

# Ensure participation of all parties for credible election

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion meeting yesterday said participation of all political parties will have to be ensured for holding a free, fair and credible election and making the results acceptable to all.

They said the government and the Election Commission will have to inform the people of the steps that they are going to take for creating a congenial environment for upcoming national and upazila polls.

The discussion titled 'Forthcoming elections: Expectations of the nation and the reality' was organised by Sammilito Samajik Andolon (SSA) at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) auditorium in the afternoon.

Taking part in the discussion, former Dhaka University (DU) teacher Prof Rangolal Sen said democracy cannot be established without the political parties.

"The idea of holding the local government polls in non-political manner is not a realistic one. Besides, if any big political party like BNP boycotts the next parliamentary election then its result will raise questions," he added.

He however said it will be good enough if the next elections are held in such a peaceful manner as the local government polls were held on August 4.

DU Prof Syed Anwar Hossain said there is no alternative to politicians and political parties in establishing democracy.

It is still a question whether the caretaker government would be able to create an environment

conducive to holding a free and fair election in the country, he added.

Prof Anwar Hossain said that since the country's constitution was amended 14 times, it cannot be treated as a democratic one.

"I found nothing new in the immediate-past local government polls.

He said those, who are now in the present government, are not nonpolitical since they had served during the rule of four-party alliance government.

Prof Anwar Hossain said the next election should be held under the state of emergency as the mucklemen and corrupt people remain in fear under an emergency situation.

"The August 4 elections to city

corporations and municipalities were held peacefully and the participation of the voters was good. They now believe that they can cast their votes without any fear and hassles due to emergency," he said.

"So a state, whose constitution is undemocratic, cannot be called a democratic one in any way," he added.

He thought a change would take place in the country in order to fulfill the expectations of the people, but it did not happen," he added.

SSA General Secretary Advocate Tabarak Hossain presented a written statement at the meeting.

Judges could not become independent.

The meeting was also addressed by columnist Syed Abdul Moksed, Advasi leader Sanjib Drang and Chief Executive of the Association for Land Reforms and Development (ALRD) Shamsul Huda.

SSA General Secretary Advocate Tabarak Hossain presented a written statement at the meeting.

ATTACK ON AL RALLY

## Int'l probe demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) yesterday formed a human chain on the Dhaka University campus demanding international investigation and punishment to the culprits of August 21 grenade attack incident on Awami League rally in 2004.

Around 500 BCL activists formed the human chain at the foot of the Aparajeyo Bangla on the campus.

BCL President Mahmud Hasan Ripon, General Secretary Mahfuzul Haider Chowdhury Roton, vice presidents Aminul Haque Kabir and Tareque-al-Mamun, DU unit President Sohel Rana Tipu and General Secretary Sajjad Sakib Badshah took part.

JCD demands release of Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) yesterday brought out a procession on the Dhaka University campus demanding release of the BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and her elder son Tarique Rahman.

Later, they held a rally in front of the arts building. Leaders addressing the rally demanded unconditional release of Khaleda for holding free, fair and credible elections in the country.

JCD President Azizul Bari Helal, Vice President Sultan Salahuddin Tuku, Organising Secretary Abdul Kader Bhuiyan Jewel, DU unit President Hasan Mamun, General Secretary Saiful Islam Firoz, Organising Secretary Obaedul Haque Nasir among others addressed the rally.

Bus damaged in Bogra

Meanwhile, JCD activists in Bogra ransacked three Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) buses near the Azizul Haque College, our staff correspondent from Bogorapet.

JCD Bogra district unit President Khademul Islam yesterday told The Daily Star over cell phone that few JCD activists had thrown stones at three BRTC buses after getting out from a protest rally by Azizul Haque College unit of JCD.

Azizul Haque College unit JCD General Secretary Masud Rana rejected any involvement of JCD activists in it.

Sea truck service suspended

BSS, Barisal

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) suspended plying of sea trucks between Barisal and Majuchowdhury Hat via Bholia for an indefinite period from yesterday.

Sources said hundreds of passengers of the southern region used to go to Dhaka and Chittagong via Bholia and Majuchowdhury Hat, but with the suspension of the sea truck services they will have to face serious difficulties.

He said, "I urge the DGFI to say

they want to achieve a reconciliation with the teachers and students of Dhaka University."

Prof Anwar urged the caretaker government to lift the state of emergency immediately and hold a free, fair and credible election as soon as possible.

Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique,



Dhaka University teachers wearing black badges stage a sit-in at the foot of Aparajeyo Bangla on the campus yesterday demanding withdrawal of cases against seven students. (Story on Page 1)

Schoolboy murdered by friends in Savar

UNB, Savar

A schoolboy was murdered allegedly by his friends at village Chhoto Walia here on Friday.

The boy identified as Rony, 13, a student of class VII of Begunbari High school, was found slaughtered on a field near their house yesterday.

Police said Rony, son of Faruque Hossain, went missing since some of his friends called him out of the house on Friday afternoon. Villagers found his slaughtered body in a field yesterday morning.

On information, police recovered the body and sent it to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Police arrested Rony's friends - Awlad Hossain, 18, Masud Rana, 20, Khokon Miah, 19, and Firoz, 18, in this connection.

Family sources said Rony might have been killed following previous enmity over land dispute.

BDR hands over 13 Indians to BSF

UNB, Benapole

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) handed over 13 Indian nationals to Indian Border Security Force (BSF) yesterday after completion of their prison term.

The Indian nationals were arrested by the law enforces for trespassing into Bangladesh territory and awarded imprisonment for various terms.

They all hailed from Malda, Mursidabad and Uttar Chabibpur districts of India.

Home ministry sources said prison term of 81 Indian nationals have been completed recently and they would be returned to their country soon.

Road crash kills schoolteacher

BSS, Chittagong

A

schoolteacher was killed when a speeding bus hit him at Tannery Bottali area under Bayazid Police Station in the port city yesterday morning.

The dead was identified as Khaireunnissa, 48, assistant head teacher of J Bottali Government Primary School.

Witnesses said the bus hit Khaireunnissa when she was crossing the road on her way to school.

Qulkhwani of Abdulla Al-Mamun today

METRO DESK



Qulkhwani of Abdulla Al-Mamun, an eminent playwright and filmaker, will be held after Asr prayers today at his residence.

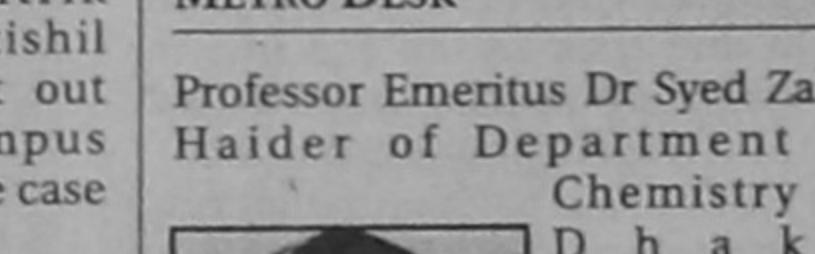
Elephant Crown, at 273/1 Elephant Road, says a press release.

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

Abdulla Al-Mamun breathed his last on Thursday at Birdem Hospital.

Prof Zahir Haider passes away

METRO DESK



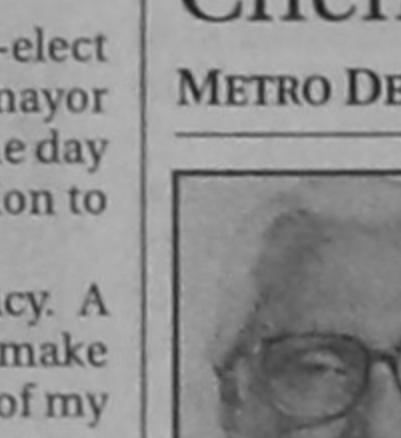
Professor Emeritus Dr Syed Zahir Haider of Department of Chemistry of Dhaka University passed away due to prostate cancer at a city hospital yesterday at the age of 82, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, five sons, one daughter and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

He was buried at Kalshi graveyard at Mirpur in the city.

Cheholum

METRO DESK



Cheholum Advocate Dewan Abdul Abbas, an MNA from Nabinagar-Banchharampur in Brahmanbaria and member of the Draft

Constitution Formulation Committee, will be held at his village home, Dewanbari, at Barikandi in Nabinagar at 11:30am today, says a press release.

Dewan Abdul Abbas, also a former president of Dhaka Bar Association, passed away at a city hospital on July 16 at the age of 83.

His family members have requested all relatives, friends, colleagues and well-wishers to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

# Call to form national level body for elderly people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a meeting yesterday called for establishing a national level organisation for the welfare of elderly people.

Although the elderly men and women are contributing to society and their families they are being deprived of their rights, they added.

Realising the Right of the Older People (RROP), a project of Resource Integration Center (RIC), in association with the Help Age International and Irish Aid organised the meeting at the Dhaka Reporters' Office.

A draft policy for setting up a

national level organisation for the elderly people was presented at the meeting.

Under the RIC project that started working at Srirampur in Pirojpur in 2001, about 400 organisations for elderly people were developed in six districts so far, RIC Executive Director Abdul Hasib Khan said.

Both the elderly men and women are contributing to society, but their contribution are being ignored, he said.

He also mentioned five major challenges to set up a national level organisation for elderly people. The challenges are making them aware of

# Formulate policy against sexual harassment in universities

Speakers say at discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said in absence of a specific provision to punish the perpetrators of sexual harassment in the university acts and proctorial laws, the students are being exploited and harassed by some teachers.

At the discussion organised by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP) at Cirdap auditorium in the city, they said it is the time to formulate a policy against sexual harassment in the universities and incorporate it in the university proctorial laws.

It must be ensured that misdeeds of a number of teachers in the universities be tried so that integrity of the teacher community is not called in question.

BMP has prepared a draft policy to resist sexual harassment in the highest educational institutions based on detailed interviews with the students and teachers of the universities.

The policy aimed at recognising sexual harassment as a punishable crime, creating a sense of security among the victims and reliance on justice and creating an environment where everybody would be aware of the punishment of such crime and would refrain themselves from making such crime.

The speakers said the policy would create a space to file complaints against the perpetrators on behalf of the students. It would also facilitate punishment to the criminal through administrative action.

The draft policy specifies sexual harassment, formation and working procedure of the cell where the students will be able to file their complaints, punishment according to the severity of crime that starts from verbal cautionary to job termination and filing cases in the court.

"Our movement is not against a particular teacher or teacher community, rather it is the movement against the ailing culture that might engulf the whole society if not resisted," said BMP President Ayesha Khanam.

The recommendations from the discussion would be included in the policy that finally would be submitted to the vice chancellors of the universities as well as the caretaker government to stop sexual harass-

ment in the educational institutions, she added.

Speaking as the chief guest, Justice Mohammad Golam Rabbani said the policy would work as an appendix of the proctorial law, adding that it would help in reducing sexual harassment of the students in the universities.

A significant number of teachers of Dhaka, Rajshahi and Jahangirnagar universities placed their recommendations at the discussion.

The teachers said if a teacher who would be punished by the university administration and then he goes to the court, the university must stand in favour of the student and it must be ensured that the teacher is not getting exemption from the administrative and political interference.

"The policy must be incorporated in the syndicate and proctorial policy, otherwise it would not be an effective one," said Dr Maleka.

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