

Refrain from handing over service sectors to NGOs

Speakers urge govt at roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday said unified protest of the countrymen is the last resort to save the country from the grab of international monetary agencies as the government itself is trying to uphold their interest by privatising service sectors.

Expressing deep concern over privatising government services like education, health and railway, they urged the government to refrain from exercising unconstitutional power by handing over these sectors to NGOs and private sectors.

The roundtable titled 'Protection of environment and the government's jurisdiction to privatise the government service sectors' was organised jointly by Jatiya Sompad Surakha Mancha and Paribesh Bachao Andolon (PBA) at the National Press Club in the city.

The speakers said World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and some other agencies have created pressure on the government to privatise its different services so that multinational companies can take over the ser-

vice as commercial commodities. Presenting the keynote paper, Mahbul Alam Tahin said it has been observed that if the government withdraws its involvement from the important service sector, private operators make too much profit from it making people victims.

For example, he said, when the government launched its cell phone operation, multinational companies operating cell phones in the country were bound to reduce their tariff from Tk 7 to Tk 0.29 per minute.

Tahin said monetary agencies ask the government to hand over the government service sectors to private sectors showing the causes of inefficiency, administrative weakness and corruption in the respective sectors but when multinational companies doing business in the country indulge in corruptions, they are not blamed.

For example he said different cell phone operators cheated and exploited people by imposing abnormally high tariff and doing illegal VoIP business and later they were excused just fining them a token amount.

Journalist Kamal Lohani, who moderated the roundtable, said, "Sometime World Bank may assign some people of their choice to run our government as its agents have already occupied all strategic posts in the government to lay off state-run mills and to grab all government service-providing sectors."

The speakers said Bangladesh is a welfare state and its first and foremost duty is to create job opportunity for its people and not to make profit only.

They urged the caretaker government not to cross its limit and leave the things to be decided by the next elected government.

With Justice Mohammad Golam Rabbani in the chair the roundtable was also addressed by Sheikh Mohammad Shahidullah, convener of the National Committee to protect Oil, Gas and Port, Dr Abdur Razzak, agriculture secretary of Awami League, Abu Naser Khan, chairman of PBA, Hasanul Huq Innu president of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Rashed Khan Menon, president of the Workers' Party of Bangladesh, and Shah Alam, convener of the Centre for Law Research.

Govt officer among 3 killed in road accidents

METRO DESK

Three people, including a female government officer, were killed and another injured in separate road accidents in Dhaka and Manikganj in the last two days.

Our staff correspondent reports: Syeda Momtaz Mohon, 42, an administrative officer at the law ministry, was killed and her husband Aminur Rahman, a personal assistant to an adviser to the caretaker government, severely injured in a road accident near Asad Gate in the city on Sunday night.

The accident occurred when a passenger bus of Rajdhani Express knocked the motorcycle they were riding on from behind at around 8:30pm.

The couple were going to one of their friends' place from their Kalabagan Staff Quarter residence.

They were rushed to the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedics Rehabilitation (Nitor) where Momtaz Mohon died at around 9:45pm.

Our correspondent in Manikganj adds: Two people were killed in a road accident near Uthuli Health Complex at Shivalaya in Manikganj yesterday. The dead were identified as Niranjan Halder, 26, a fish trader, and Tulumuddin, 36, a van driver.

The accident occurred at around 5:30am when a Paturia-bound truck from Dhaka hit a fish-laden van coming from Paturia.

They were taken to Uthuli Health Complex and later referred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) as their condition deteriorated.

But both of them succumbed to their injuries on the way to DMCH.

BCL, Shibir clash at Jagannath University

13 injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 13 students were injured in a clash between the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Islami Chhatra Shibir at Jagannath University in the city yesterday.

The clash erupted at around 11:00am after BCL activists hurled bricks at Shibir workers who gathered near the university gate, the police said.

Some injured students -- Kamrul, Sanjay, Shibir and Samon of BCL and Shahidul Islam, Anfar Rahman, Shilan, Pavel, Mustafizur Rahman of Shibir -- were admitted to different clinics and hospitals in the area.

Additional police have been deployed on the university campus to avert any untoward situation. However, none was arrested in connection with the clash.

JNU English exam tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The English examination of the second semester of the second batch at Jagannath University (JNU) will be held tomorrow instead of today due to Lakshmi Puja, says a press release.

Take industries

FROM PAGE 16

Industries should be done in a planned manner with facilitation of the government not only for economic benefits but also for making the urban areas more liveable.

He pointed out that in this respect, the government's responsiveness to business and industrial developments is very low.

Prof Nurul Islam informed the discussion that 20 percent of the country's 140 million people live in the urban areas. Sixty percent of the total urban population of the country live in Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna.

The national urban growth rate at present stands at 3.5 percent, while Dhaka has a rate of five.

Three partners -- National Institute for Urban Affairs (India), CUS (Bangladesh) and Sevantha-Urban (Sri Lanka) -- will carry out the project for ADB.

The area of study in Bangladesh includes Dhaka, Gazipur, Manikganj, Munshiganj, Narayanganj and Narsingdi.

The study area constitutes 5 percent of the total area of Bangladesh with 14 percent of the total population. Prof Nazem said that 16 percent of the total labour force and 41 percent of the industrial labour force fall in this chosen study area.

The five-member CUS team assigned with the study includes Prof Nurul Islam Nazem, Prof Amirul Islam Chowdhury, Prof AQM Mahub, architect Salma Shafi and Prof Nazrul Islam as honorary advisers.

The study began in June this year and is expected to be completed by January.

Dr Kyeong Ae Choe, Principal Urban Development Specialist of ADB's South Asia Division, economist Dr Atiur Rahman and president of Bangladesh Institute of Planners Dr Sarwar Jahan, among others, also spoke at the event.

9th Bangladesh Confce in Germany from Oct 17

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 9th Bangladesh Conference titled 'Dialogue & Exchange - Lower Saxony/Europe & Bangladesh' will be held in Hanover, Germany, from October 17 to 19.

The conference will focus on specific aspects of the social, cultural, economic and political issues in Bangladesh and topics of strengthening relations between Bangladesh and Germany, says a press release.

The main objective of the 2008 conference is to strengthen Bangladesh's ties with Europe on environment, climate change, educational exchange, cultural contact and the political process prior to the election.

Experts from different sectors, including educationists, human rights activists, environmentalists, students and freelancers from civil societies in Bangladesh and European countries will take part in the conference.

Former adviser to a caretaker government and Executive Director of Ain O Salish Kendra Sultana Kamal will speak on the pre-election political situation in Bangladesh.

The organisers are supported by Lower Saxony, the German ministry for development and cooperation, Adult Education Organisations Church and independent sponsors.

This year's conference will feature workshops on climate change, global learning and works of Rabindranath Tagore.

Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed of Bishwa Sahitya Kendra and film director Shaheen Dill-Riaz, whose documentary 'Iron Eater' will be screened on the 'Bangla-Europe-Culture-Nights', will also be present on the occasion.

Delegates from several European countries, including the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden and Belgium and Bangladeshis and other South Asian countries living in Germany, will participate in the meet.

The Bangalee communities are supporting this conference voluntarily.

Veteran journo Obaidul Haq remembered

DU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday paid their rich tributes to veteran journalist, filmmaker and litterateur Obaidul Haq for his outstanding contribution to the field of journalism and literature.

He waged a war with his mighty pen against all sorts of repression and injustice in the society, to his dying day and had always tried to establish such a society where democratic rights of people will be preserved, they added.

The discussion was organised on the 1st death anniversary of Obaidul Haq at Diploma Engineers' Institute auditorium in the city. Bangladesh Writers' Foundation organised the ceremony which was attended by intellectuals, teachers, literati and journalists.

Obaidul, also the former editor of the Bangladesh Observer, passed away on October 13 last year at the age of 96.

A career journalist Obaidul, the speaker said, believed in objective news and dedicated himself to provide authentic news for the people.

Addressing the programme, Emeritus Prof Anisuzzaman of Dhaka University said he was the first Bangalee Muslim who directed a film.

Obaidul through his writings upheld repressions and injustice in the society, he said, adding that he tried to provide real education of journalism to the young journalists of the country.

Prof Anisuzzaman hoped that he will remain alive among the people for his contribution to journalism and Bangla literature.

Termed Obaidul a social reformer, Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said he continued his writings against all odds and evils to build a democratic society.

The speakers called on the publishers to come forward to publish books comprising his columns, poems, novels and other writings, saying that those would be resources for the future generation.

Obaidul was awarded 'Ekushey Padak' for his special contribution to the field of journalism. Besides, he won several awards, including Bangla Academy Sahitya Padak and Unicef Gold Medal.

National Prof Kabir Chowdhury presided over the session which was also addressed by Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, journalists Reaz Uddin Ahmed, Zaglul Ahmed Chowdhury and Saleh Chowdhury, dramatist Prof Momtaz Uddin Ahmed and dramatist Atiqul Haq Chowdhury.

Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Afiya Islam Prapti, a six-year-old girl, has been suffering from blood cancer, says a press release.

She is now undergoing treatment at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital in the city.

Doctors advised her parents to take her abroad immediately for advanced treatment, which involves a huge amount of money. But it is not possible for her father to manage the money as he has already sold out all his valuables in the last three years for his daughter's treatment.

So, he has appealed to generous people to extend a helping hand to save the life of his daughter.

Contributions can be sent to Md Azharul Islam, Savings Accounts No. 51819, Islami Bank Limited, local office, Motijheel, Dhaka.

Interested persons can also call at 01711-301533, 0194-296434 to contact his father.



Former chief adviser to a caretaker government Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman speaks at the inaugural ceremony of South Asian Institute of Advanced Legal and Human Rights Studies (SAILS) at Spectra Convention Centre in the city yesterday. Sitting from left are Dr Deepika Udagama, Dr Kamal Hossain, Madanjeet Singh and Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury.

S Asian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The South Asian Institute of Advanced Legal and Human Rights Studies (SAILS) was launched yesterday with a view to promoting higher legal education and ensuring human rights and the rule of law in the region.

The institute will collaborate with legal education institutes and bring the great minds together to improve the legal system in the region, legal experts said at the launching ceremony of SAILS at Spectra Convention Centre in the capital.

The institute, being set up under the auspices of South Asian Foundation, has already signed a memorandum of understanding with Brac University to collaborate in launching postgraduate programmes and undertaking research work in the field of legal and human rights studies.

Speaking as the chief guest, Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman, former chief adviser to a caretaker government, said the institute having intra-disciplinary features will focus on different forms of solution mechanism that require less confrontation in the legal system.

"This is a great day that we are launching a great institute. We expect it to be a centre of excellence," he said.

Founder Chairman of South Asia Foundation Madanjeet Singh said the culture of upholding human rights and tolerance is very important for South Asia and that only the issue of terrorism has recently undermined the region's image.

"We want to have common norms... we are basically trying to be united like that of the European Union. Secular guidelines and unity will take us forward," said Singh, who is also UNesco Goodwill Ambassador.

He said Bangladesh is going through a critical time now but will have a flourishing democracy soon.

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain, chairman of SAILS, said, "We hope that the institute will become a centre of excellence in the region where we can together devise solutions to problems facing all of us."

The institute will also enable lawyers to use the law as an instrument to ensure social and economic justice for all, he added.

Dr Deepika Udagama, head of the Department of Law at University of Colombo, said there is a huge gap in legal education and that more cooperation and higher education can surely help come closer and face challenges like alleviation of poverty, gender equality and elimination of extremism.

Brac University Vice Chancellor Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury also spoke.

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'Standard management can ensure quality healthcare'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

LAMB Hospital has ensured quality health service at minimal cost for poor people in northwestern region of the country.

At a press conference in the city yesterday, Executive Director of LAMB Liaison Office Dr Peter A May said 20 percent of the total patients seeking medical treatment at the hospital get free treatment while 60 percent receive treatment at subsidised rate.

The non-profitable hospital located at Parbatipur of Dinajpur district has been providing outdoor service to some 55,000 people and indoor service to 9,000 people every year apart from around 4000 deliveries.

Concurrently, its community health services have been spread to 22 unions of Rangpur, Dinajpur and Nilphamari districts.

"The hospital has ensured greater healthcare facilities than national average, attendance of more poor people and reduction in maternal and child mortality rate in the locality," said Dr Peter.

At the press conference held after the second LAMB Dhaka Conference titled 'Reliable

healthcare for the poor', the speakers said quality and affordable services are possible in the country through good integration between services and standard management.

Brac Executive Director Dr Mushtaq Chowdhury presented the keynote paper at the conference where Health Secretary AMM Nasir Uddin was present as chief guest.

Tom Crowards of DFID, Director General of DGHS Prof MA Faiz and Prof Mahmudur Rahman of IEDCR attended the daylong conference.

SC's no to ACC plea for stay

FROM PAGE 1

After hearing the ACC petitions, the chamber judge asked the government anti-graft watchdog to file regular leave to appeal petitions with the Appellate Division against the HC orders.

The other accused who had earlier been granted bail by the HC are former lawmakers Mosaddek Ali Faul and AHM Mostafa Kamal alias Lotus Kamal, and an alleged Yaba trader Amin Huda. The ACC recently filed separate petitions with the SC for vacating the HC orders.

The defence lawyers said the chamber judge passed no order on the ACC petitions, meaning the HC orders regarding the bail and the stay in favour of the accused persons will remain in effect.

Meanwhile yesterday, the HC extended for two months the bail to AL Joint Secretary Obaidul Qader in four separate criminal cases filed by the ACC and the government in connection with amassing illegal wealth and for his involvement in three briberies.

Upon separate petitions filed by Obaidul Qader, an HC bench of Justice AKM Fazlur Rahman and Justice ATM Fazle Kabir also extended the tenure of its order staying the proceedings against the petitioner in the illegal wealth case.

On September 10, the HC had granted bail to Abdul Jalil till October 20 in a case filed by the ACC on charges of amassing illegal

wealth.

The HC on September 17 also stayed for three months the trial court convictions of state ministers Iqbal Hassan Mahmood Tuku and Aman Ullah Aman for amassing illegal wealth, and granted ad-interim bail to Tuku.

Following separate petitions, the HC in recent months also granted bail to Mosaddek Ali Falu in a case in connection with misappropriating government relief items, to Lotus Kamal in an illegal wealth case, and to Amin Huda in a case in connection with manufacturing and selling Yaba tablets.

Advocates Khan Saifur Rahman, Anisul Huq and Khurshid Alam Khan appeared for the ACC.

Govt asks ACC for graft convict list

FROM PAGE 16

arrived situation. So the government has decided to prepare a list with the home ministry so that it can be used, if need be," an NCC source said preferring anonymity.

The home ministry will be responsible for preparing the list on receipt of information from different bodies like ACC and National Board of Revenue (NBR).

Col Hanif said NCC and the home ministry have asked for the list jointly, adding, "I don't know what the government will do with it. But observing the current situation it seems they are going to do something."

He explained that according to section 15 (Gha) of the Emergency Power Rules and article 66/2 (Gha) of the Constitution, people convicted under EPR and for moral turpitude won't be allowed to take part in the elections.

Since the anti-graft drive was launched in February last year, ACC filed as many as 90 cases against over 100 people including high-profile politicians, businessmen and government officials. Of the cases, 70 have been stayed by the High Court, while others are

pending with different special courts.

The ACC has initiated a move to vacate the stay and three Supreme Court benches are set to hear the cases on a priority basis. The ACC expects to have the cases back on trial soon.

Over 30 former lawmakers including leaders from both BNP and Awami League have so far been convicted by the fast-track graft courts. Some of those convicted have obtained bail from HC and are planning to take part in the general election, while some convicts are absconding.

The convicted former lawmakers include Shahjahan Siraj, Shahjahan Omar, Rashiduzzaman Millat, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Sheikh Helal, HBM Iqbal, Haji Selim, Mustafa Rashidi Suja, Makbul Hossain, Anwar Hossain Manju, Shamim Osman, Joyal Hazari, Aman Ullah Aman, Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin, Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan, Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Nazmul Huda, Ali Asgar Lobi, Mohammad Nasim, Manjural Ahsan Munshi, Iqbal Hasan Mahmud, Salahuddin Ahmed, ANH Akhter Hossain,

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'Corruption holds back execution of good initiatives'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, founder of Bishwa Sahitya Kendra, has said many good initiatives could not be implemented in the country due to corruption.

He was speaking as chief guest at an open discussion on environment on the concluding day of a three-day-long Literary Fair in New York on Sunday, reports American News Agency.

Prof Abu Sayeed lauded the caretaker government for undertaking various reform programmes.

He said the base of civil society in the country was very weak, as there was a control of the political parties over them.

"Now this control has been reduced and an independent middle class people are strengthening the structure of the civil society," he opined.

Dr Nazrul Islam, a high official of the United Nations and coordinator of Bangladesh Environment Network, presided over the meeting.

US democrats in Bangladesh asked to join campaign for Obama

METRO DESK

American Citizens Democratic Club of Bangladesh has requested all the US democrats living in Bangladesh to register their names to support the election campaign in Bangladesh for US Democratic Party president candidate Barack Obama and vice president candidate Joe Biden.

The club is distributing t-shirt and car sticker for the supporters. Registration is free of charge, says a press release.

For getting registered one can send his/her name and mailing information to us.democratic.club@yahoo.com

US citizens in Bangladesh are requested to register for absentee voting arranged by US Embassy in Dhaka at Bougainvillea Room, American Recreation Association (ARA), Road 69, Gulshan-2 from 5:30pm to 9:00pm on Thursday.

Someone who is not a member of the ARA needs a US passport for admission.

Dr RI Chowdhury passes away

CU CORRESPONDENT

Prof Dr Rafiqul Islam Chowdhury, a political scientist and former vice chancellor of Chittagong University (CU), passed away due to a cardiac arrest at South Point Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 75.

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

His first namaz-e-janaza will be held at CU campus at 11:00am today and second at Jamiatul Falah Nation Mosque in the city after Zohr prayers. Later, he will be buried at Gorib Ullah Shah Shrine graveyard in the port city.

Prof Chowdhury was the founding chairman of the Department of Political Science at the CU and served as the vice chancellor of the university from 1991 to 1996.

CU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr M Badul Alam expressed deep shock at his death and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members. He also prayed for salvation of the departed soul.

Chittagong University Teachers' Association, CU Former Students' Association (82 Batch), Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters Association vice president and secretary also expressed shock at the death of Prof RI Chowdhury.

Janak Roy

A CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Janak Roy, a freedom fighter, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital on Sunday.

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

He was cremated with state honour at the crematorium. Thakurgaon Mukti Joddha Sangsad expressed deep shock at his death.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK

Today is the 4th death anniversary of Engineer Hasan Raimun Wahab (Rimu), a senior instructor of Rajshahi Technical Training Centre.

says a press release. On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his residence at Begunbari in Dhaka.