

## 'Govt indifferent to women's empowerment'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is indifferent to women's empowerment although their participation in economic activities has increased significantly in the last few years, said the speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

They said women's participation in economic activities has increased much due to expansion of garment industry and micro credit.

The roundtable titled 'Achievement of women in economic sector in the last 35 years and responsibilities' was organised jointly by Women's Development Foundation (WDF) and Weekly 2000 at the National Press Club in the city.

The speakers however alleged that the clandestine change in the National Women's Development Policy by the government has thwarted their empowerment.

"The policy formulated in 1997 was women-friendly, but the rights



PHOTO: STAR

Barrister Tania Amir speaks at a roundtable titled 'Achievement of women in economic sector in the last 35 years and responsibilities' at the National Press club in the city yesterday. On her right are Weekly 2000 Acting Editor Golam Murtaza and Prof Nasreen Khundker.

of women have been snatched away by bringing changes in the policy," said Barrister Tania Amir while moderating the discussion.

She said people have the right to know why the policy has been changed without the consent of the women's community.

President of Karmojibi Nari Shirin Akhter said the prime minister should be responsible for bringing the change in the policy where the issues of women's empowerment, equality and their power of decision-making have been omitted.

She demanded of the government to ensure equal wage for women workers, amendment to labour laws, and sharing of total profit.

While presenting the keynote paper at the roundtable, Prof Nasreen Khundker of Dhaka University said women's participation in economic activities increased to 26 percent in 2001-03 which was 16 percent in 1995-96.

"To increase loan facilities for women entrepreneurs and formulation of national budget on the basis of their need in different sectors is a must," she added.

She said identification of impediments for women in getting promotion to administrative posts,

and measures to remove them is also important.

Prof Masuda M Rashid, Prof Sultana Shafi of Dhaka University, Rehana Siddika of For You Forever, Hasina Doula of Micro Electronics were also present at the roundtable.

## Jalil's condition improves

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The condition of Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil, who is undergoing treatment at the Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore, has improved.

His condition improved as the water congestion in his lung had dried up.

AL presidium member Amir Hossain Amu, Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and working committee member Rajiuddin Ahmed Raju visited the ailing party general secretary yesterday.

Acting general secretary Obaidul Quader urged the people to pray for Jalil's early recovery.

## Map on CHT indicators to be launched today

BSS, Dhaka

A publication ceremony of "Mapping CHT census indicators 2001 and trends" will be held today at the LGED Bhaban in the city.

The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) and the International Centre for the Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) of Nepal under a joint programme have prepared a map on various socio-economic indicators and their trends along with CDs. The map will help understand socio-economic conditions and facilitate development planning process of the CHT.

## Hartal observed in Rajshahi for gas thru' pipeline

RU CORRESPONDENT

The dawn to dusk hartal was observed in Rajshahi yesterday for supply of natural gas through pipeline.

Rajshahi Babosayee Oikya Parishad, a trader's body in Rajshahi, called the hartal. Awami League-led 14-party also supported the hartal.

All business establishments and educational institutions remained closed and all modes of transports, including rickshaws, went off the roads during hartal hours.

Rajshahi Babosayee Oikya Parishad took out processions in

the city chanting slogans for supplying natural gas through pipeline within three month. They shouted 'No gas no vote in the next election'.

Oikya Parishad leaders Farid Mahmud Hasan, Mosherraf Hossain Akhunchi, Harunor Rashid and Reaz Uddin addressed a rally in front of the RDA market.

Meanwhile, Rajshahi Gas Andalan Parishad called a daylong strike in Rajshahi on April 17 if the government fails to announce specific dateline for supplying gas to Rajshahi by April 16.