

COALITION OF 27 NGOs SUBMIT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Call to recast local govt system

**UNB, Dhaka**

A coalition of 27 national and international NGOs operating in the country has submitted a 40-point recommendation to the caretaker government with a call to build a strong new local government.

The group demanded formation of an independent local government commission to ensure good governance, as its spokesman Mohsin Ali said, "Local government is an indispensable part of whole administration process of a modern welfare state."

The recommendations were prepared through a national convention with representation from various segments of society. Local Government National Convention Organising Committee, a platform of the 27 organisations, submitted the recommendations to a government-constituted panel on reforms of local government yesterday.

Ali, secretary of the organising committee, made the observations at a press conference at the National Press Club after the submission of the recommendations.

On behalf of the coalition, Mohsin Ali and Executive Director of Democracy Watch Taleya Rehman submitted the recommendations to the seven-member committee headed by former secretary Dr AMM Sawkat Ali.

The seven-member committee formed to outline a dynamic and

strong local government system has been asked to report to the caretaker government in three months.

Mohsin Ali said the civil society members, specialists, development partners, local government platforms, respective institutions and media personnel participated in the convention held on July 22 at the Biam auditorium to find out ways of ensuring decentralised and strong local government.

They recommended a recast of the structure and tiers of the local government bodies that can effectively work in development planning and implementation as well as administrative and financial management.

Framing a new law about manpower, function, mutual relations and coordination of local government institutions has been suggested by the coalition.

They also suggested extension of the present nine wards of union parishad to 12 wards.

Add one-third of the numbers of wards of the existing Poursava and City Corporation to their organograms to expand these local bodies, they said in the recommendations.

Elected representatives should lead three tiers of local government. The three tiers are district council, upazila council, and union council or Poursava and City Corporation as urban local-government bodies.

"Specify the responsibilities of chairmen and mayors, members

and commissioners maintaining checks and balances to ensure participation of all in local government institutions," says the coalition in its recommendations.

Taleya Rahman and Editor of the Gender and Development Alliance Ronjon Kormaker were present at the press conference.

The coalition members include Ongkar Bangladesh, Ain-o-Shalish Kendra, RDRS, Institute for Environment and Development, Actionaid Bangladesh, Care Bangladesh, Khan Foundation, Green Hill, JANIPOP, Gender and Development Alliance, Democracy Watch, Public Administration department of Dhaka University, Development Studies department of Dhaka University, Nagorik Udyog, Nari Udyog Kendra, Population Services and Training Centre, Prip Trust, Bangladesh Union Parishad Forum, VOICE, VERK, Madaripur Legal Aid Association, Manusher Jonno Foundation, Municipal Association of Bangladesh, Campaign for Good Governance, SAP Bangladesh and Save the Children-UK.

## Play people-friendly role to maintain law, order

Speakers tell police

**DU CORRESPONDENT**

As part of the initiatives of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) to bridge the gap between public and police, an Open House Day (OHD) programme was held at Shahbagh Police Station yesterday with a call for the police to play people-friendly role to maintain law and order.

Speakers at the programme said the quality of police service has not improved up to satisfactory level and there are still communication gaps between public and police.

Presided over by DMP Ramna Zone DC Selim Md Jahangir, the meeting was attended by Pro-vice-chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Prof MA Mannan, Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) General Secretary Prof Anwar Hossain, Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) President Alamgir Hossain, Office-in-Charge of Shahbagh Police Station Shahidul Islam, and representatives from other professional bodies, teachers, social workers and media persons.

The speakers said a deteriorating law and order still prevails at different areas under Shahbagh Police Station, including Dhaka University, Dhaka Medical College and Hospital and Suhrawardi Uddyan.

They hoped that the OHD programme would bring positive

changes in police service towards people as the programme has created a platform for civilians to discuss law and order with the law enforcement agency.

Admitting the police-public gap, DMP Ramna Zone DC said the OHD programme is being organised to bridge the gap.

He said problems mentioned at the programme would be met before the next meeting to be held before September 18.

On August 12, the DMP initiated the OHD programme in all the 33 police stations within the metropolis to make it a service-oriented organisation and to bridge the gap between police and public.

Under the programme, a monthly meeting will be held in each police station with the participation of representatives from different professional groups not exceeding 30.

The OHD programme is part of a set of initiatives of Bangladesh Police including 'Victims Support Centre' and 'Model Thana Programmes' under the 'Community Policing' Rule.

Our RU Correspondent adds: Boalia Police Station under Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP) was the first to hold Open House Day programme at its hall room yesterday.

Police sources said four police

stations of RMP would organise the OHD programme in each month encouraging locals to take part in it and assist law enforcers in maintaining law and order.

Rajshahi West Deputy Commissioner Mahabubur Rahman presided over the discussion where Assistant Police Commissioner Bivuti Bhusan and Boalia Police Station OC Ramzan Ali were present.

Representatives from different professional groups including journalists, local ward commissioner and college teachers took part in the meeting and advised the DC for immediate formation of community police in every ward to check crimes.

The speakers urged police to be more cooperative with the complainants and victims of repression who come to police station for help.

They also called for setting up a 'law and order monitoring committee' comprising various local representatives and senior police officials at every ward to discuss its law and order situation in every month and pursue its follow-up.



Chief Financial Officer of banglalink Ezzeldin Heikal hands over three cheques for 1.25 crore to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at his office on Thursday for the flood victims.



Officers and employees of Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha donated their one day's salary and two days' lunch allowance for flood-affected people. Photo shows BSRM Managing Director FRM Hafiz ul Islam handing over a cheque for the amount to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at his office for the relief fund recently.



Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed presides over a meeting of the advisory council at his office in the city yesterday.

## Dhaka-Colombo air connectivity important for better ties

Says Rajapakse

**UNB, Colombo**

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse yesterday said air connectivity between Dhaka and Colombo is important for better people-to-people contact and improving trade and economic cooperation.

Replying to a query from UNB during informal exchanges of views with the delegates of SAFMA at his residence, Rajapakse said officials of Sri Lankan and Bangladesh airline authorities had a meeting here yesterday discussing the issue of direct air link between the two Saarc countries.

Rajapakse said he has been impressed by innovative micro-credit idea of Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus in alleviating poverty. Prof Yunus earlier had a meeting with the Sri Lankan president.

Asked about his plan to visit Bangladesh, Rajapakse said he would like to visit Dhaka sometime next year.

On the current peace process with the Tamil Tigers, Rajapakse said he has set up a committee to talk with the Tamil Tigers and find out a solution to the longstanding problem. The committee would sit with the LTTE representatives, may be in a week or so, he added.

The Sri Lankan President expressed his optimism to find out an acceptable solution of the problem. "Even I am ready to sit with LTTE leader Pravakaran. He is not an outsider but a citizen of Sri Lanka."

He said if India extends cooperation, the problem with LTTE could be resolved quickly.

Asked whether India is non-cooperative, he said: "No, no, I'm not saying that."

Bangladesh SAFMA delegation was led by its President Reazuddin Ahmed.

The delegation also includes SAFMA Vice-president Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, National Press Club President Shawkat Mahmud, Ruhul Amin Gazi, Nurul Huda, Shamim Ahmad, Shah Alamgir, Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul and Omar Faruq.

## Steps taken to reopen closed CEPZ factory

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg**

Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (Bepza) has taken initiative to resume the activities of closed Uro Mode Fashion Limited yesterday.

The factory declared suspension of all of its activities on Friday following attack by its workers the previous day.

"We are negotiating with both the workers and the management and the factory (Uro Fashion) would be opened by tomorrow," said Bepza Executive Chairman Brig Gen Ashraf Abdullah Yusuf at a press conference at Bepza office at Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) yesterday.

He said the workers had problems with Deputy General Manager Abu Masud of the factory and the failure of the management in handling the workers resulted in Thursday's incident.

"But, 99 percent workers of the factory are innocent— they are yearning to resume working and we won't let them suffer," said Brig Gen Ashraf.

"However, few culprits would be punished while the innocent people would be dropped from the case filed in this connection," he assured.

## Army chief visits Faridpur today

**UNB, Faridpur**

Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed arrives here today to visit flood-affected areas.

He will distribute relief, fertiliser and seeds among the affected people and farmers.

The general will also visit the army-run mobile hospital that provides treatment to the people suffering from water-borne diseases.

He will exchange views with elite of the town and senior officials in the afternoon.

## Don't allocate any bench to incompetent judges

Speakers urge CJ

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Speakers at a view exchange meeting yesterday urged the chief justice (CJ) not to allocate any bench to incompetent judges in order to rebuild its image.

The meeting titled 'Honourable chief justice take action: View exchange meeting on ways to overcome the mess done in appointing judges at the beginning of the 21st century' was organised by Citizens' Rights Movement at the National Press Club in the city.

"What the chief justice can do to bring people's trust in higher judiciary is to stop allocating benches to incompetent judges," said Advocate Muhsin Rashid.

His view was also echoed by a number of discussants including eminent journalists Syed Abul Maksud and Abed Khan and Engr Khairul Anam.

Drawing reference to the trial of Bangabandhu Murder Case, Rashid said the chief justice can also enquire on what specific grounds some judges felt embarrassed in hearing the case.

Abul Maksud urged the chief justice to take steps in upholding the image of the High Court.

"Whenever any catastrophe occurs in higher courts, we request the chief justice to mend it," he added.

Editor of Samakal Abed Khan advocated for more benefits, social status and security for judges so that they can concentrate on the tough task of delivering justice



Pran-RFL Group distributes relief materials among flood victims in Bawwani Jute Mills area in Demra recently.



Peyarabagh Development Committee distributes relief materials among the flood victims at Trimohoni at Khilgaon in the city yesterday.

## Relief distribution continues

More donations pour in

**STAR REPORT**

Different government and non-government bodies, political parties and social organisations continue to distribute relief materials among the flood victims as well as making donations to the Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund yesterday.

**CITIGROUP**

UNB adds: Citi Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Citigroup, donated \$25,000 to Brac in response to the recent devastating flood in Bangladesh.

Brac's Emergency Relief Support to Flood Victims 2007 fund will be utilised to help flood-affected people in 11 districts through distribution of food items, medicine, and by facilitating the post-flood rehabilitation work.

Chief Financial Officer of Banglalink Ezzeldin Heikal handed over three cheques for Tk 1 crore, donated from the corporate fund of Banglalink, one for about Tk 16 lakh, donated by its employees, and another for about Tk 9 lakh, donated by Banglalink subscribers via SMS, to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at the latter's office.

The chief adviser appreciated the effort for helping out the flood victims.

Altaf Faquih, director administration, Legal and Regulatory Affairs of banglalink, was also present.

BSS adds: Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) yesterday distributed relief materials among the flood victims in different areas of Narayanganj district, an SCBA press release said.

Besides, two SCBA teams distributed rice, lentils and oral saline among 2000 flood victims in Sirajganj and Shariatpur districts on Friday.

Meanwhile, Oxfam-Bangladesh, an international non-government donor agency, distributed relief materials among the flood-hit people in Gaibandha through SKS, a local NGO, recently.

Sources said in the first phase, relief materials were distributed among a total of 1025 flood-affected families of Pulchhari and Saghata upazilas in the district.

Each of the families got 60 kg of rice, eight kg of pulse, two litres of soybean oil, eight soaps, one bucket and one mug.

**CPB**

Meanwhile, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) President Monjurul Ahsan Khan has left Dhaka on a weeklong visit to Jamalpur, Sherpur, Gaibandha, Bogra, Kurigram and Rangpur districts to distribute relief materials among the flood-affected people of the region.

On the first day of his visit CPB Jamalpur district committee and a team of Bangladesh Chhatra Union yesterday distributed rice, flattened rice, oral saline, water purifying tablets and firebox.

Bangladesher Workers' Party and Banglalink, a cellphone operator, donated Tk 1.25 crore to the Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund on Thursday.

Bangladesh Workers' Party and Peoples' Relief Committee yesterday distributed relief materials at different places of Gaibandha, Sirajganj and Dhaka.

Gaibandha unit of Workers' Party has made a rice seed-land for distribution among the affected farmers. From the seed-land, seeds will be distributed among the farmers to cultivate around 700 acres of land, a press release said.

Gono Sanghata Andolon yesterday distributed food and medicine among the flood-affected people of Manikganj, Madaripur and Kurigram districts.

The Good Earth, an NGO, operated relief works on August 13-15 among 1000 households in five unions and one pourasava of Belkuchi upazila in Sirajganj district.

Besides, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters' Association (BGMEA), Demra-Shyampur Pani-Bidyut Aday Sangram Committee, Bangladesh Human Rights Commission, Pran Group, Manab-Sahajya Sangstha, Resource Integration Centre, Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited and Alor Pothey Nabojatra conducted relief distribution programmes to help the flood victims.

**WEATHER TODAY**

## Thundershowers likely

**UNB, Dhaka**

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

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

Yesterday's highest temperature of 34.0 degree Celsius was recorded at Sylhet and the lowest of 24.0 degrees at Mymensingh.

**The sun sets in the capital at 6:29pm today and rises at 5:35am 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	25.6	65	67
Chittagong	30.5	25.8	73	87
Rajshahi	32.8	24.5	80	76
Khulna	30.3	25.0	89	82
Barisal	30.6	25.6	82	86
Sylhet	34.0	25.3	83	71
Cox's Bazar	29.3	25.0	93	96

## Obituary

**Khairul Bashar Khan Bir Pratik**, former deputy director of Bangladesh Rifles, passed away due to old-age complications at BDR Hospital in the city on Friday at the age of 76, says a press release.

He is survived by his wife and four sons.

He was buried at Azimpur graveyard yesterday with state honour.

## Khalid Bin Shamim

**Khalid Bin Shamim Dhruva** passed away in Dallas, USA due to a cardiac arrest on August 13 at the age of 38, says a press release.

Dhruva, son of Group Capt (ret) late Shamim Hossain and former principal of Shiekh Fazilatunnesa Islamic Girls' College Razia Shamim, is survived by his brother, wife and a daughter.

His body will be flown back to Dhaka today and he will be buried at Banani graveyard after a namaz-e-ajanaza at Mahakhal New DOHS Jame Mosque after Asr prayers.

His khalhwani will be held at the same mosque after Asr prayers on August 20.

## Selim Chowdhury

**BSS, Rangamati**

Selim Chowdhury, general secretary of Rangamati district Awami League, passed away at Apollo Hospitals in Dhaka yesterday at the age of 45.

He had been suffering from liver cirrhosis for a long time, an AL press release said.

Selim Chowdhury left behind his wife, a son, two daughters and a host of relatives and friends to mourn his death.

**Death anniversary**

Today is the second death anniversary of Tahmina Puja Shanta, says a press release.

Shanta, a resident of Purba Matherbari of Majhirghat in Chittagong, died on this day in 2005 in a road accident.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil and Qurankhwani will be held at her residence.

Her two children and other family members requested all to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.



Muhammad Alfaz speaks at a view exchange meeting at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is Justice Syed Amirul Islam and on his left is Tusher Rahman.

**DHAKA TODAY**

**Discussion**

Bangla-Urdu Sahitya Forum will hold a discussion to pay tribute to poet Shamsur Rahman on his first death anniversary. Venue: Public Library. Time: 5:00pm.

**Forum**

ICT Business Promotion Council (IBPC) and Bangladesh Computer Society (BCS) will jointly organise 'Open IT Business forum 2007'. Venue: IDB Bhaban, Agargaon. Time: 3:00pm.

**Seminar**

Bangladesh Bank organises a seminar on 'Inflation in Bangladesh: The evidence and the policy alternatives'. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.

**View exchange meeting**

Bangladesh Economic Association organises a view exchange meeting titled 'Tax management reforms'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3:00pm.

**Discussion on indigenous children**

Bangladesh Adivashi Odhikar Andolan will hold a discussion titled 'Education: Chance or right? Reality of the indigenous children'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.