

## Shun vindictive politics for democracy

### Speakers say at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Democracy is not possible without democratic culture, and political parties are mainly responsible for practising this culture, said the speakers at a seminar yesterday.

The national seminar titled 'Democratic transformation in Bangladesh: Opportunities and challenges' was organised by Bangladesh Perspective Research Foundation at the Cirdap auditorium in the city.

Mentioning about the weakness of political culture in the country, the speakers laid emphasis on refraining from the practice of vindictive politics.

They said they should not behave in such a way so that any unconstitutional body should get a chance to interfere in the politics of the country.

They also called for establishing a national security council (NSC) in the light of the constitution.

Dr Ataur Rahman, professor of the political science department of Dhaka University, presented a keynote paper on democratic transformation in Bangladesh where he mentioned the opportunities and challenges facing the country.

He suggested for reforms in political parties, structural changes in government bodies and stabilising

civil-military relations for strengthening democracy.

Prof Hasan Mohammad and Prof Tarek Shamsur Rehman also presented papers.

While reviewing the papers, Prof Dilara Chowdhury of Jahangirnagar University said the political parties had indulged in widespread corruptions and if elections were held on January 22 of 2007, there would have been violent consequences in the country.

"Without democratic culture, democracy is not possible and this responsibility goes to the political parties," she added.

Awami League Presidium Member Suranjit Sengupta called for activating the parliamentary democracy.

Citing examples of England, Australia, New Zealand and India, he said heated debate takes place in those countries before passing any law, but this process is completely absent in the parliamentary culture of Bangladesh.

"We want the best democracy but we do not want to give the time needed for the best democracy like other developed countries," said Joint Secretary General of BNP Nazrul Islam Khan.

He urged the politicians to criticise themselves more instead of criticising others.

The politicians should say what they would be able to do, and not more than that because it creates disliking among the people about the politicians, he added.

Rashed Khan Menon, president of the Workers' Party of Bangladesh, opposed the suggestion for stabilising civil-military relation and said, "Military is already a part of our society. So the question of strengthening civil-military relation is irrelevant."

He also opposed holding of national election under emergency because, what he said, the situation which required emergency for conducting an election does not exist now.

Former state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hossain Chowdhury called for holding upazila parishad election as early as possible so that democracy can start from there.

The political leaders also urged the authorities concerned to declare the date of the national election immediately.

Foundation Chairperson Dr Mahbubullah chaired the seminar which was conducted by its Chief Executive Sajjad Hossain.

Columnist Sadek Khan, Jagul Ahmed Chowdhury of BSS and The New Nation Editor Mostofa Kamal Mojumder were present on the occasion.

## Three shot in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Armed extortionists shot two construction workers at Ibrahimpur in the city yesterday.

Injured Mujibur Rahman, 39, and his nephew Mohammad Mamun, 20, received one bullet each in their abdomen.

They were undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Mujibur told newsmen at the DMCH that two young extortionists went to a construction site of National Construction Company Ltd at Ibrahimpur around 8:30am looking for a top official of the company.

"As they did not find the official, the criminals shot us before leaving the scene," he said.

Officer-in-Charge of Kafrul Police Station said the extortionists left the place leaving a piece of paper with the name 'Sikder' and a cellphone number written on it.

Meanwhile, muggers made off with a gold chain from a woman after shooting her driver at Banani yesterday.

They shot car driver Badrul Alam in the left thigh when he tried to resist the muggers from snatching a gold chain from her employer at about 8:45am.

A gang of four came to the scene in a luxurious private car and snatched the gold chain from Kalabati when she was getting into her car after dropping her son at Canadian International School at Banani.

Badrul was also being treated at the DMCH.

## 4-party to stage demonstration in London for Khaleda's release

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led four-party alliance United Kingdom unit will stage a demonstration in front of the Bangladesh High Commission in London on Thursday demanding the release of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and her son Tarique Rahman, says a report of American News Agency (ANA) from London.

They had also submitted a memorandum to the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) and European Union to create pressure on the caretaker government for their release, lifting the state of emergency and declaring the election schedule, said BNP UK President Kamaruddin.

## 12 Bangladeshi delegates to attend US Democrats' conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 12 Bangladeshi delegates will participate in the upcoming four-day national conference of the Democratic Party of the United States (DPS) at Denver, says New York-based American News Agency (ANA).

Among the 12 delegates 10 were Hillary Clinton's supporters and the other two backed Barack Obama right from the beginning.

The delegates are from Washington DC, Kansas, Boston, California and New York.

Bangladeshi Ambassador in Washington Humayun Kabir will attend the event as an observer.

## Farmer assaults agri official

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Failing to get adequate fertiliser, a farmer of Gabtali upazila in Bogra assaulted upazila deputy assistant agriculture officer yesterday.

Few hundred farmers were waiting for fertiliser for long time and did not get adequate fertiliser that angered them. At one stage of hot debate a farmer assaulted the agriculture official.

Deputy Assistant Agriculture Officer Anwarul Islam admitted the incident to the journalists.



Samajtantrik Mahila Forum forms a human chain at Shahbagh intersection in the city yesterday marking the Resistance of Violence against Women Day or Yasmin Day.

## Focus on building skills of overseas jobseekers

### Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Terming foreign remittance sent by the expatriate Bangladeshis crucial for the country's economy, economists and civil society members yesterday said the government should give the highest priority on skill building of overseas jobseekers and protect their rights abroad.

Criticising the government's inefficiency and indifference towards ensuring workers' rights and just wages and checking fraudulent practices, they suggested formation of a supervisory body on the expatriates instead of running the expatriates' ministry which, they said, has failed to do any welfare for the migrant workers.

The speakers strongly criticised the recent Kuwait police attacks on Bangladeshi workers and deportation, saying Bangladesh should seek assistance of the international organisations like ILO and UN Human Rights Council to ensure that the workers get justice.

They said this at a discussion on 'Protection of migrant workers' rights' organised by Nagorik Sanghati and ActionAid at the National Press Club in the city.

Economist Abu Ahmed said, "If our workers did not send around \$8 billion a year, we would not see the shopping malls and products here. No investor would come to invest or do business. They are interested to invest or do business because they know Bangladesh Bank has good foreign currency reserve."

It is said that readymade garment (RMG) is the highest foreign exchange earner, but actually it is

not, because the sector has to import a lot of raw materials, he said.

"Bangladesh could not survive if our workers would not work abroad and send money," added Abu Ahmed, prof of Dhaka University.

Awami League Central Committee Education and Human Resources Secretary Nurul Islam Nahid said the expatriates' welfare or foreign ministries are not actually playing their due role for workers' welfare.

"I called on all the political parties to raise their voices about expatriate workers' issue. I will also discuss it with my own party," he said.

Former ambassador Major General (retd) Amin Ahmed Chowdhury said there are many flaws in the documentation process for the Bangladeshi workers, adding, "Many documents carried by our workers remain flawed."

"On the other hand, our foreign ministry considers handling workers' issues secondarily. The officials of the Bangladesh missions don't feel like visiting the workers," he said.

Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) President Ghulam Mustafa said strengthening the labour wings of Bangladesh missions is a crucial task to protect overseas workers.

Terming manpower brokers a major problem for the migrant workers, he said the brokers trading on visas should be resisted in cooperation with the Bangladesh missions.

Seeking pardon on behalf of the

recruiting agencies for the recent woes of Bangladeshi workers in Kuwait, he said a step in harness with the government and recruiting agencies should be taken to compensate the workers deported from Kuwait following recent strikes in Kuwait.

"Bangladesh is a country of tremendous potential for its youth manpower. To impart timely and modern technical education, the government should set up technical training centres at every upazila," Ghulam Mustafa said.

DU Prof Robaet Ferdous said, "We should have a master plan to send at least one person abroad for jobs from 3 crore families in next 20 years."

Another DU Prof Hafizur Rahman Karzon said major part of the country's diplomacy should be economic and labour diplomacy, not political one. "Our diplomatic strength must be developed."

There are also not bilateral agreements with many countries hiring workers from Bangladesh, he said, adding that such agreements help ensure workers' rights. He suggested seeking assistance of ILO and UN Human Rights Council to protect workers' rights abroad.

Journalist Raju Ahmed in his keynote said Bangladesh embassies' attitude towards workers should be changed and the corrupt officials should be punished.

BSS Managing Director Zagul Ahmed Chowdhury also spoke at the discussion moderated by Nagorik Sanghati General Secretary Sharifuzzaman Sharif with DU Prof Dr ASM Atiqur Rahman in the chair.

## 5 hurt as Ansars clash with locals in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least five people were injured in a clash between members of Ansar and local people at Shyampur in the city over fishing in a lagoon of Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) in the area last night.

Witnesses said the clash began at 9:00pm after the law enforcers detained two people when they protested catching fish in the Wasa pond. The Ansars were posted in the area to prevent people from catching fish from the Wasa ponds, police said.

Local people pelted the members of Ansar with bricks when they refused to release the detained men. The Ansars charged baton on the people, leaving at least five people injured.

Police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control when several hundred angry people gathered to attack members of Ansar.

The injured were released from local clinics after first aid.

## Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Abdul Hakim, presidium member of Gono Forum party and one of the organisers of the Liberation War, passed away at Apollo Hospitals in the city yesterday at the age of 70.

He left behind his wife, three daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain and acting General Secretary Subrata Chowdhury expressed deep shock at his death.

## Laxman Murma

RU CORRESPONDENT

Laxman Murma, an indigenous freedom fighter, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at his residence at Puba in Rajshahi on Saturday night at the age of 52.

He left behind his wife, one son and one daughter and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death. He was buried with state honour.

## Md A Malek Hawlader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Md A Malek Hawlader, father-in-law of Md Nazimuddin Raju, central law secretary of Bangladesh Rickshaw Owners League, passed away at a city hospital on Saturday at the age of 75.

He left behind his two sons, three daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

## Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tomorrow is the 12th death anniversary of Prof Dr SGM Chowdhury, says a press release.

On the occasion, Samorita Hospital Limited will arrange a Quankhwani and doa mahfil after Maghrib prayers at its compound. Food will also be distributed among the orphans.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend the programme.

## Syed Nahoum Ali

METRO DESK

Today is the first death anniversary of Syed Nahoum Ali (Ghuto), son of Syed Fazle Ali, senior partner of SF Ahmed and Company, says a press release.

On the occasion, Quankhwani and doa mahfil will be held after Asr prayers at a Baridhara mosque in the city.



Dr Ataur Rahman speaks at a seminar titled 'Democratic transformation in Bangladesh: Opportunities and challenges' at the Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday.

## 'Reduce prices of essentials before Ramadan'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Samajtantrik Sramik Jote demanded the government to reduce the price of essentials before Ramadan.

The leaders of the organisation made the demand at its central executive committee meeting on Saturday. They also demanded to improve law and order situation and urged the owners of private industries to announce minimum wage for the employees and workers.

The meeting was held at Jatiya Samajtantrik Sramik Jote central office in the city with its President Abul Khair Sajjad in the chair.

General Secretary Abdul Khalek, Abdur Razzak Raja, Shamsul Islam Selim, Kawsar Ahmed, Monirul Anwar, ABM Jamal Uddin Ahmed and Abdus Sobhan also spoke in the meeting.

## Nat'l workshop of Bangladesh Scouts ends

METRO DESK

The three-day 11th national multi-purpose workshop of Bangladesh Scouts concluded at Mouchak in Gazipur yesterday, says a press release.

Former member of World Scout Committee Md Habibul Alam was present at the closing session of the workshop as the chief guest with Bangladesh Scouts President Md Montazul Islam in the chair.

Chief National Commissioner of Bangladesh Scouts Md Abul Kalam Azad, Md Rafiqul Islam Khan and Md Nazrul Islam spoke at the workshop.

A total of 130 scouters of National and Regional Scouts participated in the programme.

The workshop finalised the strategic plan of Bangladesh Scouts and the action plan for the next two years. Recommendations and the workshop declaration were adopted at the closing session.

## RMG factory closed fearing attacks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities of a garment factory at Dhaka Export Processing Zone (DEPZ) yesterday closed it apprehending possible attacks by the workers.

In another incident, around 2,500 workers of two other factories on Indira Road in the city's Tejgaon area took to the street demanding dearness allowance on the same day.

Traffic movements in alley roads around the factories remained snapped for around one hour and a half as workers blocked the roads since 2:00pm yesterday.

Tejgaon police said the workers of the factories - New Fashion and New Age - left the roads after the authorities had assured them of providing 15 percent dearness allowance from now on.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA) General Manager AZM Azizur Rahman said the authorities of Hope Lon (Bd) Ltd in DEPZ closed the factory for an indefinite period fearing attacks by the garment workers enraged by reinstatement

of the two officials.

The factory authorities displayed a noticeboard announcing the closure of the factory in the morning. Therefore, around 4,000 workers of the factory went back home.

Sources said, following complaints from the workers, the factory authorities earlier had suspended two of its officials - Administrative Officer Kamruzzaman and Production Manager Mohammad Shafiq - for their misbehaviour with the workers.

But reinstatement of the suspended officers to their jobs made the workers angry. They also staged a demonstration inside the factory on Saturday.

BEPZA General Manager AZM Azizur Rahman told The Daily Star that the authorities took the decision to close the factory in order to avert any untoward incident, adding that there are some problems among the workers and factory authorities over various issues.

Asked, he said before the closure of the factory, the authorities had informed them. The factory will resume after the problems are solved, he added.

## WEATHER TODAY

### Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

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

Highest temperature 34.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 24.5 degrees Celsius at Rangamati.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:23pm today and rises at 5:38am 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	33.0	27.0	79	71
Chittagong	31.2	26.2	81	86
Rajshahi	34.3	27.6	79	72
Khulna	34.0	27.0	84	80
Barisal	32.6	26.7	78	90
Sylhet	31.0	26.2	91	78
Cox's Bazar	31.8	25.8	73	80

## DHAKA TODAY

### CPD dialogue

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) organises a dialogue on 'Accra conference on aid effectiveness: Perspective from Bangladesh'. Venue: Brac Centre Inn. Time: 3:00pm.

### Symposium

The opening session of the international symposium on climate change and food security in South Asia will be held. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 9:30am.

### Talk

A special talk on 'Swami Vivekananda: A perennial source of inspiration' will be held. Venue: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh auditorium. Time: 4:30pm.

### Food festival

The seven-day Thai food festival styled 'Colours of Thai cuisines' will begin. Venue: Westin Hotel. Time: 4:00pm.



Guests hold copies of the autobiography 'Koto Ghere Dile Thai' by Dr Mahfuzur Rahman at Words 'n Pages at Gulshan in the city yesterday. From left are Prof Mansur Musa, Prof Anisur Rahman, the writer, Prof Anisuzzaman, wife of the writer Farida, Abul Mal Abdul Muhit and Hasnat Abdul Hye.

## 2m hit by Indian monsoon, toll reaches 800

AFP, Lucknow

The death toll from monsoon-related accidents reached 800 and two million people have been displaced by flooding following heavy rains across India, officials said yesterday.

At least 26 people died in overnight accidents in northern Uttar Pradesh, taking the toll to 686 in the country's most populous state since the monsoon struck in June, Relief Commissioner GKTandon said.

"Several districts are receiving continuous rains for the past month and a half," Tandon said in the state capital Lucknow as local aid agencies backed by World Health

Organisation staff rushed emergency supplies to those affected.

Tandon put the number of people hit by the floods at 1.29 million and said 3,000 villages were swamped in Uttar Pradesh, in monsoon damage he described as "unprecedented".

Lightning strikes, boat accidents and house collapses are common during the June-September monsoon in tropical India.

In the adjacent eastern state of Bihar, 24 people died in rain-linked accidents since Saturday, a government spokesman said in the regional capital Patna.

The latest fatalities raised Bihar's monsoon death toll to at least 60 so far this month, according to the latest

figures.

"Nearly 750,000 people are reeling under the impact of the floods," a Bihar Disaster Management Department spokesman said.

The army deployed rescue helicopters as experts warned seven rivers in Bihar were in spate and that more rain was forecast.

Northern Punjab saw 14 deaths in August, while 40 others died in heavy downpours in southern India during the month, according to separate official reports.

Authorities in New Delhi evacuated scores of farmers from the banks of Yamuna as the river flowed at danger levels, officials said on Sunday.