

Withdraw judges appointed on political considerations

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday urged the government to withdraw 'controversial' judges who were appointed on political considerations during the tenure of BNP-Jamaat alliance government.

"The country is now passing through a grave crisis... This is in part due to interventions by the BNP-Jamaat government in judicial system. The caretaker government should take necessary steps right now to restore the image of our judiciary," columnist Syed Abul Moksud said.

The controversy began with the extension of judges' retirement age, he added.

The Citizens' Rights Movement organised the press conference at the National Press Club in the city to press home their 17-point

demand, including resignation of 'controversial' judges, independent judiciary, transparency in appointment of judges of the Supreme Court and an end to political interventions in the appointment of judges.

Advocate Mohsin Rashid, a lawyer of the Supreme Court, said independence of the judiciary does not mean only the separation of the judiciary from the executive. The judges should also change their mindset, he added.

Referring to the anti-corruption drive, he said that 'in-camera trial' might not be acceptable after the end of the tenure of the caretaker government.

He added that 'in-camera trial' is not constitutionally acceptable in the country.

He also stressed the need to check spiralling prices of essen-

tials. "The people suffering financial hardship are not at all interested in anti-corruption drive or trial. They need fertilisers; they need rice and lentil. The caretaker government must address this issue."

Lauding the ongoing drive to stamp out corruption, Tushar Rehman, secretary general of the Citizens' Rights Movement, said the caretaker government should form a Supreme Judicial Council or Council of Elders to exert pressure on 'controversial' judges.

Prof Mesbah Kamal, Vice-president of the organisation Advocate M Shahjahan, former ambassador Mohuiddin Ahmad, Group Captain (retd) Mohammad Alfaz and Major (retd) Hamidul Hossain Tarek Bir Bikram also spoke.

'Identify officials responsible for ruining jute mills'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Speakers at a view exchange meeting yesterday urged the caretaker government to devise ways and means to keep jute mills running, turning them into profitable enterprises.

They also called on the government to form an impartial probe committee to identify the corrupt officials who were responsible for making the jute mills loss-making concerns.

The Greater Khulna Development Action Coordination Committee organised the meeting at Khulna Press Club auditorium, with its acting president Haider Gazi Salahuddin Runu in the chair.

Journalist Gouranga Nandi of Khulna bureau office of the Janakantha presented a keynote paper on the condition of jute mills and its workers and employees.

The speakers demanded that Tk 300 crore be allocated to save the jute mills in Khulna-Jessore region from ruin.

They also suggested extending fresh bank loans to the jute mills.

They called on the government not to follow the prescriptions of the World Bank and IMF on issues relating to the jute industry.

Committee Secretary general Sheikh Ashrafuzzaman, CPB leader Advocate Feroze Ahmed, former Awami League lawmaker Advocate Enayet Ali, former principal of BL College Zafar Imam, retired additional divisional commissioner Hafizur Rahman, Engineer Asadul Haque and labour leader Lokman Hakim took part in the meeting.

SIM card registration deadline extended

BSS, Dhaka

The government yesterday launched a renewed campaign for registration of mobile phone clients against their Subscribers Identification Module (SIM) cards to prevent crimes using cellphone extending up to August 16.

The previous deadline for mandatory registration of SIM was March 16.

"In case of the old subscribers, the connection could be snapped if their addresses were not registered against the SIMs within the deadline" in line with the prescribed Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) form, an official said.

The source said the mobile phone operators would be fined \$10 per SIM if they did not record the clients' addresses and their identities correctly while selling SIM along side the disconnection of the service. The amount could be raised if the situation did not improve despite the warning.

The officials said the extended deadline was set at a high level meeting at the BTRC office on July 16.

"Earlier decision for the registration by July 16 could not be materialised because of the influence of some vested quarters during the past several years. But the present government has taken a firm step to enforce the rule for mandatory registration," an official said.

He said under the decision BTRC would ask the mobile operators to launch a massive campaign for registration of mobile phone SIMs to make the campaign successful.

The officials said the mobile phone operators as well as the clients will not face any problem with the registration of the SIMs. Because of unregistered SIMs, the ordinary clients had often been entrapped by the extortionists, terrorists and corrupt people.

Ahsan Kalimullah and Editor of the Samakal Abed Khan also spoke at the programme moderated by Maj Gen (retd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim.

2 street boys electrocuted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Two street boys were electrocuted at Tootpara Jorhahal Bazar in Khulna Sadar yesterday.

They were identified as Shafiqul, 12, of Bagerhat district and Rabiul, 13, of Pirojpur district.

Police sources said the incident occurred when they were stealing electric wire of a house near Tootpara police outpost.

However, police could not identify their fathers till filing of this report.

The bodies were sent to Khulna Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.



PHOTO: STAR

Eminent lawyer Dr Kamal Hossain launches a book titled 'Formula One' by Maj (retd) Ameen Ahmed Afsari, middle, at a publication ceremony at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

ARREST OF HASINA Awami Shilpi Goshthi concerned

Awami Shilpi Goshthi expressed grave concern over the arrest of former prime minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, says a press release.

In a written statement its central committee members said the government decision to arrest Sheikh Hasina has raised eyebrows among people. Hasina didn't get due respect, the statement added.

The artistes are 'agitated and worried' at the arrest of Hasina, read the statement.

Signatories to the statement include Awami Shilpi Goshthi President Salahuddin Badal and General Secretary Shibu Roy, actor Jamaluddin Hossain, poet Kazi Abu Jafar Siddiqui, poet Rabindra Gope, singer Kanan Bala Sarkar, engineer Safat Khaiyum, poet Aslam Sani, singer Moloy Kumar Ganguli and many others.

Unite against wicked politics: Dr Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday called on all to unite against wicked politics in the country.

The nation could not fulfil the aspirations of martyred freedom fighters and the great leaders because of wicked politics, he said at the publication ceremony of a book titled 'Formula One' by Maj (retd) Ameen Ahmed Afsari.

"Since honest politics no longer dominates and wicked politics has replaced it, we could not deliver the fruits of the freedom to the people," Dr Kamal said.

He also said the wicked politics has paved the way for fundamentalist politics in the country.

The nation has become stronger to a great extent after 36 years of independence, he said, adding that it is high time to unite against all kinds of wicked politics.

Rhythm Cultural Society organised the publication ceremony at the National Press Club in the city. Maj (retd) Afsari, Prof Nazmul



PHOTO: STAR

Legal expert Shahdeen Malik speaks at a roundtable titled "Effective steps to curb corruption" at Hotel Sheraton in the city yesterday. On his left are M Hafiz Uddin Khan, Lt Gen (retd) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury, Prof Muzafer Ahmad, Dr Akbar Ali Khan and Saadat Hossain. The daily Prothom Alo organised the roundtable. (Story on Page 1)

Police now free from all undue pressure: IGP

CU CORRESPONDENT

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Nur Mohammad has said it is the high time to bring in some positive changes in the police department which is now free from all undue pressures that it frequently faced before January 11 this year.

He was speaking as chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of 'Police Service Delivery Centre' and 'Police Open Day' at Panchlaish Model Police Station in the port city yesterday.

The IGP called upon all to say 'Yes' to police and extend helping hands to build a prosperous Bangladesh.

"Radical changes have already started taking place in police department while it might take some time to remove the stigmas completely," he added.

"Earlier, we could not work independently when 'vested quarters' even interfered with the appointment of officer-in-charge in police stations

where 'their' approval was a must," he said.

Nur Mohammad said these quarters are also equally responsible for the bad name of police department.

He hoped that the newly launched service delivery system and Police Open Day would help develop a friendly community-police relationship based on mutual understanding, trust and cooperation to prevent crimes.

PRP Project Manager Hubert Staberhofer and representatives from different sections of the society also spoke on the occasion.

With Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Commissioner Moirur Rahman Chowdhury in the chair, the function was attended by Additional Inspector General of Police NBK Tripura as special guest.

Later, the IGP inaugurated the delivery centre and distributed bicycles, torchlights, mobile phones and umbrellas among the members of the community police.

Panchlaish Model Police Station is the first model police station in Chittagong under the Police Reform Project (PRP) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The 'Open Day' would provide an opportunity for the local residents to go to concerned police stations where the officer-in-charge (OC) would listen to their problems and suggest proper steps once in a month.

The government in collaboration with UNDP and Department for International Development (DFID) launched the first phase of the PRP in 2005 that aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of Bangladesh Police.

The programme is being implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs and Bangladesh Police while the European Commission is a major partner of the programme.

Col Taher's death anniversary observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 31st death anniversary of Col Abu Taher Bir Uttam was observed across the country yesterday.

Col Taher was a sector commander during the liberation war and a left leaning activist.

On the occasion, Jatiya Samaitantrik Dal (JSD) organised a rally at Kajla and JSD President Hasanul Haq Inu and other activists placed wreaths at his grave.

Inu said Zia betrayed the leaders and soldiers of the November 7 revolution although Col Taher gave Zia a new life. The country is passing through crisis and the people are concerned whether the country is leading towards democracy or autocratic rule, he added.

He urged the democratic parties to maintain unity of the 14-party alliance in this hour.

On November 7, 1975 Col Taher led the soldiers to free former president Ziaur Rahman from captivity. But on November 24, Col Taher was arrested and tried in a military tribunal inside Dhaka Central Jail by Zia.



PHOTO: STAR

Rozina, Akash, Irin and Taslima, who were abducted by a child trafficker on Friday, reunite with their family members yesterday after a team of Rapid Action Battalion arrested the trafficker along with the children in Khilgaon area in the city. Rab members handed over the children to their parents at the Rab-3 office yesterday.