

National consensus against boycott of JS, hartal a must for democracy

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a view exchange meeting yesterday underscored the need for national consensus against boycott of Parliament and hartal for the sake of sustaining democracy.

Swadhinata Forum organised the meeting titled 'Necessity of national consensus to avert boycott of National Parliament and hartal' at Jatiya Press Club in the city.

Speaking on the occasion, adviser to the BNP chairperson Brig Gen (Retd) ASM Hannan Shah said parliamentarians of other countries only walk out when they

are not given due opportunities in the parliaments. But in Bangladesh, boycott of parliament go for days after days, he added.

Hartal should be staged when it concerns national interests, he said adding it should not be staged on trivial matters, as it never brings any good for the country.

Both the issues are sensitive and the political parties will have to give specific declaration regarding both the issues in their electoral manifestos, he added.

Jatiya Party leader GM Quader said though the parliament was supposed to be the centre of all activities, successive parliamentarians always boycotted it.

He added, "We have to elect honest and deserving candidates in the next election to make our parliament effective."

Presided over by former chief election commissioner Justice Abdur Rauf, the meeting was also addressed by Member of AL Advisory Council Rahmat Ali, BNP leader Maj Aktaruzzaman, columnist Sadek Khan, National People's Party Chairman Sheikh Shawkat Hossain Nilu, Jatiya Gonotantrik Party President Shafiul Alam Pradhan, Jamaat-e-Islami Assistant Secretary Kamruzzaman and Swadhinata Forum President Abu Naser Mohammad Rahmatullah.

Reinstate previous exam system

Medical students urge authorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students of different medical colleges at a press conference yesterday urged the authorities concerned to scrap the faulty examination system from the new curriculum and to reinstate the previous one.

In the new curriculum, there is no provision for sitting for a supplementary examination more than once. As a result, a student will get the chance to sit for the supplementary examination only once and if he fails to appear that time, he will not be promoted to the next class.

Students under the banner of 'Voice of Medical Students' at the press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) said that in the previous curriculum, the students used to attend in 3rd year classes, wards and other activities after first professional exam. It was kept in the record book.

But under the new curriculum, the examination system is set in such a way that if a student fails in the supplementary examination in his first attempt, he will not be promoted, rather he will have to stay in the same class again and all his records will be deleted.

Thus, the lengthy five-year course would be lengthier, the students alleged.

"Even we did not get any copy of the curriculum and the authorities concerned did not pay heed in this regard," said Rakibul Islam, convener of Voice of Medical Students.

For this new examination system, our student life would be extended for nothing and at the same time the government would have to spend more money for a medical student, the students said adding that the students studying at different private universities would be worst victims as a year loss means a huge loss of money there.

The students urged the authorities to reinstate the examination system of the previous curriculum.

RMG workers demand arrears, bonus before Eid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sramik Karmachari Sangram Parishad yesterday reiterated their demand for payment of bonus and arrear salary to all the garment workers before Eid festival.

The leaders in a joint statement said the tripartite agreement among the owners, workers and the government is yet to be implemented fully. Rather there are many factories where the workers did not get their due wages.

Though the implementation timeline of tripartite agreement is over, most of the factories did not implement the agreement even after the government's repeated asking for it.

WORLD QURAN CONTEST Adel wins first prize

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hafez Fazole Rabbi Adel won the first prize at World Hifzul Quran contest held in Dubai, says a press release.

The contest held from Ramadan 8 to 20 of Arabic month, where contestants from 79 countries, including Arab world, took part.

Adel, son of Hasan Ali, deputy assistant engineer of Desco, was selected for the competition by the Islamic Foundation Bangladesh.

He was awarded with Tk 55 lakh, a certificate and other prizes.

Adel has completed Hifzul Quran from Jamilul Ummah Hifz Madrasa at Uttara and now studying in class eight at the same institution.

Train derails in Srimangal, 20 injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

At least 20 people were injured when the engine of Akhaura-bound Kushiara Express train derailed near Srimangal Railway Station yesterday.

Rail communication from Sylhet to Dhaka and Chittagong remained snapped for about four hours because of the accident.

Jahangir Alam, station master of Srimangal Railway Station, said the express train reached Srimangal from Sylhet at about 12:40pm. But the driver started to pull away ignoring the red traffic signal. The engine derailed soon after it crossed the outer signal.

Six of the injured were admitted to Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital and three others were rushed to Srimangal Upazila Health Complex.

The rail communication was restored at around 3:45pm.

Help establish separate market for women entrepreneurs

Geetara urges business community

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women and Children Affairs Adviser Geetara Safiya Choudhury yesterday called on the business community to help establish a separate market for the women entrepreneurs to facilitate marketing their products.

It is difficult for a woman entrepreneur to maintain marketing and merchandising the products along with monitoring the production at the same time, she added.

The adviser was speaking as the chief guest at the 'Exhibition and sewing machine distribution ceremony' at the Russian Cultural Centre in the city organised by Distress Women Rehabilitation Project (DWPR) of Muslim Aid-UK Bangladesh Field Office.

Geetara said that 50 per cent of the population are women and they can play a significant role in the national development.

Muslim Aid-UK distributed sewing machines to a total of 40 destitute women who showed good performance in the training conducted by DWPR.

The adviser inaugurated the distribution ceremony by giving away two sewing machines to Hasina Akter and Shahida Begum.

She urged the sewing machine recipients to make the best use of this donation and become conscious about the current fashion trend and quality of their products.

Muslim Aid-UK Country Director Amzad Mohammad Selim said DWPR is all about empowering destitute urban women and making them self-sufficient and successful entrepreneurs providing training and other facilities.

Shah Abdul Hannan, chairman of the advisory committee of Muslim Aid-UK Bangladesh Field Office, presided over the ceremony addressed by Prof ANM Abdus Zahed, chairman of Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd and Mahbub Hossain Shahid, head of operations of Muslim Aid-UK Bangladesh Field Office.

EVICION NOTICE Rajshahi shop owners demand compensation

RU CORRESPONDENT

About 100 shop owners facing eviction from Rajshahi Gourhanga level crossing area yesterday demanded compensation and steps to rehabilitate them.

The Rajshahi district administration will start evicting the traders from the area on October 8 to bring the area under a city development project, they said at a press conference.

But no initiative was taken to pay proper compensation to the businessmen or rehabilitate them, they alleged.

They said the land department of the district administration has already sent eviction notices to the shop owners and also gave a little amount to some traders as compensation.

The traders said they would incur huge losses if evicted, as many of them have taken loans from banks and NGOs with high interest rates.

Kazi Rafi Ahmed, a businessman, said they have been doing business in the area for the last 50 years. If the district administration does not take any steps to rehabilitate them, they along with their family members would face an uncertain future.

The traders urged the caretaker government and the district administration to ensure payment of proper compensation and their rehabilitation.

Abdul Motaleb, Anu Sheikh, Masud Khan and Motiur Rahman were present at the press conference.



Child artistes perform at a cultural function organised by Shishu Odhikar Forum on the occasion of Child Rights Week at Shishu Academy in the city yesterday.

UK supports CG measures for free, fair polls

Says British Foreign Office director

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Visiting British Foreign Office Asia Director John Dennis yesterday said the UK supports the various measures taken by the caretaker government to hold a free, fair and meaningful election next year.

The caretaker government faces many challenges and that meeting the challenges effectively is a great task, he told reporters.

Dennis who is now on a three-day official visit to Bangladesh, came to Sylhet yesterday, accompanied by British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury and other officials.

During his stay, Dennis met the divisional commissioner and the

deputy inspector general of police. He also addressed a gathering of the British-Bangladeshi diaspora at the British High Commission's liaison office in the city's Kumarpur area.

Dennis said the British government has been assisting the government in implementing the voter registration & ID card project.

He also hoped that there will be a good election next year as things are going well.

A sustainable system and transparency in society are needed to strengthen democracy, he said, adding: "We are really impressed with the development achieved during the last few months in different fields. They will pave the way for a meaningful democracy in near future."

Since the UK is a leading development partner of Bangladesh, the British government has been providing assistance in strengthening the Election Commission as

well as the Anti-Corruption Commission, he said.

Appreciating the anti-corruption drive, Dennis said that bringing the corrupt public servants to book is an encouraging development.

The anti-corruption drive is very important to create a politically responsible and responsive society, he added.

Dennis said the British people of Bangladeshi origin, who are mainly from Sylhet region, have been playing a very laudable role in the British society for long.

British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury said the UK is the largest donor to Bangladesh, contributing around 250 million dollar to the country's development per year.

He also said the police reforms project is now being implemented with the assistance from UNDP and the British government.



No change in temperature 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 division and at one or two places over Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 34.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 23.9 degree Celsius at Majdee Court.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:43pm today and rises at 5:52am 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	34.2	26.8	72	73
Chittagong	32.6	26.0	74	73
Rajshahi	34.0	26.2	80	83
Khulna	34.0	26.2	74	87
Barisal	33.2	26.4	83	84
Sylhet	33.5	25.9	95	73
Cox's Bazar	34.0	26.0	67	69

Asia Energy wants to negotiate deal

FROM PAGE 1

Amid much controversy about the deal over Asia Energy's proposal for open-pit coal mining in Phulbari, a positive thing came out -- the company is now willing to renegotiate the terms, he noted.

"To revise the contractual terms, the ministries concerned will have to converge on some decisions. But the coal policy has not yet been finalised. I personally believe that after the coal policy is finalised, we may renegotiate the contract in the light of that policy to get more benefits," the adviser said.

On Tata's \$2.5 billion proposal on gas-based steel industry and power plant, he said, "A significant issue here is allocation of natural gas for Tata's project. We have to guarantee gas supply to Tata. Before that we must ensure that we have adequate gas for the guarantee period. Then we have to be sure about our own reserve and immediate gas and power demands, and how much gas we should keep for our own use."

"Before assessing the gas situation, we cannot give guarantee," Mirza Aziz pointed out. When

reminded that the past government had the gas issue analysed by experts, he said, "different experts have different assessments. A local expert has one version while a foreign expert has another version."

Both Asia Energy and Tata proposals are awaiting government nod from 2005. The Asia Energy proposal triggered violent protests in Phulbari in August last year. The protest was calmed down through an announcement that the deal will be cancelled. On the other hand, the Tata proposal became uncertain as it demanded gas supply guarantee for 10 years, and Tata made a gas tariff offer which Petrobangla refused to accept.

Meanwhile, ADB mission chief Kunio Senga told the press that his team discussed, among other things, ADB's assistance for regional cooperation, and a project on building an information superhighway.

"Access to technology is very important. If Bangladesh and its neighbours get together, there will be a multiplier effect of having joint access to information. This will be very helpful for Bangladesh and

other neighbours and we'll finalise the other technical scope of the project," he said.

"We talked about energy cooperation. Last year, we invested in the power sector to make it sustainable in terms of providing essential services to the people and the progress of this project is very good. I appreciate the government efforts in this regard."

On coal development, Senga said, "The finance adviser and his team told us about ongoing preparation of the coal policy. We all agreed coal mining is going to give huge potential benefit for power generation. At this moment we rely on gas, which is limited. So, the government has to find alternative sources for power generation. Coal mining is very effective. To ensure coal-generated power, many technical, environmental, social and viability studies have to be undertaken."

He went on, "The mining methods -- open-pit and underground -- are being closely reviewed by experts, and we would be guided by the reviews of the advisory committee."

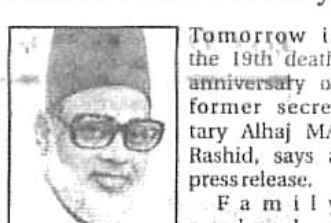
Obituary



Rakib Sultan, chief of Finance of Daffodil Computers Ltd and secretary of Daffodil Group, passed away at Birdem Hospital in the city on Tuesday night at the age of 48, says a press release.

He is survived by his wife, one son and one daughter. He was buried at Choudhagram in Comilla.

Death anniversary



Tomorrow is the 19th death anniversary of former secretary Alhaj MA Rashid, says a press release.

Family members have requested all to pray for the departed souls of MA Rashid and his wife Begum Sultana Rashid, who passed away on September 9.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are also requested to attend a Doa Mahfil to be held at the Gulshan residence of the youngest son of late Rashid after Asr prayers today.

Debabrata Chowdhury

Today is the 3rd death anniversary of Debabrata Chowdhury Apu, son of late Joytirmoy Chowdhury of Dharampasha, Sunamganj, says a press release.

On the occasion, a religious programme will be held at the residence of his elder brother Subrata Roy Chowdhury at Chatlapur Tea Estate in Moulvibazar.

A similar programme has also been arranged at Siddheswar Kali Mandir in Dhaka by his elder sister Sorbani Chowdhury.

DHAKA TODAY

Roundtable conference

Samakal and Save the Children Sweden-Denmark jointly will organise a roundtable conference on 'UNHCR reporting: Expectation and achievement'. Venue: LGED conference room. Time: 10:00am.

Discussion

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) organises a discussion on good governance problems in NGO sector and way out. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 10:30am.

View exchange meeting

Left Democratic Alliance organises a view exchange meeting on 'electoral reform and democracy in Bangladesh'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

TV conference

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) arranges a TV-conference between primary level students of two schools in Bangladesh and Japan. Venue: JICA Bangladesh office. Time: 11:00am.

Booklet launching

Handicap International will launch a booklet 'Sport and fun for all'. Venue: Women Sports Complex, Dhanmondi. Time: 10:00am.