

Campaign for 'No vote' should be strengthened

Says Citizens' Rights Movement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Citizens' Rights Movement at a view exchange meeting yesterday called for strengthening the campaign for 'No vote' to raise awareness among the voters so that they can opt for it in the event that all the candidates in their constituencies are corrupt and dishonest.

At the meeting at the National Press Club in the city, the speakers called on the countrymen to vote for honest and competent candidates and cast 'No vote' for corrupt, dishonest and incompetent candidates, which would compel the political parties to nominate honest candidates in future.

Terming 'No vote' as

another party, the speakers also said that if the number of 'No vote' becomes highest in any constituency, a further vote should be held there.

"The option for 'No vote' is the greatest achievement in 37 years of the country's history towards establishing a democratic Bangladesh," said Secretary General of Citizens' Rights Movement Tushar Rehman.

While reading out the keynote paper, Tushar, however, said the effect of the 'No vote' will only be counted if it is 50 percent against a candidate, which would hinder the implication of 'No vote'.

Countrymen's right to vote and political power would have been protected, had there been a system for conducting the polls again in case

of 'No vote' getting the maximum votes, the speakers said.

They also urged the voters to cast 'No vote' against the war criminals to establish a non-communal democratic country.

The leaders of the movement also demanded the government establishes a 'Peoples Democratic Bangladesh' instead of 'Peoples Republic of Bangladesh' by reforming the constitution.

Academician M Shakhawat Hossain Tutul, Advocate Fakir Delwar Hossain, freedom fighter Major (ret'd) Mohammad Mofizul Haque Sarkar, Major (ret'd) Ziauddin and Prof Mehzeb Rahman were also present at the meeting presided over by Group Captain (ret'd) Engineer Mohammad Alfaz.

JS ELECTION

BDR, BSF agree to strengthen vigilance on border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Border Security Force (BSF) of India at a flag meeting yesterday agreed to strengthen their vigilance along the border to stop smuggle of explosives and arms to Bangladesh ahead of 9th national election on December 29.

The sector commander level flag meeting between Dinajpur sector of BDR and Raiganj sector of BSF was held at Shukandighi of Thakurgaon Sadar upazila.

Col Md Rezaul Kabir of BDR Dinajpur Sector led Bangladesh while Shree Sanjib Bhanot DIG of BSF Raiganj Sector led India in the meeting. Commanders of BDR and BSF of different battalions were present at the meeting.

The flag meeting also agreed to maintain biological security at the shared borders under both the sectors so that bird flu cannot spread as Indian part of the border area is witnessing severe infection area, according to the BDR officials.

The meeting also agreed to work jointly to stop drug smuggling into Bangladesh. Raiganj sector commander ensured his all out support in this regard to drug padding.



Anti-War Movement Bangladesh holds an anti-imperialism solidarity rally at Muktangan in the city yesterday.

Call to ensure rights of indigenous people

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Leaders of United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) yesterday called on the government to recognise indigenous people constitutionally, ensure their rights to lands and language and stop repression in the name of security personnel's operations in the CHT areas.

They said this at a discussion on 'One decade of UPDF in CHT' at Tribal Cultural Institute (TCI) in the hill town with UPDF central committee member Dhruva Joyti Chakma in the chair.

The leaders said no governments have yet taken any initiative to solve the CHT crisis permanently. They always repressed and oppressed the indigenous people in the name of some operations, including operation Uttaran.

They further said that a section of security forces shelter outsiders for grabbing indigenous lands in CHT. They think that by grabbing indigenous land and snatching mother tongues, they would abolish the sign of indigenous people from CHT, but they would never succeed till the last drop of blood.

To ensure the rights of

tribal people, UPDF and its front organisation Pahari Chhatra Parishad and Hill Women's Federation were formed on December 26 in 1997 and are still fighting against all odds and injustices, they added.

They further said that it is high time the people should identify and elect their own man.

Secretary of UPDF central committee Robi Shankar Chakma, its members Animesh Chakma and Robi Shankar Talukder, Hill Women's Federation President Sonali Chakma and UPDF candidate Uzzal Smriti Chakma spoke at the programme.



Guests pose for photograph at the 14th annual scholarship distribution programme of Bangladesh Scholarship Council at Engineers' Institute auditorium in the city yesterday.

250 students get grants from Bangladesh Scholarship Council

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Scholarship Council yesterday distributed scholarships among 250 meritorious students at its 14th annual scholarship distribution ceremony.

The council in association with the Nippon Foundation of Japan distributes 300 scholarships worth Tk 12000 among the meritorious students every year.

Former adviser Dr Akbar Ali Khan was the chief guest at the ceremony at the Engineers' Institute auditorium in the city where he thanked the organisers for taking such an initiative.

He said, "This initiative is helpful for the meritorious students of our country and would help them complete their studies successfully." He also urged the well-off people and the expatriates to take more initiatives of such kind.

Chairperson of the council Ajit Kumar Barua presided over the programme. The speakers also urged the guardians to monitor how the students spend the money.

An essay competition was also held this year like the previous years.

Yasmin Akhter of Chittagong University, Ahmed Sharif Moju of Dhaka University Engineering and Technology (Duet) and Mohammad Badiuzzaman of Jahangirnagar University clinched the first, second and third positions in the essay competition respectively.

2 killed, 31 injured in road accidents

METRO DESK

Two people were killed and 31 others injured in separate road accidents in Jessore and Rajshahi in last two days.

BSS from Jessore reports: Two people were killed and 16 others injured as a passenger bus and a tempo collided head-on at Hashimpur on Jessore-Magura road yesterday morning.

The dead were identified as Mizan, 40, and Abdul Wahab, 55.

Police said the accident occurred when a Jessore-bound speeding bus collided head-on with a tempo near Hashimpur High School, leaving Mizan dead on the spot and 17 others wounded.

Seriously injured people were taken Jessore General Hospital where Wahab succumbed to his injuries.

Our RU correspondent adds: At least 15 BNP activists were injured in a road accident on Tanore-Rajshahi road at Pachandor council crossing at Tanore upazila in Rajshahi on Thursday.

The seriously injured were identified as Shamsur Ali, 60, Abdul Jalil, 20, Manik, 20, Al-Fahad, 20, Latif, 60, Samad, 50, Mukul, 20, Alam, 35, Ekramul, 28, Mushtak, 30, Habibur, 25 and Anwarul, 30.

The injured were under treatment at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

Locals and police said the accident occurred at around 8:00pm when a 'Bhutbuti', locally made engine-propelled vehicle, carrying the activists, fell into a roadside ditch losing its control. They were returning from an electoral meeting.

PRE-POLL VIOLENCE

4 injured in Keraniganj

UNB, Keraniganj

Four people, including daughter of BNP leader Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, were injured in an attack allegedly by Awami League supporters at Ainta yesterday.

Witnesses said a group of AL supporters attacked Goyeshwar's daughter Arpana Roy, her relatives Himangshu Bhoumik, Debabrata Das and driver Akhter at about 4:00pm, as they went to the area, for electioneering in support of Goyeshwar, a BNP candidate from Dhaka-3.

The injured, including Arpana, received first aid at a local clinic.

Arpana told local journalists that the supporters of Nasrul Hamid Dipu, an AL candidate from the same constituency, attacked them during their campaign.

Arpana filed a case with South Keraniganj Police Station in this connection.

UCEP-Bangladesh receives Mother Teresa medal

METRO DESK

UCEP-Bangladesh was awarded Mother Teresa Gold Medal-2008 for its contribution in transforming underprivileged children into human resources, says a press release.

Mother Teresa Research Council awarded the medal.

Justice Habibur Rahman, chairman of the Truth and Accountably Commission, handed over the medal to UCEP Executive Director Brig Gen (ret'd) Aftab Uddin Ahmad at a ceremony at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre recently, says a press release.

AGM Shamsul Kamal, Dr Mahfuzur Rahman, chairperson of ATN Bangla, Monowara Hakim Ali, chairperson of Chittagong Mohila Chamber, Allama Syed Ridwan Ishaq and Archbishop Polineus D Costa DD were present on the occasion.

UCEP-Bangladesh works for the distressed urban working children. It also provides employment support services to the UCEP graduates in close collaboration with industries and employers.

Obituary

BSS, Dhaka

Wajed Mahmud, a senior sub-editor of the daily Bhorer Kagoj, passed away due to brain stroke at a city hospital yesterday at the age of 68.

He left behind his wife, two daughters and one son to mourn his wife.

Family sources said he suffered a stroke and fell on the road in front of Shyamoli Cinema Hall on his way to office. He was immediately rushed to Suhrawardy Hospital where the attending doctors declared him dead.

Publisher of the daily Bhorer Kagoj Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Editor Shyamol Dutta, Awami League leader Asaduzzaman Noor and leaders of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists and Dhaka Union of Journalists, Dhaka Sub-editors Council and Rajshahi Journalists Union expressed deep shock at this death.

Ensure EFA to create talented politicians

Says Prof Muzaffer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

TIB Chairman Prof Muzaffer Ahmad yesterday stressed the need for ensuring equal rights of education for all (EFA) in order to create talented politicians who will stand beside the deprived people with a view to solving their problems.

"Our countrymen have been facing all the crises with courage and patience. Many of the Sidr-hit people are still suffering from shortage of food, cloths and pure drinking water. Politicians should go to them to solve their problems," he added.

He said this as the chief

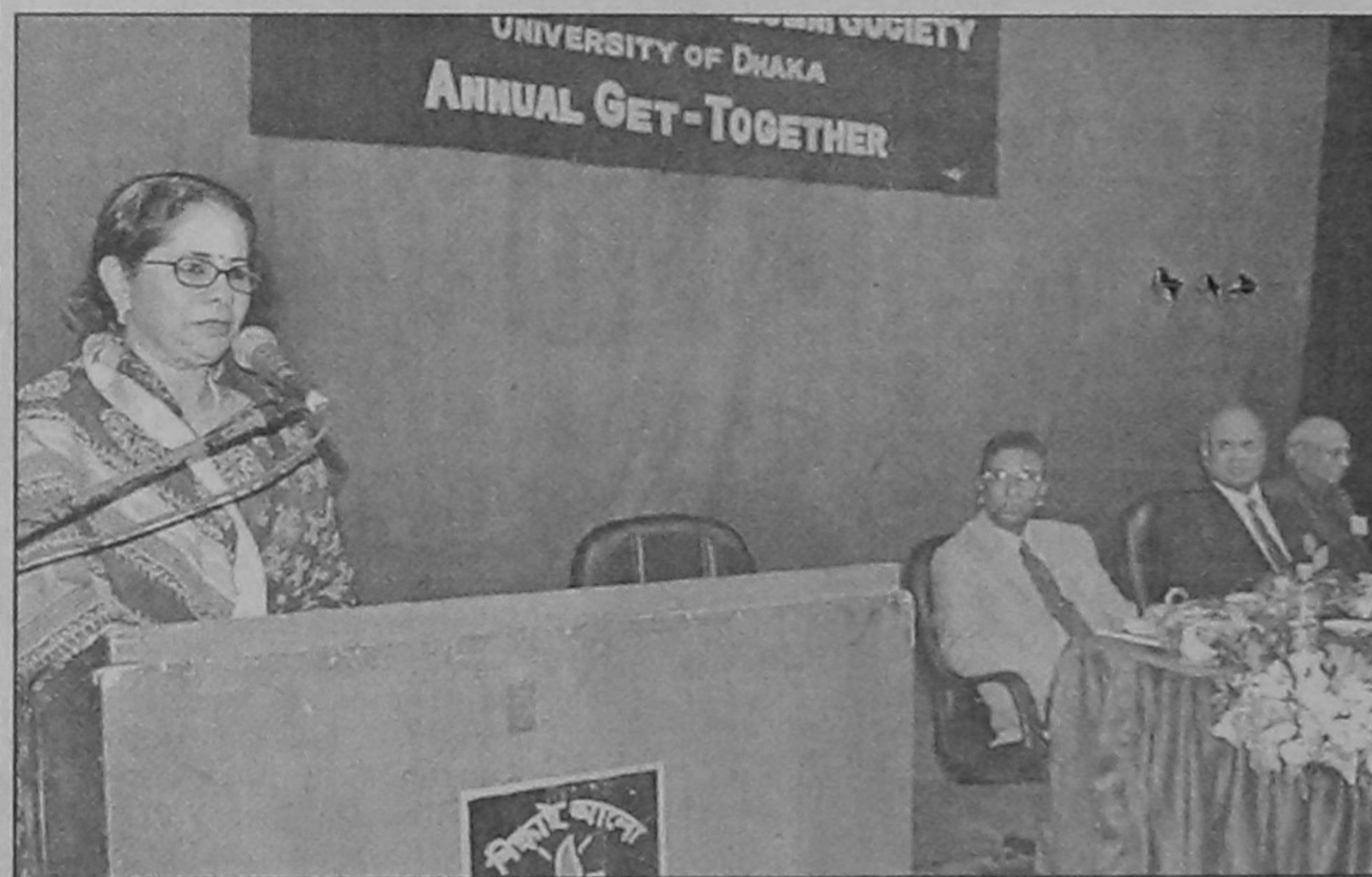
guest at a discussion on 'Politics of Bangladesh' in memory of the intellectuals killed and victory days organised by Bhasani Anusari Mancha, a platform of followers of great leader Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, at the National Press Club.

Prof Muzaffer said the nation is now passing through a transitional period, but expressed his hope for the coming days.

Ekushey Television (ETV) Director Atiqul Huq Chowdhury and Abul Hossain Peace Foundation Chairman engineer Abdul Hossain also spoke.



Justice Habibur Rahman, chairman of the Truth and Accountably Commission, hands over Mother Teresa Gold Medal-2008 to UCEP Executive Director Brig Gen (ret'd) Aftab Uddin Ahmad at a ceremony at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre recently.



Adviser Rasheda K Chowdhury speaks at a reunion of the students of English department at Dhaka University yesterday.

Poll finances of parties

FROM PAGE 1

Asked if they have received donations from any institutions, Imam replied in the negative. He however said they expect some to come up with assistance now as the campaigning has entered the final stage.

He would not answer whether AL has received funds from individuals.

As per its constitution, the party's parliamentary board is empowered to oversee everything regarding the elections. But its members do not know much about election funds.

Imam said that some 20 days ago AL opened an account with the Trust Bank for its election finances.

AL chief Sheikh Hasina, General Secretary Abdul Jalil and Treasurer HN Ashiqur Rahman are authorised to operate the account.

Later, Imam was included as both Jalil and Ashique are candidates and busy canvassing in their constituencies, sources said. According to the electoral laws,

AL should have been opened the bank account immediately after the announcement of election schedule on November 2.

BNP FUNDS

Contacted by The Daily Star, BNP Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan declined to speak about the party's election funds.

He said the correspondent would better collect the information from the EC after the election. They will turn in the accounts of expenditure to the commission once the election is over.

Nazrul, also spokesperson for the party, said they have given money to those who were running short on funds.

BNP raked in Tk 4.36 crore selling nomination papers last month. Later, some businessmen contributed a substantial sum to its election funds, party sources said.

So far, MA Hashem, Sahabuddin, Sharfuddin Ahmed Shantu and some other industrialists loyal to BNP have

donated to the election funds, added the sources.

Hashem, a former BNP lawmaker, however, declined to talk about the matter to The Daily Star.

Contacted over phone, BNP standing committee member M Shamsul Islam said he does not know anything about the party's election finances.

The same answer came from another standing committee member who spoke in return for anonymity.

Meanwhile, some mid-level leaders working at the central election office at Gulshan said BNP this time is facing financial constraints as a good number of its donors have thought better of it after January 11 last year.

They added that the party is struggling to give adequate support to its candidates.

"Every day contestants and their representatives crowd the Gulshan office to seek funds. But most of them go away empty-handed," a worker at the BNP's electoral desk for Dhaka division told The Daily Star.

DHAKA TODAY

Conference

The inaugural ceremony of the 4th BSME-ASME international conference on thermal engineering will be held. Venue: LGED conference room. Time: 9:30am.

Human chain

Forum for secular Bangladesh and Trial of War Criminals of 1971 will form a human chain marking the closing ceremony of its special campaign to vote against war criminals. Venue: Around the Sangsad Bhaban. Time: 3:00pm.

Rotary Dhaka Central

The regular meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 1:30pm.

WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderate to thick fog may occur over the river basins and light to moderate fog elsewhere over the country during midnight till morning.

Slight fall in night temperature may fall by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 28.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 11.9 degrees Celsius at Satkhira.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:20pm today and rises at 6:40am 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	23.6	14.8	98	84
Chittagong	24.5	16.6	91	70
Rajshahi	25.0	13.6	89	79
Khulna	24.5	14.3	91	80
Birsa	25.2	13.5	92	90
Sylhet	28.0	15.5	83	72
Cox's Bazar	27.0	17.0	83	76