

# Strengthen local govt bodies for development

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday said the country can achieve sustainable development by strengthening local government bodies and holding of the local body elections successfully is likely to effect future elections in the country.

Decentralisation is needed for the country's development and that can be ensured by strengthening the local government system, they added.

The speakers said the national and upazila elections should be held on the same day and called on the political parties not to oppose the local government elections.

Titled 'Local government elec-

tions in creating honest and efficient leadership,' the roundtable was organised by Free Thinkers Forum (FTF) at the National Press Club in the city.

Former chief election commissioner Justice Abdur Rauf was present at the roundtable as the chief guest with former vice chancellor (VC) of Dhaka University Muniruzzaman Mia in the chair.

Justice Abdur Rauf said power should be decentralised by strengthening the local government bodies and the country can achieve development at the grassroots level, adding that the local government system should be strengthened to establish the power and rights of the people.

Chittagong University Prof. Abdur Nur said the upazila elections should be held even though there are some suspicions of the political parties are there about it.

The Election Commission should hold elections in all the upazilas instead of holding polls only at 300 upazilas, because the much-awaited voter list has been finished, he said, adding that the parliamentary and the upazila elections should be held on the same day.

Journalist Sadek Khan said the local government elections must be held and the political parties must support the holding of the elections to establish the power of the people and development of the

country.

The political parties are opposing the holding of the local body election as the power of the MPs would be curbed if it is held. The parties are only finding an excuse to oppose the election by saying that someone is using it as a tool to come to power, he added.

FTF President Zahangir Chowdhury moderated the roundtable which was also addressed by Editor of the Amar Desh Amanullah Kabir, Editor of the New Nation Mostafa Kamal Majumdar, Chittagong University Prof Dr Tofail Ahmed and ex-VC of Patuakhali University of Science and Technology Abdul Latif Masum.

RISKY WORKPLACE

## 5 construction firms served notices

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special team of the government, which was formed to oversee the risky workplaces of the construction workers, yesterday issued notices to five construction firms as their workers were doing risky jobs.

The team during a visit in different areas in the city found that the workers were engaged in risky works and issued the notices to the firms. Cases will be filed under Labour Law-2006 if they fail to give satisfactory reply, says a press release.

Meanwhile, another two teams visited the Jamdani Palli in Narayanganj and found the child labourers were working there in an unhygienic atmosphere.

Almost all the child labourers work there to get a nominal amount of money, meals three times a day and a place to sleep.

In another drive at different Jamdani Pallis at Rugganj in Narayanganj on Monday, a team issued notices to five establishments, including the deputy director of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC).

They will be punished under the Labour Law-2006 if they fail to reply to the notice.

## NU first yr final exams begin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The honours final examination for the first year under National University will begin today, says a press release.

A total of 1,58,244 students will sit for the examination in 119 centres across the country. Among the students 46,031 will sit for improvement.

## 'Make local govt bodies accountable to people'

METRO DESK

Democracywatch, a human rights organisation working to promote transparency and accountability in local government in association with the Human Rights and Good Governance programme of DANIDA, organised a two-day experience sharing meeting with local government activists in the city recently, says a press release.

The meeting was held with an aim to identifying the existing problems and possible solutions to make local governments more responsive, transparent and accountable to the people.

A number of local government activists from Jessore, Nilphamari, Gazipur and Dinajpur were present at the meeting held at Democracywatch Hall Room.

Taleya Rehman, executive director of Democracywatch, inaugurated the meeting.

The activists identified some obstructions to local governments performance that should be considered if local governments are to be efficient and effective. These included but not limited to poor knowledge of the local elected bodies to handle local government institutions efficiently, non-existence of institutions to monitor union parishad activities, poor commitment of representatives of local government, lack of communication and sharing of information among NGOs, government officials and other stakeholders etc.

The recommendations were emphasised on mobilisation of target groups, local civil society organisations, including the media and individuals, and other stakeholders to be able to monitor local government activities and local service delivery system.

Mostafa Sohel, Wazed Feroz, Shahadat Islam Chowdhury, Mujtoba Shamim, Shariful Haq, Golam Rabbani, Abdur Rahman, Feroze Nurun Nabi, Saiful Islam, Mahabubul Alam, Mohsin Kabir, Towfik Alahi, Nilufa Easmin were also present.

Taleya Rehman said Democracywatch is planning to conduct a huge national advocacy campaign to promote transparency and accountability in local government soon.

## Parul wins Chand Sultana Literacy Prize

METRO DESK

Parul Begum, a housewife of Taraganj in Rangpur, has been awarded the 'Chand Sultana Literacy Prize 2007' for her endeavor to bring children at school who were not admitted at schools earlier, says a press release.

Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) has been awarding the prize every year since 2001 in memory of late Chand Sultana, a renowned non-formal education material developer of DAM.

The prize will be awarded on August 6, which consist of Tk 30,000, a crest and a citation.

Parul Begum at her own initiative started a free school at her own house-yard in 2001 for education of the children who were not enrolled into schools. She used to collect students from their houses and taught them from 6:00am to 8:00am. In this way she educated herself among the students and guardians.

## British HC launches new website

UNB, Dhaka

A new British High Commission website will display essential information for those applying for or sponsoring visas for the UK, seeking consular assistance in Bangladesh and looking for advice about British or Bangladesh trade and investment opportunities.

The website <http://ukinbangladesh.fco.gov.uk> will be launched today.

It will also carry news, features and announcements about the work of the British High Commission and its partner UK organisations, DFID and the British Council in Bangladesh.

The new website address will replace the previous address -- www.ukinbangladesh.org.



Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda speaks at a luncheon meeting of American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (AmCham) at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

## Cultivate sweet potato to ensure food security

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cultivation of sweet potato in the coastal char lands could help ensure food security, said the experts at a seminar on Monday.

They said char lands, which run risks of natural calamities like

CHEATING

## Jiban Chy held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion members on Monday arrested film producer Anwar Chowdhury Jiban alias Jiban Chowdhury, 36, and three others on charges of cheating people in the guise of 'pirs'.

Three other arrested persons are identified as Mohammad Mostafizur Rahman, 29, Marium Begum alias Rubi, 35, and Mohammad Sabuj, 35.

Rab-3 officials said Jiban, also a Jatiya Party leader and a fake pir, has so far produced a number of feature films, including Guru Dev, Paaper Santan and Rajniti, which were screened in movie halls.

Rab arrested Jiban from Shantinagar while Mostafizur Rahman, Rubi and Sabuj from their 'The Madras Herbal' office at Tantibazar.

Rab said acting on secret information provided by a Bangladeshi expatriate in Germany, they raided The Madras Herbal office.

The German expatriate informed that he was promised that he would win a lottery in Germany, but that proved to be wrong and he was cheated.

The arrestees, however, denied the allegations. They claimed that they help people who are frustrated to recover from their frustration.

## Keep away from restlessness

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University SMA Faiz yesterday urged the students to keep themselves away from all sorts of restlessness to face the challenges of globalisation.

He was addressing the freshers' reception of Islamic History and Culture Department at TSC as the chief guest with its Chairman Prof Dr Akhtaruzzaman in the chair.

He also said each and every problem of the country touches the university. So, as proud students of the university, they should find ways to address the problems the country is undergoing.

## BCL lays siege to DU VC's office

Demands Rotan's release

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) yesterday laid siege to the Dhaka University (DU) Vice Chancellor (VC) office for an hour demanding release of detained BCL General Secretary Mahfujul Haider Chowdhury Rotan.

In support of their demands, BCL leaders and activists brought out a procession from Madhu's Canteen at around 12:00noon that marched different streets on the campus and ended holding a protest rally in front of VC office.

Some unruly BCL activists from the rally threw some brick pieces towards the VC office, which broke

some window glasses of the office. BCL leaders from the rally demanded immediate steps on behalf of DU authorities for the release of Rotan.

Later, a team of BCL met VC Prof SMA Faiz and urged him to take immediate steps to facilitate the release of Rotan.

BCL President Mahmud Hasan Ripon told The Daily Star that they would go for the movement demanding removal of VC if their demands are not met soon.

Among others, BCL acting General Secretary Syed Abul Kalam, DU unit President Sohail Rana Tipu were present during the meeting with the VC.

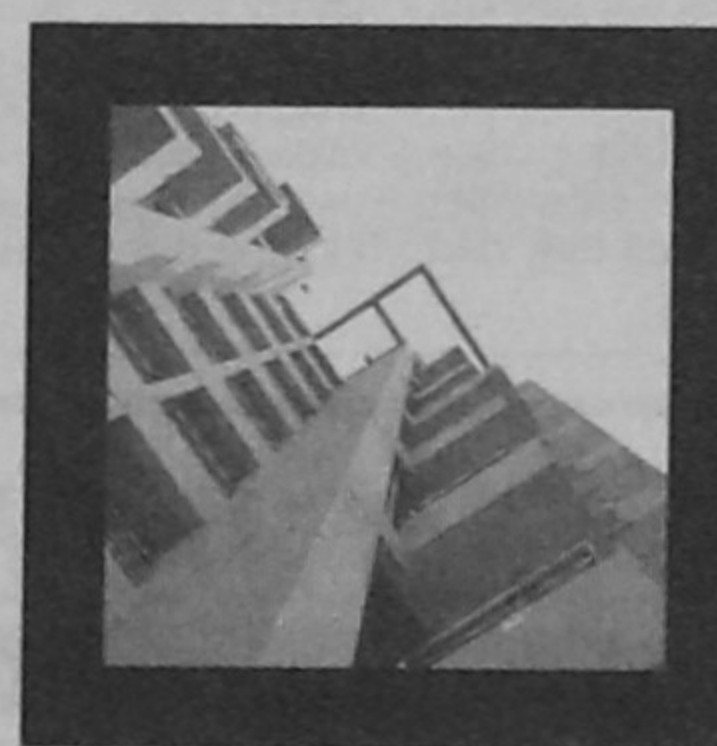
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## Dispatch of Half Yearly Accounts

This is for kind information of all concerned that the half yearly accounts (unaudited) of the company as on 30th June, 2008 have been dispatched to the shareholders, Securities & Exchange Commission, Dhaka & Chittagong Stock Exchanges on July 27, 2008

Arham Masudul Huq  
Executive Vice President  
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