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Elected govt now a demand of the time

Say BNP leaders Nazrul, Amir Khasru

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Senior BNP leaders Nazrul Islam Khan and Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday demanded prompt completion of the necessary reforms in order to pave way for establishing an elected parliament and government to restore the country's democratic process and fulfill peoples' aspirations.

The leaders made their remarks while addressing separate events.

Addressing a rally, organised by Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani Anusari Parishad in front of Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka, Nazrul Islam, also a BNP standing committee member, said while one aspiration has been fulfilled with the fall of fascism, the other aspiration -- that of the restoration of democracy and people's rights -- remains to be fulfilled.

He also said democracy needs to be restored in such a way that it cannot be used against the people.

"True democracy and peoples' democracy must be reestablished. It is

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Latika Mandal and her family members prepare mats which they will sell for Tk 500-600 per piece at local markets. During the monsoon, they collect the natural fibres to weave the mats from the nearby canals. The photo was taken from Beel Pabla in Dumuria of Khulna yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Religious unity is crucial for peacebuilding

Speakers tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a programme yesterday urged individuals of all races and faiths to come together to foster a peaceful nation through religious harmony and tolerance.

They emphasised that without harmony and peaceful coexistence, societal peace is unattainable.

The call was made during a dialogue titled "Religious Harmony: Reality and What Should Be Done," held in Gulshan, Dhaka, and jointly organised by The Hunger Project and the Multi-stakeholder Initiative on Peace and Stability project with support from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Chief guest AFM Khalid Hossain, adviser to the interim government for the religious affairs ministry, said, "Intolerance leads us into darkness; therefore, we must strive for greater tolerance. Without religious harmony and peaceful coexistence among all faiths, we cannot achieve our national goals."

"Though we may differ in faith, religion, and politics, we all love Bangladesh. We will not do anything that would damage or distort the country's image," he said.

Stressing that social and religious harmony contributes to attracting foreign investment, the adviser said if there is conflict in the country, no foreign investment will come.

Terming those who attack places of worship criminals and wrongdoers, the adviser said these people have no religious identity.

Badiul Alam Majumdar, global vice president and country director of The Hunger Project, said, "This nation was created with a desire to establish a democratic, prosperous, and peaceful Bangladesh, upholding equality, human dignity, and justice. Unfortunately, we have not fully realised this aspiration yet. It is a responsibility we all share, across all faiths, ethnicities, and backgrounds, to make it a reality."

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Dengue claims two more lives

UNB, Dhaka

Two more deaths due to dengue were reported in the 24 hours leading up to yesterday morning, raising the total fatalities from the mosquito-borne disease in Bangladesh to 271 this year.

The recent fatalities took place in the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) and Khulna (out of city corporation).

During this period, 961 patients were hospitalised with the viral fever, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Currently, 3,937 patients are receiving treatment in various hospitals across the country. Since January 1, 2024, a total of 55,663 dengue cases have been reported.



Transfers not enough to punish cops who killed students

Sarjis tells Rangpur rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Transferring the police personnel for their alleged misconducts, including killing students during the July uprising, is hardly enough punishment, said Sarjis Alam, a central coordinator of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, yesterday.

Sarjis was speaking at a gathering in Rangpur, marking the sixth anniversary of Rangpur Metropolitan Police.

Referring to the death of Abu Sayed, a student of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, in police firing on July 16, Sarjis called for accountability under the country's legal system for the officers responsible.

"Some police officers continue to act on behalf of certain political factions and party, ignoring the trust deficit created by recent events," he said.

He stressed that without proper punitive measures, Bangladesh could see larger uprisings and more bloodshed in future.

He also expressed concerns regarding

We will shake the ground of Rangpur, demonstrating how we can crush the collaborators of the fascists on the streets.



alleged financial exploitation of police through false cases, and disappointment over the continuous cycle of exploitation by the governance system that had allowed one party to rule, while oppressing others.

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10 get Women of Inspiration Award 2024

STAR REPORT

Ten women have been given Women of Inspiration Award 2024 for contributions to their respective fields.

Junior Chamber International (JCI) Bangladesh organised the award ceremony at a city hotel on Friday, where all JCI Bangladesh members from various local organisations participated, said a press release.

The awardees are: Eshita Sharmin in technology and development, Afsana Zarin in driving inclusion through innovation, Nadia Anwar in changing communities with social business, Barrister Miti Sanjana in ensuring justice through legal profession, Zareen Mahmud Hosein in empowering women, Zyma Islam in Fourth State journalism, Elita Karim in music for social change, Tasnia Farin in breaking stereotypes through entertainment, Firdausi Qadri in improving public health and medical science, and Farah Kabir

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Action needed to keep global warming in check

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The earth will no longer be habitable if global warming exceeds 2 degrees Celsius in the year 2100. There will be no point discussing climate finance at that point, said speakers at a seminar in the capital yesterday.

A new UN Environment Programme report has warned that if current policies continue, global temperatures could rise by a catastrophic 3.1 degrees Celsius by the end of this century.

Therefore, the main focus of all government delegations should be to reduce carbon emissions by 42 percent before 2030, speakers added.

The remarks were made at a seminar organised on the eve of the 29th Climate Conference (COP29) which will take place in Baku, Azerbaijan.

It was organised by EquityBD at the CIRDAP Auditorium in Dhaka yesterday.

The co-hosting organisations were COAST Foundation, CDP, CPRD, AOSED, BCJF, Manusher Jonno Foundation and CSRL.

Md Shamsuddoha of Center for Participatory Research and Development, also a member of the government delegation at COP29, said no definition of climate finance has been set. As a result, all money -- including loans and investments -- from rich countries that are responsible for climate change to poor and affected countries, continues to be called climate finance.

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Over reliance on AI may reduce critical thinking

Say journo in MRDI survey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over half of the 53 journalists from 25 news outlets, who were surveyed, use artificial intelligence, finds a study by Media Resources Development Initiative (MRDI).

About two-thirds of the participants found that using AI increased their efficiency and improved their content quality, while 52 percent reported that it reduced their workload.

The report was disclosed at a discussion at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday.

Maliha Tabassum, assistant professor of Mass Communication and Journalism department of Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP), and Miraj Ahmed Chowdhury, associate professor of the same department, presented the findings.

Among the survey participants, 77 percent are male and 23 percent female. Half of the participants represent print outlets, with television channels and online portals accounting for 25 percent and 23 percent respectively.

The report also said 50 percent of participants believe, in the future, AI will improve their journalism quality significantly.



Women are more receptive to AI than men, with 58 percent of women participants using AI in news production compared to 48 percent of men.

Concerns over AI causing job loss are moderate, with most participants rating it 3 out of 5. However, there is a strong concern among journalists that over-reliance on AI may reduce critical thinking and affect the reliability of content.

Key findings of the focus group discussion segment of the study mentioned that journalists show deep-rooted resistance to technological change, especially AI, viewing it as a threat rather than a tool. It also said despite clear evidence of AI's benefits in tasks like translation and fact-checking, newsrooms are barely scratching the surface of its capabilities.

Speaking about the limitation of the survey, the two researchers stated small sample size and high representation of print media may skew findings towards traditional journalism practices.

Saiful Alam Chowdhury, associate professor of the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism of Dhaka University, said, "Usage of free AI tools raise concerns about digital safety and security... With the booming of independent journalism, which is likely to happen in the next two or three years, using these free AI tools will put us in a spot of bother."


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