

AL, BNP should take part in dialogue with govt

Speakers tell BBC Bangladesh Sanglap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Renowned jurist Barrister Rafiq-ul-Huq yesterday suggested that both the Awami League and BNP should take part in the dialogue with the caretaker government so that the 'influential quarter behind the scene' could not implement their blueprint.

"Both the parties have been trapped into not joining the dialogue without their party chiefs -- Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia," he said at the BBC Bangladesh Sanglap held at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city.

Barrister Rafiq, who is the counsel for both Hasina and Khaleda, said the quarter does not want election. It will be happy if the two major parties do not join the dialogue as it does not want the dialogue to be successful, he added.

"So, the two parties should join the dialogue and raise the demand for the release of two chiefs," the Supreme Court advocate said, adding that the two chiefs would never be freed through legal process.

Secretary General of Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh Maj (ret'd) Abdul Mannan, agricultural affairs secretary of BNP Shamsuzzaman Dudu and assistant secretary for women's affairs of Awami League Shagufta Yasmin Emeli also took part in the sanglap as panelists.

BBC Bangla Service in conjunction with the BBC World Service Trust organised the programme moderated by Kamal Ahmed of BBC Bangla Service.

Maj (ret'd) Mannan urged all the political parties to join the dialogue in a bid to restore democracy, while the AL and BNP leaders said there is a doubt about the success of the

dialogue without the participation of their party chiefs.

Replying to a question, Barrister Rafiq said that finally all the parties would have to sit together to reach a consensus on crucial national issues.

He also opposed the idea of formulating any national charter and suggested that the government should restore the 1972 Constitution.

Barrister Rafiq also suggested bringing reforms to the political parties and ensuring democratic practices at all levels from the grassroots level.

The other panelists, however, said reforms are a continuous process in the political parties.

Barrister Rafiq also observed that the anti-corruption drive would pave the way for honest and competent youths to join politics in the coming days.

DU students confine teachers to instt building for classes

DU CORRESPONDENT

Master's students of the Institute of Social Welfare and Research (ISWR) yesterday confined some teachers to the institute building for two hours, as they did not start classes on scheduled date.

Classes of the fresh master's students were scheduled to start yesterday. But the teacher did not take classes due to internal conflicts among them over taking classes under the incumbent Director Prof Syeda Firoza Begum.

The angry students took out a procession inside the institute and locked some teachers inside the building demanding resumption of their classes immediately.

Due to internal conflicts among the teachers, classes of the master's students in the academic session 2002-03 of the institute are yet to start though they completed their honours final examinations in 2007.

The conflicts among the teachers occurred over the issue of resignation of the director who submitted her resignation letter to the university authorities on personal grounds. But the university authorities did not grant her resignation.

The agitating students unlocked the institute's main entrance at around 12:45pm after getting assurance from the teachers that they will take classes from tomorrow (Monday).



Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed waters a sapling after planting it on the premises of Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday on the occasion of the National Tree Plantation Movement-2008. (Story on Page 16)

AL EXTENDED MEET TOMORROW

CA urged not to act as referee in dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) yesterday said they do not want to see the chief adviser (CA) to act as a referee in the dialogue between the caretaker government and the political parties and urged him to represent the government side only.

AL president, the highest policy-making body of the party, at a meeting also asked the government to refrain from creating any confusion about holding election in time.

Referring to Election Commission Brig Gen (Retd) Sakhawat Hossain's Friday statement that Election Commission (EC) wouldn't take any responsibility if election is not held in time for any other reasons despite its preparation, AL acting General Secretary Syed Ashraf Islam said people have already expressed their doubt about the holding the parliamentary election and such remarks will only increase the confusion.

The meeting discussed the preparation of the party's extended meeting scheduled for tomorrow at the city's Institution of Engineers Bangladesh. AL acting president Zillur Rahman presided over the

meeting. Syed Ashraf briefed journalists after the meeting at Zillur Rahman's Gulshan residence.

He said they are yet to decide whether to join the dialogue or not. He urged the government to be flexible about sending party representatives to the dialogue.

He said AL Central Working Committee (ALWC) will take the decision on joining the dialogue after reviewing the party leaders' opinions at the extended meeting.

He urged the chief adviser to be present all through the sessions of the dialogue. "You have seen in the television that the CA left the dialogue after a while. He should be present all the time and should sit beside the advisers to represent the government," he added.

Urging the CA to change his seating position, Syed Ashraf said such a position looks like a referee.

Presidium members Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Amir Hossain Arnu, Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta and Motia Chowdhury attended the meeting.

Around 850 AL delegates will participate in the extended meeting.

Govt trying to earn trust of political parties: Hossain Zillur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Commerce and Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman yesterday said the government is trying its best to earn trust of the political parties so that they would participate in the ongoing formal dialogues with the government.

The government is looking for an acceptable solution to the crisis created about non-participation of the two major political parties in the talks side by side keeping the legal procedures against the corrupt politicians continued, the advisers said.

He expressed the hope that the two major political parties would participate in the dialogues giving emphasis to the national interests.

He was talking to journalists after joining a reception ceremony as the chief guest at Dr Khastagir Govt Girls' High School in the port city.

The school authority organised the ceremony to greet the students who achieved scholarships in this year's primary and junior scholarship examinations.

While talking to journalists, the adviser termed the ongoing dialogues as the reflection of aspiration of the nation and urged the politicians to keep faith in the government.

Leaders of the two major parties should join the dialogues with confidence and even with some risks, he added.

Zillur further said the govern-

ment is doing everything to create confidence among the political leaders.

Earlier, while attending the reception ceremony the adviser called on the students to build them as good citizens with achieving moral values and self-confidence.

Remove misconceptions about Islam

Speakers tell national conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a national conference yesterday said misconceptions about Islam must be eliminated from society in order to properly follow the teachings of Islam.

Islam should be understood properly so that we can confidently face the challenges of the 21st century, they said.

Muslim Professionals, a non-political intellectual organisation, arranged the conference on 'Islam -- misunderstood and misrepresented' at the auditorium of the Institute of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh.

Six topics were discussed in the two sessions of the conference.

Former chief election commissioner justice Abdur Rauf said

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ashraf Shamim, Chief of Education and Engineering Department, Chittagong Shahjahan Patwary and Chittagong Education Board Chairman Dr Mohammad Yusuf were present as the special guests at the programme with Headmistress Hasmat Jahan in the chair.

attended one session as the chief guest.

Dr Anwarul Azim, vice chancellor of Dhaka University of Engineering and Technology, spoke on the topic of 'Islam and Science', Mufti Mohammad Nuruddin Khatib of Baitul Mokarram on 'Islamic Law', Fahmida Farhana on 'Women in Islam', Mobarrat Rahman, on 'War on Terror? Or War on Islam?' Dr Saeed on 'Islamists: Fundamentalists or Reformists', and Maulana Raqib on 'Muslim Ummah's Revival: Dream or Reality'.

Mirza Aminur Rahman, chief coordinator of Muslim Professionals, said any misconceptions about Islam should be removed through debate and discussion.

Shahid, Baker elected DUJ president, secy

BSS, Dhaka

Abdus Shahid and Muhammad Baker Hossain have been elected president and general secretary of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ).

The election was held at the National Press Club on Friday.

Other elected office-bearers are: vice-presidents - Amirul Islam Kagazi, Khandaker Hasnat Karim and Dr Mahbub Hassan; joint secretary - Khurshid Alam; treasurer - Shahidul Islam, organising secretary - Abdullah Ferdous; publicity secretary - Zahurul Haq Rana; sports and cultural affairs secretary - Shahadat Hossain Khan; office secretary - Akon Abdul Mannan and members are: Abdul Basit Mian, Sharif Abdul Gofran, Muhammad Sanaullah, Nurul Islam, Toufique Rahman Fahim, Mainuddin Ahmed, Abdul Baten and Azhar Ali Sarkar.

New website of books, authors, publishers launched

DU CORRESPONDENT

With a view to give access to the books published from Bangladesh and to its publishers and authors to Bangladeshis living abroad, a new website: www.pbublishers.com.bd was launched yesterday.

Noted litterateur Prof Muhammad Jafar Iqbal formally inaugurated the website at Somy Net office in the city.

The goals of the website are to build a community of publishers, authors and readers, and to introduce Bangladeshis books, publishers and authors worldwide.

A total of seven links are available in the website from where readers would get information on books, could discuss and comment on books, and contact with the publishers and the authors from any part of the world.

Prof Jafar Iqbal expressed hope that this website would help the expatriates of the country to read all updated publications of the country.

"It is impossible to deny the expansion of the internet, as it is not only a technology, it has become a part of our regular life. So, other publishers should come forward now to launch more such websites", Prof Iqbal added.

Prof Muntassir Mamun, artists Hashem Khan, writer Anisul Haque, journalist Sumanta Aslam were present at the opening ceremony.

Information about 50 publishers, 1000 authors and their 8,000 books have already been uploaded in the website.

People's participation in admin a must to establish rule of law

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday stressed that the restoration of direct democracy and people's participation in the administration and the judiciary are imperative to establish justice and rule of law in the society.

"We require restoration of direct democracy through local republics as articles 59 and 60 of the Constitution of Bangladesh formulate. Through the medium of these local republics the entire body of citizens will actively participate in the administration of the state. Then the society will obliterate the state. There will be no opportunity or necessity for corrupt practice," said Justice Mohammad Golam Rabbani while speaking as chief guest at the discussion.

The discussion titled 'Judicial accountability in Bangladesh: Is Ombudsman an option?' was organised by the Society of Justice at Brac Centre Inn at Mohakhali in the city.

Justice Rabbani said in Bangladesh the parliamentary democracy has reached the dead end and it is now party-cracy.

"Political practice under the party system discards morality and generates lust for power, sectional selfishness, class-hatred and so on. The state under the control of the evil passions has obliterated the society and unless this is changed totally, the corruption will prevail," he added.

Justice Rabbani said a judge is no doubt a human being and so he is fallible as was his ancestor Adam.

"If so, then who will guarantee that the chosen Ombudsman would be infallible? Further, we have the courts of first instance, then the series of appellate courts or revisional courts and at the apex Appellate Division of the Supreme

Court. So one should not be allowed to meet the Ombudsman before all forums are exhausted," he said.

"If he is allowed then there will be two issues out of one judgement. Number one, the judge is corrupt and number two, the judgement is wrong and to allow simultaneous proceedings, one before the Ombudsman and the other before the appellate court will be disastrous. Each and every successful litigant will rush to the office of the Ombudsman and there will be innumerable cases adding with the same innumerable cases in the courts," he added.

Barrister M Amir-ul Islam, former vice-chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council, said Ombudsman should not be the only option, social awareness should be built up in order to establish the judicial accountability.

Nurul Kabir, editor of the New Age, said there should be an external body in respect of the recruitment of judges for the interest of transparency of judicial system.

Prof Dr Sarker Ali Akkas of Daffodil International University said in order to strengthen the confidence of people, public participation should be ensured in the affairs of the judiciary.

"Discipline of judges is one of the important aspects in which such participation is necessary. An independent office of Ombudsman may play an effective role in establishing such an accessible system. Therefore, immediate measures should be taken to establish the system of Ombudsman for the judiciary so that public confidence in the judiciary, particularly in the system of judicial accountability can be sustained properly," he added.

Barrister Charles Whiteley, first secretary of European Commission to Bangladesh, and Taleya Rehman, a development activist, also took part in the discussion moderated by Prof Dr Mizanur Rahman, president of the Society of Justice.

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NSI officer stabbed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Junior Field Officer of the National Security Intelligence (NSI) was stabbed in his hand by a gang of muggers at Tikatuli in the city last night.

The miscreants, however, fled as locals came forward to rescue him after he cried for help.

The injured officer, Firoz Alam, 35, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) from where he was later shifted to Pangu Hospital.

The victim told reporters at the DMCH that a gang of three to four muggers waylaid his rickshaw at Tikatuli crossing at around 7:30pm when he was returning to his Shegunbagicha office from Rajshahi Super Market.

Women in Politics launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A new political platform titled 'Narir Rajnaitik Andolon' (Women in Politics) was launched in the city yesterday aspiring to march equally in the male-dominated political arena of the country.

"The constitution ensures equal rights for men and women, but women cannot practise their rights in the male-dominated politics," said the convener of the platform Naheed Nazrul at a press conference at the National Press Club.

Naheed is a social worker and runs a non-government organisation for the development of women.

Welcoming the males in the women-led political platform, Mehjabeen Rahman, a platform member who is studying in Nottingham University of the UK, placed 13-point proposal at the press conference.

The proposals include a federal form of government where the prime minister will be the chief executive and the president will be in-charge of defence.

There will be a bi-cameral parliament where in the upper house 64 seats will be reserved for women belonging to different classes and professions.

A government of national consensus will be formed with the members of all elected political parties.

The country will have seven provinces where there will be elected parliaments as well as elected governments.

The parliamentary committee will consist of members from both the upper and the lower houses.

An independent election commission will have to be formed. Besides, national security council, national economic council, constitutional court and permanent judicial council will also be set up as per the proposals.

The political platform also suggested different reform proposals to strengthen the economy of the country.

These include micro-credit for destitute, establishing upazila-based industries with the finance of the expatriates, and establishing social business against the business of the multinational companies.

Using information technology, they also want to build up a 'digital Bangladesh' by 2021 and to raise per capita income to \$2000 by that time.

The platform wants to establish a sub-regional economic alliance including Nepal, Bhutan, India, Myanmar and China to achieve the economic goals.

It also wants to incorporate 2000 women working in education, health, information technology, business and economic sectors into this platform by this year to help achieve its objectives, said the Joint Convener Moksada Ferdous Khan Eljia at the press conference.

ARMY CHIEF'S TOUR OF GREECE, KUWAIT ENDS

Support for sports dev, military sought

UNB, Dhaka

Chief of Army Staff Gen Moeen U Ahmed has concluded his 10-day official tour of Greece and Kuwait.

During his first leg of visit to Greece, Gen Moeen made a courtesy call on International Olympic Academy (IOA) President Minos and discussed different proposals on development of Bangladesh's sports arena.

The IOA president assured him of cooperation "in all possible sectors and sanction of quota for Bangladesh in all IOA training curriculum."

Bangladeshi buried in Saudi Arabia

BSS, Dhaka

A Bangladeshi expatriate, who died in Saudi Arabia nine and half months ago, was laid to eternal rest in that country on May 16.

The burial of Nurul Islam from Chakoria upazila of Cox's Bazar was done at the initiative of Foreign Adviser Iftakhar Ahmed Chowdhury, an official handout said here yesterday.

Nurul Islam died after being hit by a lightning on July 28 last year while working in an Agriculture field in Jahali area of Abha district in Saudi Arabia.

Police kept the body into Jahali mortuary due to various complications arisen after his death. Despite intense efforts of his family members and other Bangladeshi expatriates in Saudi Arabia, he could not be buried.

Death anniversary



Today is the 8th death anniversary of Dr Jahan Ara Rabbee, wife of martyred intellectual Dr Md Fazle Rabbee, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani and doa mahfil will be held and wreaths will be placed at her grave. More over food will be distributed among the children of the Salimullah orphanage.

Relatives and admirers are requested to pray for her departed soul.

ricula from now on," said an ISPR release yesterday.

Earlier on May 13, the army chief attended the inaugural function of the 9th International Session for Presidents or Directors of National Olympic Academies and Officials of National Olympic Committees in the historical city of Olympia.

On May 14, from among the representatives of all countries present, Gen Moeen was selected for placing wreath at the Kubertin, which was a rare honour shown to him, the release said.

On the second leg of his tour, Gen Moeen went to Kuwait on May 17.

He explored training facilities for sports persons and more Bangladesh military role in the Gulf states during his visit.

The army chief met the Kuwaiti deputy prime minister and defence minister, the chief of armed forces and chiefs of three services and other military and civil high officials.

During the meeting with the

chief of armed forces of Kuwait, Moeen discussed various matters including increase in financial, administrative and other benefits of the Bangladesh army personnel working in the Gulf state as well as recruitment of more manpower from the country.

Upon the plea, the Kuwaiti armed forces chief directed the authorities to "rapidly resolve the matters".

Gen Moeen also sought his cooperation in creating job opportunity for Bangladesh army personnel in some other Gulf countries like Kuwait.

Besides, he made a courtesy call on the president of Asian Shooting Federation and attended a reception accorded to him by the Bangladesh expatriates.

"This visit is expected to help create more employment opportunities for Bangladeshis apart from strengthening cooperation between the two countries in military sector," sources added.



Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

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

Highest temperature 35.4 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Faridpur and lowest 22.4 degrees Celsius at Dinajpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:39pm today and rises at 5:12am 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	35.3	26.2	60	89
Chittagong	32.3	26.2	73	72
Rajshahi	33.0	26.2	76	97
Khulna	34.5	26.0	73	73
Barisal	34.5	26.0	66	87
Sylhet	34.2	24.2	69	76
Cox's Bazar	33.8	25.7	71	69



Seminar

Department of World Religion of Dhaka University organises a seminar on 'Kazi Nazrul Islam and Inter-religion harmony'. Venue: TSC auditorium. Time: 4:00