

# Nat'l consensus a must to end political instability

Says Akbar Ali Khan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Regulatory Reforms Commission (RRC) Chairman Dr Akbar Ali Khan yesterday stressed the need for national consensus to find out a way out of the political crisis.

He also said that establishing the rule of law, strengthening democracy and promoting political tolerance can also help put an end to political instability.

Political instability is a bigger problem than corruption for the nation, Dr Akbar said while delivering a lecture at the Dr Shamsuzzoha Memorial Speech at Rajshahi University Senate

Bhaban.

Chemistry department of the university organised the event on the occasion of Teachers' Day marking the death anniversary of Dr Shamsuzzoha, who was shot dead by Pakistani soldiers during the mass upsurge in 1969.

RUVice Chancellor Prof Dr Altaf Hossain and Pro-VC Dr Mamunul Keramat also spoke at the programme.

Dr Akbar also suggested bringing about some changes such as reducing the tenure of parliament and enhancing the authority of the president, especially in appointing persons for constitutional posts

and empowering him to decide alone while removing or dismissing government officials.

"Our prime ministers enjoy excessive power like Mughal emperors. As a result, they treat their party lawmakers as subordinates," he said.

Dr Akbar also said the present electoral system might be a source of political instability as the parties can go to power even without winning majority votes. It also leads to corruption and rigging as any party can ensure victory by managing only one more vote than the votes obtained by its rival, he added.



PHOTO: STAR

Dr Akbar Ali Khan delivers a lecture at the Dr Shamsuzzoha Memorial Speech at Rajshahi University Senate Bhaban yesterday.

# 'Bangladesh, Nepal enjoy closest ties'

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Affairs Adviser Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury yesterday said Bangladesh and Nepal enjoy the closest relations as friends and neighbours.

The adviser said this when Nepalese Charge D' Affaires Ramesh Prasad Khanal called on him at his office in the morning.

The Nepalese Charge D' Affaires (CDA), on behalf of his government, handed over a cheque for 40,000 US dollar to the Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund for which the foreign adviser thanked him.

"This is a symbolic gesture of your friendship which we truly appreciate," the foreign adviser said to the CDA.

Iftekhar wished Khanal all the best for the forthcoming parliamentary elections in Nepal, scheduled for April 10, and said: "Bangladeshis will follow the election with great and friendly interest."

# 6 Bangladeshi engns recruited in Afghanistan

UNB, Dhaka

Afghan authorities have recruited six Bangladeshi engineers and their security will be ensured by the recruiting firm, according to Expatriate's Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry.

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, who is also in charge of the Expatriate's Welfare and Overseas Employment, said, "It's a good sign and in line with our emphasis on exporting more qualified manpower to new destinations."

"Indeed, President Karzai had mentioned to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed of their interest in recruiting Bangladeshi experts. Of course, security remains a concern and we have made this known to the recruiters," he said.

# Five receive Citi-Ananda Alo Literary Award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four distinguished literateurs and an eminent artist of the country were awarded the 'Citi-Ananda Alo Literary Award 2008' yesterday in recognition of their outstanding contributions to their respective fields.

Ananda Alo, a fortnightly entertainment magazine, in collaboration with Citibank NA, Bangladesh, organised the prize giving ceremony in front of the Ananda Alo stall on the Amar Ekushey Book Fair premises.

The awards were given under five categories -- novel, poetry, child literature, non-fiction and cover design.

Popular writer and filmmaker Humayun Ahmed received the award for his novel 'Moddhanho-2'. Al Mahmud won the award for his poetry collection 'Shelai Kor Mukh', Imdadul Haque Milon for children's book 'K', Fazlul Alam for his non-fiction 'Savyatar Durge Sangskritir Koraghat' and Quayyum Chowdhury won the award for the cover design of the novel 'Boyon'.

All the books were published on the occasion of the Amar Ekushey Book Fair 2008.

Each of the awardees received a crest and a cheque for Tk 30,000.

Rezanur Rahman, editor of the Ananda Alo, Rashed Maksud, acting chief executive of Citibank NA, Bangladesh, and Dr Syed Mohammad Shahed, director general of Bangla Academy, handed over the awards to the winners.

Imdadul Haque Milon said he was proud to receive the award with such writers and poets.

"In our country the trend of literary awards started with huge grandeur but gradually its appeal faded away due to biasness," he said, adding, "Many of our national awards faced this problem."

He hoped that this award will follow such wrong path.

Humayun Ahmed said the jury board should take more time in judging the books since he thinks the job was done quickly. "I hope this award will go a long way," he added.

Dr Syed Mohammad Shahed said the literary sector gets little patronisation compared to the others.

He urged all to come forward to patronise this field more.

Rezanur Rahman said the award has been introduced for making the Amar Ekushey Book Fair livelier.

He added that a separate category will be introduced next year for the young writers.

Poet Asad Chowdhury, litterateur and actor Amzad Hossain and media personality Muhammad Jahangir were the jurors in selecting the awardees.



Rajuk bulldozes illegal structures of Khan Jahan Ali Computers Ltd at Elephant Road in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

# SAUDI AID FOR SIDR VICTIMS

# Construction of 21,200 houses begins next month

SHAMIM ASHRAF

The construction of one-room houses with Saudi financial assistance for 21,200 families worst affected by Cyclone Sidr in four districts is likely to begin next month.

The construction of tin-roofed houses at 34 villages in 13 upazilas of Barguna, Bagerhat, Patuakhali and Pirojpur will be completed by June, according to government officials.

Each house will cost Tk 1 lakh. The 20 feet by 10 feet house will have a concrete plinth.

Another 1,600 Sidr-affected families of two upazilas in Bagerhat will also receive one-room houses to be built with Indian financial assistance. However, time and other details are yet to be decided.

Saudi Arabia has provided \$102 million aid for the Sidr victims. Of them, \$30.31 million will be utilised to build the houses while remaining is being spent on foods, medicines, clothing and vehicles

for the victims.

Bangladesh authorities have already prepared and sent the design of the houses to the Saudi authorities.

"We've received a hint that the construction work of the house will begin in March," Ranjit Kumar, Kolapara Upazila Nirbahi Officer, Patuakhali, told The Daily Star yesterday. A total of 2000 houses will be built in his upazila.

Officials at the food and disaster management ministry said the director general of Directorate of Relief and Rehabilitation will supervise the construction work, which will be implemented by the directorate's engineering cell.

Modality has not been decided yet whether the Saudi authorities will supply the construction materials," said Mohsena Ferdousi, joint secretary (disaster management).

In Barguna, 5,320 houses will be built at seven villages in Sadar and Patharghata upazilas.

Four thousand houses will be built at 10 villages in Sharankhola, Bagerhat, while 3,380 houses at nine villages in Mathbaria, Bhandaria and Zianagar upazilas of Pirojpur.

And 8,500 houses will be built at eight villages in six upazilas of Patuakhali.

The Cyclone Sidr struck the southern part of the country on November 15 last year, killing more than 3000 people and destroying homes and crops in 30 districts.

Under the Indian financial assistance, 800 houses will be built in six villages of Morelganj upazila and as many in five villages of Sharankhola upazila.

The food and disaster management ministry has already sent the same design of the house to the Indian High Commission and is waiting for the response, officials said.

The UK has also committed financial assistance to constructing houses for the Sidr victims at the worst-hit village in Barguna.

# NU 1st year admission test result today

The result of admission test for the first year of National University (NU) under academic session 2007-08 will be published at its websites (www.nu.edu.bd and www.nuadmission.com) at 8:00pm today, says a press release.

The result will also be available at concerned colleges and by sending sms to 4636 from any mobile writing NU AT Roll No.

# UK education exhibition begins in Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

The two-day 5th Education UK Exhibition 2008 began in the port city yesterday.

British Council organised the fair at Hotel Peninsula with a view to provide opportunity to the students, their parents, teachers and training managers to talk directly with the representatives of participating institutions.

Professor Emeritus Dr Jamal Nazrul Islam inaugurated the fair with British Council Education Promotion and Marketing Services Manager Raiqah Walie-Khan in the chair.

Representatives from 15 UK universities and colleges took part in the exhibition.

The fair will remain open from 2.00pm to 6.30pm today.

# Duta demands security of teachers

Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) expressed deep concern over the death threat issued to Prof Abul Barakat of Economics department, says a press release.

They urged the government to immediately identify the people involved in it and bring them to book.

They also called on the university authority to ensure full security of the teachers.

# Nat'l consensus govt risky

Says Gen Ibrahim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Decentralisation of planning and administration is a must for the development of the country, Bangladesh Kalyan Party (BKP) Chairman Maj Gen (ret'd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim Bir Pratik said in the port city yesterday.

While exchanging views with the journalists at Chittagong Press Club auditorium, Ibrahim also said that he came to politics for the cause of country and if elected his party would start the process of decentralisation, which has no other alternative.

It would be risky to go for a government of national consensus in absence of an elected parliament since it might spark debate, he observed.

Although the BKP constitution never believed in the concept of national consensus government, the party chairman thought that such a government could be formed if situation demands.

BKP expects army not to get involved in politics. However, there could be an indirect participation of army in the highest level of the government, said the BKP chairman replying to a question at the meeting.

The BKP chief said he believed that the next election would be held within the year.

He became critical while saying that the constitution of the country doesn't have a provision for changing the polls date after announcement of the election schedule.

He reiterated that there was no

force to back or inspire the party and he came to politics at the call of his own conscience.

However, Ibrahim refused to make any comment on the imprisonment of the two former premiers.

He hailed the ongoing anti-corruption drive adding that the BKP would never have a war criminal as its member.

BKP Secretary General Abul Kalam Azad, Chittagong Press Club President Ali Abbas, General Secretary Ejaz Yusooqi, Chittagong Union of Journalists President Shahid Ul Alam, General Secretary Reaz Haider, Suprabhat Bangladesh Chief Reporter M Nasirul Haq and the People's View Chief Reporter Samir Barua were also on the occasion.



PHOTO: STAR

Former adviser to the caretaker government Rokia A Rahman, right, and Anita Chowdhury launch a book titled 'Bangladesher Oitihyabahi Ranna' (Traditional cooking of Bangladesh) at Hotel Sheraton in the city yesterday.

# Nazrul Institute programmes on Amar Ekushey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nazrul Institute organises three-day programmes from February 19 to 21 to mark the Amar Ekushey and International Mother Language Day.

As part of the programme, handwriting and Nazrul song competition for children will be held at Kabi Bhaban at Dhanmondi in the city on February 19 and 20.

Wreaths will be placed at the Central Saheed Minar at 12:30 am on February 21. A discussion, prize distribution and cultural function will be held at Kabi Bhaban at 10:00am the same day.

The programme will be presided over by Chairman of Nazrul Institute Prof Rafiqul Islam while Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury will take part in the discussion.

# OIC needs to modernise its working methods

Says foreign adviser

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury said OIC needs to modernise its working methods and focus more on development issues.

"Topics of current interest such as climate change should also be discussed at the Islamic Summit because there are many member countries who are vulnerable and a cooperative plan needs to be developed to combat its consequences," he said.

The foreign adviser said when visiting Information Minister of Senegal Dr Bacar Dia met him at his foreign ministry office yesterday,

said a handout.

He said wealthy Islamic countries could also financially support training and upgrading of manpower in other Muslim nations and derive benefits from contractual labour migration.

"What the Islamic world needs is effective leadership at this critical juncture of history, and we look to the Summit to give us the necessary direction," Iftekhar said.

Dr Dia is expected to hand over a letter of invitation from President Abdoulaye Wade to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed to attend the OIC Summit that will take place in Dakar on March 13 and 14.

# Korea-Bangladesh cultural evening held at JU

A cultural evening of South Korea-Bangladesh was held at Jahangirnagar University (JU) auditorium on Saturday, says a press release.

Students' Welfare and Counseling Centre of JU organised the cultural evening with a view to building diplomatic cooperation between the two countries.

JU Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Moniruzzaman inaugurated the programme while Prof Atiqur Rahman, director of Students' Welfare and Counseling Centre was in the chair.

Prof Moniruzzaman said the cultural heritage of South Korea-Bangladesh is very old and rich. Such kinds of cultural programme would be helpful to make friendship, he added.

Speakers said South Korea and Bangladesh work in the international arena as part of the Asian community and this type of programmes will help to build bilateral cooperation between the countries.

Lee Dong Huy, secretary of South Korean Embassy in Dhaka, Chargé, dean of Christian Theology College, Ahmed Reza of English department of JU, Kim So Jung, leader of the Korean delegation addressed among others in the function.

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