

# UZ vice chairmen seek power

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the newly elected upazila parishad vice chairmen at a view exchange meeting yesterday urged the government to amend some provisions of the Upazila Parishad Act to make the upazila parishad an autonomous body.

They also called upon the government to take measures to give charge of the parishad to vice chairmen and power to convene meeting in absence of chairman.

They said the government also should meet their seven-point demand to end discrimination in power sharing between chairman and vice chairman at the upazila administration to make the parishad fully functional.

They also sought prime minister's interference in this regard.

They threatened a tougher agitation if their demands were not met within the short-possible time.

The leaders said the Ministry of Local Government and Cooperatives had undermined the post of vice chairman through a gazette notification.

"We have been elected by the people through general election. We cordially want to cooperate with the Awami League (AL)-led grand alliance government to strengthen the local government, one of the key election pledges," they said.

The seven-point demand includes amendment to certain provisions of Upazila Parishad Act, power of vice-chairmen to convene meeting in absence of chairmen, cancellation of rules that undermine the authority of the vice-chairmen to ensure direct and

effective participation in different development and financial activities, declaration of the designation of vice-chairmen according to the Warrant of Precedence and Protocol, power to preside over upazila parishad meetings in absence of chairmen and allocation of cars.

Md Hossain Faku, vice-chairman of Gobindganj upazila of Gaibandha, presided over the meeting.

Jahangir Alam of Gazipur Sadar upazila, Razaul Karim of Parbatipur upazila of Dinajpur, Farzana Wahab of Babuganj upazila of Barisal, Joyonti Rani Sarkar of Da Kop upazila of Khulna, Nasima Akhtar Bakul of Cox's Bazar upazila also spoke at the meeting.

Around three hundred of vice chairmen from all over the country attended the meeting.



Shefina Begum, additional deputy commissioner (education and development) of Jessore, speaks at the launching session of 'English in Schools' (EIS), a joint initiative of The Daily Star and AKTEL, at the Municipality Community Centre in Jessore yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

## STAR-AKTEL INITIATIVE

# EIS to help students learn English to face global challenges

Speakers tell launching session in Jessore

A CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

The 'English in Schools' (EIS), a joint initiative of The Daily Star and AKTEL, is a well-timed initiative to help students learn English and prepare themselves to face global challenges, said speakers at the launching ceremony of the programme here yesterday.

"Thanks to information technology, the world has become a global village where knowledge of English is a must to acquire new idea and information to face different challenges in the rat race world," they added.

The launching session was kicked off by Shefina Begum,

additional deputy commissioner (education and development) of Jessore, as the chief guest at the Municipality Community Centre.

SM Abdul Latif, registrar of Jessore University of Science and Technology, and Zakir Hossain, deputy director of education department, attended the programme as the special guests.

In her speech, Shefina Begum said the new generation is the future of the country.

"To make them properly educated, knowledge of English is a must. The Daily Star and Aktel have taken an appropriate initiative in this

regard," she added.

Shahnoor Wahid, senior assistant editor of The Daily Star, said EIS will help students overcome the barrier to learning English language.

The students of some 130 schools under Khulna division will be provided with The Daily Star to learn new words and enrich their vocabulary collections, he added.

Koji Ono, chief strategy officer of AKTEL, said the vast manpower of Bangladesh could be turned into real asset if they are imparted education properly.

"English is the most important tool to achieve this objective," he added.

Moderating the session, Prof Shaheen Kabir of Jahangirnagar University highlighted the characteristics of the programme and called on the English teachers to help implement it successfully.

Bidyut Kumar Basu, chief commercial officer of AKTEL, Abu Masud Bulbul, circulation manager, and Shariar Shahid, in-charge of business development, of The Daily Star were present at the orientation programme.

Some 260 teachers of Jessore, Satkhira, Bagerhat, Jhenaidah, Magura, Kushtia, Meherpur, Chuadanga and Narail took part in the programme.

Initially, EIS will cover the students of 1000 schools across the country.

To encourage the habit of reading English, each school under EIS programme will be provided with three copies of The Daily Star five days a week free of cost.

Moreover, there will be a weekly full-page English learning material, which both the students and the teachers can use inside and outside the classrooms. Regular competitions on spelling, vocabulary, quiz, puzzles and book reading will be covered by this programme to help develop English language skills of the students.

## CHOPPING TREES AT SONAICHHARI

# 'Arrest, punish culprits'

DU CORRESPONDENT

Environmental organisations yesterday demanded arrest and punishment to the culprits who have chopped down around 15,000 trees at Sonaichhari coast of Sitakunda in Chittagong to develop a ship-breaking yard.

In support of the demand, Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan (Bapa) organised a protest rally in

front of Fine Arts Faculty of Dhaka University in the morning.

Speakers at the rally demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits, saying that cutting down of this huge number of trees for making any institution in coastal areas is unacceptable.

Bapa Chairman Abu Naser Khan said they would take legal action if the culprits are not brought to

justice and forge a tougher movement to realise the demand. Those have cut down the trees are enemy of the country and its people, he said.

Another environmental organisation Green Voice also demanded punishment to the culprits.

In a statement, Green Voice expressed concern that the local dam might be in risk following these huge losses.



PHOTO: STAR

Paribesh Bachao Andolon forms a human chain in front of Fine Arts Faculty of Dhaka University yesterday demanding arrest and punishment to the culprits who have chopped down around 15,000 trees at Sonaichhari coast of Sitakunda in Chittagong to develop a ship-breaking yard.

## Dutch minister assures help in dev sector

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Visiting Dutch Development Cooperation Minister Bert Koenders yesterday assured Bangladesh of continued Dutch support in development programmes, especially in the field of water management, reclamation of lands, health and education.

The assurance came when the Dutch minister called on Foreign Minister Dipu Moni at her office yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed the entire range of bilateral relations and other issues like investment, water management and climate change, human rights, Rohingya refugees and the trial of the war criminals, sources said.

Dipu Moni expressed her profound gratitude to the Dutch government for its significant role in the development of Bangladesh, especially in the fields of food aid, commodity aid and loan.

She also lauded the "grand support" in the investment sector and technical assistance at the early stages of our independence.

The foreign minister said the government is committed to establishing human rights in the true sense of the term and the government would show zero tolerance towards extrajudicial killings.

Referring to the subject of climate change, she said steps need to be taken to rehabilitate the environmental refugees.

Dipu Moni said as per the mandate of the people, the government took steps to try the war criminals.

Saying that transparency and international standard in the process of trial would be maintained, she sought Dutch support to this end.

## JUDICIAL MAGISTRACY HC withdraws earlier rule

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday withdrew its earlier rule asking the government to explain under which authority the judicial magistrates were functioning.

The HC bench of Justice ABM Khairul Haque and Justice M Momtazuddin Ahmed passed the order after examining the government's reply to the rule and hearing submissions of the lawyers concerned.

Dr M Zahir, an amicus curie in the case, told the court that the government has enacted Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) (amendment) Act 2009 giving legality to all functions of the judicial magistrates since November 1, 2007, the day when the judiciary was separated from the executive.

He said there is no illegality in discharging functions by the judicial magistrates following enactment of the law.

Deputy Attorney General Mostafa Zaman Islam told The Daily Star that the HC withdrew its suo moto rule considering it (rule) ineffective, as the government has passed the law giving legitimacy of the functions of the judicial magistrates.

Earlier on March 11 this year, a division bench of the HC, headed by Justice ABM Khairul Haque, issued the suo moto upon the govern-

ment as the law did not exist at that time giving legality of the judicial magistrates' functions.

The government has recently submitted an affidavit to the HC, saying that the judicial magistrates have been functioning lawfully under the (CrPC) (amendment) Act 2009.

The CrPC (amendment) Act 2009 was passed in parliament on April 8 this year, with retrospective effect from November 1, 2007, it said.

## Manhandling of schoolgirl condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad condemned the incident of manhandling an adolescent girl in Sunamganj.

In a statement, the Parishad said a local youth Pintu blocked the girl, a student of class VIII of Government SC Girls High School, on her way to school at HMP High School intersection and slapped her, says a press release.

But school authorities refused to take the written allegation from the victim, the statement read.

Then the students protested the decision and abstained from attending classes and demanded immediate arrest of the responsible person.

Later, police arrested Pintu and his five associates.

## Police attack protested

DU CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations yesterday strongly condemned the police attack on members of 'Lampost', a largely unknown organisation, in front of the Indian High Commission in the city on Sunday.

Police beat up some of members of the Lampost while they were staging a demonstration in front of the High Commission protesting Indian attempt to construct a dam across the river Tipaimukh and demanding expulsion of Indian High Commissioner to Dhaka Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty for his derogatory comment on local experts.

Pragatishil Chhatra Jote, Srijon, Ganosangkriti Front, Bibortan Sangskritik Kendro, Jatiya Mukti Council, Pahari Chhatra Parishad, Bangladesh Chhatra Federation, Bangladesh Lekhok Shibir, among others, condemned the police attack.

The organisations also demanded immediate release of the arrestees who were arrested in connection with the demonstration.

Meanwhile, some members of Lampost at a press conference at Madhu's canteen of Dhaka University demanded release of the arrestees -- Ashis and Prince -- claiming them as members of Lampost.

They alleged that without any provocation police attacked on them and six members of the organisation were injured in the attack and under going treatment in hospital.

They, however, could not inform the name of their injured members and place where they were taking treatment.

Pradeep, Afroza Khatun, Ferdous Apu and Zuma addressed at the press conference.

## NATURAL CALAMITIES

# 'Rural livelihoods in South Asia to be more vulnerable in future'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rural livelihoods in the South Asian countries will be more exposed to natural calamities in the future because of changes in climate that is already increasing salinity in soil and changing farming patterns, experts said at a seminar yesterday.

They suggested making the rural people familiar with the modern technologies that can help increase agricultural productivity and getting them engaged in non-farm activities to increase their income level.

They were speaking at a seminar styled 'Changing rural livelihoods in the Cirdap member countries: Opportunities and constraints' organised by Cirdap (Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific) at its auditorium in the city.

"We see more dangers for livelihoods in the rural areas thanks to the impacts of climate change. We must learn from experiences of other countries and frame policies accordingly," said Cirdap Director General Dr Durga P Paudyal.

He said as the climatic change would affect the regions, "We have to address the issue together, regionally."

Professor Dr SI Khan of Brac University said Bangladesh will be seriously affected by salinity if water in the rivers in the upstream is withdrawn, while there will be water shortages during summer with the glaciers melting in the Himalayas.

It is alarming for Bangladesh that per capita land here is only 21 decimals, which is very insufficient, especially for the rural people to sustain growth, he said.

Most people depend on

natural resources, Dr Khan said, adding that people must be provided with more vocational trainings for better employments in non-farm activities.

They should also learn modern technologies to increase productivity in agriculture, he noted.

Cirdap Director Dr SK Singh said India enacted a law -- National Rural Employment Guarantee Act -- ensuring 100-day job for the unemployed people a year. The law established job as a right, meaning any unemployed

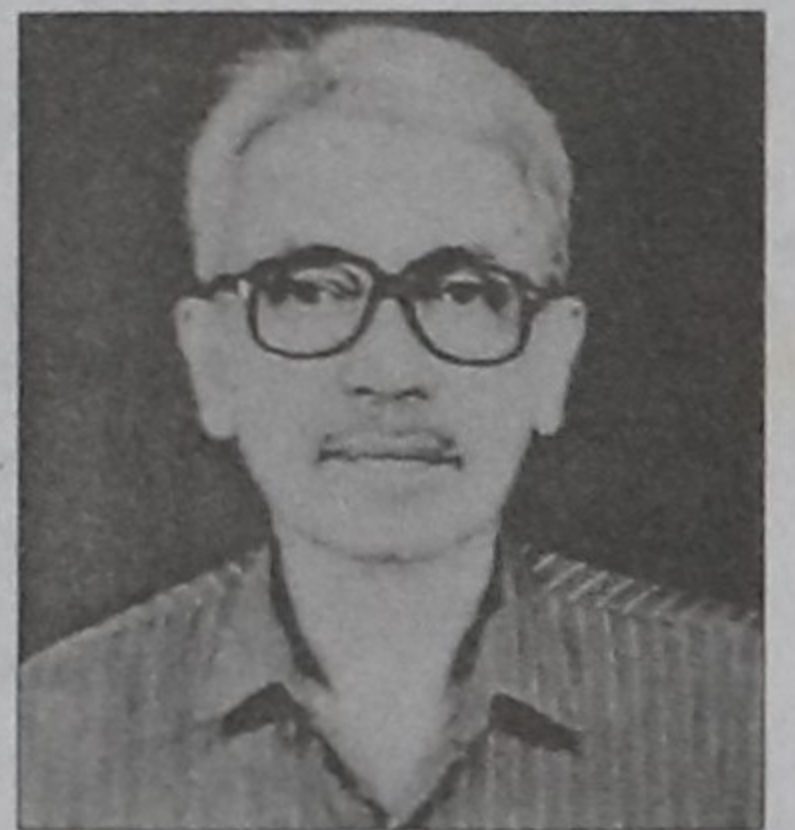
person of a family can demand job or unemployment allowance.

He said this has helped the rural infrastructures, and water conservation through renovating water bodies, which contributed to increase underground water level and flood control systems.

"We have to develop such mechanisms so that natural calamities do not affect the rural livelihoods," Singh said.

Asian Institute of Technology Assistant Professor Mokbul Morshed Ahmad presented a paper.

## DEATH ANNIVERSARY



Today is the 9th Death Anniversary of our beloved father Mr. Mosharraf Hossain Chowdhury. He was a vanguard soldier of language movement of 1952 and in recognition for his contribution he was awarded Ekushe Padok. He was also the former Managing Director of Titas Gas Transmission & Distribution Co. Ltd.

The family members of late Mosharraf Hossain Chowdhury have requested all his relatives, friends, former colleagues and well-wishers to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

RUMEE, JAMEE, SADEE

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Post Liberation Students Union for Better Bangladesh burns the effigy of the Indian high commissioner in front of Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) on Dhaka University campus yesterday protesting his comments about local experts.

PHOTO: STAR

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Last Few Seats