUs containers.

SHIP COMES EMPTY
Many feeder ships are coming to Chittagong without any import cargo as there is a sluggish trend in import trade following the joint forces' crackdown on importers, stevedores said.

Quite a few ships with empty containers are coming only to go back with export items, shipping agents sources said, adding that the importers' go-slow policy in opening letter of credit for the last two months has led to a drastic fall in the flow of import cargo.

The situation may continue for some more weeks. Feeder vessel Oil Freedom came from Colombo without any import cargo and left the port with 400 export containers last week, said a stevedoring staff.

Another vessel, Kota Rukun,

which came from Singapore, unloaded a few dozen containers at Mongla port. Now anchored at Chittagong Port, it is likely to sail for Singapore with 429 export containers, said the stevedoring staff.

DOCK WORKERS' SORROW
Many dock workers said the three-shift work system caused them immense sufferings while its objective to accelerate work failed.

"When there was two-shift work, we used to take a break for one and a half hours for taking meals and saying prayers but now we cannot take any break," said dock worker Mujibul Haque.

The break for lunch or tea has been cancelled and now we have to work from 8:00am to 4:00pm without taking any food."

"The new system failed to accelerate work at the port as one cannot expect better output from workers going empty stomach."

"The main problem in the port is lack of space and equipment. Without creating new space and arranging modern and sophisticated equipment the efficiency of the port would not be increased," said Tajul Islam, a stevedoring staff.

The stevedoring staffs have also alleged that the performance at the port became slower as half of the space in the yard has been allocated for private operators.

Earlier, lots of containers would go to CCT as the yard is much wider there. But now sending containers from the main terminal to CCT has been stopped, they said.

They categorically denied allegation of holding the port hostage. "We are the workers appointed by stevedoring agents. We have nothing to do with port related issues," said Nurul Absar, another stevedoring staff.

SPACE CRISIS

While the port authorities are desperate for more space for keeping containers, this correspondent found a lot of open space in the middle of two sheds. Imported items particularly steel sheets are lying on the space between sheds number five and six.

It is lying because the importers do not take delivery of those sheets, said a port worker. The importers use the space as their godowns, he said, adding that the space can easily be used for keeping containers.

The imported cartons and soft items like cotton, cloths, garment accessories are kept in the port sheds. But the hard materials like steel sheet and timber are kept on open spaces.

The premier port is heavily burdened with 18,000 containers out of which 13,000 containers are full of import goods, port sources said. The importers do not take delivery of goods kept in those containers due to unknown reasons, said a high official of the port.

The port authority decided to issue notices against import containers within 20 days of arrival while the goods will go for auction within 30 days, he said.

Earlier, the time for sending goods for auction was 45 days.

The port authority also made effective from yesterday many steps taken earlier. The steps include waiver of fine for delay of the ships due to the port's failure and waiver of storage charge on ICD-bound containers if the delay occurs due to failure of Bangladesh Railway in sending those.

At 4:00pm when this correspondent came back to the CCT after going round the main terminal, three QGCs were operating in two ships while one crane remained idle and one berthing jetty was empty.

Bogra farmers

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received only one sack of urea during that time.

Nawab Ali, from Chhoto Kumira village of the same upazila, cultivated five bighas of land. He also has used urea only once.

Another farmer, Latif from Kalar Bari village in Gabtoli upazila, said he transplanted boro on about 3.5 bighas of land and he purchased urea on the black market at Ranirhat of Shahjahanpur upazila for Tk 350 - Tk 400 a sack.

He was unsuccessful to collect one more sack of fertiliser on Saturday from a fertiliser store at Borogola in Bogra town.

Woman burnt

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In another incident, some 150 makeshift houses were destroyed when a fire broke out at Balur Math area at Mazid Khan Road of Rayerbazar in the early hours.

The residents managed to get out of the houses quickly, but the fire blazing for about one and a half hours burnt the houses and goods inside.

On information, 13 units of the fire brigade rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control. Fireman Mahbub was injured at this time.

The fire originated from a cooking stove of a house, fire brigade sources said.

Another fire, originated due to electric short circuit at Islamic Bank Hospital at South Shahjahanpur in Outer Circular Road at 3:25pm, destroyed a computer and some furniture.

Fire fighters and the hospital staffs managed to extinguish the fire within 10 minutes before it spread to other rooms of the three-storied building.

Anti-graft team

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Memorial Hospital and the branches of Rupali Bank and Islami Bank.

Abul Kalam Azad, manager of Rupali Bank Nathullahad branch, and Biplob Nag, media officer of Ambia Memorial Hospital confirmed the report, but refused to disclose any detail.

The task force is examining irregularities in overpayments and loans of around Tk 34 crore recommended by Hafiz Ibrahim and his wife Mafuza Sultana when they were directors at Rupali Bank. The team also collected documents and copies of cases lodged in this connection at the court and police station in Barisal, said the sources.

Ambia Memorial Hospital on Bogra Road was built after a loan of Tk 25 crore was sanctioned to BNP leader Jannatunnesa Nayon from Nathullahad branch of Rupali Bank without following appropriate rules and regulations, sources added.

The task force is also likely to inspect properties owned by Hafiz Ibrahim and his family members in the Port Road area of the city.

The team of anti-corruption special task force reached Barisal Thursday afternoon and started probing properties, establishments and bank accounts belonging to Hafiz Ibrahim, his family members, relatives and accomplices.

Fake certificate

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be able to investigate it as it would amount to interference in a sub judice matter."

Replying to a letter by CU authorities, Dean of the university Law Faculty Zakir Hossain

said, "If any matter came under the consideration of court, there is no way to further consider it by any person or organisation."

"As the matter is under consideration of the Honourable High Court, I think, supplying any documents related to the cancellation of certificates to any person, committee or organisation for any investigation or consideration would not be right," he added.

Besides, such investigation of certificate cancellation is beyond jurisdiction of the UGC as the highest policymaking syndicate committee of the university made the decision in this regard, sources said.

The UGC is responsible for looking into irregularities in recruitment and promotion, development works, budget and other financial matters, they added.

The CU authorities cancelled 50 LLB certificates, including that of judge Faizee, on charge of tampering with tabulation sheets and other irregularities, on March 11.

The five-member committee formed on March 13 and headed by UGC Member Prof Dr Sultan Hussein was also examining the alleged irregularities including the appointment and promotion of the university teachers that took place in the last five years, sources said. Exchequer

Other members of the committee are UGC Member Professor Dr Tareque Shamsur Rahman, Professor Dr Ehsanul Haq, Acting Controller of Examination of Dhaka University Mohammed Bahalul Haque Chowdhury and Deputy Controller of Examination of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) Mohammed Sultan Uddin Khan.

The committee that arrived here Friday night is scheduled to continue their investigation till next Tuesday.

Plotters behind TV raid, says Musharraf

REUTERS, AFP, Islamabad

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf said on Saturday a police raid on a television station during protests against his government's suspension of the country's top judge was a conspiracy against him.

Police ransacked the office of the private Geo television station in Islamabad on Friday during protests by lawyers and opposition supporters against the government's March 9 suspension of Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhary.

"There is a conspiracy going on and it has to be traced. Who is hatching this conspiracy so everything is put on me?" Musharraf said in a speech in the town of Pakpattan, referring to the raid on Geo's office.

Musharraf, who is expected to seek election to another term in office late this year, telephoned Geo to condemn the raid and apologise. He said the culprits had to be caught.

He did not elaborate. Earlier Pakistan has suspended

Tigers lord

FROM PAGE 1

Hitting speeds in the early 140 kmphs, he then had Robin Uthappa caught at point, the dashing right-hander playing a loose stroke after being subject to a probing spell from Raseel at the other end.

That bought Sachin Tendulkar to the crease and he along with Ganguly set off to stabilise the innings. It was no easy task though and both overcame strong leg-before appeals and survived some edgy moments.

Just when it looked like they had seen off the worst of the troubles, left-armur Abdur Razzak struck in his very first over with the prized scallop of Tendulkar.

Coming onto bowl in place of Mashrafe, Razzak surprised Tendulkar by firing in a slightly quicker arm-ball, one that held its line after pitching on middle. Tendulkar was foxed and saw an inside edge deflect onto his pad and pop up behind the stumps where Mushfiqur Rahim held on at the second attempt. India were reduced to 40-3 off 15 overs.

Rahul Dravid and Ganguly put on 32 runs for the fourth wicket before the Indian captain was snared off the first ball of the 25th over by veteran spinner Mohammed Rafique with the score on 72.

The wily slow left-armur trapped Dravid leg-before playing across the line, although the Indian captain was visibly displeased with the ruling.

That bought Yuvraj to the crease and he and Ganguly struck up a good partnership and was just beginning to look dangerous when disaster struck.

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nuclear envoy said Saturday.

The US Treasury Department earlier this week ended its investigation of Banco Delta Asia which had been blacklisted for its alleged complicity in North Korean money laundering paving the way to unfreeze a portion of the money.

However, the North's Kim Kye Gwan said Pyongyang expected all the funds to be released before it would follow through on a Feb. 13 agreement to close its main nuclear facility and allow UN inspectors to visit.

"We will not stop our nuclear activity until our funds frozen in the BDA are fully released," he said, referring to the bank by its initials. "We will not stop the Yongbyon nuclear facility until the United States fully releases our funds frozen in the BDA."

Kim said his government had not heard anything official about the lifting of financial sanctions. He arrived in Beijing Saturday ahead of a new round of six-nation nuclear disarmament talks set to begin Monday. It was the first official response by the North to Washington's decision.

Washington had promised to resolve the issue as part of the implementation of the February agreement under which North Korea agreed to shut down Yongbyon, its main nuclear reactor and processing facility, and allow UN inspectors in for verification by April 14.

In return, North Korea would receive energy and economic assistance and a start toward normalizing relations with the US and Japan.

Christopher Hill, the chief American nuclear negotiator, said earlier Saturday that he planned to brief Kim on the issue on Saturday, but did not foresee any complications.

"I don't think BDA will be an obstacle," he said before meeting Kim. "I think we'll work that out."

A senior US Treasury Department official arrived in Macau on Saturday to discuss the results of the investigation with Macanese officials. It will be up to the government of Macau a semiautonomous Chinese territory to decide whether

14 police for ransacking a private television station office during opposition protests over the sacking of the country's top judge, officials said yesterday.

"The government has suspended 14 police officers for the incident at the Geo office and has also ordered a judicial inquiry into the incident," Islamabad police chief Iftikhar Ahmed Chaudhry told AFP.

7 killed

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fuselage broke apart during the landing," Inina Adrianova, a spokeswoman for the emergency situations ministry, told state television channel Vesti-24.

The accident comes after 2006 was declared the deadliest year on record for air safety in Russia.

Of the 50 passengers and seven crew members aboard, "there were seven fatalities. Ten people