

## 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 provi-

sions 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 Badil Alam Majumder, secre-

tary 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 Iahangir 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.

"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 tried from politics.

Dr Matiur Rahman, Shah Abdul Hannan, Mohiuddin Ahmed, Ilyas Kanchari, 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.

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.

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 Taltoli Dike Bari at Joydebpur 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.

Women shot, robbed of Tk one lakh

### Concern over filing of case against 2500 RMG workers

#### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations yesterday expressed concern over filing of a case against 2500 unnammed workers of Fortune 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 demanded that the government take effective steps in implementing the tripartite agreement to stop harassment of the workers.

In separate statement, Sramik 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.

They also demanded that the government should not take any interest in the case.

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#### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A housewife was murdered in the city yesterday.

The dead was identified as Nadira Yasmine, 38, of Kalabagan 1st lane in Dhammoli.

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

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

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

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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.

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

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.

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

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



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.

Dr Yunus wants to take banking for the poor to Africa

APP, 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 Wieczorek-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

L a n g u a g e M o v e m e n t veteran engineer Nurul Huda passed away due to respiratory complications at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical 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 Koltakata Presidency College in 1947, he enrolled at the then Ahsanullah 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 Tamuddin Majlis, Rashtravasha Sangram Parishad and Sarbadala 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 (retd) 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.

### '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 Paralysed (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.

Nagarik 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 (retd) ATM Abdul Wahad, Akku Chowdhury and Golam Moshed also spoke at the press conference.

Death anniversary

UNB, Dhaka

Today is the 6th death anniversary of Nuruddin Ahmed, a former president of Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and 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'

#### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

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 strengthen 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 understand-

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, Mukti Joddha Smriti Trust, Bishwa Shahitya Kendra, Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB), DNet and Massline 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 enlightenment citizens through raising awareness.

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.

Contributions can be sent to Account no: 6554 (34), Somali Bank, Krishibazar Branch, Mohammadmur, Dhaka. For further information, interested persons can also contact Pancare Hospital Limited, Dhamondi Tower, House # 4/A, Road # 16 (old 27), Dhamondi. Telephone: 8158394, 914242.