

Hold parliamentary polls as per electoral roadmap

BDB, Gonotantri Party urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) and Gonotantri Party yesterday called on the government to hold parliamentary elections as per the electoral roadmap announced by the Election Commission and hand over power to an elected government as early as possible.

They also called on the government to lift the state of emergency and the ban on indoor politics across the country soon to pave the way for an atmosphere conducive to parliamentary election.

The call came at a meeting

between the leaders of the two parties at the BDB office at Segunbagicha in the city.

"Both the parties think that the only way to resolve the political crisis is to hold parliamentary election as per the electoral roadmap after lifting the state of emergency and the ban on indoor politics across the country immediately," BDB Secretary General Maj (ret) Abdul Mannan told reporters after the meeting.

He also said that they want a meaningful election. So, the government should ensure that the corrupt people who were in power

before 1/11 do not get any chance to stand in the upcoming elections, he added.

Gonotantri Party President Nurul Islam called for steps to ensure sustainable democracy in the country. To achieve this goal, the government should hand over power to an elected government as early as possible through holding a free, fair and credible election, he added.

He also urged the government to start dialogue with the political parties as early as possible.

The two parties would place similar proposals in the talks, he added.

'Dhaka committed to resisting terrorism'

BSS, Dhaka

The international community should have the confidence that the Bangladesh government is committed to resisting any kind of terrorism.

The foreign ministry made this remark while its attention was drawn to a news item that the United States had termed Harkat ul-Jihad-I-Islami-Bangladesh (Hujji-B) a foreign terrorist organisation, a foreign office spokesman said in a statement yesterday.

The spokesman also said Hujji was banned a few years ago in Bangladesh.

Anti-corruption concert today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) and Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) will hold an anti-corruption concert and laser show at Gulshan Youth Club ground in the city today to mark the International Women's Day.

The concert beginning at 2:00pm is open to all, but free entry coupons will have to be collected from the organisers in advance, says a press release.

Musical bands Souls, Renaissance, Dalchhut, Arthoheon, Black, Yatee and Krishnokoli will perform in the concert. Besides, singers Syed Abdul Hadi, Kanganali Sufia, Azam Khan, Fahmida Nabi, Maksud, Meherin and Shahed will perform in the concert.

Sas Compact Tune will present the laser show in the evening.

The concert will be aired on www.metrobd.net live. Anyone can enjoy it from any corner of the world.

Couple held on charges of torturing domestic help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The police yesterday arrested an engineer and his wife on charges of torturing their domestic help at their residence at Shantinagar in the city yesterday.

The arrestees are LGRD engineer Shafiqul Islam and his wife Abida Sultana.

Police said the 15-year-old domestic help Nilufa Akhter jumped from the five-story building at around 4:45pm when she was being tortured.

The girl, however, landed on the roof of a nearby garment factory building.

Receiving information, the police rushed to the spot, rescued Nilufa and took her to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Sub-Inspector Anwar Hossain of Paltan Police Station said they arrested the couple from their 157/A Shantinagar residence at about 6:30pm.

Land grabbers evict Santal family

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

An divasi Santal family has been evicted from their homestead by land grabbers in the Jafflong area in Gowainghat Upazila.

The family has been staying away from their house in the face of threat from the land grabbers for the last one week.

The victim Bindu santal, 61, lodged a complaint with the police authority over the matter. But he is not getting any legal support, he alleged.

However, Sylhet Superintendent of Police yesterday said the case is being investigated.

The couple Bindu santal and Lakshmi Santal had long been staying at their house at Chhailakhet tritioy khondo of Purba Jafflong union in Gowainghat upazila. Local coal trader Shamsul and Rubel eyed on their land last year.

As a trick, they rented some part of Bindu's house for dumping coal last year. But, after paying the first installment, they stopped paying the rent for the lands. Rather, they threatened Bindu for leaving the house.

Bindu lodged a general diary with the police on August 29 last year seeking security of lives and property.

It angered the grabbers and planned for evicting the family from the house.

Shamsul and Rubel used one Runu Begum and her family men for occupying a room in the house on February 28. On filing of a case in this connection, police caught Runu Begum on March 1. But the next day all accused including Runu Begum got bail and attacked Bindu's house.

Bindu informed the matter to Deputy Inspector General of Police, SP and UNO and urged steps to recover the house.



Awami League leaders led by acting party president Zillur Rahman place wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday on the occasion of the historic March 7.

A dream come true for acid survivor

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

Nilima, a 29-year-old woman who was forced to get married at the age of nine and was burnt with acid thrown by her husband at the very beginning of her conjugal life, has finally proved that a woman can establish herself in society and nothing can stop her from becoming self-reliant if she really wants to do so.

Nilima, now a medical attendant at the Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF), is an example of self-reliant woman and a source of inspiration to other acid survivors who come to the ASF for their treatment or legal support and rehabilitation.

The woman, who was once dependent on her family, now provides financial support to her family. She hails from Manirampur in Jessore.

"As the living cost in the capital is too high, I can't save much money. Yet, I try to send money every other month to my parents who tried their best to arrange my treatment and fight the legal battle against my husband who threw acid on my face," she said.

She still has difficulty speaking as her lips and nose were burnt

with acid. The acid attack has also impaired her ability to see and hear clearly. Her fault was that she did not want to come close to her husband, as she, then only nine, was afraid of that man.

"My husband wanted to kill me by throwing acid. I was burnt so badly that my parents lost the hope of my recovery," Nilima said.

"But I didn't lose heart," she said.

Nilima started to go to school again and studied up to class seven in her village school. She also provided private tuition to other students to earn money and even did hard work like earth digging to fulfil her dream of becoming self-reliant.

"I ignored all my pains at that time. I just wanted to be alive. I had done all types of odd jobs for long 15 years before I was brought to the Acid Survivors Foundation," she said.

Nilima underwent plastic and reconstructive surgery several times at the ASF Hospital. Although she has now some physical problems, she has been working at the ASF with dignity.

When asked about her husband, Nilima said, "He had already served 14 years in jail for throwing acid. After being freed, he got mar-

ried again and I have heard that he is now a father of three children."

Nilima has received justice as her husband was brought to book. But in most cases, acid attackers went unpunished due to lack of enforcement of laws.

"Two laws have been enacted in 2002 to curb acid attacks. But such crimes are still taking place as the laws are not being enforced properly," ASF Executive Director Monira Rahman said, adding that acid violence, however, has been declining gradually.

According to the ASF, the number of acid attacks was 154 in 2007, which was 174 in 2006, 252 in 2001 and 367 in 2002. But in most cases, the culprits went unpunished.

On February 28, the 16th meeting of the National Acid Control Council of the home ministry was held. It was decided that charges against the culprits in 87 percent of acid attack cases could not be proved due to lack of evidence.

According to the home ministry, a total of 1,440 acid attack cases were filed during the period from January 2002 to January 2008, but only 294 people have been convicted so far. Of them, 11 were sentenced to death and 90 others to life imprisonment.



Chief Adviser Fakhrudin Ahmed talks to people from all walks of life at Mariapara in Barisal Sadar on his way to Patuakhali yesterday.

Firearm factory unearthed in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) unearthed a firearms-making factory in the city's Nayabazar area last night and recovered three firearms and 12 bullets.

The Rab also arrested a 24-year-old youth identified as Mohammad Imran Hossain in this connection.

Firearms-making equipment and spare parts were recovered from his possession, Rab said.

During a drive at 35 Shanchhabad Lane from 8:00pm to 12:00 midnight, the Rab members recovered two revolvers, one shooter gun, ammunition and other materials, said Assistant Superintendent of Police Enamul Kabir of Rab-10.

Dhaka replaces contingent in UN Mission in Liberia

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh is replacing its Army contingent in United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

Under this programme, the first batch of 264-member Army team, led by Brig General Jalal, left Dhaka by a UN chartered plane on Thursday night.

A media team also left Dhaka for Liberia by the same flight.

Replacement programme will be completed in different phases by 20 April 2008. A total of 2,381 Army personnel of different ranks will be replaced while 2,381 will return home after their successful completion of their tenure, said an ISPR release yesterday.

Botanical Society confce at JU today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The annual conference of Bangladesh Botanical Society (BBS) will be held at Jahangirnagar University (JU) today.

Agriculture Adviser Dr CS Karim will attend the conference as the chief guest while JU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Khandaker Mustahidur Rahman, Pro-VC Dr Mohammad Moniruzzaman, Treasurer Prof Abdul Hye, Life Science Faculty Dean Prof Shahabuddin Kabir Chowdhury and Managing Director of Hamdard Laboratories Hakim Yusuf Harun Bhuiyan will be present as special guests.

BBS President Prof Dr AZM Nowsher Ali Khan will preside over the conference.

As part of the conference, a three-day exhibition of trees, herbal and agricultural products and flowers was inaugurated on the JU campus yesterday.

Obama adviser quits after calling Hillary 'a monster'

AP, Washington

An adviser for Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama resigned yesterday after calling rival Hillary "a monster."

Samantha Power, an unpaid foreign policy adviser and Harvard professor, announced her resignation in a statement provided by the Obama campaign in which she expressed "deep regret."

"On last Monday, I made inexcusable remarks that are at marked variance from my oft-stated admiration for Senator Hillary Clinton and from the spirit, tenor and purpose of the Obama campaign," she said.

"And I extend my deepest apologies to Senator Hillary, Senator Obama and the remarkable team I have worked with over these long 14 months."

AFP adds: Samantha Power made the explosive comments in an interview with the Scotsman newspaper, in the latest sign that Obama's once flawless campaign is feeling the heat from increased pressure from the Clinton camp.

Power told the Scottish daily that they messed up in Ohio, referring to the Illinois senator's loss to the former first lady in the midwestern state in Tuesday's primary.

"In Ohio, they are obsessed and Hillary is going to town on it, because she knows Ohio's the only place they can win," Power was quoted as saying.

"She is a monster, too -- that is off the record -- she is stooping to anything," Power said.

"You just look at her and think 'Ergh.'"



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over all Khulna, Barisal, Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Comilla in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, said Met Office, predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 32.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Mongla and lowest 16.0 degrees Celsius at Srirangal.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:05pm today and rises at 6:13am 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	28.1	20.1	78	72
Chittagong	29.0	20.0	79	76
Rajshahi	28.8	19.2	82	63
Khulna	30.8	23.0	87	72
Barisal	31.0	21.2	91	66
Sylhet	31.2	18.4	60	55
Cox's Bazar	30.3	19.0	76	77



Members of Dhaka University English Department Alumni Society render songs at its annual get-together at the British Council auditorium in the city yesterday.

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar
Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMU) will organise a seminar on rights of the female migrant workers. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4:00pm.

Debate
Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association organises a debate competition on eve leasing. Venue: Institute of Modern Languages auditorium, DU. Time: 3:00pm.

Roundtable
Muktijoddha Samannay Parishad will organise a roundtable on Liberation War and today's Bangladesh. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 3:30pm.

Seminar
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and JICA Alumni Association of Bangladesh will jointly organise a seminar on disaster management and preparedness. Venue: Public Works Department auditorium. Time: 9:00am.

Folk music
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Dhaka City Corporation will jointly organise the event 'Solid waste management campaign through folk music'. Venue: Koratola School Yard.

(opposite of Sydbad bus terminal). Time: 3:00pm.

Book launching
The launching ceremony of the handbook titled 'An Executive's Handbook of Etiquette and Manners' will be held. Venue: etc, Dhanmondi. Time: 11:00am.

Symposium
United Nations Association of Bangladesh (UNAB) organises a symposium on 'Experience of women working in Bangladesh'. Venue: Scout Bhaban. Time: 5:00pm.

Roundtable
The daily Amar Desh and Campus will jointly organise a roundtable on role of the media on creating awareness about kidney disease. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

Food festival
The inaugural ceremony of the Thai Food Festival will be held. Venue: Westin Hotel. Time: 7:00pm.

Rotary Dhaka Central
The regular meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 1:30pm.

Brazil comes out against Taiwan's UN referendum

AFP, Brasilia

Brazil yesterday said it was against Taiwan's decision to hold a referendum on joining the United Nations and affirmed its support for a policy of "one China".

"The Brazilian government reiterates its firm support for the policy of one China and peaceful efforts for a reunification of Chinese territory," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

It said it believed the referendum "will in no way contribute to peace, stability and security in the region."

Taiwan is planning on holding a referendum on March 22, on the same day as its presidential election.

The Republic of China, as Taiwan is formally known, lost its UN seat to the mainland in 1971 and is now recognised diplomatically by 23 countries.

Its efforts over the past 14 years to rejoin the world body using its official name have been repeatedly blocked by Beijing, which has a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

This time, it is asking its people whether the island should seek UN membership under the name "Taiwan."

City University to honour Dr Yunus with President's Medal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The City University of New York will award Nobel laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus the President's Medal on March 9 for his innovative economic ideas, humanitarian efforts, and contributions toward world peace.

The medal will be handed over to Dr Yunus at a programme on Lehman College campus.

Dr Yunus will also deliver a special talk entitled 'Social business is the solution' on the occasion, reports ANA from New York.

He will also address another gathering, organised by American Muslim Public Affairs Council, at Manhattan penthouse in New York the same day.

Two arrested with hemp in city

BSS, Dhaka

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested two woman drug peddlers with two kilograms of hemp from West Aargoan under Mohammadpur thana in the city yesterday.

The were identified as Amana Bibi, 35, wife of Mohammad Alamgir Hossain of Charsuamya village and Kulsum Begum, 24, wife of Mohammad Rubel Mia of Shahabandi village of Bhola district, a Rab press release said.



Poet Obaidullah memorial fair today

In memory of noted poet Abu Zafar Obaidullah a fair will be held at Baherchar village under Babuganj Upazila in Barisal today, says a press release.

Abu Zafar Obaidullah Smriti Pathagar organised the fair to mark his birth and death anniversary.

Poet Jaya Mahjabin Khan Moni will inaugurate the memorial fair by unveiling a portrait of the poet.

Students of local schools and colleges will recite his poetry in the fair. Besides, patriotic songs, competition of folk songs written on him and discussion will also be held.

Poet Asad Chowdhury, the daily Jugantar Editor Golam Sarwar, Workers Party of Bangladesh President Rashed Khan Menon, poet Belal Chowdhury, television personality Nawajesh Ali Khan, poet's relative Selima Rahman, former secretary Siraj Uddin Ahmed, businessman Abu Jafar Saleh and Shahidullah Khan Badal will take part in the discussion.

Noted singer Anob Chowdhury, Close up 1 stars Abid Hasan, Nishita Barua and others will perform in the cultural programmes.

Born in Barisal on February 28 in 1934, popular poet Abu Zafar Obaidullah died on March 19 in 2001.

Death anniversary

Today is the 25th death anniversary of M. A. B. Rahman, a political leader, social worker and businessman, says a press release.

On the occasion, doa and milad mahfils will be held at his residences at Purnabazar in Patuakhali town and Elephant Road in the capital.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the programmes and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Sheuli Karim (Lucky)

Today is the 13th death anniversary of Sheuli Karim (Lucky), wife of Nazmul Karim, managing director of Shenjuti Limited, Tejgaon, says a press release.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to pray for eternal peace of the departed soul.