



Guests hold copies of a book titled 'People's Participation in Budgetary Process in Bangladesh: In search of Some Policy Reforms' by former adviser to a caretaker government Dr Akbar Ali Khan at a publication ceremony at Brac Centre Inn yesterday. From left are Mushfiqur Rahman, Prof Nurul Islam, Prof Rehman Sobhan, Dr Atiur Rahman, Dr Akbar Ali Khan and Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud.

Amend constitution to make budgetary process participatory

Speakers tell book launching ceremony

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the present constitutional framework, members of parliament (MPs) and citizens have no power to contribute to national budgetary process, said the speakers at a book launch programme in the city yesterday.

They said it is only the prime minister (PM) and the finance minister (FM) who enjoy absolute power in implementing the national budget.

The launch of the research-based book titled 'People's Participation in Budgetary Process in Bangladesh: In search of Some Policy Reforms' and authored by former adviser of the caretaker government Akbar Ali Khan, was held at Brac Centre Inn.

Shamunnay, a research organisation, published the book with the assistance of Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF).

"We will have to amend the constitution to make the budgetary process participatory since the present constitution gives all power and responsibility for budget implementation only to PM

and FM," said Akbar Ali. Terming the budgets very much centre-focused, he said presently the budget discussions continue in parliament for a maximum period of 18 days during which it is not possible for an MP to read all the budget papers.

Echoing the voice of the author, former Jatiya Party MP GM Quader said, "I was involved in the budgetary process for a long time and my experience is that excluding the PM and FM all others are merely spectators in the budget formulation process."

Mushfiqur Rahman, chairman of a former parliamentary standing committee on finance, said since the MPs have no power to incorporate their opinions into the budgetary process, discussion on the budget in parliament does not produce any qualitative result.

He viewed that there was no regulatory obligation to discuss the budget in standing committees.

Speaking as chief guest, Prof Rehman Sobhan, chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said the random issuance of Statutory Regulatory Ordinance (SRO) is a

major weakness of budget as it changes many things of the original budget.

Suggesting that budget-related information should be shared, he said even the ministers know a little about project implementation.

Prof Sobhan criticised the maintaining of secrecy about defence budget and said the defence budget remains outside the budgetary discussion which is not a practice in modern democracies.

Pointing towards the politicians he said, "Now you don't participate in budget discussions when you are in the opposition."

Regarding budget we have many things to do at policy level. Budget is nothing secret and more people should be involved in its process and more time should be spent on its implementation," Shaheen added.

Finance Secretary Dr Mohammad Tareque said many changes were made in case of budget preparation and announcement in recent years, and the government is still working to make budget more transparent and accountable.

Dr Atiur Rahman, chairman of Shamunnay, chaired the function.

ment requires qualitative research which is absent in Bangladesh.

About the book he said when a knowledgeable person like Akbar Ali Khan writes it should be very rich.

"The cause of human rights violation is the absence of good governance and we are working to reduce this violation," said Shaheen Anam, executive director of MJF in her introductory remark.

She said the book has been published since people want to know how the budget gets implemented.

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Two killed as building collapses in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Two people were killed and eight others injured in a building collapse in Khulna city on Thursday night.

The four-storied abandoned building, which was among 60 buildings declared highly risky by Khulna City Corporation, collapsed at about 8:30pm, injuring 10 people.

Two of the injured succumbed to their head injuries at 10:15pm at Khulna Medical College Hospital.

The dead were identified as rice traders Nesar Ahmed Khokon, 35, and Subrata Karmakar, 38.

Injured Shamim, Brishti, Nasir, Monir, Abdur Rob Sarder and Alim are now undergoing treatment at the same hospital.

Two others were released after receiving first aid from Khulna General Hospital.

KCC Mayor Talukder Abdul Khaleque visited the spot twice. He blamed the district administration for leasing out buildings that had already been identified as highly risky.

He demanded an impartial probe into the matter and necessary actions against the people who leased out the buildings.

The building was leased out to Siddiqur Rahman, an official of the office of Deputy Commissioner of Khulna.

President, CA greet Maldivian president-elect Nasheed

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed have congratulated Maldivian President-elect Mohamed Nasheed on his confirmation of being elected to the high office.

The president, in a message yesterday, expressed his confidence that the Maldives would continue in the path of socio-economic progress and attain even greater heights under the leadership and stewardship of President Nasheed.

Pointing out excellent bilateral relations between the two countries, the chief adviser, in a separate message, reassured President Nasheed of Bangladesh's commitment to further strengthening and deepening of the relations with the people and the government of the Maldives.

He conveyed his wishes to work with President Nasheed's administration for the mutual benefit of the two peoples.

Nasheed was declared elected in Tuesday's run-off elections, defeating President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom who has been ruling the island chain since 1978 and was running for a seventh term.

'Involve youths in national development'

National Youth Day today

UNB, Dhaka

The National Youth Day 2008 will be observed today, aiming to promote greater participation of the youth community in nation-building activities.

Different organisations, including the ministry of youth and sports, have drawn up elaborate programmes to mark the day.

In a message on the occasion, President Iajuddin Ahmed urged all concerned to take necessary steps for further involving the youth community in national development.

He lauded the role of youths as they always played a pioneering role in every movement and nation-building activities.

Iajuddin hoped that the country's youth community with their unending potentials and creativity would play more responsible role for the development of the country upholding the tradition.

In another message, Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed said, "The youth community is our valuable resource and future of our country and nation, as we're facing economic and social challenges of the 21st century."

The chief adviser hoped that the youth community will be able to play a significant role in facing these challenges by utilising their intelligence, unending force of life and creativity.

"It's the expectation of all of us that the youth community being imbued with democratic values and patriotism would engage themselves in welfare activities for the country's rapid progress," the CA said.



Prof Anisuzzaman speaks at the biennial council of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

Call to remove toxic milk brands from market

DU CORRESPONDENT

Kendriyo Khelaghor Asar, an organisation working for children, yesterday demanded immediate removal of melamine-mixed powdered milk brands from the market, terming it harmful for children.

It also demanded that the government take all necessary steps to reinstall the Baul sculptures at the roundabout in front of Zia International Airport and name the place as 'Lalon Chattar' (Lalon Square).

In support of their demand, the organisation formed a human chain at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city protesting the dismantling of sculptures and government

inefficiency in handling melamine-mixed milk powder issue.

Over a hundred children from different city schools and noted personalities participated in the programme.

Chairperson of the organisation Prof Panna Kaiser said the government should take immediate steps to remove melamine-mixed milk powder from the market and take immediate steps to test the rest of the available milk brands.

People who were involved in importing these milk powder brands in the country without testing should be put behind bars, she added.

Prof Panna demanded that the government would take measures

to make liquid milk available and cheap for the children of poor families in the country.

About removing Lalon sculpture, she said it was not an attack on the culture, history and liberation war of the country.

Some vested quarters who did not want independence and took position against the liberation war are involved in such anti-cultural activities, she said, adding that they should be identified and brought to trial.

Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, Editor of Bhorer Kagoj Shyamal Dutta and Deputy Editor of the Samakal Mozumy Hossain Manju, among others, took part in the programme.



Kendriyo Khelaghor Asar forms a human chain at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday demanding immediate steps to remove melamine-mixed powdered milk brands from the market.

Seven SPs given new postings

UNB, Dhaka

Seven Superintendents of Police were given new postings on Thursday, according to the Police Headquarters.

Feni SP Harun Rashid Hazari has been transferred as SP of Panchagar.

SP Mallick Fakrul Islam, who recently returned from East Timor on completion of the UN peace-keeping mission, was appointed as SP of Feni. Panchagar SP Harun-ur-Rashid has been transferred as Deputy Commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police.

Another SP Jamil Ahmed, who returned from Ivory Coast UN Peacekeeping Mission, has been given new posting as SP of Pabna district.

Pabna SP ASM Masum Rabbani has been transferred to Police Headquarters as Assistant Inspector General of Police.

SP Abdul Malik, who returned from Ivory Coast UN Peacekeeping Mission, has been appointed as DC of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, while SP Abdul Quader, who returned from the UK on completion of his academic leave, has been posted as SP of Police Staff College, Dhaka.

Performance of Baul songs on Nov 4

UNB, Dhaka

The High Commission of India in association with Indian Council for Cultural Relations will present a performance of Baul songs by eminent Baul singer Madhusudan Baul and his troupe at Shilpakala Academy at 7:00pm on November 4.

Complimentary passes for the programme can be collected from the Gulshan-1 offices of the High Commission and the Indian Cultural Centre.



Society of Conscious Artists takes out a procession on the Dhaka University campus yesterday demanding a congenial atmosphere for free practice of art, culture and creativity.

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