



The Jatiya Garments Sramik Federation stages a demonstration in the city yesterday demanding steps to improve the working environment in the garments factories.

# Gender activists vow to establish world free from patriarchal authority

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gender activists at a conference yesterday vowed to establish a world free from patriarchal authority where women can move and work with same dignity and honour as enjoyed by their male counterparts.

The inaugural session of the three-day conference, organised by Bangladesh Chapter of South Asian Network of Gender Activists and Trainers (SANGAT), was held at CIRDAP auditorium in the city.

Hundreds of gender activists from South Asia gathered at the conference.

Launched in 1998, SANGAT worked to evolve a south asian feminist perspective on issues related to gender, peace and development and develop strategies to institutionalise gender concerns within all development organisations.

Kamila Bhasin, noted Indian human rights activist and ANGAT South Asian-level co-ordinator, and Fawzia Khandaker, Bangladesh chapter's co-ordinator, delivered the welcome speech after the conference began with Lalon songs by noted singer Farida Parvin.

Speaking on 'Link between globalisation, conflict and gender' at the first session, Amena Mohsin of international relations department of Dhaka University said pro-rich and pro-market globalisation policy utilises different states as its machinery to execute its agendas which are turning richers richer and poor poorer day by day.

"Identifying women as reproductive agent, the state which itself is male-dominated, has set a reproduction code marginalising them in all affairs," she said adding that women are not welcomed to share power.

Perceiving globalisation as a systemic phenomena affecting different countries' politics, economy and administration, Meghna Guhathakurata of the same department, said women are undermined and poorly paid in a globalised world which runs by capitalist forces.

Dina Siddiqi, a researcher, pointed out that job security for women went down for globalisation, which ultimately contributed to increased sexual and mental harassment.

"Women have to work on meagre salary due to decrease in job opportunity resulting from privatisation under the pressure of globalisation", she added.

Jahirul Haque, deputy chief of the children and women affairs ministry, also addressed the session moderated by Kamila Bhasin.

Speaking in another session on 'Relationship between Rights, Democracy and Gender', Prof Dalim Chandra Borman of DU said gender equity is a precondition to democracy.

Ayesha Khanom, a women activist, expressed grave concern at the rise of fundamentalism and revival of dorra system at different parts of the country.

Indian human rights activist Jaya Mitra spoke about her experiences on gender discrimination.

The session was moderated by Hamida Hossain.

## Obituary

BSS, Dhaka

Syeda Sultana Banu, a descendant of Hazrat Shah Ali Bogdadi (R), died yesterday at the age of 87.

Family sources said Syed Sultana Banu was the wife of late police inspector Abu Ahmed Abdul Ali and elder sister of late national professor Syed Ali Ahsan. She left behind five sons and four daughters to mourn her death.

Her qulkhwani will be held after Asr prayers on Monday at 1-F Eastern Housing Apartment at 26/B Topkhana Road.

Her autobiography titled 'Pachasi O Hazrat Shah Ali Bogdadi (R)' was published last year.

## Thai NDC team arrives

BSS, Dhaka

A 73-member delegation of Thailand National Defence College (NDC) led by its Superintendent Lieutenant General Kasemsak Plooksawat arrived in the city yesterday on a two-day goodwill visit.

On their arrival at Kurmitola BAF tarmac by a special aircraft of Thailand Airforce, the members of the delegation were received by Chief of General Staff of Bangladesh Army Major General SM Ikramul Haque.

Thai Ambassador to Bangladesh Phirithak Phrombubpha was also present, an ISPR press release said.



## Death anniversary DU CORRESPONDENT

The 19th death anniversary of Shaheed Maizuddin, an organiser of the War of Liberation and close associate of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, will be observed today, says a press release.

On this day in 1984, he was killed while leading a procession at Kaliganj in Gazipur district.

Shaheed Maizuddin was a member of parliament, vice-chairman of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society and secretary general of the Family Planning Association of Bangladesh (FPAB).

He was awarded Swadhinata Padak for the year 2000-2001 for his contribution to the War of Liberation.

Shaheed Maizuddin Welfare Trust, Kaliganj thana Awami League and the FPAB have chalked out elaborate programme to observe the day.

The programmes include milad mahfil, feeding of the destitute and discussions.

## Gouhar Jamil

The 23rd death anniversary of Gouhar Jamil, a noted dance artist and founder of Jago Art Centre, will be observed today, says a press release.

He was given Ekushey Padak (posthumously) in 1981 for his contribution to performing arts.

Jago Art Centre will organise a cultural function at Shishu Academy auditorium this evening to mark the occasion.



Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan called on US Secretary of State Colin Powell in New York on Tuesday.

# Morshed Khan meets Chinese FM, C'wealth chief

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, now in New York leading the Bangladesh delegation to the United Nations General Assembly session, met with his Chinese counterpart Li Zhaoxing at the UN Headquarters on Thursday.

During the meeting, the two leaders expressed satisfaction at the high level of cooperation between Bangladesh and China in economic, political and social fields.

According to a message received yesterday, the Chinese foreign minister praised the leadership of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and appreciated the progress achieved under her leadership.

The Bangladesh foreign minister also had a meeting with Commonwealth Secretary General Don McKinnon in New York on Thursday.

Later, he made a statement at the Commonwealth Ministerial Meeting, emphasising the need to vigorously address the problems of development in the Commonwealth countries.

Morshed Khan also held discussion with Canadian Foreign Minister Bill Graham and thanked him for the steps with regard to market access that Canada has recently extended to Bangladesh.

BSS adds: Morshed Khan also met Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al- Khalifa, foreign minister of Bahrain, Dr Marwan Muasher, foreign minister of Jordan, and Ahmed Maher El-Sayed, foreign minister of Egypt, at the UN Headquarters on Wednesday.

All of them expressed their support for the Bangladeshi candidate in the forthcoming election to the post of OIC secretary general.

Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, MP, adviser for parliamentary affairs to the prime minister, was present at the meetings.



## New leaders of Bastuhara Dal city unit

Dr MA Mannan and Anwar Hossain Mandal have been made president and general secretary of the Dhaka city unit of Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Bastuhara Dal recently, says a press release.

The central committee of the party has nominated them for two years.

Names of other leaders of the city unit will be announced soon.

# 87 pc slum dwellers decry hartal: Study

BSS, Dhaka

Slum dwellers, who earn their living by hard physical labour from sunrise to sunset, decry hartal, saying that it brings untold sufferings to them, according to a study.

The study revealed that 86.72 percent of the slum-dwellers opposed hartal as they believe that the culture of hartal was responsible for creating obstacles to their livelihood.

It also destroys the socio-economic and political fabric of society, they said.

The slum-dwellers hate hartal and consider it as a negative approach of politics, the study said.

The Institute of Social Welfare and Research of Dhaka University carried out the survey in the city slums recently. Dr Nurul Islam conducted it.

According to the study, the female members of the families living in slums earn more than their male partners.

The study also reveals that women are facing problems like early marriage, divorce and marriage more than once.

Most slums are being used as drug selling centres and owners of the slums provide the dwellers with loans on higher rate of interests, it said.

The study also found that most of the city slums are located on government or disputed land and the owners

of those slums put strong resistance to any government drive against eviction.

Some 65.62 percent slum dwellers confided that they were engaged in drug selling and 9.37 percent were involved in prostitution.

A total of 3.91 percent are involved in women and child trafficking, while 14.04 percent have links to criminal activities.

In the 1996 general elections and Dhaka City Corporation elections in 1994, some 87 percent and 74 percent voters of slums had cast their votes.

## Guardians' Forum formed in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Frustrated at their wards' poor results and the authority's apathy to maintain congenial atmosphere on the campus, about 250 guardians of the students of Government Laboratory High School have formed a committee in a bid to help maintain the glorious tradition of the institution.

At a press conference yesterday, the guardians announced the new committee styled as 'Guardians' Forum' with Amjad Hossain and Mazharul Haque as its president and general secretary. The forum has 21 executives and 250 general members.

Iftakhar Alam, convener of the forum, said that the need for a forum was felt after a teacher of the school beat up all the 40 students of a class for making a noise while he went out of the class to answer a mobile phone call.

"Despite repeated appeal from the guardians, the school authorities did not bother to inform them about the reason behind the beating," he said, adding that 19 students could not be successful in the last SSC examination although they have no previous records of failure.

He also blamed the 'teachers-cum-coaching centre owners' for damaging the reputation of the school.

The forum identified 15 problems of the school that included weak administration, lack of coordination among the teachers, students and guardians and irregular attendance of teachers.

The forum placed an 11-point demand including formation of a governing body comprising students, teachers and guardians, changes in school timing and ensuring attendance of teachers in classes.

Guardians MM Alauddin, Azizur Rahman and Ayub Ali also spoke at the press conference.

