

Restore National Women Dev Policy '97

Rights activists demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday reiterated the demand for restoring the National Women Development (NWD) Policy '97 without any change.

resistance, at the National Press Club following a national convention on August 27. In a written statement on behalf of the committee, Ayesha Khanom, general secretary of Mahila Parishad, said the NWD Policy '97 paved the way for women's development as representatives from women's and human rights organisations worked together in preparing the policy.

Ayesha said terms like 'equal rights', 'equal partnership' and 'equal dignity' were omitted cleverly from different sub-sections of 7, 8, 9, and 12 of the policy creating barriers to establishing women's rights. Ranjan Karmakar of Steps Towards Development and Shirin Akhter of Karmajibi Nari also spoke. Selina Khalek of Bangladesh Mahila Samity, Rawshan Jahan Parvin of Ain O Shalish Kendra and Nasimun Ara Huq of Bangladesh Naari Sangbadik Kendra were present on the occasion.



Ayesha Khanom, general secretary of Mahila Parishad, speaks at a press conference organised by Samajik Protirodh Committee, a platform for social resistance, at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

SANSKRITIK JOTE RALLY

Vow to resist fanaticism

DU CORRESPONDENT

Sammilita Sanskritik Jote, a cultural organisation, yesterday condemned the death threat to Rajshahi University (RU) teacher Prof Hasan Azizul Haque and Dr Muhammad Zafar Iqbal of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST). The Jote leaders blamed a part of the alliance government for the repeated threats against country's pro-liberation intellectuals, writers, poets, and cultural personalities in a planned way to turn the country into a theocratic state.

to the issue, cultural personality Ramendu Mojmudar said. Jote General Secretary Golam Kuddus, Bangladesh Kobita Parishad leader Prof Dr Samad and other leaders also attended the rally. Our Chittagong correspondent adds: eleven eminent educationists in a joint statement here yesterday condemned the death threat to Prof Hasan Azizul Haque and Dr

Muhammad Zafar Iqbal. The signatories include Professor Emirates Dr Jamal Nazrul Islam, Prof Alamgir Mohammad Sirajuddin, Prof Anupam Sen, Prof Hasanuzzaman Chowdhury, Prof Hamida Banu, Begum Mustar Shafi, Prof Abul Mansur, Dr Moinal Islam, Abul Momen, Dr Gazi Saleh Uddin and artist Dhalal Mamun.

BCL worker killed in clash with BNP

CU CORRESPONDENT

An activist of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) was killed and 25 people were injured in a clash with the BNP activists in front of Shah Waliullah Filling Station at Sitakunda yesterday. The dead was identified as Mohammad Elias, 22, son of one Bachchu Mian. Three of the injured -- Nur Nabi, Rubel and Belal -- were admitted to a local hospital in a critical condition. According to sources, activists of Awami League and BCL were returning home by bus after attending road march programme of the AL-led 14-party combine held in the city's Alongkar intersection at around 2:30pm. The activists were locked into an

alteration with a truck driver as he was blocking the way of the bus carrying the AL and BCL men in front of Shah Waliullah Filling Station. At one stage, the activists assaulted the driver, leading to a clash with local BNP men and transport workers, sources said. During the clash, the BNP men beat up BCL activist Elias with iron rods and injured him critically. He succumbed to his injuries on the way to hospital. Protesting the incident, angry activists of the BCL put up barricades on Dhaka-Chittagong highway, disrupting traffic movements for about three hours. When contacted, Sub Inspector Abdul Latif of Sitakunda Police Station claimed that Elias died in a road accident.



Moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi divisions in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today. Moderately heavy falls are also likely at places during the period, Met Office said predicting that day temperature may fall slightly over the country. Yesterday's highest temperature of 36.0 degree Celsius was recorded at Sylhet and the lowest of 24.0 degrees at Cox's Bazar. The sun sets in the capital at 6:20pm today and rises at 5:39am tomorrow. The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Table with 4 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, and Cox's Bazar.

'Oust Asia Energy'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Workers Party of Bangladesh yesterday urged the government to close down all the offices of Asia Energy in the country and to oust the company. The party declared to observe 'Phulbari Day' on September 2 to mark the event. Asia Energy made huge money in the British Stock Exchange making a false claim that the company has full ownership of Phulbari Coalmine, the party leaders said at a press conference at its Topkhana Road office in the city. 'The process, whether the coal would be extracted through open-pit or tunnel method, is a secondary matter, though not less important, but the contract that the government made with Asia Energy was totally unfair,' said Party Secretary Bimal Biswas. Even Mahmudur Rahman, the executive chairman of Board of Investment, last March severely criticised the contract with Asia Energy saying that the country will get only six per cent of the coal, the leaders said. The area would turn into a desert and some 50,000 families will be evicted if the company extracts coal in open-pit method, said the party leaders, which would also have long-term effects. The party leaders vowed to observe the agitation today and hartal on August 30 in support of the National Committee for Protection of Oil-Gas-Port.

City diagnostic centres fined Tk 2,80,000

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court in the city yesterday realised Tk 2,80,000 in fine from several diagnostic centres for having no trade license and selling illegal blood. The court led by Narayan Chandra Devnath fined different diagnostic centres in city's Green road, Dhanmodi, Mohammadpur, Aadar, Kamrangir Char, Hazaribagh and Newmarket area. Tobarok Hossain, owner of Shandhan Blood Diagnostic Centre at Green road and his five partners were fined Tk 30,000 each as the diagnostic centre started functioning as a blood bank and there was no receiving date on the blood bags. Tobarok was also the manager of Gastrolover Hospital and Research Institute and with the help of five ward boys, he used to run the diagnostic centre. Gastrolover Hospital was also fined Tk 60,000. Meanwhile, the Mobile Court fined Ekram Hossain Biplol, owner of Mahanagar Diagnostic Centre at Mirpur road Tk 30,000 as he could not show documents and trade license. Manager of the diagnostic centre paid Tk 50,000 as fine only five days ago. Manager of Medi Sair Diagnostic Centre at Green road was sent to jail for four months for non-payment of Tk 50,000 as fine. The court has also sealed the centre. Owner of Lab Bangladesh at Babar Road at Mohammadpur Towhiduddin was fined Tk 10,000.

Saudi prince's bid

FROM PAGE 1

procedures followed so far for selling the bank are transparent. Asked about the Saudi prince's offer price for a share, the chairman said he offered around Tk 2700. Earlier on Sunday, the commission declared the Saudi prince the highest bidder out of two technically fit bidders. The other bidder was, Domestic Investors Consortium, which offered \$100 million. On the same day, an evaluation committee comprising representatives from the Bangladesh Bank, finance ministry, law ministry and consultants from the Privatisation Commission selected the two bidders out of four. Maa International Investment Ltd of Malaysia, and JJ Finance Ltd of the UK were disqualified for technical reasons. Meanwhile, a delegation of Saudi prince yesterday met the Privatisation Commission chairman to know about the next phase of the procedure. The government that owns 94 percent of Rupali Bank's shares decided to sell 67 percent of its shares in order to appease the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, who demanded reforms in the country's banking sector as a condition for getting loans from them. In March last year, the government assigned the Privatisation Commission to sell the bank. The total value of assets of Rupali Bank as shown in December 2005 stood at \$1.07 billion and it has over 493 branches across the country. RUPALI BANK'S SHARE PRICE DOWN Share price of Rupali Bank went down by Tk 66.75 or 4.65 percent to close at Tk 1570.50 yesterday on Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) while the price rose as high as Tk 1999 during the day. On Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE), share price of Rupali Bank also declined by Tk 67.50 or 4.10 percent to close at Tk 1577.75. A total of 43,600 shares of Rupali Bank worth Tk 7.92 crore were traded on DSE yesterday while 45,930 shares worth Tk 8.10 crore changed hands on CSE.



Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain speaks at a press conference at the Supreme Court Bar Association hall room in the city yesterday. On his left are Barrister Amir-Ul Islam and Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud.

Opposition doesn't want continuity of democracy

Says Khaleda

UNB, Mirpur, Kushtia

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has said the opposition is trying to create a vacuum in the country, foiling the upcoming general elections. 'The opposition has made the Election Commission (EC) and the upcoming polls targets and doesn't want continuity of the democracy,' she said while addressing a public rally at Mirpur upazila football ground yesterday. She urged people to remain alert against those who do not want the holding of election on the pretext of 'so-called reforms'. Khaleda, also the chairperson of the ruling BNP, said the election commissioners are neutral and they are working well, but the opposition, instead of cooperating

with them, is creating obstacle. She said the opposition is giving lip service to so-called reforms which they didn't do while in power for five years and threatening that election will not be allowed to be held without reforms. She mentioned that the government has proposed dialogue on this issue but they (opposition) don't want to come up for discussion. The prime minister said a flawless voter list is necessary for free, fair and neutral elections and urged people to become voter so that they can cast their vote in the upcoming polls. Khaleda said the opposition parties don't want democracy, peace and development. 'They want to push the country backward, keep people poor and make

economy crippled which they did in the past. Chaired by local BNP President Saiful Huq Khan, the rally was also addressed, among others, by Telecommunications Minister Aminul Huq, Water Resources Minister Hafizuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury. Earlier, the prime minister inaugurated Sagorkhali Siphon project under Sagorkhali-Barobila drainage project, which involved Tk 20 crore, and Mirpur 500-line digital telephone exchange. She also laid the foundation stone for upgrading the 50-bed upazila hospital. The prime minister distributed goats and documents of khas land among poor and landless people at the meeting venue.

Attempt to hold polls sans reform to be resisted

14-party leaders vow at Ctg rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Leaders of Awami League-led 14-party opposition combine yesterday reiterated their demands for reform in caretaker system of government and the Election Commission and threatened to foil any attempt to hold election until their demands are met. They said anticipating a sure defeat in the next general election, if it is held in a free and fair atmosphere, the four-party alliance government is trying their best to politicise the Election Commission to retain power through election engineering and ignoring people's demand for reform. They were speaking at a big rally at Olonkar Intersection in the port city yesterday. The rally was held before the Divisional Road March of the 14-party opposition combine. Chittagong City Corporation Mayor and city AL President ABM

Mohiuddin Chowdhury presided over the rally where AL General Secretary and Coordinator of 14-party Abdul Jalil MP, AL presidium members Abdur Razzak MP, Amir Hossain Amu, Matia Chowdhury MP, Tofael Ahmed, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Hoque Inu, Gono Forum Presidium Member Pankaj Bhattacharyya, Workers Party leader Fazole Hossain Badsha, AL Organising Secretary Bir Bahadur MP, Samyabadi Dal General Secretary Dilip Barua and JSD leader Mainuddin Khan Badal addressed. Matia Chowdhury said reform is a must for holding a free and fair election in a peaceful way. Hasanul Hoque Inu said 14-party is fighting not only for power but also for removing poverty, corruption and violence from the country. Pankaj Bhattacharyya said the opposition parties were united for establishing a secular, democratic

and accountable government. Abdur Razzak said BNP-Jamaat alliance government in the last five years established a land of murder and terror by killing a number of opposition leaders and people including former Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria, Ivy Rahman, Ahsanullah Master, journalist Manik Shah, Humayun Kabir Balu, Dr Humayun Azad, Rajshahi University teacher Prof Taher and others. Criticising the government, Tofael Ahmed said it is yet to place an investigation report on August 21 grenade attacks on AL rally in Dhaka. City Mayor Mohiuddin said the huge support they got from the people of Comilla, Chandpur, Chittagong Hill Tracts and Cox's Bazar during their five-day divisional road marches earlier this month proved that the people of the region also want an immediate reform as demanded by 14-party.

Sylhet div road march deferred to Sept 2

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL)-led 14-party opposition combine has deferred its Sylhet divisional road march programme from August 30 to September 2. The nation-wide programme which began at different divisions and districts three weeks back to press home the demand for electoral reforms has been deferred due to tomorrow's countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal called by the combine, says a press release. Abdul Jalil, coordinator of the 14-party, urged people from all walks of life to make the road march programme a complete success. In another statement, Jalil, also AL general secretary, said the prime minister (PM) has been propagandising against the AL in the name of reform. Referring to her speech in Barisal that the AL would restore the Constitution of 1972 if comes to power, Jalil asked if the PM is printing the country's constitution omitting the proclamation paper on the War of Liberation to run the country according to Pakistani constitution. Jalil also asked the PM whether there was Bismillah or not when the AL was in power from 1996 to 2001.

Listed criminal held in Comilla

A CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

Detective Branch (DB) of Police arrested one listed top criminal in the town on Sunday night. He was identified as Saifuddin Ahmed Pappu, 28, son of Ruhul Amin Master of Kasonpara village in Sadar Dakkhin upazila. Tipped off, the DB police arrested Pappu from Comilla DC Road at about 11.30pm and handed him over to Kotwali Police Station. A case was lodged in this connection. Pappu, an accused in 12 cases including murder, robbery, snatching and piracy, was arrested two times earlier but released on bail.

AL leader dies at Tangail rally

UNB, Dhaka

Rafiquzzaman, a senior member of California unit of Awami League, died of a cardiac arrest during a party workers' rally at his home village in Tangail on Sunday. Awami League president Sheikh Hasina has expressed her deep shock and profound grief at his death. In a condolence message yesterday, she prayed for the salvation of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Obituary

BSS, Dhaka

Shamsunnahar Begum, wife of noted academic and social worker Siddique Ullah Miah of Hajir Para of Noakhali, passed away at Gastro-liver Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 77. She is survived by her mother, four sons and three daughters.

Islamic parties boom after 1977 ban lifting

FROM PAGE 1

Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh and Bangladesh Muslim League participating in it. But the number of Islamic parties rose to 18 in the parliamentary election on June 12 in 1996 while the total number of parties contesting the first parliamentary polls held in 1973 was 14. No Islamic party could contest that election because of the ban. Seventeen Islamic parties contested the 1991 parliamentary election. In the last election held in 2001, their number stood at 11 as some of them did not field candidates although they were allocated polls symbols. Similarly, three Islamic parties--Jihad Party, Jatiya Islamic Dal and Khadem Party Zindabad -- did not field any candidate in the 1991 parliamentary election despite getting election symbols. Except Jamaat-e-Islami, the other Islamic parties together bag less than one per cent of the votes in the elections after resumption of parliamentary democracy following the fall of autocratic Ershad regime in 1990. Along with the major political parties, most of the Islamic parties also boycotted the elections held in 1988 and on February 12 in 1996. ISLAMIC PARTIES CONTESTING POLLS The names of more than 30 Islamic parties are on election-related documents preserved by the EC. They

contested elections after withdrawal of the ban. The parties are --Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, Bangladesh Islamic Front, Bangladesh Khelafat Andolon, Bangladesh Krishak Raj Islamic Party, Bangladesh Muslim League (Jamir Ali), Bangladesh Tanjumul Islam, Islami Al Zihad Dal, Islami Oikya Jote which is an alliance of seven parties, Islami Shashantantoro Andolon, Islamic Dal, Zaker Party, Jamiate Ulumaye Islami Bangladesh, People's Muslim Party, Quran Sunna Bastabayan Party, Quran Darshan Sangstha Bangladesh, Tehriku Ula-ma-e-Bangladesh, Islami Dal Bangladesh (Saifur), Bangladesh Inquilab Party, Bangladesh Islamic Republican Party, Muslim People Party, Bangladesh Khelafat Party, Muslim League (Yousuf), Muslim League (Matin), Muslim League (Quader), Jamayate Ulamaye Islami Front. NAMES OF OTHERS The EC does not have any record of other Islamic parties and organisations since they have not contested any elections. But the names of Islamic organisations were recorded by government intelligence agencies when they (organisations) got involved in some activities. Intelligence records show a large number of Islamic parties and organisations have been floated in Bangladesh, particularly after the ban was lifted. In between 1964 and 1970,

intelligence records claimed existence of 11 Islamic parties with various activities. These are Nezam-e-Islam, Jamaat-e-Islami, Muslim Affairs, Jamiyat-e-Ulama-e-Islam, Jamiat-e-Ahle Hadith, Islami Darodi Sangha, United Islamic Front, Islami Sangram Parishad, Islami Durmuz Party, Jatiya Mujaheed Sangha and Jamayat-e-Tabligue-e-Deen. But since 1977, floating of such parties and organisations greatly increased. Intelligence agencies recorded the names of a large number of them over the last 29 years. These include Islamic Democratic League, Young Muslim Society, Islami Oikya Andolon, Bangladesh Islami Mohila Mojilish, Muslim Shanti Parishad, Zikir Ul Dal Bangladesh, Bangladesh Muslim League, Islami Awami Party, Sorbadalya Islami Sangram Parishad, Mojaheed Bahini, Bangladesh Muslim Jubo Sangha, Bangladesh Jatiya Olama Dal, Ittehadul Ullah, Islamic Revolution Council, Islami Sanghati Parishad, Nikhil Bangladesh Muslim League, Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh (Jabbar), Islami Jatiya Oikya Jote, Islamic Republican Party, Al Qudds of Bangladesh, Islami Jubo Shibir, Bangladesh Olama Front, Muslim Akida Association, Idara-e-Hefazat-e-Islam, Islami Jukto Front, Bangladesh Islami Parishad, Hizbul Qurrah Bangladesh, Pragatishil Islami, Muslim Millat Shariat, Islami Hukumat Bastabayan, Islami Shashantantoro Andolon, Rabiat Al

Alam Alah Alam, 27-party Islami Sanghati Jote, Islami Dawati Sangstha, Anjuman-e-Tahfuz-e-Arkan-e-Islam, Ahle Sunnatul Jamaat, Muslim Oikya League, Muhajer Qawmi Movement, Bangladesh Khelafat Majilish, Jamiyate Hijbullah, Bangladesh Mujaheeden, Bangladesh Majilish-e-Islam, Bangladesh Islami Biploli Andolon, Jatiya Olama Party, Bishaw Muslim Jubo Andolon, Islami Oikya Jote, Bishaw Muslim Biploli Council, Olama Ekram Party, Khelafat Party, Tahfuz-e-Harmain, Bangladesh Khelafat Jubo Andolon, Islami Solidarity Party, Bangladesh Sunni Front, World Muslim United Forum, Bangladesh Sufi Majilish, Olama Committee, Bangladesh Muslim Oikya Front, Islam O Rashtrodrohi Protirodh Morcha, Islami Sangram Parishad, Bangladesh Muslim Ganotantrik Dal, Harkatul Ansar group, Al Markajul Islam, Bangladesh Hijub Tahrir, Iman Akida Sangrokkan Committee, Hujub Mahdi, Shahadat-e-Al-Hiqma, Majilish-e-Dawat-ul-Haq, Khelafat-e-Rabbani Party, Khademul-Islam Jamaat, Majilish-e-Tahaffuz-e-Khatme-Nabuat and Faraezi Jamaat.