

The Daily Star ROUNDTABLE

Youths envision new nation

Call for wide-ranging reforms to make govt efficient, just

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Young professionals, entrepreneurs, and civil society members yesterday spoke of a new vision of the government that would provide for the people, especially the poor and the vulnerable. They said the idea should be outlined in a social contract between the state and the public. The representatives from across the youth population made the observations at a roundtable on "State of Our Polity Views of the Young Generation". Speaking at the discussion organised by The Daily Star at its auditorium, they also proposed a set of proposals for reforms aiming to make the government more efficient.

The new social contract, envisioned by this particular group, calls for a fairer and just system that would institutionalise a process to ensure the government delivers goods and services to the people more efficiently. And for that job to be done properly, the government should increase the revenues by widening the collective tax net. A number of participants observed that widespread reforms in a number of government institutions such as the National Board of

Revenue (NBR), the Judicial Service Commission, and the police should be introduced. Some participants noted that the public service is overstaffed and should be downsized to stop waste of government coffers.

Kazi Zahin Hasan, director of Kazi Farms Ltd, a leading hatchery, said that low pay for the government officials encourages corruption and it should be addressed.

Kaiser Kabir, managing director of Renata Ltd, said an overnight rise in public service wages would be unfeasible. So the government should rather re-deploy its staff to increase efficiency, he added.

But Naomi Hossain, from Brac, said Bangladesh has a comparatively small government, so importance should be attached to increasing its quality rather than to downsizing it. Sara Hossain, a lawyer, and Naeem Mohaimen, an activist and filmmaker, stressed the need for inclusion of ethnic and religious minorities in a dialogue among the youth. Sara also observed that there is no need to do away with politics, rather the criminal and corrupt elements should be weeded out. She said the ongoing anti-graft crackdown should look also at the past and present human rights abuses.

One of the ways to resuscitate politics should be giving space to those who have been dedicated to politics for the past 30 years without resorting to crime and corruption, she added. Recalling the days immediately after democracy was restored in 1991, Sara said those hopes of a new way of doing politics were dashed by replication of 'old models' and a tendency to pursue a 'quick fix' to every problem. On the current administration, she said, "We can't support it uncritically." She added that there are a lot



Discussants at a roundtable on "State of Our Polity Views of the Young Generation" organised by The Daily Star at its office yesterday.

JUDICIARY SEPARATION Hearing on contempt resumes today

The hearing of the contempt of court case against government officials, including four secretaries, regarding separation of judiciary resumes today. Earlier, the Supreme Court had adjourned the hearing after finding a number of mistakes in the newly framed four rules on independent judicial service and the amended CrPC Ordinance 2007 to separate magistracy from the executive control. Prior to adjournment of the hearings on February 26, the Supreme Court also ordered the government to correct a number of flaws in the four rules and the amended CrPC Ordinance. Those mistakes, according to the court, contradict its 12-point directives in the Masdar Hossain case on separation of judiciary.

CTG PORT Container handling still goes at snail's pace

RAFIQ HASAN from Chittagong port

It was around 10:00am on Thursday when this correspondent entered Chittagong Container Terminal (CCT), the exclusive container terminal at the Chittagong Port. One Quay Gantry Crane (QGC) is loading container on the Banga Badar, the lone anchored ship at the terminal. The rest two berths are vacant with three sophisticated cranes sitting idle. CS Helen is waiting in the middle of the Karnaphuli River as it could not anchor due to low tide. The ship will have to wait a few more hours for the high tide before finally entering

the terminal. This is an usual scene of the country's premier port where ships remain idle or wait for hours for various reasons like low tide, and delay in starting of loading and unloading activities. On that day this correspondent spent six hours in the Chittagong port area and made several rounds in the jetty when he found a number of ships anchoring idle. The costly cranes installed on the jetty were also found sitting inactive for hours together. Many dock workers were taking rest or spending idle time on the jetty as there was not much cargo han-

dling work. The port takes several hours just to begin cargo handling work. Lack of proper coordination to manage export and import cargo often causes delay of ships. Sometimes, import cargo is discharged quickly but it takes a long time to ready the export cargo. The ship Banga Badar arrived on Monday at CCT. "After completion of discharging import cargo, the loading of export container began last night and it would continue for a few more days," an official of Saif



Students waving to Saarc car rally as it leaves Dhaka for India yesterday. The photo was taken from Manik Mia Avenue.

BCL men ransack 15 rooms of JCD activists at DU Jagannath Hall

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists ransacked at least 15 rooms of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) men at Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University on Friday night following a clash between the two groups in the afternoon on the same day. BCL men also occupied a number of rooms left by the JCD activists after the afternoon event and kept a few others under lock and key, sources said. Two BCL activists were injured in the clash erupted centring a JCD activist's taking a girl to a hall room. The ransacked rooms are 444, 463, 367, 468 of October Memorial Building; 337 (Ka), 337 (Kha), 340, 363 (Ka), 385 (Ka) 395 and 329 of East Building; 222, 227, 252 of South Building and 141 of North Building of the hall. Hall sources said BCL men including Hemonto Bapari, Shyamol Bapari, Shankar Talukder, Sumon Das Pancham, Palash, Devdas, Pankaj Baruri and others launched the attack at around 11:30pm. Neither the university authorities nor the police took any measures against the action of BCL activists so far. Sources said the authorities did not visit the vandalised rooms

Chlorine bombs kill 8, sicken 350 in Iraq

REUTERS, Falluja

Two suicide bombings in involving toxic chlorine gas made 350 people ill in Falluja on Friday, the US military said yesterday, and another smaller bomb attack near Ramadi also released chlorine gas. Hospital sources said earlier eight people were killed and dozens were became ill after chlorine gas was released in the two bombings in Falluja, in the western province of Anbar. The attacks appeared to mark a stepped-up campaign by insurgents to use unconventional weapons, after two bombings involving chlorine killed eight people earlier this year. The US military said they discovered an al-Qaeda car bomb factory last month near Falluja that was constructing bombs with chlorine. The gas causes severe burns when breathed in and can cause death.

Friday's two bombs in Falluja occurred within the space of 40 minutes in the early evening and both involved suicide bombers driving dumper trucks. In the first, near the town of Amiriya, two Iraqi police were killed and up to 100 Iraqis showed signs of chlorine exposure, with symptoms ranging from minor skin and lung irritation to vomiting, the US statement said. Soon afterwards a suicide bomber detonated a dumper truck containing a 200-gallon (900-liter) chlorine tank rigged with explosives around 5km south of Falluja. "Coalition Forces responded to the attack and found approximately 250 local civilians suffering from symptoms related to chlorine exposure," the US statement said. "Of those affected by the attack, four adults and seven children were evacuated to Coalition medical facilities for

further treatment," it said. Earlier on Friday, another smaller bomb using chlorine detonated at a checkpoint northeast of Ramadi, wounding one US soldier and one Iraqi civilian. "Suicide car bombers have used chlorine against Iraqis in Al Anbar a total of five times since January 28," the statement said. Chlorine gas was used as a weapon in World War One but its use in guerrilla attacks in Iraq has particular resonance for Iraqis. Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons on Kurdish areas in the 1980s during the Iran-Iraq war. Hospital sources said one of the Falluja attacks targeted the entrance to a large housing complex south of Falluja, killing six people including policemen, while the second bomber targeted a tribal leader opposed to al-Qaeda.

N Korea prepares to shut key N-reactor

Pyongyang insists US unfreeze \$25m

AFP, AP, Seoul/Beijing

North Korea has begun preparations to shutdown and seal its key Yongbyon nuclear reactor, South Korea's top nuclear envoy said yesterday, according to the Yonhap news agency. Pyongyang was also willing to start moving towards disabling its nuclear facilities but its actions would depend on how soon it will be rewarded, Chun Yung-woo told reporters in Beijing. "North Korea said it has begun preparations to shut down the Yongbyon nuclear facilities. It said it will disable the facilities as soon as

conditions are met," the envoy said. Under a February 13 accord, Pyongyang promised to begin shutting down its nuclear programme within two months in exchange for energy aid and diplomatic concessions. A follow-up round of disarmament negotiations, which group the two Koreas, China, the United States, Russia and Japan, begins in Beijing on Monday. Meanwhile, North Korea will not stop its nuclear activity unless all \$25 million frozen in a Macau bank is released, the regime's top

Council decides to sign Saarc Food Bank accord

BSS, Dhaka

A meeting of the council of advisers yesterday decided to sign an agreement to establish Saarc Food Bank with a view to ensuring food security in the South Asian region during food shortage and food emergency. The agreement is likely to be signed during the 14th Saarc summit to be held in New Delhi next month. Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed chaired the meeting held in his office. While briefing newsmen, Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim said the proposed Saarc food bank will start functioning with a stock of 241,580 tonnes of rice and wheat. Bangladesh will contribute 40



A colourful procession was brought out by Adivashi Forum in the capital yesterday to mark the launching of a three-day cultural festival of the indigenous people.

Prayer Timing		
March 18		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-00	5-35
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-14	6-18
Esha	7-45	8-15
Source: Islamic Foundation		

FAKE CERTIFICATE Probe stalled for Faizee's petition

CU CORRESPONDENT

The University Grants Commission (UGC) probe committee yesterday stopped investigating fake LLB certificates in the Chittagong University (CU) as the matter has turned sub judice following a writ petition by the controversial judge Faisal Mahmud Faizee in High Court. CU-appointed legal consultation firm 'Dr Kamal Hossain and Associates' sent faxes to the univer-

sity Registrar as well as to the UGC yesterday pointing out the limitation from legal point of view. In the fax, barrister Tanjib Ul Alam on behalf of the law firm said "Since Mr Faizee has filed a writ petition before the Honourable High Court Division challenging the issue of cancellation of the certificate, the matter is now sub judice and therefore, the committee formed by the UGC would not