

# '72 constitution to be restored with changes

PM tells parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliament yesterday had an unscheduled discussion on Constitution Day with a call for restoring the 1972 constitution to uphold the spirit of liberation war, and to establish a secular democratic society.

Prior to the discussion, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, however, told the House that the constitution of 1972 should be restored after bringing some amendments to it.

"We will consider sensitive issues while amending the constitution," she added without any further detail.

Participating in the discussion that began after the break for magrib prayers, lawmakers said the original constitution of 1972 lost its basic structure as the military ruler following the August 15, 1975 regime change aimed to legitimise the takeover.

The discussants demanded restoration of the 1972 constitution and hoped that the Appellate Division of Supreme Court will uphold the High Court verdict that paved the way for restoration of the original constitution.

The issue was raised in the afternoon when Speaker Abdul Hamid at the beginning

of the prime minister's question-answer hour informed the House that the country's constitution had been adopted by the erstwhile constituent assembly on November 4, 1972.

"Today is the constitution's adaptation day. A very few of the signatories are still alive and are members of the current parliament, I happen to be one of them," Hamid added.

Earlier, replying to lawmakers' queries in the afternoon, the premier said the constitution of 1972 reflected the people's desire after the liberation war. But unfortunately after 1975, unconstitutional forces amended the constitution abruptly to legitimise their power grab.

She said the country was pushed back through the violation of the constitution, otherwise the country would have seen more progress, and the nation would have stood with its head high in the world community.

After the break, the sitting resumed with Deputy Speaker Shawkat Ali in the chair. The deputy speaker suspended disposal of call attention notices and said a discussion on Constitution Day would go on from that point on due to demands of many lawmakers.

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Then the unscheduled discussion began and lasted over an hour and a half. Nine ruling Awami League lawmakers including Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury participated in the discussion.

Awami League lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta said the High Court already delivered a historic verdict for restoration of the constitution of 1972.

"Now an appeal against the High Court verdict is pending with the Appellate Division of Supreme Court. We hope, the Appellate Division will soon adjudicate the appeal upholding the High Court verdict," he added.

No Jatiya Party lawmaker participated in the discussion. Former military ruler HM Ershad, who founded Jatiya Party which is now a component of the AL-led ruling alliance, had amended the constitution in an unconstitutional way to legitimise his military rule.

At the end of the discussion, the speaker said he had actually forgotten that yesterday was Constitution Day, but prior to the day's sitting, he was reminded of it which prompted him to speak about it in the House.

## RMG workers announce agitation programmes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Garments Workers' Unity Forum yesterday announced a two-month agitation programme to press home their seven-point demand, including punishment to the killers of the workers at Nippon Garments in Tongi.

The announcement came from a press conference at its central office in the city, said a press release.

As part of the demonstration programme, workers will form a human chain at Muktangan in the city and elsewhere in the country tomorrow.

They also threatened to go for tougher agitations if their demands are not met by the next two months.

The demands include paying Tk 1 lakh to the family of each of the deceased workers as compensation, withdrawal of all the cases filed against garments workers across the country, implementation of rights of trade union by the next three months, fixing Tk 5,000 as the minimum wage for the garments workers, cancellation of the Labour Act-2006 and implementation of tripartite agreement signed in 2006.

Mosharrif Hossain Mishu, president of the organisation, readout the written statement, while General Secretary Kamal Debnath and other leaders were present at the press conference.

Meanwhile, Mishu and Md Barahane Sultan Bahar, president of Jago Bangladesh Garments Sramik Federation, received death threats over mobile phone yesterday.

They have been told to quit the leadership of the workers' bodies or else get ready for dire consequences.

## Bangladeshi journo wins int'l award

METRO DESK



Raihan M Chowdhury, special correspondent of The Financial Express, has become the 'first runner-up' in the climate change adaptation category of Tokyo-based Developing Asia Journalism Awards 2009, says a press release.

The article titled 'Facing the natural disasters' was published in the newspaper's July 15 issue.

The other three categories were poverty impact of the global financial crisis, government responses to the global financial crisis and infrastructure development.

There were 14 prizes among the 22 finalists for the four thematic categories in this year's competition initiated by Asian Development Bank Institute (ADB).

The winners were selected from more than 200 entries from across ADB's developing member countries by a distinguished panel of four independent judges.

Prof Ajoy Roy speaks at a roundtable on trial of war criminals at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right are Lt Gen (Retd) Harun-ur Rashid, Ramendu Majumder and Nasiruddin Yousuf Sammilita Sangskritik Jote organised the event.

## 3RD PHASE LOTTERY 283 get Rajuk plots at Purbachal, Uttara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakha (Rajuk) yesterday announced the names of 283 plot winners of the third phase lottery for Purbachal New Town Project and Uttara Model Town Project.

Of the total, the names of 55 winners were picked in one category - journalist -- for Purbachal project while the rest for Uttara project.

Rajuk, however, did not hold lottery for 60 plots at Purbachal and Uttara (55 plots at Purbachal and five plots at Uttara) in journalist category as the plots have been reserved for distribution under political consideration.

The formal draw of the lotteries for Purbachal and Uttara plots was held at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city.

There were seven categories -- journalist, foreign exchanges earner, freedom fighter, artist/sportsperson, industrialist and businessman, private jobholder, lawyer and justice -- for Uttara project.

This was the third round draw for Purbachal plots this year. The previous two were held on September 16 and October 10.

State Minister for Housing and Public Works Abdul Mannan Khan said, "We held

the draw on 50 percent plots based on the suggestions of journalist leaders and 50 percent more plots will be distributed through seniority and salary scale basis."

There were different groups of journalists many of them wanted lottery and many other wanted to distribute plots through seniority and salary scale basis. That's why, we held lotteries on 50 percent plots in this category," he added.

Ministers, state ministers and lawmakers will be given plots directly while government jobholders, autonomous organisations jobholders and defence forces will get plots based on seniority and salary structure of the applicants.

The state minister said the names of the plot winners for the remaining categories under two projects will be given by this month.

Meanwhile, the High Court (HC) yesterday directed the government and the Rajuk authorities to keep plots at Uttara 3rd phase reserved for 130 people whose allotments were cancelled during the caretaker government.

The HC bench of Justice Shahidul Islam and Justice Syeda Afas Jahan passed the order upon applications filed by five people whose plots were cancelled.

## WEATHER TODAY Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country having chances of light rain at one or two places over Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

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

The sun sets in the capital at 6:17pm today and rises at 7:08am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 34.2 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and Bogra and lowest 18.6 degrees Celsius at Dinajpur.

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	33.0	23.3	74	57		
Chittagong	33.2	24.4	70	75		
Rajshahi	32.7	20.7	81	74		
Khulna	32.8	23.0	72	79		
Barisal	32.5	22.9	76	92		
Sylhet	32.6	22.2	60	73		
Cox's Bazar	34.2	24.5	63	72		



Discharge duties neutrally  
President urges judges

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman yesterday urged the judges to neutrally discharge their duties entrusted upon them under the present independent judicial system to establish the rule of law in the country.

He made the call when a nine-member delegation of the newly appointed Additional Judges of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court led by Justice M Moazzem Hossain met him at Bangabhaban.

During the meeting, Zillur said the judges could play a significant role in establishing the rights of the citizens, as the higher court is the last place for their protection.

The additional judges expressed their deep gratitude to the president for giving them the appointment and sought his cooperation in discharging their duties.

Secretaries to the President's Office and concerned officers of the High Court Division were present at the meeting.

## Debate Warriors launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Renowned debaters were

accorded a reception at the launching ceremony of Bangladesh Debate Warriors on the United International University campus in the city recently.

Debate Warriors, a new platform for debaters, also conferred 'Lifetime Achievement Award' on Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, and 'Honorary award' on debater and media personality Abdun Noor Tushar and Prof Syed Munir Khasru of the Institute of Business Administration for their outstanding contribution to the debating arena.

Dristy Chittagong, an organisation, received 'Honorary Award' as the best debating organisation at the programme.

Educationist Prof Md Mahbubur Rahman presided over the ceremony and Principal of Vigarunnissa Noon College Rokeya Akther Begum gave a welcome address.

Debate Warriors President Mahbubur Rahman also spoke at the programme.

Later, a prize giving ceremony was held where the winners of daylong debate competitions received prizes, says a press release.

Newly appointed Additional Judges of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court pose for photograph with President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

## Japan to help address traffic congestion

Says envoy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Japanese Ambassador Tamotsu Shimotsuka yesterday said his country would assist Bangladesh in addressing the issue of nagging traffic congestion.

"Our government is giving importance to this issue," he said at a 'Meet the Reporters' session organised by Dhaka Reporters' Unity at its auditorium in the city.

It is a complex issue, the envoy said, adding that Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) has been conducting a feasibility study and that experts from Tokyo have already come to Bangladesh to find out a solution to the problem.

Mentioning that Tokyo is also facing the same problem, he said, "Flyover, underground rail and sky-train are not the only solution to this problem. We should take into consideration various aspects and elements, including improving traffic rules and management."

They also threatened to go for tougher agitations if their demands are not met by the next two months.

The demands include paying Tk 1 lakh to the family of each of the deceased workers as compensation, withdrawal of all the cases filed against garments workers across the country, implementation of rights of trade union by the next three months, fixing Tk 5,000 as the minimum wage for the garments workers, cancellation of the Labour Act-2006 and implementation of tripartite agreement signed in 2006.

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He also said Japan considers Bangladesh a potential destination of its relocated production bases and investment.

"Now our investors are trying to shift production bases to other countries, including Bangladesh, he said.

Bangladesh is one of the promising countries and appearing as attractive destinations for Japanese businesses, particularly in textile and garment sector.

"You have excellent human resources and labour forces which are cheaper than in Thailand, Vietnam and China," he pointed out.

He also said the political situation seemed to be stable in Bangladesh after the last year's general election, which can attract investment, and that the government is doing

ment of Bangladesh in its efforts to solve the problem."

About assistance for the proposed Padma bridge, the envoy said the bridge is one of their priorities after the Jamuna Bridge.

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The Japanese government has several priority areas, including infrastructure, human resources and socio-economic development, he said, adding that they also assist Bangladesh in its efforts to build power plants.

The ambassador said 30,000 foreign students, including Bangladeshi, would be allowed to study in Japan by 2020.

Currently, more than 1,600 Bangladeshi students are studying in Japan, he added.

Japan also has been assisting Bangladesh in fighting natural calamities and helped build 80 cyclone centres, he said.

DRU President Shamsur Ahmad presided over the programme and its General Secretary Pathik Saha also spoke.

## Only 14pc migrant workers get treatment cost: Study