Work neutrally for credible election

B Chowdhury urges govt officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) President Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday said the administration will have to function neutrally during the next general election to make it free, fair and credible.

"The government officials who were promoted by political parties during their regimes must be kept away for holding free and fair polls as they might influence the election directly," he added.

The BDB president was speaking at a press conference at its central office on Topkhana Road in the city where former lawmaker from Barguna-1 Dr Abdur Rahman Khokon and former PWD chief engineer Mohammad Eusuf joined the party.

The former president said problems of the country will reduce significantly if the countrymen cast their votes to those candidates who hate corruption and terrorism, adding that the political parties should make pledges that they would not keep any criminal and corruptionists in their respective parties.

B Chowdhury said, "We will definitely take part in the parliamentary election as we believe in election."

Asked whether his party would join the Awami League-led grand alliance, he said they are discussing and will take a final decision after observing the attitudes and moves of other political parties.

"It is not a unilateral issue, it is a multilateral issue and so we will observe attitudes and moves of other political parties to take our decision," he said, adding, "We have good organisations and people in half of the total parliamentary constituencies and we are capable to give nominations for over half of the total constituencies."

He further said, "We will participate in the election for wining as well as forming a government. So, we will demand and sacrifice for the candidates who have possibility to win."

Asked about whether they will join BNP-led four-party alliance, he said, "We will not join those parties who have confusions over Liberation War and have different ideologies."

Prof Chowdhury said the government will have to take the security measures to ensure security and safety to voters, candidates, campaigners and poll officials.

"The country had experienced some unexpected incidents during the election in the past and it is the duty of the government to ensure security to the voters so that they can cast their votes without any fear," he added.

Referring to the decision of providing Special Security Force (SSF) to two former premiers, he said the government could have also offered special security to him as he was the former president of the country.

BDB Secretary General Maj (retd) Abdul Mannan said they would start distributing nomination forms for the parliamentary polls from November 5 and it will be continued for three days.

"We will take part in the election and are taking preparation for it," he said, adding that they have formed an 11-member steering committee led by its Convener Dr Nurul Amin Bepary to monitor the whole election process.

Organising Secretary Mahi B Chowdhury also took part in the conference.

27TH BCS EXAMS

Mothers of candidates submit memo to chief adviser

DU CORRESPONDENT

Mothers of the candidates of 27th BCS examinations, who passed it at first but were dropped from the list of successful candidates as per fresh results, submitted a memorandum to the chief adviser yesterday demanding appointment of their sons and daughters.

Mahfuzur Rahman, a candidate said a three-member team on behalf of the mothers submitted the memorandum to the personal assistant of CA in the morning at his office.

On the other hand, candidates continued their fast-unto-death programme for the fourth consecutive day yesterday.

Over 100 candidates along with their parents and guardians began the hunger strike at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city on Saturday demanding that the earlier results of the exam be declared valid.

Meanwhile, eight hunger strikers fell ill and four of them received treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday, the candidate added.

He further said Awami League presidium member Surajit Sen Gupta visited the hunger strike programme and expressed his solidarity with them.

PHOTO: STAR

Mothers of candidates of 27th BCS examinations stage a demonstration at Shahbagh in the city yesterday demanding appointment of their children.

Scrap metal trader killed in city, wife arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified criminals slaughtered a scrap metal trader at his house at Arsin Gate in the city's Shyampur area in the early hours of yesterday.

The victim was identified as Jahangir Alam, 38.

The police arrested his wife Sagorika after his father Firoz Alam filed a case mentioning that she is involved in the murder as she has an extramarital affair.

In the case statement, Firoz mentioned that Sagorika helped the killers enter the house by opening the door.

Criminals stabbed and slaughtered Jahangir in his room at about 3:30am, said the police who sent the body to Mitford Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Sagorika and Jahangir got married eight years ago and they have three daughters.

'Incorporate sex workers' children into mainstream'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday urged the government to incorporate the children of the sex workers in the mainstream by ensuring their right to education.

The sex workers at the roundtable also demanded their profession be legalised.

"If our children get education and better jobs, the number of sex workers will gradually decline. Our adolescent children need a haven so that they can grow up in a safe and violence-free environment," said Mahfuz Begum, president of Sex-Workers Network Bangladesh.

Durjoy Nari Sangha (DNS), an organisation of floating sex workers, and Bangladesh Child Rights Forum organised the roundtable on 'The rights of the children of the sex workers and our responsibilities' at the National Press Club in the city.

Academicians, NGO activists, journalists and representatives of the sex workers' community took part in the roundtable.

"Everywhere our children are facing discrimination especially while enrolling themselves in schools, doing birth registration and getting passports," said DNS President Shahanaz Begum, who also chaired the programme.

PHOTO: STAR

Prof Sadeka Halim speaks at a roundtable at National Press Club in the city yesterday. On her right are Prof HSK Arefeen, Prof Nazrul Islam and Shahanaz Begum.

To break the intergenerational cycle of prostitution, she stressed the need for restoring the basic rights of the children of the sex workers.

Prof Sadeka Halim and Prof HSK Arefeen jointly placed a charter of recommendations at the roundtable.

The recommendations include building shelter homes for children of homeless sex workers, creating a special cell of experts for supporting them and their children, ensuring the educational rights of their children, introducing a course on child rights in school to university level and ensuring low cost housing for the homeless sex workers.

Prof Arefeen said the government should implement the UN Child Rights Convention (CRC) to ensure the constitutional rights of the children of sex workers.

Terming the existing laws on prostitution as 'ambiguous', he also recommended reforming the laws to recognise their profession.

"We suggest that prostitution be legalised so that sex workers have a legal footing. It will have a positive impact on their children, too," he added.

Referring to Women Development Policy, Prof Sadeka Halim said, "The policy said stern actions should be taken against prostitution and that's why law enforcers get the chance to harass the sex workers."

She also underscored the need for making the sex workers and their children aware of their rights.

Prof Nazrul Islam of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Medical University was the chief guest while Danida's Programme Manager Sarder Mohammad Asaduzzaman was present as special guest at the roundtable moderated by Director of Bangladesh Child Rights Forum Md Kafil Uddin Ahmed.

Abducted Brac staffs return home

UNB, *Dhaka*

Two abducted Brac officials who were released after nine days of captivity returned home from the Afghan capital of Kabul yesterday night by a flight of Emirates Airlines.

Brac Media Affairs Director Anwarul Haq told UNB that Akhtar Ali and Shajahan Ali have gone back to their families and they would come back to the Brac headquarters after rest.

Akhtar and Shajahan were abducted in Ghazni city of Afghanistan on October 23. The abductors set them free unconditionally on Saturday.

JP parliamentary board formed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party (JP) formed a seven-member parliamentary board yesterday according to its constitution, says a press release.

Members of the board include senior presidium member Rawshan Ershad, presidium member Kazi Jafar Ahmed, barrister Anisul Islam Mahmud, MA Sattar and member secretary ABM Ruhul Amin Hawladar.

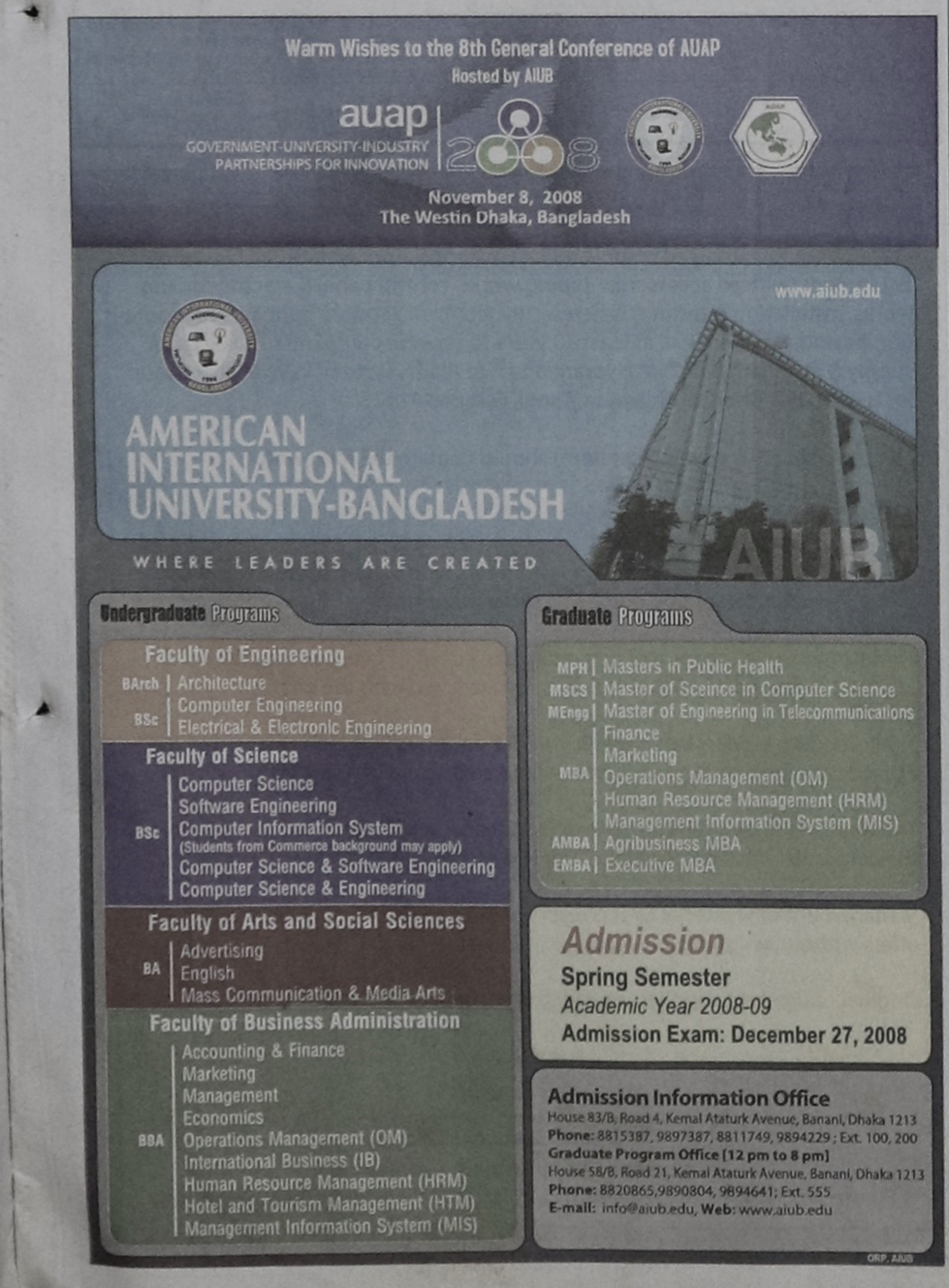
The party has also invited applications for the nominations from the prospective candidates until November 6 for the upcoming general polls.

The interviews for the nomination seekers will be taken at the party president's Banani residence from November 7-8.

Applicants from Rajshahi and Barisal divisions will be interviewed on the first day of the two-day interviews and applicants from Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions will be on the following day.

JP-MANJU

Meanwhile, JP-Manju also held its parliamentary board meeting that discussed the procedures of candidature for December 18 election.

Interested candidates have been asked to collect their nomination forms from the party office at 3/6, C-2, Block-A at Lalmatia in the city. Last date of the submissions of the forms is November 8.

Personal Secretary to JP chairman Mejbah Uddin on behalf of Anwar Hossain Monju and Md Mohibul Hossain from Pirojpur-2 constituency took their forms on the first day of the sale.