

Ensure internal democracy

Speakers tell political parties at roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ensuring democracy within the political parties, ridding the leadership of corruptionists and putting an end to dynastic politics are a must for establishing democratic rule in the country, politicians, civil society members and professionals said at a roundtable yesterday.

They also observed that crimes, terrorism, nepotism and dynastic politics -- some of the prevailing problems in politics -- would not disappear until the political parties themselves establish and practise internal democracy.

They also emphasised the need to strengthen state-run institutions and sectors to establish real democracy.

Shushashoner Janney Nagarik (Shujan) organised the roundtable titled 'Review of the constitutions of major political parties' at the Jatiya Press Club in the city.

The speakers strongly criticised the major political parties, including the Awami League and BNP, for establishing dynastic politics and not practising internal democracy.

They said the party constitutions should have specific provisions

regarding powers of the party chiefs in order to avoid dictatorship. There should also be provisions for punishment in the event of violations of constitutions by the party chiefs.

Presenting the keynote paper, Dr Badiul Alam Majumder, secretary of Shujan, said there is no mention of democracy in the constitutions of BNP and Jatiya Party.

There is no transparency in the funding for the AL, BNP and JP, he said, adding that these three parties are also accused of selling nominations.

"So, there is no alternative but to reform the political parties to strengthen democracy," he said.

Eminent economist Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said if the political parties do not practise internal democracy, they could not establish democracy in the country after assuming power.

He called for developing self-criticism within the political party and among the leaders so that they can find out the real problems.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) leader ASM Abdur Rob said the

main problems lie with the state system, not with the political parties themselves.

He called for initiating a new system so that the prime minister could not exercise immense power.

Prof Syed Anwar Hossain of Dhaka University said those who do not have specific educational qualifications and the anti-liberation elements must be barred from politics.

Sheikh Shahidul Islam, secretary general of Jatiya Party (Manju), and Dr Asif Nazrul stressed the need to make the registration of the political parties mandatory.

Media personality Muhammad Jahangir said the political parties must take into account the educational qualifications of a candidate before giving them the party nomination for parliamentary elections.

Mujahidul Islam Selim, general secretary of Communist Party of Bangladesh, blamed the AL and BNP for the present situation.

Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury, project coordinator of Ganoshasthya Kendra, said dynastic politics has pushed the country towards a dangerous situation.

"If the political parties do not under reforms, the caretaker government should impose reforms on them," he said, stressing the need for decentralisation of powers in the state system as well as political parties to curb corruption.

Misbahur Rahman Chowdhury, chairman of Bangladesh Islami Oikya Jote, said the retired government officials who have entered politics have spoiled the politics and politicians.

He also demanded that war criminals be barred from politics.

Dr Matur Rahman, Shah Abdul Hannan, Mohiuddin Ahmed, Ilyas Kanchan, Rafiqul Islam Sarkar, Dewan Sultan Ahmed, AZM Abdul Ali and ATM Kamal also spoke at the discussion moderated by former adviser to the caretaker government M Hafizuddin Khan.

Concern over filing of case against 2500 RMG workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations yesterday expressed concern over filing of a case against 2500 unnamed workers of Fortuna Apparels Ltd in Gazipur by the police.

They also demanded immediate withdrawal of the case.

In a press release, Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) said the owners of the garment factories are not abiding by the tripartite agreement signed between the owners, workers and the government, which generated a lot of resentment among the workers.

They said the government is not showing any interest to enforce the agreement rather the workers are being harassed by filing cases against them.

They demanded that the government take effective steps in implementing the tripartite agreement to stop harassment of the workers.

In separate statement, Samik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (Skop) demanded payment of the salaries and arrears to the workers, compensation to the family of the killed, proper treatment of the injured workers and withdrawal of the case.

Housewife murdered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A housewife was murdered in the city yesterday.

The dead was identified as Nadira Yasmin, 38, of Kalabagan 1st lane in Dhanmondi.

She was the wife of Amir Hossain, a transport businessman.

Being tipped-off, police recovered the body which was lying on a bed.

They found a black mark around the victim's neck and found a scarf hanging from the ceiling fan.

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Woman shot, robbed of Tk one lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some unidentified miscreants shot a housewife and looted Tk one lakh from her possession at Mirpur in the city yesterday.

Marzina Begum, 35, wife of an expatriate living in Saudi Arabia Abdul Hossain, rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with a bullet received at her leg.

Police said three snatchers, riding a motorbike, intercepted her in front of Mirpur Fire Service Station when she was returning home along with her sister in a rickshaw after drawing Tk one lakh from the Mirpur branch of Islami Bank at around 10:30am.

As she protested, the muggers opened fire and left the scene hurriedly with the money, said Marzina.

Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parents of a nine-year-old boy who has been suffering from aplastic anaemia has sought financial assistance for his treatment.

The boy, Mohammad Reza, born into a stranded Pakistani family at Geneva camp in Dhaka, was diagnosed with the disease recently. He is now undergoing treatment at Pancare Hospital.

According to doctors, the boy immediately needs bone marrow transplant, which involves about Tk 25 lakh. Besides, his initial treatment will cost about Tk 50,000 a month.

But it is not possible for his father Mohammad Murad, a rickshawpuller, to afford such an expensive treatment. He has appealed to generous people to extend a helping hand to save the life of his son.

Contributions can be sent to Account no: 6554 (34), Sonali Bank, Krishi Bazaar Branch, Mohammadpur, Dhaka. For further information, interested persons can also contact Pancare Hospital Limited, Dhanmondi Tower, House # 4/A, Road # 16 (old 27), Dhanmondi. Telephone: 8158394, 9142422.

CA provides Tk 1 lakh for treatment of ailing journo

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed has provided Tk one lakh for the treatment of ailing Staff Reporter of the daily Jugantor Hasan Arefin.

The CA extended the help as his attention was drawn to the ailing journalist who underwent bypass heart surgery at Ibrahim Cardiac Centre of Birdem Hospital few days ago.

On behalf of the CA, his Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim handed over a cheque for the amount to Arefin's wife Rina Pervin at the CA's office yesterday.

Jugantor Editor Golam Sarwar was also present.



PHOTO: STAR

Chief Justice Md Ruhul Amin speaks at the Call to the Bar Ceremony at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday. Bangladesh Bar Council organised the ceremony.

TRAINING OF POLICE

5-year-old girl shot dead in Gazipur

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A five-year-old girl died after a bullet reportedly from nearby firing range of Rajendrapur Cantonment in Gazipur hit her head yesterday afternoon.

The bullet hit the right side of the head of Shila Akter, daughter of one Shahin Miah and Jayeda Akter, while Shila along with her parents was having lunch inside the kitchen of their house at Taltoly Dike Bari at Joydevpur in Gazipur at 1:38pm.

The family members with the help of locals rushed Shila to Combined Military Hospital in Rajendrapur where the doctors declared her dead.

Another bullet was found engraved in a date palm on the northern side of the kitchen.

Sources in the cantonment said that a daylong training session of firing for the officials from the departments of police and special branch was held yesterday in the firing range of the cantonment starting from 7:00am.

Turkish envoy seeks Dhaka's support to hold World Expo

UNB, Dhaka

The government of Turkey has full support for the present caretaker government, said the Turkish Ambassador in Dhaka Ferit Ergin.

The Turkish envoy said this when he made a courtesy call on Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at the latter's office yesterday morning.

Ergin sought Bangladesh's support to the Turkish move to hold World Expo in 2015 at Izmir, a city of Turkey.

The ambassador appreciated the government's various reform activities in the economic sector and in electoral process.

This was the Turkish envoy's first call on Fakhruddin Ahmed after his assumption of office as the chief adviser of the caretaker government on January 12, 2007.

Chehlum

Chelum of Dr Qamrun Nahar, gynecological consultant of Chittagong Medical College Hospital, will be held at her residence at Changan on Friday, says a press release.

She passed away due to a cardiac arrest on May 15.

She left behind her husband, one son and one daughter.

Friends, relatives and admirers have been requested to attend the programme.

Dr Yunus wants to take banking for the poor to Africa

AFP, Berlin

Bangladeshi Nobel peace laureate Muhammad Yunus said on Tuesday he was hoping to export the micro-credit system he pioneered in Asia to more African countries to help the continent overcome poverty.

"There is a lot of interest from African leaders to whom I have been talking. The question is how can this be translated into practice," he told a press conference at the close of a World Bank meeting on Africa in Berlin.

Yunus said all of the developed world needed to strive to help Africa in order to live up to the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals which include halving extreme poverty by 2015.

"This is very important. It is the first time the UN has set such goals. The time has come to stick to them."

Yunus, nicknamed the "Banker to the Poor", won the 2006 Nobel peace prize for helping millions escape poverty through micro-credit financing projects which enable people without collateral or steady income to get small loans.

A few African nations, including Rwanda and Mali, already have micro-credit financing projects based on the model he developed.

Yunus held talks with African officials in Berlin just weeks ahead of the Group of Eight summit from June 6-8 in Heiligendamm, Germany.

The host nation, which holds the G8 presidency, has promised to put initiatives to help Africa high on the summit agenda.

German Development Minister Heidemarie Wiese-Zeul said Tuesday the summit would look at how to give ordinary Africans access to financial institutions.

"This will be an important point at the summit."

Nurul Huda passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Language Movement veteran engineer Nurul Huda passed away due to respiratory complications at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital yesterday at the age of 83, says a press release.

He was buried at Banani Graveyard.

Son of advocate Nuruddin Ahmad and Sabia Khatun, Nurul Huda was born in Tripura of India on August 8 in 1924. After completion of BSC from Kolkata Presidency College in 1947, he enrolled at the then Anshan Ullah Engineering College in Dhaka.

He was elected vice-president for 1948-54 and led the language movement in the college.

He was also members of Tamuddun Majlish, Rashtravasha Sangram Parishad and Sarbadalya Rashtravasha Sangram Parishad.

During the first strike in the government offices in Dhaka demanding declaration of Bangla as the state language of Pakistan on December 13 in 1947, Nurul Huda led a rally in front of the secretariat.

Rehab official killed in road accident

Squadron Leader (ret'd) Syed M Akhter, organising secretary of Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (Rehab) and managing director of Northern Foundation, was killed in a road accident on Airport Road in the city early yesterday, says a press release.

Rehab members, in a statement, expressed deep shock at his death. They also prayed for salvation of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

Doa mahfil

A doa mahfil for late ABM Kamal Uddin Khan, founder life member and former chairman of Board of Governors of North South University

Foundation, will be held on the North South University campus at Star Tower at 12 Kemal Ataturk Avenue in the city at 4:30pm tomorrow, says a press release.

Members of NSU Foundation, NSU administration, faculties, students and admirers are requested to attend the doa mahfil.

Kamal Uddin Khan passed away on May 20 in a road accident.

A doa mahfil on behalf of his family will also be held at Banani Jam-e-Mosque on May 24 after Maghrib prayers.



PHOTO: STAR

Dr Badiul Alam Majumder speaks at a roundtable titled 'Review of the constitutions of major political parties' at the Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left are M Hafizuddin Khan and Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury and on his right is Mujahidul Islam Selim.

96 killed by law enforcers since emergency: Odhikar report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 96 people were killed and 1,93,329 arrested by different law enforcement agencies since the state of emergency was declared 130 days ago, says a report by Odhikar, a human rights watchdog.

Of the dead, 54 were killed by Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), 25 by police, seven by joint forces, six by army, three by navy and one by narcotics control department men.

The report revealed that 51 people were killed in 'crossfire' by Rab while 12 by police and one by

the joint forces.

Odhikar demanded investigation into 'extra judicial killings' so that the persons involved in those could be brought to justice. They also demanded to make the investigation report public.

According to the report, 17 people were killed in torture by different law enforcement agencies.

The dead included 39 activists of different political parties including eight from BNP, four from Awami League, six from Purbo Banglar Communist Party

(Janajuddho), four from Purbo Banglar Communist Party, four from Purbo Banglar Communist Party (Red Flag), and two from Biplobi Communist Party.

The list of dead also includes a housewife, a female garment worker, a freedom fighter, an indigenous leader, three farmers, a businessman, a police informer and two bus drivers.

Odhikar also expressed grave concern over non-payment of wages to garment workers across the country and jute mill workers at Khalishpur in Khulna.

'Reinstate Valerie Taylor as CRP coordinator'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday demanded necessary steps to bring Valerie Taylor, founder of the Centre for Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP), back to her previous position as coordinator with due honour for the sake of restoring the reputation of the organisation.

The CRP board of trustees recently removed Valerie Taylor, who dedicated her life to caring for others, from her position as its coordinator.

At the press conference, the speakers alleged that some trustees have tried to turn the welfare organisation into a profit-making organisation.

They also demanded restoration of the spirit of CRP -- treatment and rehabilitation of the poor at a minimal cost.

The Nagarik Committee organised the press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) auditorium. Mobarak Ali Mollah, a retired additional secretary, said the CRP authorities have increased all the fees for care and treatment. As a result, the poor people are being deprived of healthcare, he added.

Nagorik Committee urged the government to take necessary steps to save the organisation from ruin through investigation into various activities of the trustee board.

Engineer SM Anwar Hossain, Maj Gen (ret'd) ATM Abdul Wahad, Akku Chowdhury and Golam Morshed also spoke at the press conference.

Death anniversary

UNB, Dhaka



Industry (FBCCI) and Dhaka Club.

To mark the day, a milad mahfil will be held at his Banani residence after Maghrib prayers.

Relatives and friends have been requested to attend the milad.

'Implement draft RTI Act to ensure good governance'

Non-accessibility of information not only creates a major obstacle to bringing about a change in the livelihood of marginalised groups but also acts as a hurdle to strengthening good governance and democracy, said development and human rights activists at a workshop yesterday.

They also called for implementing the draft Right to Information (RTI) Act 2006 to ensure good governance, democracy, press freedom and the rights of the people.

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) organised the three-day workshop on 'Mainstreaming Right to Information (RTI): Challenges and Possibilities' that began at Brac Centre Inn in the city yesterday, says a press release.

The objective of the workshop is to develop a common understanding

ing on the concept of Right to Information (RTI), to mainstream RTI related issues into partner's programme and to identify the future course of action.

Representatives of six partner organisations of MJF, who are working directly on the issue, namely Shamunnay, Muktiyoddha Smriti Trust, Bishwa Shahitya Kendra, Consumers' Association of Bangladesh (CAB), D.Net and Mass-line Media Centre (MMC), are taking part in the workshop.

Projects of these partners of MJF are focusing on national level policy advocacy matters, mobilising grassroots people and making them aware so that they can claim access to information as a right and consider the right as a tool for development and enlightening citizens through raising awareness.

WEATHER TODAY				
No change in temperature likely				
UNB, Dhaka				
Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Dhaka, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over				
Rajshahi and Khulna divisions in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.				
Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period, Met Office said.				
Highest temperature 37.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Bogra and Ishwardi and lowest 23.0 degree Celsius at Faridpur.				
The sun sets in the capital at 6:38 pm today and rises at 5:12am 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	34.3	25.4	69	70
Chittagong	31.4	24.2	81	78
Rajshahi	36.8	24.0	77	65
Khulna	35.3	24.5	76	64
Barisal	33.5	24.7	79	73
Sylhet	30.5	24.5	92	87
Cox's Bazar	31.5	24.5	90	75