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Prof Sakhawat Ali Khan passes away

DU CORRESPONDENT

Prof Sakhawat Ali Khan, a pioneering figure in Bangladesh's journalism education and a longtime teacher at Dhaka University, passed away on Sunday night at a hospital in Dhaka, aged 85.

Family members said he had suffered a stroke a few days earlier. After several days of treatment, he was taken home. However, he fell ill again on Sunday night and was rushed back to the hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

His first namaz-e-janaza was held at the DU Central

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Speakers at a roundtable, titled 'From Rights to Reality: Advancing Justice and Action for All Women and Girls in Bangladesh', organised on the occasion of International Women's Day. The event was organised by the Bangladesh National Gender Working Group (BNGWG) in partnership with Plan International and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Patriarchal norms, weak policies limit women's leadership

Say speakers at roundtable by Bangladesh National Gender Working Group, Plan International, Star

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women's participation in Bangladesh has increased over the years, but significant barriers still limit their leadership and decision-making roles, experts and activists said yesterday.

They said patriarchal attitudes, weak policy implementation and lack of institutional support continue to hinder women's meaningful representation in governance and public life.

They made the remarks at a roundtable, titled 'From Rights to Reality: Advancing Justice and Action for All Women and Girls in Bangladesh', organised on the occasion of International Women's Day.

The event was organised by the Bangladesh National Gender Working

Women are often viewed not as leaders but as liabilities or dependents. They are frequently treated as passive recipients of policies, while structural barriers and social norms continue to limit their leadership opportunities.

PROF TANIA HAQUE
Department of Women and Gender Studies, DU

Group (BNGWG) in partnership with Plan International and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre.

At the discussion, Prof Tania Haque of Women and Gender Studies at Dhaka University said Bangladesh still struggles with deeply rooted patriarchal attitudes.

Women are often viewed "not as leaders but as liabilities or dependents", she said.

She added that women are frequently treated as passive recipients of policies rather than active participants in decision-making, while structural barriers and social norms continue to limit their leadership opportunities.

Sanaul Haque Mondal, assistant

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Jamaat undecided on BNP's deputy speaker offer

Party to decide after written proposal, internal discussion

MAMUNUR RASHID

Jamaat-e-Islami has not yet decided whether to accept a verbal offer from the BNP government to take the post of deputy speaker ahead of the first sitting of the 13th Jatiya Sangsad, senior party leaders said.

The BNP, which formed the government after securing a majority in the parliamentary elections, has "verbally" proposed that Jamaat, the main opposition party in parliament, take the deputy speaker's position.

Jamaat leaders, however, said they have not received any written proposal from the BNP. They said the party would review and analyse the matter before making a final decision if a formal proposal is sent.

Opposition leaders noted that under the existing constitution, parliament has one speaker and one deputy speaker. However, the July Charter proposes a legislature with one speaker and two deputy speakers - one from the ruling party and one from the opposition. They pointed out that the BNP's election manifesto reflects the same.

Jamaat leaders said it remains unclear whether the BNP's proposal for the deputy speaker's post is based on the July Charter or its election manifesto.

The first session of the 13th parliament will be held on March 12, when the speaker and deputy speaker are expected to be elected.

On March 2, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed told reporters that the party wanted to begin implementing the July National Charter.

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Moyeen Khan, Hafiz frontrunners for speaker

BNP discussions continue as party looks for credible, experienced figure for top parliament role

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

With the 13th Jatiya Sangsad set to convene on March 12, the ruling BNP is considering standing committee members Abdul Moyeen Khan and Hafiz Uddin Ahmad for the post of speaker, according to party insiders.

Party sources said the two leaders are among the main options under discussion as the party prepares to elect a speaker for the new parliament.

BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman has been consulting senior leaders as the party works toward a final decision, added the sources.

The leadership is looking for someone who can preside over parliament in a neutral manner and command acceptance across the political arena.

Meanwhile, the party has offered the post of deputy speaker to the opposition.

Senior BNP leaders said both Moyeen and Hafiz Uddin are being considered for the position of Speaker due to their long political

experience and relatively clean public image.

Moyeen Khan was elected from the Narsingdi-2 constituency in the February 12 national election.

He first entered parliament in 1991 from the same constituency in the fifth parliamentary election. Before joining politics, he was

planning from 1993 to 1996. In

the Khaleda Zia-led government between 2001 and 2006, he served as minister of information from 2001 to 2002 and later as minister of science and ICT from 2002 to 2006.

Moyeen comes from a political family. His father, Abdul Momen Khan, was a politician and once served as food minister.

The other leader under discussion is Hafiz Uddin Ahmad, currently liberation war affairs minister and the MP from Bhola-3.

Hafiz was first elected to parliament in 1986 from Bhola under the Jatiya Party and was re-elected in 1988. He later won the fifth parliamentary election as an independent candidate.

After joining the BNP, he was elected to parliament for three consecutive terms up to the eighth parliament in 2001.

During the previous BNP government, he served as minister of water resources and later as commerce minister following a cabinet reshuffle.

He served as state minister for

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Moyeen Khan Hafiz Uddin

a professor of physics at Dhaka University.

He was re-elected from Narsingdi-2 in June 1996 and again in 2001 as a BNP candidate, and was elevated to the party's standing committee - the party's highest policy-making forum - in 2009.

Police not to control parties; they will act against criminals

Says IGP Ali Hossain Fakir

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Policing is not about controlling political parties, but anyone committing crimes or violating the law will face action, said new Inspector General of Police Md Ali Hossain Fakir yesterday.

Replying to a question about political patrons of teen gangs, he said political parties are the country's main driving force and policymakers who decide in parliament how the country, society, and institutions function.

Using a metaphor, he added, "Can you take action against your father?" saying it is not the police's responsibility to control political parties.

Addressing the media at Police Headquarters Media Centre, at the DMP's Central Command and Control Centre building on Abdul Gani Road, the IGP, however, said, "If they engage in any criminal activity or violate the law, we will bring them under the law."

On a planned drive against extortionists and listed criminals, the IGP said law enforcers have prepared a list and will launch drives soon.

About mob violence, the police chief said they have a plan to tackle it and have already started taking action. Many of those involved in such incidents are linked to drugs, looting, and other crimes, he said.

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Pass NHRC ordinance in its current form

Civil society representatives call on parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil society representatives yesterday called on parliament to approve the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) ordinance without amendment, saying this is crucial to ensure the rights body's institutional continuity.

They made the call at a consultation meeting between NHRC leadership and civil society representatives at the commission's office in the capital.

Speaking at the programme, TIB Executive Director Itekhazuzzaman said, "We believe the ordinance should be approved in parliament in its current form for now. Improvements can be made later if necessary."

"If the ordinance is reopened for review now, complications may arise, and we may risk losing what has already been achieved," he said.

He proposed creating a communication channel between the commission and civil society to share information on rights concerns affecting vulnerable communities and recommended a strategic, time-bound work plan to address priority challenges.

NHRC Chairperson Justice Moyeenul

Islam Chowdhury said the commission wanted to listen to those who have long worked with victims and communities in the human rights field.

He said Bangladesh is at a time when questions of human rights, justice, accountability and institutional trust have gained renewed importance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Work towards upgrading NHRC from 'B' to 'A' status

Build a more active, rights-based NHRC

Ensure strong legal framework and institutional independence

Develop strategic, time-bound plan for priority issues

Strengthen local-level human rights monitoring committees

The commission wants to protect rights and strengthen public confidence, but its effectiveness will depend largely on the strength of the legal framework

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Firefighters in action to douse a fire that broke out on the third floor of a 10-storey building in Mirpur-2 yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Two die in Mirpur fire

STAR REPORT

Two people were killed in a fire broke out at a commercial building named LA Plaza in Dhaka's Mirpur-2 yesterday.

Rakib Hasan and Ananya died at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital last night, said a duty officer at the Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Mirpur Model Police Station Inspector (investigation) Rajib Hossain also confirmed the deaths.

The fire broke out on the third floor of the 10-storey building at 1:52pm.

The fire was doused at 4:35pm, Khaleda Yasmin, duty officer at the control room, told The Daily Star.

A total of 23 people were rescued from different floors of the building. The two who were found unconscious later died at the hospital, she said. Market caretaker Nizam Uddin said the fire originated from an air conditioner inside a beauty parlour on the fourth floor.