

CONVENTION OF CONSCIOUS CITIZENS' COMMITTEE HELD Vow to resist corruption

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Common people should condemn every act of corruption wherever it takes place and expose the corrupt people as a means to rid the nation of the vice that has bedevilled it, speakers at a convention of Conscious Citizens' Committee (CCC) said yesterday.

The daylong convention of the CCC, a watchdog group comprising representatives from various walks of life, was held at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city.

The convention brought together some 458 CCC members from across the country. They vowed to resist corruption from their respective positions and work towards stepping up and expanding the movement against corruption countrywide.

The citizens' committees were formed in different parts of the country at the encouragement of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).

Inaugurating the convention, Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, chairman of TIB Board of Trustees, stressed the need to strongly protest the acts of corruption and said it is not possible for the government alone to stamp it out.

"Through our movement, we are trying to create a demand for good governance. But merely creating the demand is not enough; we also have to create examples," he said, calling on the people to play a major role in this end.

He asked the CCC members to involve more people in the movement



Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, chairman of TIB Board of Trustees, speaks at a convention of Conscious Citizens' Committee at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

against corruption and expand it to all levels. "So, the presence of an assisting force is needed in areas where we don't have CCC members."

He also called on them to be inquisitive to dig out incidents of corruption.

Calling for measures to strengthen the movement against corruption, Prof Muzaffer said, "You have to remind the people that they have the courage to resist injustice and corruption."

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said the pioneers of the movement must be

free of corruption first.

They have to ensure that they would refrain from indulging in any kind of corruption, make no contact with the corrupt people and, most importantly, expose the corrupt people whenever there is a chance, said Anam, also the secretary general of TIB Board of Trustees.

Lamenting the failure to free the politics from corruption, he said, "If we believe in democracy and want to see Bangladesh as a democracy, we have to strongly believe that only an elected government is an acceptable government."

And those who will be elected must be totally free of corruption, he said, adding that otherwise they could not take effective steps to curb corruption.

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman delivered the welcome speech at the inaugural session. Other members of the TIB Board of Trustees were also present.

The annual convention of Youth Engagement and Support (YES) will be held at the same venue today. Chairman of Anti-Corruption Commission Lt Gen (ret'd) Hasan Mashud Chowdhury will inaugurate it.

Country passing thru' crucial time Says Justice Habibur Rahman

BSS, Savar

Former chief adviser Justice Habibur Rahman yesterday said the country is now passing through a crucial time.

"We are responsible for this situation as the country is not ruled by foreigners and we can't blame them," he said while he was addressing as the chief guest a reunion of 'Ujibian', a platform of optimistic people, of The Hunger Project, Bangladesh at Gonoswastha Kendra.

He hoped that it would be able to overcome the situation successfully. He urged the people of all sections of society, especially the youth community, to work for building a participatory administration for getting over the present situation.

Eminent jurist and Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain, former advisers to caretaker governments Sultana Kamal, Prof Rehman Sobhan and M Hafiz Uddin Khan, 'SUJAN' President Prof Muzaffer Ahmad and Country Director of Hunger Project Dr Badul Alam Mazumder spoke at the function with reunion committee convenor Prof Mahfuz Khanam in the chair.

Dr Kamal said the country has strength to materialise the dreams of

independence for building a prosperous Bangladesh. Now it is necessary to properly evaluate and utilise the strength, he added.

He said those who create obstacles towards the path of meaningful change of the country, want to keep the people stagnant and dependent on others.

Sultana Kamal said, "We have a lot of responsibilities as the citizens of an independent country. We need to

sharpen our spirit and we have to erase all the stigmas."

Prof Rehman Sobhan urged the people, particularly the youth community, to take part in the ongoing reforms for the democratic process.

Prof Muzaffer emphasised the need for establishing democracy and a participatory government for solving the existing problems.

Another reshuffle in admin

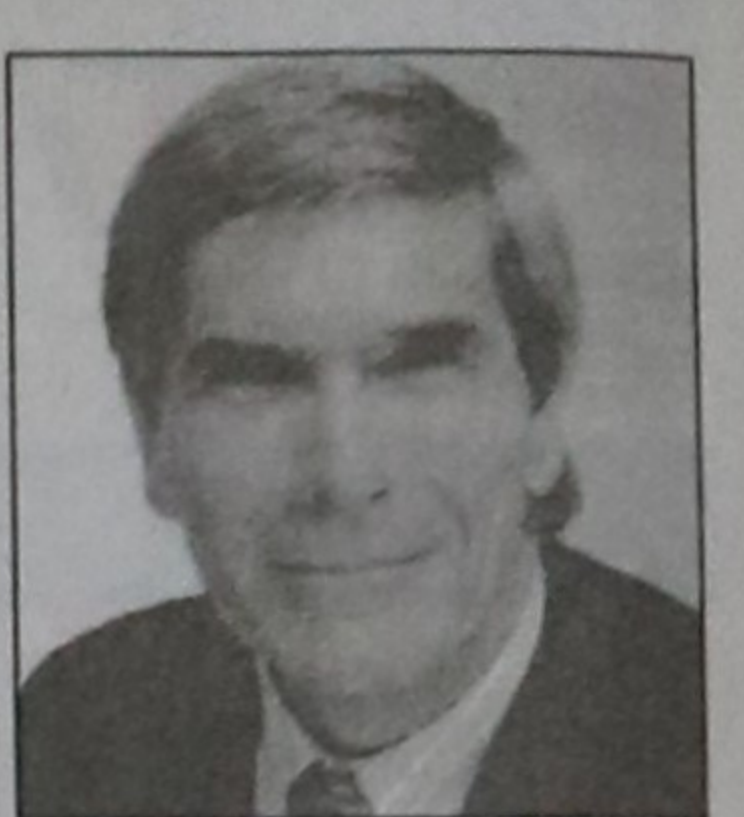
UNB, Dhaka

The government yesterday transferred a number of senior officials in another reshuffle in the administration.

Secretary of Labour and Employment Ministry Ashfaq Hamid has been made secretary of Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat, secretary of Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat ATM Ataur Rahman made OSD (secretary) of Establishment Ministry, secretary of CHT Affairs Ministry Mohammad Abdus Sabur appointed member of Bangladesh Privatisation Commission, and chief Insurance Controller of Life Insurance Department Dr Mahfuzul Haque

made acting secretary of Labour and Employment ministry, says a hand-out.

Additional secretary of Economic Relations Division Mohammad Shahidul Haque has been made acting secretary of CHT Affairs Ministry, additional secretary of Agriculture Ministry Dr Syed Naquib Muslim made acting chairman of Bangladesh Tariff Commission, additional secretary of Agriculture Ministry CQK Mushtaque Ahmed made acting secretary of Liberation War Affairs Ministry and chairman of Bangladesh Land Port Authority Aftab Hasan transferred to Agriculture Ministry as additional secretary.



Orbis president Oliver Foot passes away

Oliver Foot, president of Orbis International, a humanitarian organisation dedicated to saving sight worldwide and mostly known for its Flying Eye Hospital, passed away due to a cardiac arrest in London on February 6 at the age of 62, says a press release.

Born in Kingston, Jamaica, he led the Orbis for more than 25 years.

Oliver was a great advocate, friend and guide who did everything possible in his life to carry the Orbis mission forward.

Oliver took the Flying Eye Hospital to more than 85 developing countries and received endorsements from 70 heads of state.

He visited Bangladesh several times and his last visit took place in 1999. Since the establishment of Orbis Bangladesh country office in 1999, over 700,000 eye patients were treated and 50,000 eye surgeries performed.

Abdul Fattah BSS, Dhaka

Abdul Fattah, a Bangladeshi nuclear scientist, passed away in Vienna on February 5 at the age of 64.

He left behind his wife, two sons and one daughter to mourn his death, family sources said yesterday.

Fattah joined International Nuclear Agency under the United Nations as nuclear scientist in 1975 and he was retired from his service in 2003.

He was associated with a number of international science organisations and agencies.

He will be buried in Vienna on February 13.

Makhon's death anniversary today

Today is the 14th death anniversary of Abdul Kuddus Makhon, one of the leaders of Swadhin Bangla Kendro Chhatra Sangram Parishad and one of the organisers of the Liberation War, says a press release.

To mark the day, Abdul Kuddus Makhon Smriti Parishad has taken up programmes in the city and his home in Brahminbaria.

Wreaths will be placed at his grave at Muktiyoddha Jatiya Gorosthan at Mirpur in the city.

Recitation from the holy Quran and doa mahfil will also be held after Asr prayers at his home in Brahminbaria.

Draft voter list

FROM PAGE 16 municipalities for publishing.

The EC has decided to announce by mid-March the schedules of polls to the city corporations of Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet, and to the municipalities of Shariatpur, Sitakunda, Cox's Bazar, Golapganj, Sripur, Fulbaria, and Manikganj.

According to the EC's decision, preparations for holding polls to local government bodies must be completed by March 20, but it will be difficult to complete the work within the timeframe if the commission cannot begin publishing the draft voter lists for the areas this week, the sources said.

It will require a month from the date of publication of the draft voter lists to complete the process of finalising those. Entertaining the claims and objections from registered and prospective voters will require at least 15 days. If they find any mistake, they will file objections within that time. Then the revising authorities who will be appointed by the EC will settle the claims and the objections in the next 15 days, officials in the EC Secretariat said.

Once the process is completed, the EC will make final voter lists for the four city corporations and seven municipalities, and print those. It will need another 15 days or more to finish printing the final lists.

Publication of draft voter lists for other areas will also follow.

EC OVERCOMES DIFFICULTIES Meanwhile the EC is overcoming the difficulties caused by glitches in its fingerprint scanners which slowed down the field level work of voter listing in many areas.

The commission already purchased 2,000 additional scanners to expedite the process of voter listing, and the company which supplied those also replaced another 2,000 malfunctioning ones.

Technical glitches were detected in around 5,000 finger print scanners, making the EC worried and prompting it to initiate an all out effort to resolve the problem, the sources said.

During its talk with leaders of professional organisations on Thursday, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda disclosed that the EC had faced some problems in voter listing due to malfunctioning fingerprint scanners. He however said the supplier was replacing 5,000 faulty ones.

A senior official, who has been working in the project of preparing the voter lists with photographs, said they had detected glitches in some fingerprint scanners over the past few months. "We're now overcoming the problem," he added.

Death threat to Prof Barakat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Abul Barakat of economics department of Dhaka University (DU) received a death threat on Wednesday.

A letter posted to his office address said, "No forgiveness for those so-called teachers who are destroying the golden future of innocent students and the tradition of Dhaka University known as the Oxford of the East."

"So, you have no right to remain alive for being involved in a deep-rooted conspiracy to destroy the country. Wishing welfare of the nation, Sachchidan Samaj," the letter reads.

A piece of shroud was also stapled with the letter which was posted from the General Post Office on Wednesday night. The address of the sender was mentioned as Sohail Rahman, Badda, Dhaka.

Prof Barakat filed a general diary with Shahbagh Police Station on Friday.

Officer-in-Charge Shahidul Islam said they are investigating the matter. Prof Barakat in a press release said a vested quarter is trying to exploit the present complicated situation.



Nancy S Dye named AWW president

Dr Nancy S Dye, esteemed women's historian and President Emerita of Oberlin College, has been appointed the first vice-chancellor and president of the Asian University for Women (AUW), says a press release.

The university, sited in Chittagong, aspires to become a leading institution of higher learning for women from across Asia. As the chief executive of the university, Dye will lead the growth and development of all aspects of AUW, which is slated to welcome its first undergraduate class in fall 2009.

AUW will offer a distinctive programme of study focused on developing critical thinking, leadership and entrepreneurship, which will be rooted in a rigorous liberal arts education.

Dr Dye brings extensive experience and a passion for using the liberal arts to prepare young women to become leaders in various professional fields.

She received her PhD from University of Wisconsin, Madison. Following her tenure as a professor of women's history at University of Kentucky, Dye served as dean and chief academic officer at her alma mater, Vassar College. She was then named Oberlin College's first female president, a position she held for 13 years until her retirement in June 2007.

National consensus govt an extra-constitutional concept Speakers tell BBC Bangladesh Sanglap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a dialogue yesterday categorically said the formation of national consensus government without holding the election is an extra-constitutional step which will not be accepted by people.

Saying that the constitution does not endorse the concept of such government, they urged the caretaker government to hold the election as early as possible.

The dialogue titled 'BBC Bangladesh Sanglap' was organised by BBC Bangla Service in conjunction with the BBC World Service Trust at Feni Government College.

Senior producer of BBC Bangla Service Kamal Ahmed moderated the event.

Journalist ABM Musa, Joint General Secretary of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) Shirin Akhtar, former lawmaker and Feni district BNP President Mosherraf Hossain and former minister and Awami League (AL) leader Col (ret'd) Zafar Imam featured in the sanglap as panelists.

Speakers at the dialogue opined that formation of a national consensus government could be discussed if the coun-

try's sovereignty is threatened. Such government could also be formed after election, they observed.

"A national consensus government can be formed only by suspending the constitution, otherwise not," said Musa.

Apparently supporting the concept of national consensus government, Shirin Akhtar said such government could be formed through united efforts by all political parties.

The constitution could be amended if people want the government of national consensus, she viewed.

Zafar said if the proposed dialogue fails and if the election is not held at all, only then the issue could be discussed with all major political parties.

Mosherraf said since the constitution does not permit the formation of national consensus government, they do not support it.

Responding to a query, Shirin said the state of emergency must be lifted to bring reforms in political parties.

Claiming that it is the workers of the political parties to decide on bringing reforms, Musa said reforms imposed by few senior party leaders would not be acceptable.

Mosherraf said it is the matter of

political parties and not the headache of the government to bring reforms in political parties.

Demanding congenial atmosphere for bringing reforms, he said it will not be acceptable if the election is delayed or stalled giving an excuse for failure to reforms.

Zafar said all parties would have to take pledge in their electoral manifestos that they would bring intra-party reforms after election and would not take the country back to pre-11/11 situation.

If the election is held without a consensus through dialogue, then it would be disastrous for the nation, he added.

Responding to another query, the panelists said there is no alternative to dialogue and lifting of emergency to implement the EC-announced electoral roadmap.

They also urged the government to arrest and try the war criminals immediately.

Responding to yet another query, the panelists said the government should give compensation to the owners of poultry farms, which have been badly affected by avian influenza.

Marie Curie School science fair held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A daylong science fair organised by Marie Curie School was held at the school premises in the city yesterday.

Executive Director of Democracy Watch and member of advisory committee of the school Taleya Rahman inaugurated the fair as the chief guest.

Prof Shamsur Ali, chairman of the school, chaired the inaugural ceremony while Shafiq Rahman, editor of the daily Jajaidin, was present as the special guest.

More than 50 science projects, innovated and prepared by the school students, were displayed in the fair.

Reunion

The annual reunion of social welfare department of Dhaka University (DU) will be held at a private resort Meghna in Narayanganj district on March 7, says a press release.

All ex-students of the department along with their family members are invited at the gathering.

Those, who want to take part, are requested to confirm their registration paying Tk 400/- each on or before February 28. For each kid under 6 Tk 300/- will have to be paid.

A souvenir will be published on this occasion and interested persons are requested to send their write-ups to Jahangir Morshed, deputy registrar of DU, on or before February 25.

Reserved buses will start for Meghna from the National Museum at 8:00am.

For further information and booking following persons may be contacted: Jahangir Morshed 01552457155, 8617553, Shahid Mahmood 01714344533, 01819454828, Abdul Jabbar 01552451792, and Munirul Islam 01715496670.

Concern over health status of Sigma Huda

Two foreign HR activists hold press conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two foreign human rights activists at a press conference in the city yesterday expressed grave concern over the health status of detained Sigma Huda, wife of detained former minister Nazmul Huda.

Dr Janice Raymond and Dorchen Leidholt, members of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW), said Sigma suffers from a debilitating heart condition and diabetes that has precipitated kidney disease, high blood pressure and backpain.

They said despite such health condition Sigma has been removed from the hospital to a jail where she gets almost no medical care and treatment.

The two CATW members urged the government to transfer her to a hospital or her home where she can have much needed medical attention.

They alleged that the judicial procedure against Sigma in a special court is questionable and not transparent.

They said Sigma has been a key representative of their organisation from Asia Pacific branch of CATW for many years and she is a leader in human rights campaign for deprived women and children.

Asked about two former prime ministers now in prisons, Dorchen said, "We are aware of them. Like Sigma, rights are also violated in their cases."

"We are also aware that thousands of Bangladeshis are suffering in jails and we support their efforts to obtain justice," said Dr Janice, professor emerita at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst.

Both the CATW members regretted that they were not allowed to meet Sigma in jail.

Khushi Kabir, a rights activist and sister of Sigma, was also present at the press conference held at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

TORTURE OF DOMESTIC HELP Husband hands over wife to Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Aman set a unique example yesterday by handing his wife over to the law enforcement agency as she tortured their six-year-old domestic help at their residence at Rampurain in the city.

The members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) picked up Roksana Islam Pushpa, 30, from her home in the evening after her husband Nazmul Hasan informed them.

The Rab also brought the girl, Banya, to the safe custody in Khilgaon Police Station. She has marks of burns in the two arms and neck.

Road accident kills minor boy

A CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A minor boy was killed in a road accident on Pirganj-Jaborhat road at Doulatpur under Pirganj Upazila in Thakurgaon yesterday.

The victim was identified as Sohanur, 7, son of Solaiman of Doulatpur village under Pirganj upazila.

Police said while Sohanur was walking along side the road, a microbus hit him from behind leaving him dead on the spot.

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Leaders and activists of different political and socio-cultural organisations greet National Professor Kabir Chowdhury with bouquets on the occasion of his birthday at his residence at Naya Paltan in the city yesterday.

Show controversial judges the door

FROM PAGE 1

Council and appointing persons with no political affiliation."

Faruk Khan, industrial and commerce secretary of Awami League, said the president can dismiss the controversial judges by forming the Supreme Judicial Council according to article 96 of the constitution.

The government can form a commission, comprising the sitting chief justice and two former chief justices to appoint skilled and qualified judges, he said at the roundtable styled "Removal of controversial judges urgent" organised by Citizens Rights Movement at the Jatiya Press Club.

The participants at the discussion alleged that the government is not interested in reforming the judiciary.

Democracy would be ineffective in the absence of rule of law, they said.

Supreme Court Bar Association President barrister M Amir-Ul Islam alleged that no government has paid any heed to the advice or recommendations of the Bar Council regarding judiciary.

He also called on the government to form a commission for appointing judges. The commission will determine what qualities a judge should possess, barrister Amir added.

Khandakar Mahbub said in order to establish the rule of law and human rights, it is important to restore the image of the judiciary.

Faruk Khan said the issue should be discussed in parliament. Writer Syed Abul Maksud said the judges should treat their job as a moral duty rather than a service. It is important to reform the judiciary

like other institutions in the light of reality, he added.

In the present situation, people are forced to go to a corrupt judge for justice, founder of Gonoshasthya Kendra Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury said. He also urged the government to publish details about a judge's qualifications to inform people about it.

He advocated for more benefits for the judges.

Former minister ASM Abdur Rab said if the judiciary is full of corruption, it is impossible to build an effective nation.

He said it is shameful that the

present government is yet to take any action regarding the judiciary even after the chief justice's comment that it would take 20 years to "clean" the judiciary.

Former Justice Goura Gopal Saha, Group Captain (ret'd) Mohammad Afaz, Advocate Yusuf Hossain Humayun, former director general of Bangladesh Rifles Maj Gen (ret'd) ALM Fazlur Rahman and barrister Sadia Arman spoke at the discussion moderated by Citizens Rights Movement General Secretary Tusher Rahman. Journalist Mizanur Rahman Khan presented the keynote paper.

Publication of draft voter lists for other areas will also follow.

Light rain or drizzle likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light rain or drizzle is likely at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins during early morning, Met Office said, predicting nearly unchanged night temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 30.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 16.6 degrees Celsius at Rangpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:50pm today and rises at 6:35am 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	21.4	20.4	69	94
Chittagong	27.0	19.5	75	77
Rajshahi	21.8	18.3	96	84
Khulna	27.0	21.4	91	95
Barisal	24.8	20.5	81	96
Sylhet	21.6	19.0	90	95
Cox's Bazar	30.0	20.0	65	51