

Media should point out wrongdoings of govt to strengthen democracy

President tells 'Bazlur Rahman Memorial Award' giving ceremony

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The media should point out the wrongdoings and faults of a government in order to strengthen democracy and also project the true history of the liberation war, President Zillur Rahman said yesterday. "Newspapers play an important role in consolidating democracy. They highlight opinions and expectations of the people and point out the wrongdoings and faults of a government through constructive criticism," he said as the chief guest at 'Bazlur Rahman Memorial Award' giving ceremony at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city.

He also said the print and electronic media are now enjoying full freedom of expression. So, their responsibility is immense. The president said the history of the liberation war has been distorted in various ways. Opportunists have done this for their own interest. "It is our responsibility to present true history of our liberation war to the young generation. Both the print and electronic media can play an important role in this regard," he added. At the award giving ceremony organised by the Liberation War Museum, two journalists -- one from the print media and another from the elec-



President Zillur Rahman gives away 'Bazlur Rahman Memorial Award' to a winner at the award giving ceremony at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city yesterday.

tronic media -- were awarded for their reports on the liberation war. The award carries Tk 1 lakh and a certificate. Sushanta Ghose won the award for his series report on 'Witnesses' detailed accounts of the liberation war genocide' published

on the Ajker Paribartan, a Barisal-based newspaper. The other winner is Pronob Shaha, a reporter of Rtv. He made a series report on 'News reports on Liberation War' depicting the incidents from 1947 to 1971'. This award is given to the winners not only for excellence in journalism but also for their contribution to upholding and promoting the spirit of the liberation war, said noted historian Prof Syed Anwar Hossain, head of the jury board, who presided over the ceremony. The jury board members also included Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddiqui, Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam, litterateur Selina Hossain, media personalities Fariduz Reza Sagar and Nawazesh Ali Khan, cultural personality Aly Zaker and lawmaker Asaduzzaman Noor. Bazlur Rahman, an eminent journalist and editor of the Sangbad, died in February in 2008. The Liberation War Museum instituted the award in his memory last year with the help of Bazlur's family and friends. Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, wife of Bazlur Rahman, and Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad were present at the ceremony.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Interpol drive to net 73 fugitives

BSS, Dhaka
International police agency Interpol is set to launch a simultaneous campaign in 188 countries in May to net 73 fugitive Bangladeshis, including six absconding killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, under a drive called 'Operation Infrared', 2010.

Officials said the campaign was finalised at the end of the three-day sixth annual conference of the Heads of National Central Bureaus (NBC's) of the Interpol at its headquarters in France earlier this month.

"The government will formally request the countries concerned to extradite the fugitives once they are tracked down under the Interpol operation," Additional Inspector General of Police and head of Bangladesh NCB Nabo Bikram Kishore Tripura told BSS.

Farroque gets bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted bail up to April 4 to Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abdin Farroque and BNP lawmaker Shahid Uddin Chowdhury in a case filed against them for making 'derogatory remarks' about prime minister's son Sajeeb Wazed Joy.

The vacation bench of Justice Shahidul Islam passed the order after they appeared before the court seeking bail. Plaintiff Advocate Dirghatama Barua filed the case with Chittagong Chief Metropolitan Judge's Court on March 27.

'Govt trying to harass opposition'

DU CORRESPONDENT

BNP Standing Committee member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain yesterday said the government is trying to harass the opposition politically in the name of war crimes trial.

He, however, said BNP would not oppose the trial if the real war criminals are punished. The BNP leader also criticised Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the first post-independence government, saying that he [Sheikh Mujib] declared general amnesty for war criminals.

After Bangabandhu, his daughter Sheikh Hasina gave shelter to war criminals up to 1996, Mosharraf said at a discussion organised by Bangladesh Jatiya Party (Dr Abdul Matin) at the National Press Club.

Those who gave shelter and patronised war criminals should be tried first, he added.

Call to extend retirement age of all

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) yesterday demanded extending the retirement age of all workers -- regardless of private and government industries -- to 60.

Hailing the decision to extend the retirement age of government industry workers, SKOP leaders said the decision, however, is discriminatory towards private industry workers.

They also demanded fixing Tk 5000 as minimum wage, forming a wage commission and implementation of the new pay scale for the government employees.

EU hails ratification of Rome Statute

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The European Union has welcomed Bangladesh's ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

In a statement, Catherine Ashton, the EU high representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and vice president of the Commission, said, "I warmly welcome the ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court by Bangladesh on March 23."

This ratification, bringing the number of ICC states parties to 111, marks a further significant step forward in the international community's efforts to combat impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, Ashton said.

NGO-run anti-poverty, education, healthcare projects inspiring

Says visiting Australian HR commissioner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The programmes on poverty alleviation, education and health implemented by non-government organisations (NGOs) in Bangladesh are inspiring and imitable, said a visiting Australian human rights commissioner yesterday. Mick Gooda, an aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social justice commissioner of the Australian Human Rights Commission, was talking to three national newspapers, including The Daily Star, at the residence of the Australian high commissioner in Dhaka. "The NGOs in Bangladesh work in good coordination with the government programmes," said Mick reflecting on his field-level experience.

"We can replicate in Australia some of the success stories and experiences of the NGO services of Bangladesh," said Mick, who came to Bangladesh on March 27 on a week-long visit till April 1, at the invitation of the high commission.

He travelled to Bogra, Naogaon and Joypurhat during his field-level visit and saw by himself various poverty alleviation, education and health development programmes undertaken by Brac and Oxfam.

He travelled to Naogaon to visit Brac



Mick Gooda

education and health programmes and to meet rural poverty reduction committee there.

He visited Brac's Wash and Sanitation programme for indigenous community in Joypurhat on March 30.

He visited Oxfam programmes in Rangatali village under Bodolgachhi upazila in Naogaon, learnt about Oxfam's working strategies with local ethnic communities, visited a pre-primary school run with bilingual curriculum and met Mothers' Forum involved in managing

the school. It was interesting to see the education programmes on hand washing and sanitation and personal hygiene among young women, he said, adding that the bilingual education is going to conserve cultural heritage.

"Brac's bilingual pre-primary education may be imitable for Australia," said Mick, "In case the services are not provided the way people want, the results are not sustainable."

Australian High Commissioner Dr Justin Lee, who was present during the interview, said out of 61-million-dollar Official Development Assistance (ODA) of Australia to Bangladesh every year, 25 million are granted to Brac.

"Mick's visit could develop a linkage between the NGO practitioners of the two countries," the envoy said. "We could work in partnership with NGO like Brac in a third country even in Australia."

Mick met Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus, Bangladesh-Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group and the foreign secretary the same day.

Deputy High Commissioner Kilmeny Beckering Vinckers was present.

War crimes trial to be transparent: Dipu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni yesterday said the government has international support in its efforts to bring the war criminals to book and it wants to ensure international standards of justice.

"I have met foreign ministers of more than 40 countries in different international conferences and during my visit abroad and discussed the issue of war crimes trial. All of

them supported our decision to try the war criminals," she said at a discussion in the city.

The foreign minister also said the trial would be transparent.

"First investigations into the complaints against war criminals will be carried out and then charges will be framed," she said at the discussion organised by Mukti Juddher Chetona Bastabayan Committee at the Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) auditorium.

Death anniversary



METRO DESK

Today is the 39th death anniversary of liberation war martyrs engineer Fazlur Rahman, his younger brother Rafiqul Islam and his nephew Anwar Hossain, says a press release.

The Pakistani occupation forces led by an army captain

shot them dead in Syedpur Cantonment on this day in 1971 during the War of Liberation.

On the occasion, milad and doa mahfil will be held at their village home at Kazikandi in Narsingdi after Asr prayers and at 303/A Gulbagh, Malibagh in the city after Maghrib prayers.

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