



## ELECTION COMMISSION REFORM PROPOSAL Ensure 33pc representation of women in political parties

Speakers tell discussion

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday demanded implementation of the Election Commission (EC) reform proposal for 33 percent representation of women at policy making level in political parties for their empowerment.

Criticising the outlook of major political parties towards the proposal, they urged them to create supportive atmosphere for women to apply their skill and merit at policy making level.

The discussion titled 'The proposal for participation of women by 33 percent at policy making level in political parties: Recent thoughts and our demands' was held at the National Press Club in the city.

It was organised by Samajik Protirodh Committee, an alliance of 41 social, cultural and women's rights organisation.

Referring to EC proposal, Shahna Shumi, programme manager of Nari Pragati Sangha, said the initiative will pave the way for political empowerment of women.

Presenting a keynote paper at the discussion, she said even five

percent representation of women is not there in any major political parties at present.

There are only eight women members in 88-member central committee of Awami League representing only 11 percent participation of women, while 10 women members are there in 182-member central committee of Bangladesh Nationalist Party representing less than six percent participation, she added.

Shahnaz also pointed out that women are given nominations where the possibility of their winning in the election is very slim and they are also deprived of having the responsibility of significant ministries in the government giving a lame excuse of eligibility.

The New Age Editor Nurul Kabir said the eligibility of women cannot be judged until they are given chance.

He urged all including civil society and rights organisations to press the authorities concerned to implement the proposal soon.

Hailing the reform proposal, Ayesha Khanom, general secretary of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad,

said the overall democratic reforms in the government require equal participation of women and establishment of their rights.

Khairunnahar of Action Aid Bangladesh suggested the women to be sensitised to press the political parties to nominate more women and include them in different committees including the central one.

Representatives of different organisations of the alliance including AIN O Shalish Kendra, Bangladesh Mahila Samity, Awaj Foundation, Brac, The Hunger Project, Samata, Steps Towards Development, and Bangladesh Nari Sangbadik Kendra took part in the discussion chaired by Prof Mahmuda Islam, president of Women for Women.

Prof Mahmuda laid emphasis on the role of mass media to create pressure on political parties and government to implement the reform proposal.

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General Secretary of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad Ayesha Khanom speaks at a view exchange meeting on women's participation in the policy-making process of political parties at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

## Long-term strategy a must to prevent bird flu epidemic

### BSS, Dhaka

Speakers at a discussion yesterday stressed the need for a long-term strategy to prevent bird flu epidemic in order to protect the country's Tk 12,000 crore poultry sector.

Nearly 30 lakh people are directly involved in this vital sector and making a significant contribution to the national economy, they added.

UNICEF held the discussion on bird flu at its conference room presided by President of Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB) Quamrul Islam Chowdhury.

UNICEF Communication Officer Shamsuddin Ahmed, experts, professionals and journalists took part in the discussion.

Referring to the government's meticulous preparedness since the detection of bird flu, the speakers said the role of the mass media is significant to supplement the government efforts in this regard.

UNICEF, with the help of the government of Japan, has provided \$1.2 million to Bangladesh government in combating bird flu.

So far, about 1.7 lakh chickens were culled at 68 affected farms in 14 districts since the detection of the

bird flu virus in the country, said the speakers.

UNICEF sources said as part of the government steps to check bird flu, the Livestock authorities have ordered stamping out and taking measures to disinfect all poultry farms around one kilometers radius of the affected farms, ban on transportation of poultry, chickens, eggs and pet birds within 10 kilometers radius of the affected areas.

Besides, deputy commissioners were asked to carry out intensive inspection at poultry farms while members of the armed forces were called out to assist the police in this respect.

Meanwhile, the ministries of Agriculture, Livestock and Health and Family Welfare have opened control rooms to monitor the situation and provide with preventive measures in places where avian influenza was detected.

According to Livestock Department statistics, there are 52,000 and 1.52 lakh poultry farms in the country while the estimated figure of poultry birds are about 20 crore.

International bodies, including World Health Organisation (WHO), UNICEF and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), joined the campaign pledging to extend their technical and financial supports to face the

deadly phenomenon, which so far killed 169 people and attacked 281 others in 60 countries following the latest bird flu outbreak.

According to the officials, preparations have been underway since two years ago when National Avian Influenza Human Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Plan Bangladesh 2006-2008 were formulated and a large number of doctors were trained to identify bird flu victims.

But World Health Organisation (WHO) representative in Dhaka Dr Duangvadee Sungkhobol earlier said the high population density exposed Bangladesh to the intensifying avian influenza risks but "aggressive actions" involving all stakeholders and massive public awareness could help the South Asian country overcome this crisis.

The government has urged the people not to be panicked with the outbreak of avian flu as the human infliction of avian influenza were not reported from anywhere in South Asia including India despite its outbreak there.

Experts said that the chickens or eggs of even the flu-infected poultry birds are safe after proper cooking and asked the people in handling them properly, to clean their hands and bury the poultry remnants underground.

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Justice Nazrul Islam Chowdhury yesterday concluded his two-day inspection of civil courts in Barisal laying emphasis on establishing the rule of law in the country.

Earlier, he was given a reception by the members of Barisal District Bar Association at its auditorium on noon.

Speaking as chief guest at the function, Justice Nazrul said only rule of law can bring prosperity and peace to the society.

He said no body is above law, but in the past some persons behaved in such a way as if they were above the law, and that attitude created many problems.

He called upon the members of legal profession to join in an effort to make the country habitable.

Dilip Kumar Ghosh, president of the association, presided over the function.

## Thundershowers likely

### UNB, Dhaka

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

Moderately heavy rainfalls are also likely at places, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 35.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Ishwardi and lowest 25.3 degree Celsius at Sylhet.

The sun sets in the capital at 6.50pm today and rises at 5:13am 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	34.6	27.4	69	65
Chittagong	32.6	26.4	69	78
Rajshahi	34.8	26.2	83	68
Khulna	33.2	26.5	77	69
Barisal	33.6	26.5	83	81
Sylhet	34.3	25.3	76	64
Cox's Bazar	32.5	26.5	73	73

## CPB president hospitalised

President of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) Manjurul Ahsan Khan was admitted to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University for an eye operation, says a press release.

He is now undergoing treatment under the supervision of Dr Shafiqul Islam.

Relatives and admirers have been requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Adeluddin Ahmed

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Today is the 26th death anniversary of Adeluddin Ahmed, former central minister of Pakistan and a founder member of Awami League, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his Faridpur town residence after Asr prayers today.

He was a member of the legislative assembly and the constituent assembly of Pakistan. He was also elected member of the National Assembly of Pakistan in 1970.

He placed the bill in Pakistan Assembly to make Bangla and Urdu the joint state languages of Pakistan.

## Md Khairuzzaman

Today is the first death anniversary of Md Khairuzzaman, former deputy general manager of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, says a press release.

Relatives and admirers have been requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

He is survived by his wife, one son and father and mother.

He was cremated at Postagola Crematorium in Dhaka.

The post-funeral rites for the departed soul will be held at Dhakeswari Temple complex on July 2.

Officers, employees and workers of Limo Electronics Ltd expressed deep shock at his death and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family.

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