

Participation of grassroots' people a must to strengthen democracy

Speakers tell Shujan roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Development and institutionalisation of democracy is not possible without participation of the people at grassroots level and strengthening of the local government institutions with financial autonomy, said the speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

They said the local governments formed by elected representatives at all levels should be brought under strong monitoring and made free from the influence of lawmakers and central government officials.

The roundtable on 'Measures needed to strengthen and activate local government' was organised by Shushashoner Janney Nagorik (Shujan) at Cirdap auditorium in the city in a bid to make a concrete proposal to put forward to the government for reforms in the local government.

"We want to make our future bright by learning from the mistakes of the past," said Shujan President Prof Muzaffer Ahmad referring to corruptions by many politicians both at national and local levels.

All should try to think how honest and competent people could be involved in political process, he said lauding the formation of a commission in the local government ministry and urging the present government to initiate effective reforms in this regard.

Prof Ahmad, who presided over the roundtable, said national planning should be framed on the basis of the recommendations made at



PHOTO: STAR

Prof Muzaffer Ahmad speaks at a roundtable at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. On his right is Syed Abul Maksud.

the local government level.

The draft proposal prepared by Shujan Secretariat recommended that the local government should be formed at union, upazila and district levels by the elected representatives.

The government officials will work under the local government councils, it noted.

Every council should have clear responsibilities so that one does not clash with others, while there will be standing committees in the local government institutions to look after more important issues, it proposed.

There should be a finance commission to recommend to the government on making a formula for distribution of funds to the local government based on the needs and fund collected by them, said

the draft proposal presented by Shujan Central Coordinator Dilip Kumar Sarkar.

"The local government will not control the central government, but facilitate it," Dilip said, adding that it can suspend any elected representative only on the recommendation of the local government ombudsman.

The local government should hold council meetings mandatorily after every three months through which the elected representatives will be made accountable, he read from the draft proposal.

Economist Dr Atiur Rahman suggested formation of an ombudsman to hold the local government accountable and a finance commission to decide budgetary allocation and specify the role of the government officials

at the local level.

The conflicts, if there are, among the upazila parishad, union parishad and municipality should also be looked into, he added.

Taking part in the discussion, Justice Ebadul Haque suggested selection of judges to work at village court.

Awami League (AL) leader Advocate Rahmat Ali said the local government's role is very important in formulating policies, especially in collecting data on the resources and problems at grassroots levels.

AL leader Dr Abdur Razzak said the process of giving more power to bureaucracy instead of empowering the local government would not bring good results.

Col (ret'd) Shawkat Ali suggested elections at all tiers of local government simultaneously to save money and check frauds.

The first duty of the lawmakers is to formulate laws, national policies and monitor the executives, he said, adding that they should also monitor whether national policies are reflected in their own constituencies.

Shujan Secretary Dr Badiul Alam Majumder, Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury of Ganashasthya Kendra, Columnist Syed Abul Maksud, Taleya Rehman of Democracy Watch, Aroma Dutta of Prip Trust, former lawmaker Golam Sarwar Milon, former upazila chairmen Ahmad Bashir, Bijoy Kumar Barua, Suvash Singha and UP chairmen Khorshed Alam, Matiur Rahman Tapan, Ataharul Islam Bulbul and Hasan Rakib Azad also spoke on the occasion.



PHOTO: PID

Advisers to the caretaker government see off President Iajuddin Ahmed at Zia International Airport on Saturday night prior to his departure for Singapore for medical checkup.

Construction work at DU stopped amid student protest

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) authorities yesterday stopped the construction work of a labourers' shed in front of Central Library in the face of agitation by students.

The authorities had started the construction work of Social Sciences Faculty Building beside Madhu's Canteen in the last week of June. The shed was being built for the construction workers who will stay there during the construction.

Seeing a boundary wall being erected on the open space in front of the library, the students became enraged.

They met Dean of Social Sciences Faculty Prof Harun-or-Rashid and argued that the shed for labourers will be a source of noise pollution. As a result, students will have difficulty concentrating on their studies, they added.

Prof Harun told them that the contractor did not inform him before building the shed.

But he has now asked the contractor to stop the work.

He also said the boundary wall will be demolished soon and the shed will be shifted to another place.

Reforms should be aimed at restoring people's rights

Says Badruddoza

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday said eliminating one or more leaders from their party posts cannot be the aim of the reforms initiatives.

"The aim of reforms should be the restitution of people's rights," Badruddoza said adding, "Removing one or more top leaders from their respective party posts cannot be the aim of reforms initiatives."

Badruddoza, also a former president, was addressing a view-exchange meeting on political reforms at Maghbazar in the city. About 100 leaders and activists of the party from Barisal and Sylhet divisions attended the meeting.

The LDP chief also emphasised bringing reforms so as to touch not only the top level but also the grassroots level of any party.

He said they might announce their reforms proposal before the media at the Election Commission on July 22.

The former president also spoke for bringing reforms in the constitution.

About age limit for participating in active politics, the LDP chief said, "Age does not matter to do active politics. If anyone can play role for his or her party at older age then where is the problem?"

Badruddoza viewed that political parties should allocate 20 percent of their total seats for the women candidates to participate in the parliamentary election.

He reiterated that parliament

should have 100 more seats, which would be distributed among the political parties on the basis of the number of seats they win in the election.

He said balance of power between the president and the prime minister is a must.

"If the politicians do not change their mindsets and mentalities, nothing positive would come for this nation and people," felt the former president.

LDP Secretary General Maj (ret'd) MA Mannan and party member Mahi B Chowdhury, among others, were present at the meeting.

Shab-e-Meraj on Aug 11

UNB, Dhaka

Holy Shab-e-Meraj will be observed in the country on August 11 as the moon of Rajab was not sighted yesterday.

This was decided at a meeting of the National Moon Sighting Committee held at the Islamic Foundation with its Vice-President and Religious Affairs Secretary Muhammad Ataur Rahman in the chair yesterday evening.

The meeting took the decision after reviewing information received from all the district administration offices, local and head offices of the Islamic Foundation, the Met Office and SPARSO, said an official hand-out.

Rath Jatra today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The annual Jagannath Rath Jatra (chariot procession), a major religious festival of Hindus, will be celebrated across the country today.

The country's biggest Rath Jatra will take place at Dhamrai. The procession will start at 3:00pm with the participation of thousands of devotees.

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) will bring out a chariot procession from its temple at Swamibagh in the city at 4:00pm, seeking divine blessings for universal peace and harmony.

The Rath Jatra will start from ISKCON temple at 4:00pm and end at Dhakeswar National Temple. The chariot will return from Dhakeswar Temple on July 24," Sukhi Susheel Das Brahmachari of

Shop owner beaten to death

Wife, daughter, son-in-law arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A stationery shop owner was beaten to death allegedly by his family members at their house in the city's Mohammadpur area on Saturday night.

The police recovered the body of Boni Israel Mallik, 50, from his residence at Bashbari yesterday afternoon and also arrested his wife Faizunnesa, daughter Nasrin

Sultana, son-in-law Mir Imran Hossain and his friend Aminul Islam on charges of murder.

During the interrogation, all the arrestees confessed to the police that they first tied the hands and legs of Mallik and beat him up with cricket bats and stumps, leaving him dead.

The police said family feud is the reason behind the murder.

Shahidul Islam, nephew of the victim, has filed a case against the four arrestees.

IIBA Bangladesh chapter formed

International Institute of Business Analysis (IIBA) has formed its Bangladesh chapter at a general meeting held at its office in the city, says a press release.

The meeting has also formed a five-member executive committee with former FBCCI president Yussuf Abdullah Harun as its president, former president of American Chambers of Commerce in Bangladesh Aftab Ul Islam as vice-president (communications), President of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce Saifuzzaman Chowdhury as vice-president (education), Director of Bangladesh Association of Software & Information Services M Shueb Chowdhury as general secretary and FBCCI Director Amirul Haque as treasurer.

The IIBA is an international not-for-profit professional association for business analysis professionals. Its vision is to be the leading worldwide professional association that develops and maintains standards for the practice of business analysis.

Death anniversary

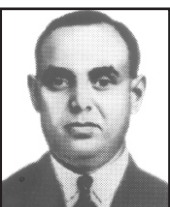


Today is the 37th death anniversary of freedom fighter Shaheed Gazi Alauddin Master, says a press release.

An English teacher of Narayanganj High School, he was also the founder of Nutan Bakhtar High School and Nutan Bakhtar Primary School at Keraniganj.

Baktarchar High School and Shaheed Gazi Alauddin Smriti Parishad will hold a milad mahfil and discussion on the school premises today.

Sultan Ahmed



Today is the 37th death anniversary of Sultan Ahmed, secretary to the then East Pakistan government and also the secretary to the East Pakistan Red Cross Society, says a press release.

He was the founder of Brahmanbaria and Sakhira Colleges and president of Gandaria Monija Rahman Girls' School.

A milad and doa mahfil will be held after Maghrib prayers at his residence at 32 Purana Pallan.

Dhali Mohammad Monowar



Today is the 16th death anniversary of Dhali Mohammad Monowar, a rhymist and a sports organiser, says a press release.

On the occasion, Dhali Mohammad Monowar Smriti Parishad organises elaborate programmes, including milad and doa mahfil and distribution of food among orphans, at his home village at Samashpur in Srinagar, Munshiganj and in Dhaka.

Gruel kitchen for jute workers

With the support from the people of all walks of life, the National Relief Committee will open a 'gruel kitchen' at Khalishpur in Khulna for starving jute mill workers and their families on July 19, says a press release.

Justice Ghulam Rabbani, Dr Kamal Hossain, Hamida Hossain, Sultana Kamal, Dr Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Dr Atiur Rahman, AAMS Arefin Siddique and Ataus Samad are among the persons who played a significant role in making this humanitarian programme a success.

Sven Lampell passes away

Sven Lampell, the Red Cross chief delegate to the then East Pakistan in 1971, passed away in Stockholm last week at the age of 86, says a press release.

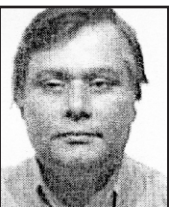
An earnest friend of Bangladesh, Lampell played a significant part in hastening the resignation of the then governor of East Pakistan Dr AM Malik.

Lampell was in charge of the Green Zone, housed at what was once known as the Intercontinental Hotel, and insisted on the resignation of the whole cabinet before they could enter in the closing days of the Liberation War. Dr Malik's resignation came as a serious blow to the Pakistani junta who were fast losing control over Dhaka in December 1971.

Sven Lampell, a retired Swedish Air Force Colonel, came here to act as a Red Cross delegate to help the victims of the 1970 cyclone.

Lampell is survived by his wife Eva Dahlback and two sons, David and Tomas.

Syed Nizamuddin



Syed Nizamuddin, senior economist, World Bank Office, Dhaka, passed away at Labaid Cardiac Hospital in the city yesterday, says a press release.

Nizamuddin joined the World Bank in 1979 and was the longest serving professional staff member of the Dhaka office.

He is survived by his wife, two sons and one daughter.

His qulkhani will be held after Asr prayers today.

WEATHER TODAY

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

Moderately heavy to very heavy rainfalls are also likely at places over the country, Met office said.

It also said that day temperature may fall by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 36.2 degree Celsius was recorded at Sylhet and the lowest of 25.5 degrees at Chuadanga.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:49pm today and rises at 5:21am tomorrow.

The 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	32.7	25.8	7	75
Chittagong	31.4	27.4	82	86
Rajshahi	33.5	26.4	77	93
Khulna	32.0	27.4	83	86
Barisal	32.0	27.0	92	87
Sylhet	36.2	27.0	73	78
Cox's Bazar	30.6	26.5	92	97