



From left, Dr Md Salim, professor of history at Jagannath University; Nooh-ul-Alam Lenin, Awami League leader and author of "Rajnoitik Islamer Bissayon o Jongibader Utthan: Poriprekhit Bangladesh"; MM Akash, professor of economics at Dhaka University; Prof Dr Harun-or-Rashid, vice-chancellor of National University; Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star; Maj Gen (ret'd) MA Rashid, security expert, and Robin Ahsan, owner of Srabon Prokasoni, during the launch of the book at Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Religion for political gain breeds extremism

Speakers tell launch of Nooh-ul-Alam Lenin's book

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Religious extremism or militancy is created in a country when religion is used politically to grab the state power, said speakers yesterday.

They also said it is important to make a clear distinction between those who use religion as a tool to grab power and those who are religious-minded.

The remarks came at a book launching ceremony.

Srabon Prokasoni organised the event at Jatiya Press Club on the occasion of launching of "Rajnoitik Islamer Bissayon o Jongibader Utthan: Poriprekhit Bangladesh" (Globalisation of political Islam and rise of militancy: Bangladesh perspective) written by Nooh-ul-Alam Lenin, an Awami League leader.

The 224-page book consisting nine chapters mainly focuses on the rising militancy in Bangladesh and role of political Islam in an interna-

tional context. The book also deals with the history of Islamic thoughts, the arrival of Islam in the Indian sub-continent and the special features of Islam in Bengal, which the author states was always syncretic and accommodative of the local tradition and cultural practices.

Prof Dr Harun-or-Rashid, vice-chancellor of National University, who presided over the programme, said political Islam in Bangladesh has been induced externally and its source of inspiration is also coming from outside the country.

"Our Islam in Bangladesh does not support Wahhabism, which patronises politicisation of Islam. When Islam is politicised to grab power, militancy takes shape."

Praising the research-based book, Prof Rashid said the writer did not hurt any quarter or any faith in the book as he has analysed different issues unbiased.

Pointing to Bangladesh's perspective in the rise of political Islam, he said the successive governments after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975 politicised religion to ensure their legitimacy.

"All of us should speak against religious extremism and militancy for the sake of peace and to save those who have taken a wrong path in the name of establishing Islam," he said.

In his speech, Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said there is a global aspect to the rise of militant Islam, and the role of imperialism needs to be studied thoroughly for this purpose.

Following the defeat of fascism in Europe, the world committed to democracy, freedom, decolonisation and economic prosperity and social equality, he said.

This did not happen and there is a consequent disillusionment about the present international

economic and social system. Extremism has made an inroad taking advantage of this, he said.

MM Akash, professor of economics at Dhaka University, said, "Although Awami League claims that it is a secular party, we will have to read the book to know how religion still matters in the party."

He said the CIA had created al-Qaeda for its own interest to tackle its main enemy Russia following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Maj Gen (ret'd) MA Rashid, a security expert, said the book would be helpful as a reference for young researchers and academicians. He said al-Qaeda and other militant forces were created to resist the rise of socialism.

He said the state should be careful so that no one could use religion for political purposes. He hoped that Bangladesh can be a model before the world to combat militancy and terrorism.

East Kazipara embroidery factory catches fire

Worker dies, two others sustain 80pc burns; Pallabi fire victim succumbs to injuries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A worker died and two others sustained severe burns as a fire broke out in an embroidery factory in the capital's East Kazipara area early yesterday.

Masum, 18, succumbed to his injuries at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

With more than 80 percent burns, Mohammad Mainuddin, 19, and Al Amin, 20, are undergoing treatment in the hospital's intensive care unit (ICU), said doctors.

The fire originated around 3:15am at Sadid Sourcing, the factory located on the ground floor of a six-storey building, said firefighters.

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HSC EXAMS BEGIN TOMORROW Nahid warns against question leaks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the HSC and equivalent examinations beginning tomorrow, the government has taken various initiatives to stop question paper leak.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid urges the guardians to keep their children away from such immoral activities.

During a programme at Dhaka University yesterday, the minister said no one will be spared if they are found guilty of leaking questions.

Addressing the programme, the ministry Secretary Sohrab Hossain said the authorities, including of Bangladesh Bank and law enforcing agencies, are working to stop question leaks.

In this regard, police have formed five special teams. These teams will monitor the online and virtual platform round-the-clock, Shaikh Nazmul Alam, joint commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), told The Daily Star yesterday.

All units of police will keep the special teams updated with latest information, he said.

"We have already detected a new social media group trying to show its activities of question leaks," he said, adding that they are hopeful the offenders will be arrested soon.

As part of the education ministry's measures to check the menace, coaching centres will be closed until the exam finishes. The envelope containing question papers will be sealed with a "security tape".

If the envelope is opened before the exam, the authorities will be able to ascertain the fact, according to ministry officials.

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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Justice hindered due to use of influence

Prothom Alo-IID discussion told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Violence against women is on the rise and justice is being hampered due to increasing use of influence, speakers told a discussion yesterday.

Cases are filed after such violence, but when the perpetrator negotiates with the victim the case comes to an end, they said.

The roundtable titled, "Demands for stern steps to prevent violence against women", was jointly organised by the Prothom Alo and Institute of Informatics and Development (IID) at the newspaper's office in the capital.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad General Secretary Maleka Banu said if a perpetrator is an influential person, law enforcers do

not want to register cases involving abuses or harassment of women.

Prof Sadeka Halim of the sociology department of Dhaka University said the root causes of violence against women have to be found out.

Dr Sayed Saikh Imtiaz, chairman of women and gender studies department of DU, said education can eliminate this vice. Schoolboys are curious to watch pornography on smartphones, which shows violence against women, he said.

Emphasising education, Barrister Sara Hossain said law is not the only weapon to root out such violence. Law enforcers have to be held responsible for not taking the cases, she said.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

Gazipur, Khulna city polls May 15

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Election to Gazipur and Khulna city corporations are scheduled to be held on May 15.

Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda announced the election schedule at a press conference at Nirbachan Bhaban in the capital yesterday.

According to the election schedule, the deadline for submission of nomination papers is April 12. Election officials would scrutinise the documents on April 15-16, while candidates can withdraw their candidacy till April 23.

Gazipur City Corporation is formed with 57 general wards and 19 reserved wards with around 11.64 lakh voters. Dhaka Regional Election Officer Rakibuddin Mandol has been made the returning officer for Gazipur City Corporation polls. The last election in GCC was held on July 6, 2013.

Khulna City Corporation is formed with 31 general wards and 10 reserved wards with around 4.93 lakh voters. Regional Election Officer Md Yunus Ali has been made the returning officer for this election, which was last held on June 15, 2013.

BNP-backed candidates won both the city corporation elections last time.

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187 women raped in three months

FROM PAGE 3

suicide, it mentioned. At least 46 people were killed in "crossfire" with law enforcement agencies in the last three months, it added.

Of them, 16 were killed in "crossfire" with Rab while 19 with police, five with Detective Branch of police and the rest were killed in "crossfire" with other agencies, it said.

The rights group said plainclothes men identifying themselves as law enforcers picked up four people during the period. Two of them returned while one was shown arrested.

The law enforcement agencies, however, denied the allegations.

At least 25 people including Chhatra Dal leader Zakir Hossain died in jail custody, it said.

According to the ASK report, 11 people were killed and 1,488 were injured in 109 incidents of political violence in the three months.

At least 65 journalists faced torture, harassment, threat and obstruction while discharging their duties during the period, it said.

Body of a journalist, Suman Sikder, was

recovered from his flat in Jatrabari while cameraperson of DBC news Suman Hasan was tortured by DB police in Barisal, it mentioned. Eight DB men were suspended over it.

Five houses of Hindu community were vandalised and torched while 17 idols and temples and Puja mandaps were attacked in the last three months, it said.

At least 19 people were injured in the incidents, it said, adding that a priest was killed at his home in Pabna.

The report added that three persons were tortured to death by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) while seven others were injured and three were abducted.

Sixteen people were killed in mass beatings, it mentioned.

ASK also mentioned about the attack on Prof Muhammed Zafar Iqbal on the campus of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) in broad daylight on March 3.

Investigators said the attack bears hallmarks of Ansar al Islam, a banned militant outfit.

Patients

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CMCH Director Brig Gen Md Jalal Uddin said they are preparing a proposal to update the organogram of the hospital and create more posts.

In regards to equipment at the cardiology ward, he said in the context of Bangladesh, the ward is delivering better treatment to patients and the existing equipment is sufficient to deliver quality services.

"We have already floated a tender to purchase an ETT machine. We will also purchase a Colour Doppler Machine," he said.

On the shortage of beds, Jalal Uddin said, "Chittagong city in fact needs a specialised 350-bed heart hospital to cope with the increasing number of patients."



Commuters and pedestrians suffer on the battered and half-submerged Sylhet-Kanaighat-Burhanuddin road, which is a major artery joining Sylhet Sadar with Kanaighat and Golapganj upazilas. Due to lack of maintenance and disregard by the authorities, the road has developed many potholes making it extremely difficult for regular travel. The photo was taken yesterday in Muradnagar Bazar area.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

A ward stands out

FROM PAGE 5

the area. Next month, I will assign six more guards for daytime to keep a check on the city dwellers for keeping the areas clean," he added.

Initially, the beautification was done surrounding the intersection as it is the centre of the zone.

Sumon said he had plans to build 34 more murals of notable personalities up to Love Lane area, set up a bird sanctuary and a large fish aquarium in the ward, so that the children can know about the legendary people, and different bird and fish species.

Among challenges, Sumon said although the city dwellers have become more conscious than before, the percentage is some 40. But, it will be difficult to make all the residents aware and restrain them of making the area dirty, he said, calling upon all the inhabitants to cooperate.

Contacted, CCC Mayor AJM Nasir Uddin said now the other ward councillors should take it as challenge and develop their respective zones.

"We will make all the 41 wards clean and green this year," he said.

Event for women

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manager, DHL Global Forwarding Bangladesh and Aftab Mahmud Khurshid, CMO, Bengal Group. The panel discussion was moderated by Asna Towfiq, consultant, United Nations Foundation.

Among the special guests Sara Zaker, executive vice-chairperson, Asiatic 360; Farah Kabir, country director, ActionAid International; Geetara Safiya Choudhury, chairman, ColoursFM 101.6, also attended the event.

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