

Rights movement a must to institutionalise democracy

Speakers tell publication ceremony

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Citizens' rights movements must be strengthened and spread countrywide to continue political reforms and institutionalise democracy, said eminent citizens yesterday.

People of the country are not politically educated not only because of negligence of the political parties, but also because social activists do not play their due role in this regard, they added.

The observations came at the publication ceremony of two books written by Dr Badiul Alam Majumder, secretary of Shushashone Janney Nagar (Shujan), at the National Press Club in the city.

The books titled 'Democracy, Election and Good Governance' and 'Local Government: Past, Present and Future' were published by Agam Prakashani.

Shujan President Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said, "We would indirectly blame the political parties for not educating the citizens, but unfortunately our social activists have also not done it."

Taking this opportunity, vested quarters exploited the democratic rights of citizens, he said, adding: "We don't want any feudal democracy and that people are confined in symbols in electing their representatives."

Prof Muzaffer criticised the present government's role in involving members of parliament (MPs) in the upazila-level local government.

Stating that the quorum is

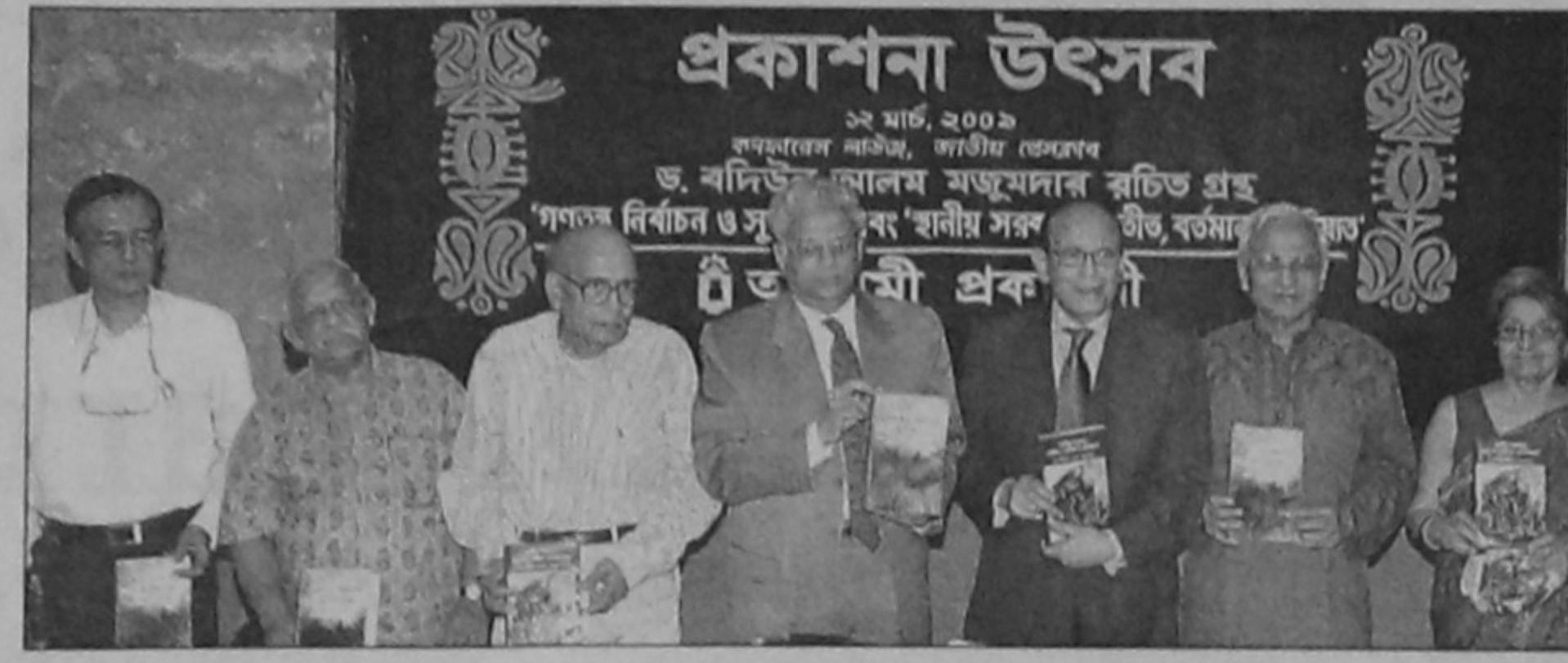


PHOTO: STAR

Guests hold copies of two books by Dr Badiul Alam Majumder at a publication ceremony at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. From left are Dr Shahdeen Malik, Prof Amirul Islam Chowdhury, Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, ATM Shamsul Huda, Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid, Dr Badiul Alam Majumder and Dr Hameeda Hossain.

not completed in the parliament because of the MPs' involvement in other activities, the eminent citizens' rights activist said, "There is no alternative to strengthening the local government."

All conscious citizens must get united to remain vigilant for good governance and democracy," he added.

Speaking as the chief guest, CEC ATM Shamsul Huda said the EC has done some good works in the recent past by bringing electoral reforms, but this is a continuous process for strong democracy.

"We have completed a phase, but there are many works to be done yet. For example, the people's representatives must come from the grass-roots levels and the parliament members should be constituted of 33 percent women members," he

added. Appreciating the activities of Shujan, the CEC said the organisation was very helpful in the EC's reform process.

He further said, "The problem of those who claim themselves elite is that they talk long words, but do not know of the issues in details."

Prof Amirul Islam Chowdhury, former VC of Jahangirnagar University, criticised the government for not passing the Local Government Commission Ordinance.

Human rights activist Dr Hameeda Hossain said political parties want democracy, but do not take effective steps to truly strengthen democratic institutions and educate people to develop a democratic culture.

The mentality of the political parties to go to power through elections and not really working

for democracy must be changed, he added.

Appreciating the role of Shujan, particularly Badiul Alam for writing the books on crucial issues of democracy and good governance, Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam said, "We need more such people for a true change."

The subjects of the books speak of the knowledge that is very important for the daily life, he said, adding: "We have achievements, but not in line with our immense potential."

Badiul Alam said, "I wanted that the books would help creating citizens' activism for democracy and development."

Noted jurist Dr Shahdeen Malik also spoke at the programme with former chairman of TIB Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid in the chair.

The mentality of the political parties to go to power through elections and not really working

WORLD KIDNEY DAY OBSERVED

35,000 die of kidney diseases every year: Experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the slogan 'Keep your blood pressure under control', the World Kidney Day was observed in the country as elsewhere across the globe yesterday with a call to create awareness of kidney diseases and their treatments.

Health experts at a discussion said a huge number of patients seek treatment at the advance stage of the disease due to lack of awareness.

As the symptoms of kidney diseases are not exposed at primary stage, people do not seek treatments and by the time of exposure of the symptoms, 75 percent of the kidney get damaged, they added.

The experts further said unfortunately, 90 percent

Death anniversary

The second death anniversary of Shamimuzzaman Chowdhury, a banker and businessman, is being observed today, March 13, 2009, says a press release.

He passed away in England on this day in 2007.

He was laid to rest at Binsted Cemetery in the Isle of Wight where he spent the last few years of his life with his family. He hailed from Sylhet.

He was the eldest son of former MP Mina Zaman Chowdhury and Shamsuzzaman Chowdhury, ex-chairman of Rajshahi Education Board.

Shamimuzzaman served as a manager of Uttara Bank branch in London before joining the BCCI.

Khodeza Begum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 7th death anniversary of Khodeza Begum, wife of former Gono Parishad member late Shamsuddin Shikdar, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held after Asr prayers at her son's residence at Shantanir in Mansurabad (Mymensingh) in the city.

Shamsun Nahar Khan METRO DESK

Today is the ninth death anniversary of Shamsun Nahar Khan, wife of former minister Ata Uddin Khan, says a press release.

On this occasion, a milad mahfil will be held and a special prayer will be offered and foods will be distributed among the orphans at Nawabganj Etimkhana and Madrasa.

BNP likely to decide Tanbir's fate tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Standing Committee of BNP may sit tomorrow to settle the fate of its member Chowdhury Tanbir Ahmed Siddiky whose son brought allegation of demanding Tk five crore against the party chairperson.

Sources said Tanbir will submit his reply to a show cause notice today, following his son Idrad Ahmed Siddiky's public statement against the chairperson and other leaders of the party.

"He [Tanbir] embarrassed chairperson and the party for several times. Even he is the first signatory to the controversial October 29 meeting at Saifur Rahman's house during the caretaker government which created Saifur-led faction of the party," a senior leader of the party told The Daily Star last night.

Irad alleged that Khaleda Zia sought Tk five crore from him for getting party ticket to

contest mayoral election of Dhaka City Corporation.

Later on Tuesday, Tanbir at another press conference said the allegation brought by his son against the party chief is not true.

Party insiders said Tanbir is now trying to convince the chairperson so that the party will not take decision to expel him, but BNP leaders and its associate bodies are mounting pressure on the leadership for taking highest disciplinary action against him.

The party in its notice gave 72 hours to Tanbir to explain about his son's statement what he made on Monday at a press briefing at his Gulshan residence in presence of the caretaker government which created Saifur-led faction of the party.

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WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:07pm today and rises at 6:08am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 35.2 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessor and lowest 16.1 degrees Celsius at Srimongal.

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	32.8	23.0	41 24
Chittagong	33.6	21.5	74 --
Rajshahi	32.8	18.8	28 --
Khulna	32.5	21.5	63 52
Burisal	33.0	21.3	65 62
Sylhet	32.8	19.5	58 29
Cox's Bazar	33.5	21.0	77 --

A milad mahfil seeking the salvation of the departed soul of Col Gulzar Uddin Ahmed will be held at Udayan Apartment at Shahid Mainul Hossain Road in Cantonment in the city after Asr prayers today.

Family members of Gulzar have requested all friends, colleagues, and well-wishers to attend the milad and pray for eternal peace of the departed soul.

Col Gulzar, one of the brightest army officers in the country, was best known for his efficient role in the crackdown on Islamist militants and terrorists.

He was killed during the mutiny by BDR jawans at the BDR headquarters, but his body remained unidentified. Finally, his body was identified through a DNA test on Tuesday.

Habib, appointed on December 24, 2007, had often stood against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in case proceedings against her at the High Court during the tenure of the last caretaker government.

He was killed during the mutiny by BDR jawans at the BDR headquarters, but his body remained unidentified. Finally, his body was identified through a DNA test on Tuesday.

Milad for Col Gulzar today

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Frame strict policy to stop violence against women

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday underscored the importance of formulating a strict policy and its implementation to ensure legal action to stop violence against women and girls.

They also stressed the need for increasing coordination between the government and NGOs to monitor whether laws related to elimination of violence against women are being implemented.

With the support of UNFPA Bangladesh, the seminar titled 'Men and women united to end violence against women and girls' was organised by the Department of Women Affairs (DWA) at Biam auditorium in the city.

Speaking as the chief guest, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said, "We have to strengthen legal systems and ensure access to justice and rule of law for protecting and upholding human rights."

The violence against women and girls would not be eliminated unless they are conscious about their rights, the minister added.

With a call to change the patriarchal mindset towards women to stop discrimination and violence against women and girls, she assured the

present government would give an all-out support to move them forward.

Women and Children Affairs Secretary Rokeya Sultana as the special guest said women's progress has been achieved remarkable so far but at the same time, there are some glaring gaps that need to be filled.

With DWA Director General Rowshan Ara Begum in the chair, the programme was also addressed by woman leader Shirin Akther and Oxfam Bangladesh Gender Programme Manager MB Akther and DWA Project Director Mokhlesur Rahman.

9 sued for killing FF during War of Liberation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A case was filed with a Khulna court on Wednesday against nine 'Rajakars' for killing freedom fighter Moslem Golder of Baliajanga village, Batiaghata, during the War of Liberation.

The court of Senior Judge I Magistrate Abu Ibrahim took cognizance of the case yesterday and fixed March 22 as the date for hearing on.

Abdullah Golder, son of Moslem Golder, filed the case against Rafiqul Morol, 68, and his younger brother Belayet Morol, 64, Mostafa Molla, 72, Mohor Sheikh, 62, Ashraf Ali Sheikh, 65, Gaffar Golder, 69, Abdul Hakim, 67, Rajab Ali Sarder, 77, and Karbala Sarder, 64.

In his complaint, Abdullah Golder stated that the murder was committed on December 11 in 1971.

He said the alleged Rajakars gunned down his father in the morning of December 11 in the compound of Phulbari union council office in Batiaghata.

Of the accused, Rafiqul Morol and Rajab Ali Sarder acted as Rajakar commanders during the War of Liberation, he said.

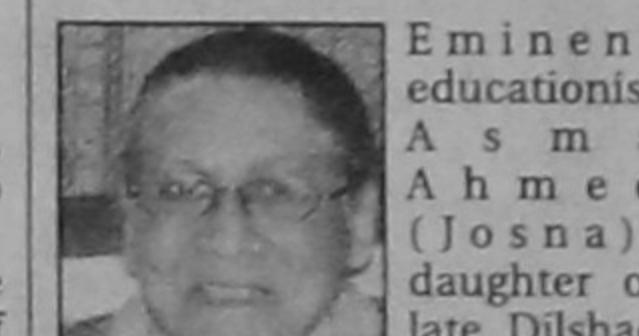
The killers also cut the body of his father into pieces and dumped them into Kazibacha river, Abdullah said in his complaint.

He has named eight people in the petition as witnesses, including his mother Khodeza Begum.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Batiaghata police station Abdus Salek said that he has not yet received any order from the court for conducting an investigation into the allegation of the petitioner.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Eminent educationist Rokia Afzal Rahman said one of the important objectives of Millennium Development Goals (MDG) is women's empowerment.

"We can achieve the goal through proper education as our female students are doing well now than the male students, and by increasing the number of women entrepreneurs," she said.

She lauded the role of CWCCI for involving a huge number of women in the SME sector and activities of the entrepreneurs who have already become successful.

She urged the potential entrepreneurs to prepare proposals for agro-based industry and seek help from the industries ministry in this regard.

CWCCI President Monwarah Hakim Ali highlighted the problems the women entrepreneurs are facing.

"We are now working for setting up a cooperative bank for the women entrepreneurs," Monwarah said.

Five women vice-presidents elected from Hathazari, Anwara, Chandanai, Rangunia and Sitakunda upazilas were accorded a reception at the roundtable.