

# Make local govt focal point of all dev activities

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said local government institutions should be the focal point of all development activities.

They called upon people to give more power to local government.

The discussion titled 'Strengthening local governance by increasing accountability of public service institutions' was organised by Governance Coalition at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday.

Taking part in the discussion, representatives from different union parishads demanded decentralisation of power including increased money allocation.

They said the government should bring changes in the existing system of the local government

so that public services including health, education and agriculture can reach people through elected representatives.

Former adviser to caretaker government Dr Akbar Ali Khan was present at the discussion as chief guest while Executive Director of Manusher Jonno Foundation Shaheen Anam, Executive Editor of Janakantha Borhan Ahmed, Dr Akhter Hossain of Dhaka University, Senior Assistant Editor of Sangbad Muniruzzaman, Dr Nitai Dash, Muhammad Helal Uddin, Nurul Amin, Morium Sheli, and Monorjon Mondol took part in the discussion.

National Project Coordinator of Governance Coalition Abdus Shukur presented a keynote paper at the discussion moderated by Mohsin Ali.

Laying emphasis on empower-

ing the local government, Dr Akbar Ali Khan said the country is not meant for politicians.

"We can't leave the country only for politicians. Everyone of us should work from our respective position for golden Bangladesh," he said.

"No government in the past implemented the directives of the constitution regarding the local government institution although as per constitution elected local government at district level is mandatory," he said, adding that politicians and bureaucrats don't want to make the local government effective.

Two major political parties during their regimes in last 10 years did not implement their electoral pledge to re-establish the upazila system though it was an important pledge in their election manifestos, he added.

Other speakers urged the government to increase the budget of union parishads and review their activities.

Shaheen Anam called upon people to force the government to enact right to information act.

She said the government must have political will to decentralise the power in order to ensure accountability even at union parishad level.

"It is tough for NGOs or donor agencies to make all union parishads effective as there are more than four thousand union parishads across the country," Shaheen Anam said, adding that NGOs can work only to create awareness.

Abdus Shukur said people's alliance (lokmorcha) played key role in different areas of the country to make the union parishad more effective.

Other speakers urged the government to increase the budget of union parishads and review their activities.

## Sacked SIs demand reinstatement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-one sub-inspectors, who were sacked at the eleventh hour of their one-year training on November 2004, yesterday alleged that they were sacked on political ground and demanded a neutral investigation into the irregularities.

They blamed a list sent by Hawa Bhaban for losing their jobs.

The sacked sub-inspectors of the police (non-armed) also submitted memorandums to the Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed and secretary to the home ministry demanding reinstatement of their jobs.

They urged the caretaker government (CG) to form a neutral probe committee to disclose irregularities of the police department.

They alleged the home ministry sacked them according to the list made by Hawa Bhaban after completing 11 months and 16 days of their one-year training course at Sarda Police Academy.

They also said that the High Court had already issued a show cause notice to the government why the removal of 21 sub-inspectors would not be declared illegal and asked to give a reply by four weeks.

"But the government did not send reply letter even after passing of four weeks. The present CG should give attention to our application as we were sacked on political ground," said Shaheen Fakir, one of the sacked sub-inspectors, told The Daily Star.

Sacked sub-inspectors gathered in front of the Chief Adviser's Office at 10:00am and submitted their memorandum.

Later they also submitted a memorandum to the secretary of the home ministry.

Such cooperation may be explored bilaterally as well as regionally, the press release added.

Saarc should now seek membership of the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) which includes ground-breaking mechanisms to facilitate recovery of stolen assets including measures for tracing, freezing, seizure and confiscation of the proceeds of corruption.

Since work has already begun on a draft Saarc Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, TIB demands inclusion of specific provisions against corruption in it.

This can pave the way to a Saarc Regional Convention Against Corruption in line with UNCAC and similar regional anti-corruption conventions already adopted in other regions.

Central American states have recently declared themselves as a corruption-free zone, similarly South Asia can also show the courage and commitment to adopt a time-line in the same direction, TIB urged.

## Thaksin to be indicted within 2 months: Thai PM

AFP, Tokyo

Thai prosecutors will bring corruption charges against deposed prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra within two months, his army-appointed successor said in remarks broadcast yesterday.

Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont, in an interview taped during a visit to Tokyo last week, repeated that Thaksin had the right to return to the kingdom but would face charges.

"I think it should be done in one or two months from now, no later than that," Surayud told Japanese public broadcaster NHK on being asked when the indictment would be finished.

Surayud said last week during a press conference here that Thaksin may be charged by the end of April and voiced confidence that prosecutors would "pin him down."

Thailand's army cited alleged corruption by Thaksin, a self-made billionaire, as the main reason to oust him in September.

Mohsin Ali speaks at a discussion titled 'Strengthening local governance by increasing accountability of public service institutions' organised by Governance Coalition at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. On his left are former adviser to the caretaker government Dr Akbar Ali Khan, Borhan Ahmed and Dr Akhter Hossain.

PHOTO: STAR

Proper opportunities, capacity-building training and commitment can enhance managerial capacities of female staff, contribute to gender balance in organisations and promote equity and diversity in a male-dominated environment.

This was observed at a reunion ceremony of graduates of Care Bangladesh's three major initiatives at the Brac Centre Inn in the city yesterday, says a press release.

Human Resource Development and Management Department of Care arranged the ceremony to share knowledge and promote understanding on how the initiatives - Management Development Programme (MDP), Women's Internship Programme (WIP) and Female Apprentices Development Programme (FADP) - are contributing to societal, organisational and individual growth.

Former adviser to caretaker government Sultana Kamal, Acting Country Director of Care Bangladesh Hasan M Majumdar, and General Manager of Human Resources Department of Care Munmun Salma Chowdhury spoke at the function.

Representatives from different local and international NGOs attended the ceremony.

Hasan M Majumdar inaugurated the function and elaborated on the justification of initiating the MDP, WIP and FADP.

He noted that MDP has minimised the gap between male and female employee ratio at the mid-to-senior level management positions of the organisation while the internship opportunities opened avenues for fresh female university graduates with the ambition to pursue a career in the field of development.

Addressing the function as chief guest, Sultana Kamal said Care is doing a noble job and this is imperative for promoting women's economic empowerment.

To achieve greater benefit from this gesture, it is important to build partnership with others to expand its periphery, she added.

Dakop UZ AL leader arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police arrested Golam Mostafa, joint secretary of Dakop upazila unit of Awami League, from a house near Dakop Police Station yesterday.

Molla Nazrul Islam, officer-in-charge of Dakop Police Station, said the AL leader was arrested along with a professional sex worker from the house.

Mostafa is also Dakop upazila correspondent of the Dainik Purbanchal published from Khulna.

## WEATHER TODAY

### Fall in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may fall slightly over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 37.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 18.5 degree Celsius at Sylhet.

The sun sets in the capital at 6.18pm today and rises at 5:42am 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	34.7	22.5	68	59
Chittagong	32.2	24.8	65	79
Rajshahi	37.4	26.3	69	67
Khulna	34.0	25.5	77	65
Barisal	33.0	25.0	76	72
Sylhet	28.8	18.5	79	67
Cox's Bazar	32.4	24.0	62	72



PHOTO: ISPR

Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Moeen U Ahmed and Chief of Naval Staff Rear Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam adorned new Chief of the Air Staff Air Commodore Shah Md Ziaur Rahman with Air Vice Marshal rank at Armed Forces Division yesterday.

New air chief adorned with rank of Air Vice Marshal

Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Moeen U Ahmed and Chief of Naval Staff Rear Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam adorned new Chief of the Air Staff Air Commodore Shah Md Ziaur Rahman with Air Vice Marshal rank at Armed Forces Division yesterday, says an ISPR release.

President and Supreme Commander of Armed Forces Iajuddin Ahmed was present on the occasion.

Principal Staff Officer of Armed Forces Division Major General Md Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, Director General of Forces Intelligence Major General Md Sadique Hasan Rumy, Military Secretary to the President Major General Md Aminul Karim, Director General of Special Security Force Major General Sheikh Md Monirul Islam, Defence Secretary Kamrul Hasan and Secretary of the President Md Sirajul Islam were also present.

Later, new Chief of the Air Staff Air Vice Marshal Shah Md Ziaur Rahman placed wreath at Shikha Anirban and paid homage to the members of Armed Forces martyred during the War of Liberation in 1971.

He was given a guard of honour by a smart BAF contingent at the Air Headquarters.

Woman dy secy detained on charge of taking promotion through bribery

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Joint forces yesterday detained a deputy secretary on charge of taking promotion through bribery and placing fake documents.

The forces picked up Nasim Sultana Hossain, a deputy secretary with OSD status under the establishment ministry, at Mirpur in the city at around 10:30am. She was later handed over to Pallabi police.

Nasim Sultana, however, denied the allegations against her and said she has been the victim of a conspiracy.

A press release provided to journalists by the joint forces at Pallabi Police Station said Nasim Sultana, an official of BCS (administration), joined deputy commissioner's office in Gazipur as an assistant commissioner on January 21, 1986.

She went to London on September 21, 1999 on lien for higher education and began staying there permanently.

As the establishment ministry took steps to terminate her for illegal overstaying, Nasim Sultana submitted an application seeking voluntary retirement from the service on ground of ill health.

She was promoted to the rank of deputy secretary when 361 government officials were given promotion to different posts in the administration in 2006, during the tenure of the BNP-led coalition government, the press release said.

Hefty sums of money were reportedly exchanged for promotion of 128, among the 361 officials and the 128 are accused in departmental graft cases.

The press release further said Nasim Sultana took promotion taking this opportunity despite staying in London bribing a big amount and her sister submitted her joining letter to the post of deputy secretary copying Sultana's signature.

She returned home on March 24 and was supposed to join her new post in the education ministry on March 25, but she did not join.

According to the news release, Nasim Sultana has taken a British passport where she mentioned her name Nasim Rekha Khan.

Nasim Sultana however said she went to the UK on lien and applied for voluntary retirement as she was unable to return due to her treatment for cancer.

She said one of her friends informed her that she has been given promotion, but she denied to have persuaded or bribed anyone for it. She further said she did not come to the country to join the post.

She has become victim of a plot by a certain quarter, she added.

Asked why she used a changed name in her British passport, she said she did not change her name, rather she used only her surname as per the requirement of the British government.

Police said the detained official is under their custody. However, no case was filed as of 7:30 last night as police was investigating whether the official was really guilty.

Today is the 10th death anniversary of Prof Fazlul Halim Chowdhury, former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, says a press release.

Prof Chowdhury, also founder chairman of the Department of Applied Chemistry and member of University Grants Commission (UGC), was the Science Adviser of UNESCO.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at his graveyard at Banani after Asr prayers.

## DHAKA TODAY

### Seminar

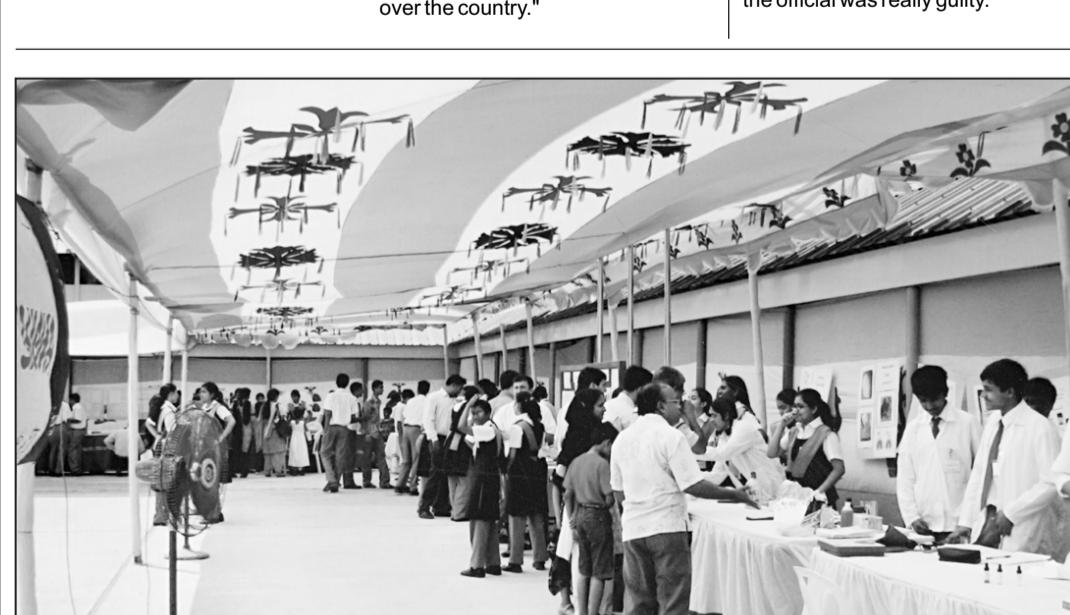
Karmojibi Nari organises a seminar on 'Liberalisation of trade in service sector'. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 9:30am.

### Lecture

Maj Gen (retd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim will deliver a lecture on 'Administration, good governance and democracy'. Venue: Bangla Academy seminar room. Time: 11:00am.

### Seminar

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) organises a seminar on 'National budget and economic security'. Venue: Institute auditorium. Time: 10:30am.



International Turkish Hope School organised a day-long Annual Science Fair on its campus at Uttara in the city on Saturday.