

# Make TV-radio autonomy functional

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Giving Bangladesh Television (BTV) and Bangladesh Betar autonomy will not yield any positive results if this autonomy cannot be made functional, said the speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

They observed that the present caretaker government had the scope to reform BTV and radio with appropriate policy to meet the long-standing demand of people.

The roundtable was organised jointly by the Prothom Alo and Dhaka University Mass Communications and Journalism Department Alumni Association at the office of the Prothom Alo in the city.

The speakers demanded formation of an independent and permanent broadcasting commission, financial freedom of the two organisations, presentation of news and views considering public interest, regular examination of

BTV and radio programmes and submission of annual report to parliament to make the autonomy functional.

The present government could bring reforms in BTV and radio as it does not need to go from door to door in bringing reforms in these institutions," said Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, former president of Dhaka University Teachers' Association.

"We feel lucky as the Right to Information (RTI) Act has been passed finally. I think we need both RTI and autonomy. Once the government accepts RTI, eventually there will be no control over BTV and radio," said Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno.

"In a democratic modern society there should not be any control over BTV and radio," she added.

"Whoever runs the country, democratic or autocratic government, there is no provision for

ensuring the accountability of these institutions. They even do not have any interaction with other departments," said Mamunur Rashid, a cultural personality.

"Freedom and facilities must be ensured if we want to make autonomy functional. We want such autonomy as will reflect people's will," said eminent actor Aly Zaker.

Robaet Ferdous, associate professor of mass communications and journalism department, presented a paper.

Chair of mass communications and journalism department Sheikh Abdus Salam and Deputy Editor Abdul Quayum moderated the programme while Joint Secretaries of the information ministry Kamal U Ahmed and Abu Tahir, Prof Shakhawat Ali Khan, Zafar Zabin Chowdhury, senior communications officer of the Unicef, and Prothom Alo Editor Matiar Rahman were present at the roundtable.

## Call to fully implement CEDAW

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday called on the government to fully implement the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to ensure women's rights.

They said the lack of understanding of and commitment to the CEDAW on the part of policymakers is the main obstacle to fully implementing it.

CEDAW has universalised the human rights of women, said rights activist Salma Khan at the seminar titled, 'CEDAW-Bangladesh context' organised by Bangladesh Economic Association at its office in the city.

Presenting the keynote paper, Prof Hannana Begum said equality, non-discrimination and responsibility of the state parties are the basis of the convention. But the government has reservations about article 2 and article 16.1 (c) of the convention, she added.

Prof Mahmuda Islam said the reservations about the two articles have remained in place for about three decades, but no political parties came forward to announce withdrawal of the reservations.

Dr Muhammad Zafar Iqbal said CEDAW can be fully implemented if it gets support from the mass people.

Economist Prof Abul Barakat and Prof Sadeka Halim also spoke at the seminar presided over by Vice President of the association Ashrafuddin Chowdhury.

## Ban Chhatra Mukti activities on DU campus

Demands Chhatra Moitri

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra Moitri (BCM), a left-leaning student organisation, demanded immediate ban on the activities of Chhatra Mukti, student front of outlawed Hizb ut-Tahrir, on the Dhaka University (DU) campus.

Terming Hizb ut-Tahrir a fundamentalist Muslim group, BCM leaders also demanded punitive steps against the teachers who are involved in the organisation.

The leaders placed the demands at a press conference at Madhu's Canteen yesterday.

Taking shelter from the previous BNP-Jamaat-backed four party alliance regime, the Islamic militant organisation became active in the country, they added.

The leaders alleged that the main coordinator of the wing Mahiuddin Ahmed, an IBA teacher at DU, was directly involved in recruiting students to Chhatra Mukti.

BCM DU unit President Tanvir Rusmot said, "Mahiuddin was recruiting students by offering them money and other financial facilities."

Identifying DU campus as a progressive one, they further said Chhatra Mukti should be declared unwanted on the campus.

They alleged that despite repeated demands of imposing ban on Chhatra Mukti by different left-leaning student wings, DU authorities are yet to take any effective steps.

BCM leaders said students would resist the activities of the organisation if the DU administration does not take any immediate steps soon to declare it unwanted on the campus.

They also threatened that the authorities would claim responsible for any kind of untoward incident on the campus in this connection.

To press home their demands, BCM will launch an awareness campaign against the activities of the organisation today and tomorrow.

They will stage a demonstration and submit a memorandum to Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz on September 23.

## Murad new chairman of Stamford varsity media dept

METRO DESK

Manzare Hassin Murad, a film personality and documentary film producer, joined as the chairman of the Department of Film and Media of Stamford University Bangladesh recently, says a press release.

Four others faculty members who have joined in the department recently are - Mahiuddin Faruque, former design director of BTV, Akhtaruzzaman, a film journalist, Panjak Palit and Zahidur Rahim Anjan.



Members of Council of Adviser see Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed off at Zia International Airport in the city yesterday prior to his departure for New York to attend the 63rd session of the UN General Assembly.

## Maternal allowance can help reduce mortality rate

Speakers say at roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday said maternal allowance can ensure proper healthcare facilities to poor women in the country and help create awareness among the people about healthcare services.

Poor women are vulnerable to maternal mortality, as they do not get proper care due to their economic insolvency. Maternal allowance can also empower them, they added.

Styled 'Maternal allowance in building deprivation-free healthy nation,' the roundtable was organised by Development Organisation of the Rural Poor (DORP) and Jugantor at National Press Club in the city.

Welcoming the government move to introduce maternal allowance project in the national budget, the speakers called on it to enhance the programme.

Economist Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud was present on the occasion as the chief guest while acting editor and publisher of the Jugantor Salma Islam was present as the special guest.

Dr Mahmud said the introduction of maternal allowance is a nice start.

"We have achieved a number of millennium development goals (MDGs) including lessening child mortality rate and increasing girls' school going rate, but we did not achieve much in cutting the maternal mortality rate," he said, adding that maternal allowance can be a tool to reduce the mortality rate.

He further said, "We can take the opportunity to create awareness among the people about maternal healthcare using the project."

Former adviser to a caretaker government Dhiraj Kumar Nath and N-Gender Health Country Director Dr Abu Zamil Faisal presented a keynote paper at the meeting.

In the paper, they said maternal allowance for the government would not be an expense; rather it would be an investment, as it could create awareness about healthcare services, adding that the project could also help reduce population growth as the allowance is granted to the mothers for their first child.

They recommended that the government should enhance the project and conduct research in this regard and evaluate some of

its outcomes.

The project was first introduced in the national budget in 2007 under the safety net programme when 45,000 women were covered under the project in 3,000 unions who were given Tk 300 each per month for 24 months.

In the current fiscal, the project was taken out for 4,500 unions to cover 60,000 women who would be given the same amount for 24 months. The total project would cost Tk 21 crore.

The speakers demanded steps to provide mothers with health cards, education cards, shelter cards, Tk 30,000 for livelihood and micro-credit facilities.

Presided over by former adviser to a caretaker government and Chairman of Social Harmony Citizen's Group M Hafizuddin Khan, the roundtable was moderated by DORP Secretary General AHM Noman.

Health Ministry Programme Support Office and team leader Dr MA Sabur, Dr MA Mabud of North South University, and writer and researcher Shaoal Khan also spoke.

## CA's participation in UNGA to raise country's int'l profile

Says foreign adviser

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury said yesterday the participation of Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at the forthcoming session of UN General Assembly will "raise Bangladesh's international profile."

He said: "Bangladesh plays a peaceful, constructive and stabilising role in the international arena, and indeed the world expects Bangladesh to play a significant role in this most important annual multilateral event of global diplomacy."

The CA's programme of participation has been drawn up bearing these points in mind, he said.

He said: "Bangladesh is widely seen as a success story in positive socio-economic transformation of its people. We are chair of the least developed countries and in this capacity is the spokesman of 50 nations of the world."

"We are also an acknowledged thought-leader in the climate change debate. We are a consistent top contributor to UN peacekeeping operations. All these render our participation at the highest level very important."

Iftekhar said besides having a one-on-one meeting with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, the chief adviser would address the General Assembly on September 26. He will attend a high level event on Millennium Development Goals and also meetings on Africa's Development Needs, Commonwealth Heads of Government, and on Malawi.

The CA will hold bilateral meetings with a number of important leaders, including Prime Minister of Nepal Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda), and will attend a number of receptions and dinners, including one hosted by President Bush, Iftekhar informed.

"It is a light programme but one that reflects Bangladesh's key role in that body," he said.

Apart from these events, he will interact widely with the media, including with the vibrant Bangladesh press in New York.

He will also be interviewed by the BBC, Al-Jazeera and the TIME Magazine.

"There is a great interest in the peaceful political transition in Bangladesh itself, and the programme responds to that as well," said Iftekhar.

## Allow Obaidul Quader to go abroad for treatment

101 doctors urge govt

DU CORRESPONDENT

Some 101 doctors yesterday called on the government to take necessary measures immediately so that Awami League leader Obaidul Quader, who is suffering from severe health complications, can go abroad for his better treatment.

In a joint statement, they expressed concern that the AL leader might be paralysed if he does not receive advanced treatment right now.

They also said the condition of Obaidul Quader has deteriorated as he could not receive proper treatment during his long detention.

A medical board comprising specialist doctors of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital (BSMMUH) has recommended sending him abroad, saying that his condition is deteriorating gradually, they added.

Quader, joint general secretary of AL, has now been undergoing treatment at BSMMUH under Prof Anisul Haque, chairman of neurology department.

He has been suffering from old ischemic stroke, hypertension, diabetes, cervical spondylitis, multiple peller injuries.

Prof AFM Ruhul Haq, Prof Syed Modasser Ali, Prof Rashid-e-Mahbub, Prof Mahmud Hasan, Dr Mostofa Jalal Mohiuddin, Prof M Iqbal Arsalan and other members of Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad issued the statement.

## Sheikh Jalal's anniversary of death today

METRO DESK

Today is the 5th death anniversary of Sheikh Ahmed Jalal, a freedom fighter and diplomat, says a press release.

Late Jalal was Mujibnagar government representative in Japan, Japanese language specialist and NHK presenter, litterateur and former Tokyo correspondent of The Observer and The Ittefaq.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held and foods will be distributed among the destitute.



Participants at a roundtable at the Prothom Alo office in the city yesterday. From left are Aly Zaker, Sheikh Abdus Salam, Prof Shakhawat Ali Khan, Kamal U Ahmed, Mamunur Rashid, Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, Fuad Chowdhury and Robaet Ferdous.

## DU admission test form distribution begins Oct 19

DU CORRESPONDENT

The admission process for the 1st year honours courses at Dhaka University (DU) for the academic session 2008-09 will begin on October 19.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the general admission committee of the university yesterday with Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz in the chair.

Sources said sale and submission of admission test forms will continue from October 19 to November 3. The application forms must be duly filled in by the applicants and submitted to the dean offices of the respective units during office hours.

The price of each admission form has been increased by Tk 50 than the previous years and fixed at Tk 300.

Through the admission process, a total of 5,523 students would gain their admissions to the departments and institutions at the university under 10 faculties.

Admission tests will start with C (Ga) unit under Business Studies Faculty on November 14.

Admission test for A (Ka) unit under Science Faculty, B (Kha) unit under Arts Faculty and D (Gha) unit (combined) under Social Sciences Faculty will be held on November 21, December 1 and November 28 respectively.

This year, GPA (grade point average) has been increased by 0.5 than the previous year in each faculty as eligibility for participating in the admission test.

Excluding fourth subjects, students, who achieved GPA 8 for science backgrounds, GPA 6.5 for humanities group and 7.5 for business studies group in the SSC and HSC examinations, will be eligible to sit for the admission tests.

## Focus on indigenous people's rights

Speakers urge media

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday said the media should focus on the rights of indigenous people rather than only portraying their livelihoods and cultural activities.

Journalists have to remain objective in reporting the ethnic issues and play a proactive role in bridging the gap between the media and ethnic communities for the betterment of the hill people, they said.

Management and Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) organised the roundtable on "Bridging gap between media and ethnic communities" in Rangamati with the support from the Delegation of the European Commission to Bangladesh under the project "Bridging Media and Ethnicity," says a press release.

Speaking as the chief guest, UNO of Rangamati Sadar Prakash Kanti Chowdhury said journalists would have to approach to the proper persons at the government and non-governmental levels to collect the right information and then provide them to the nation.

"It is the journalists who will identify the proper persons in order to collect the right information. Reporters of specific geographical areas need special facilities for their physical movement," he said and called on MRDI to take necessary initiatives in this regard.

Journalist Quratul-Ain-

Tahmina presented the keynote paper at the roundtable moderated by Shahana Huda, manager (Media & Communication) of Manusher Jonno Foundation.

Hasibur Rahman, executive director of MRDI, stressed better understanding of human rights of the ethnic communities through a shared upbringing so that the media can cover appropriate and accurate news in time.

The discussants also stressed the need to portray the indigenous people in the media in a proper way and promoting their human rights through objective reporting.

There are so many issues concerning their rights and the media should explore these issues, they said.

They also sought greater cooperation from the media in addressing the genuine needs of the hill people through detailed and investigative reporting.

The journalists who were present at the roundtable said they need adequate and reliable sources of information for reporting the issues of ethnic communities.

They also suggested that indigenous people should have greater representation in the media so that their issues can be properly highlighted in the media.

Twenty-two community/NGO representatives, governmental officials and journalists took part in the roundtable.



## No change in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over all the six divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy rainfalls are also likely at places during the period, Met Office said in a forecast. It said that day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Highest temperature 35.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 24.5 degrees Celsius at Rangamati.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:56pm today and rises at 5:48am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Major cities and towns yesterday were. City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.3	25.3	90	84
Chittagong	32.0	26.0	75	88
Rajshahi	35.3	25.8	87	72
Khulna	34.0	26.3	75	77
Barisal	33.5	26.8	76	80
Sylhet	35.3	26.6	80	78
Cox's Bazar	32.5	26.4	78	96

## DHAKA TODAY

### Dialogue

Democracywatch organises a dialogue on 'Effectiveness of union parishad standing committee: Critical issues and way forward'. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

### Award giving ceremony

Haji Shariatullah Gold Medal 2008 giving ceremony and a discussion will be held. Oryio Foundation will organise the programme. Venue: Bashundhara Exhibition Centre. Time: 3:00pm.

### View exchange meeting

Unnayan Shamunnay organises a view exchange meeting on current economic trends. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00am.