

Call to increase budgetary allocation for local govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday urged the government to increase budgetary allocation for local government institutions and specify their jurisdiction, responsibility and authority in order to strengthen them.

As the budgetary allocation for the local government is too inadequate, it cannot contribute much to the development of rural areas, they said, adding that it is important to take rural problems into consideration while preparing the budget.

They also said a pro-poor budget and decentralisation of policies are imperative for a strong local government system.

The Governance Advocacy Forum organised the discussion titled 'National budget and the local government' at Cirdap auditorium in the city.

Mizanul Haque Mizan, chairman of Shakta Union Parishad in Keraniganj, said grassroots level people give their opinions in pre-budget discussions, but the budget does not reflect them.

No initiative to strengthen the local government bodies would be successful if the opinions of their representatives are ignored, since they have close links with the grassroots level people, he said.

Bazle Rejbi Al Hasan, another union parishad chairman from Rajshahi,



PHOTO: STAR

Justice Ghulam Rabbani speaks at a roundtable at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. On his right is Dr Qazi Khaliquzzaman Ahmad and on his left is Mohsin Ali.

demanded specific allocation of budget for union parishads as this lowest tier of the local government provide services for most of the rural people.

Dr Qazi Khaliquzzaman Ahmad, co-chairman of Education Policy Formulation Committee, said, "We cannot know the basic problems of the general people unless we listen to the opinions of the local government representatives."

Budget should have measures to deal with the problems facing the people, he added.

He also said that many good speeches are being

delivered before the budget is prepared, but most of the money goes to those sectors where the pressure groups are active.

The amount of revenue income is too poor, he said and urged all to promote the culture of giving taxes.

Speaking as the chief guest, Justice Ghulam Rabbani said freedom of the people depends not only on their franchise but also on their participation in the executive tasks of the state.

Presenting the keynote paper, Akmat Ali Mia of Governance Coalition urged

DU to honour Barkat 57 years after martyrdom

UNB, Dhaka

In a rare convocation in commemoration, Dhaka University (DU) authorities will offer the graduation certificate and marks sheet on Friday to Language Movement martyr Abul Barkat 57 years after his martyrdom.

Vice-chancellor (VC) Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique will hand over the certificate and result sheet to Barkat's cousin at the VC office.

The certificate awarding ceremony is part of a move based on the language movement as well as Barkat's life, the VC told UNB yesterday.

Barkat obtained BSS (Hons) degree in Political Science from Dhaka University in 1951. He stood fourth in the second class.

He was a Masters student of the university when he was shot dead during the language movement waged on the demand for recognition of Bangla as one of the state languages of Pakistan in 1952, on the premises of Dhaka Medical College hostel on 21st February at about 8pm.

Barkat was laid to rest in Azimpur graveyard. In recognition of his sacrifice, he was awarded Ekushey Padak posthumously in 2000.

Abul Barkat, nicknamed Abai, was born in 1927 at village Babla in Bharatpur thana of Mymensingh district. After the partition of India, he came to Dhaka in 1948.

DU to open Centre for Moral Development

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) authorities have decided to open the Centre for Moral Development with a view to instilling strong moral values in people from different professions and making the country free from injustice, crimes and corruption.

The academic council of the university took the decision at a meeting on May 18, with Vice Chancellor Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique in the chair, said a DU press release.

The proposal to establish the centre was placed in the academic council following recommendations made at the meetings of academic committee of philosophy department and art faculty.

The main goal of such a centre will be to motivate people from different occupations through imparting training in moral development.

An evening course on ethics will be introduced and seminars on morality will also be organised in the centre, the press release said.



PHOTO: PID
Dora Rapold, outgoing ambassador of Switzerland, calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

Sino-Bangla friendship to be maintained

Khaleda tells Chinese envoy

UNB, Dhaka

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday said the existing multidimensional good friendship between Bangladesh and China would be maintained in the future.

"Bangladesh and China have multifarious and strategic relations," she said this while she was talking to newly appointed Chinese Ambassador Zhang Xianyi at her Gulshan office in the evening.

After the meeting, BNP chairperson's foreign affairs adviser Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury told reporters that Khaleda appreciated China's role in various international forums "in favour of trade and economic development of the Third World countries, including Bangladesh".

In this regard, the former PM mentioned China's role for the Third World nations' trade and economy in the recent meeting of G77 plus Chinaheld in London.

Referring to many Bangladeshi students studying in China with Chinese government scholarship, she said it would contribute to enhancing the bilateral relations between the two countries.

The Chinese Ambassador said there remained cooperation between the two countries "in the fields of economy and politics".

He said the bilateral agreement signed between the two countries would help advance the ties between the two peoples.

"China hopes that friendly relations between the two countries would further strengthen in future," the envoy was quoted as saying.

He said Bangladesh and China have deep and special relations, which started during the time of late president Ziaur Rahman.

He further said Khaleda Zia, when she was prime minister, had made significant contribution for improving relations between the two countries which the government and people of China remember with respect.

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Promote respiratory hygiene to prevent swine flu

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday stressed the need to promote respiratory hygiene among the people in the country in order to prevent the spread of swine flu.

Although no cases of swine flu have been found in the country, increased international travel and high density of population pose potential risk of swine flu, they said.

As suspected human cases of swine flu are being reported in different countries every day, Bangladesh should remain prepared to prevent the spread of it, they added.

James P Grant School of Public Health of Brac University and ICDDR,B jointly organised the seminar titled 'Swine Flu: Global and Local Perspective' at the ICDDR,B auditorium in the city.

Referring to a survey conducted in 80 households in Mymensingh this year, Dr Stephen P Luby of ICDDR,B said that 81 percent of people sneeze openly while 11 percent cover



PHOTO: STAR

Dr Stephen P Luby of ICDDR,B, second from right, addresses a seminar titled 'Swine Flu: Global and Local Perspective' at the ICDDR,B auditorium in the city yesterday.

their mouths with hands during sneezes and 7 percent use saris or scarves to cover their mouth.

Sneezing openly helps spread A (H1N1) virus, which causes swine flu, he said, adding that washing hands with soap, avoiding smoking, drinking plenty of fluid and stress management are important to protect one from the disease.

The speakers also said no vaccine against swine flu has yet been developed and it is still unknown how severe the effect of the virus could be.

However, the government has taken measures to prevent the entry of the virus into the country and to provide treatment, they said.

Arrangements for screening at ports have been made and drugs, masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) have been stockpiled. Hospital facility preparedness, laboratory facilities and patient management capabilities have also been increased along with massive awareness campaign on swine flu, they added.

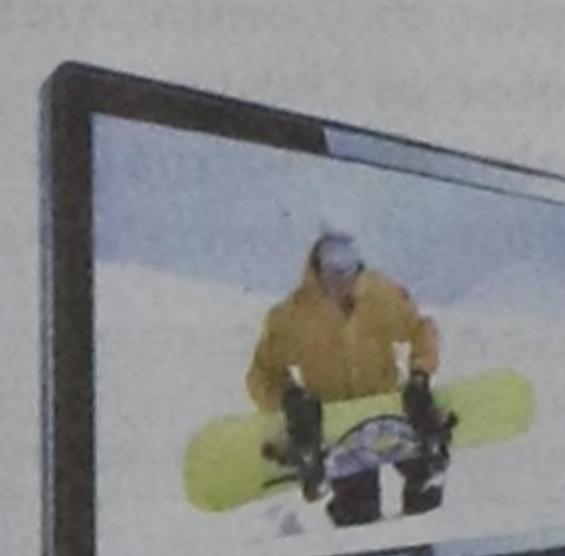
Pro Vice Chancellor of Brac University Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, Dr Be-Nazir Ahmed of IEDCR, Dr Selina Khatun of World Health Organisation (WHO) and Dr Anwar Islam of James P Grant School of Public Health, also spoke.

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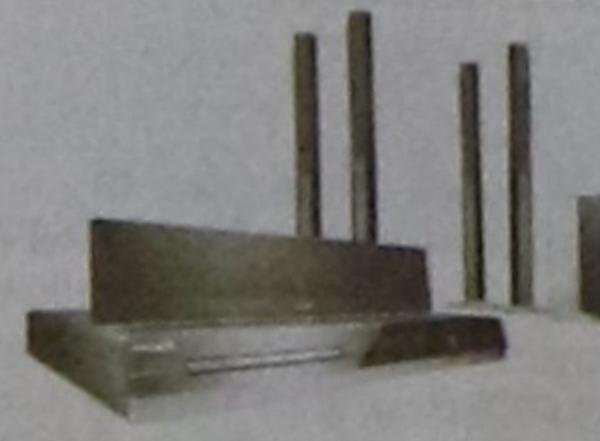
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