

Dhaka Day by Day

A Fiery Woman Activist Speaks Out

by Fayza Haq

Barbara Good, a former career diplomat, and the present Chairperson of International Affairs Community, as well as the Vice President of the National Women's Party in USA, said, "I am so annoyed that the media has ignored women for decades." She was speaking at a conference with women journalists of Dhaka, after which followed a "dialogue" at the USIS Auditorium, with select invitees of the intelligentsia of the city.

Blonde haired, full of pep, and wizened with work and contemplation, Ms Good continued, "The National Women's Party in USA is not a political one. We wanted equal rights for women. We must have to have not only the right laws but the right attitude."

She insisted that women's rights meant human rights. "With all my speeches over the decades I had to start a revolution. I wasn't even allowed to get married as a diplomat in my days. I had to suffice with Siamese cats for company. However, now we work with wonderful men, who believe that women have equal brains as men. At one time women were employed only as secretaries, and were never allowed to go to places like USSR. One found the same disparity in other jobs such as in the airlines, which rejected older women."

When Ms. Good visited the Subcontinent, she found that a lot had been achieved by the women there that had not been reported in the western media. "Nowadays women are moving in a positive way. I managed to get a lot of women involved myself in the 40 organisations in Washington DC, involving 10 million women in USA."

She dwelt on "Whisper", a group of women activists who had been prostitutes previously, in USA. She praised "The All Bengal Women's Union" in Calcutta. She spoke highly of Dr. Pradip Kumar Mahaswari in India, for helping abate what she called "female slave trade", by which she meant prostitution. "The men go in to the pent up cage-like areas, and indulge themselves with alcohol and drugs, while the women are literally limited to places that are 10 feet square and have no fresh water in Uttar Pradesh", she described with vivacity. "As for the AIDS that ensue, there are a million women and 800 children in Thailand who work as prostitutes and who are HIV suspects. In this field the Republic of China is spending a lot of money to rescue women from this shameful profession. Article 6 in CIDA also operates in this line," she added vehemently.

Ms. Good said that while the media should cover the positive side of life it must try to find a definite way to save women from shameful life of a degenerate profession. "Their minds are not finished. Jobs must be provided for them," Ms. Good insisted.

"When women get into the power group, they must necessarily do something for the plight of the underprivileged women. I was lucky enough to be in the Foreign Service, when I tried to bring in a revolution. This was two decades ago. At that time we could not openly talk about violence against women. The international women's groups and activists' work was not covered by the media, as the male bosses chose to ignore their endeavour," Ms. Good pointed out to us.

"Women at the grassroots level, in places such as in Palestine and the Subcontinent, are working for peace projects and this should be flashed by the media," the ex-diplomat and present female activist continued.

She added that the VOA was doing good work in helping the women's cause. Yet, she added, "When I say a thing or two to the media, they feel that this is a threat to their male dominance. When women stand for women's rights they think it is a joke in USA, as also in places like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh."



Ms. Good speaking to the journalists.

Ms. Good added that fewer people are reading the newspapers and more people are watching TV the world over. The TV and radio should, therefore, focus more information on the development work of women, as they comprise such a large percentage of the world population.

"Education and family planning for women are vital matters both in the East and West. This is specially so in the developing countries. The poor women should furthermore be helped financially as they are done by the 'Grameen Bank', in Bangladesh," the social and political activist continued.

She added, "The mothers-in-law get against the younger women, specially in joint families, as is often found in the East. They cannot be blamed for this as the older women themselves are 'brainwashed'."

"It is also a pity," Ms. Good commented, "that religion, all over the world has been misinterpreted to the advantage of men. In this manner a man can easily abandon his wife and move on to other pastures."

While speaking to the USIS audience at large, the female activist said, "It is time that the world knew that women are not too emotional to be involved in politics, and that women should go to work with the present recession. This is although many husbands discourage their wives. For years it is considered that women should not even travel alone, whether in USA, India or in Bangladesh. Women are repeatedly assessed as being inferior to men."

In this context she pointed out to the listeners that "It is easier for women to come to the capital city of Dhaka and work than it is for women of USA to come from the various corners and nooks, and operate in New York or Washington DC. Getting the right experience and credentials is not easy for women all over, but they must work at it and get the jobs that are *creme de la creme*."

Ms. Good concluded that the world cannot be changed overnight. She also said that there were, nevertheless, sympathetic men as Ambassador Pickering of USA, who did help out with women's cause.

German Deputy Foreign Minister due tomorrow

The Deputy Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany arrives in Dhaka tomorrow (Tuesday) on a 3-day official visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

During his visit the German Minister will call on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, Speaker Sheikh Razaq Ali, Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina and the Secretary of the Economic Relations Division Enam Ahmed Chowdhury.

The Minister will also visit the German Power Line Project at Ashuganj, says an embassy press release.

Parjatan Officers Assoc executives

Jamaluddin Chowdhury and Miazuddin Khan have been elected President and General Secretary respectively of Bangladesh Parjatan Officers Association, says a press release.

The office-bearers are: Abul Kashem and Iqbal Mollik-Vice Presidents; Hossein Ahmed and Abdur Rahman-Assistant General Secretary; Mamunur Rashid-Treasurer; Mamunur Rashid-Cultural Secretary; Rafiqul Islam-Office Secretary.

The members are: Haiyat Ali Khan; Sadekur Rahman; Masum Chowdhury; Mokbul Hossein Talukder and Sanot Kumar Kundu.

Sena Paribar Kallyan Samity handicraft exhibition

A six-day biennial handicraft exhibition organised by the Sena Paribar Kallyan Samity began Sunday at Tejgaon, reports UNB.

State Minister for Social Welfare Sarwari Rahman inaugurated the exhibition.

Speaking on the occasion Sarwari said handicraft industry could be an income generating source for the poor and destitute women.

60 pc eligible couples yet to adopt FP Call to help achieve objective of zero population growth

President Abdur Rahman Bhasia Sunday called upon the family planners, NGOs and other agencies to work hard to achieve the national objective of zero population growth in the country, reports UNB.

"Unless we can check the rate of growth of population, it

will be difficult for us to improve the lot of the common people with limited resources", the President said while addressing an award giving ceremony of the Social Marketing Company (SMC) at a local hotel this evening.

The ceremony was arranged

to commemorate the 100 crore sales of "Raja" condom by the SMC.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, Deputy Minister Sirajul Haq, US Ambassador in Bangladesh, William B Milan, Country Representative of the Population Services International, USA, Robert L. Ciszewski, USAID Director Ms Mary C Kilgour, Health Secretary M Mokkammel Haque and Chairman of SMC Board of Directors M Mahbubuzzaman also addressed the function.

The President in his speech said that tireless efforts of all concerned have made a tremendous success of the family planning activities in the country.

He however advised not to be complacent with the success as 60 per cent of the eligible couples are yet to adopt family planning.

The Health Minister lauded the role of SMC and sought donors assistance in achieving the goals in the health sector.

The US Ambassador said his government had contributed about 350 million US dollar in the family planning activities of the country and assured all out support in achieving the objectives.

Referring to successes achieved by the SMC, Ms Mary C Kilgour said it was a glaring example of what a private enterprise could accomplish.

Pointing to a recent New York Times report, Mahbubuzzaman said Bangladesh has been listed in the six most successful countries which made significant progress in the family planning activities.

Three people and three organisations were awarded medals for their outstanding contributions to the family planning and social marketing.

President Bhasia distributed the awards among the recipients. The function was rounded off with a musical soiree.

Uttara Ladies Club Meena Bazar Feb 7

By Staff Correspondent

Uttara Ladies Club will organise a Meena Bazar on February 7 (Friday). Allotment of stalls are going on for this purpose at the Uttara play ground in Sector No 3.

Interested persons have been requested to contact over telephone No 894988 for allotment of stalls.

Uttara Ladies Club regrets that the function on January 31 could not be completed due to inclement weather. However, the lottery draw for that day will be held on the day scheduled for Meena Bazar.

IMF team meets Saifur

The visiting mid-term review team of IMF, led by its Central Asia Department division chief Ichiro Otani, called on Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman at the latter's residence here Sunday, reports UNB.

MANY HAPPY RETURNS OF THE DAY
SIMEEN
Love
Shazneen, Shehzi, Reaz, Mummy, Abbu

Happy Birthday to Simeen Madam from Saleh & Asif The Daily Star



A sequence of street-drama Kaal Nagini staged by Naandonik at the Central Shaheed Minar on Sunday.

— Star photo

Chhatri Brigade to maintain peace at Bangla Academy book fair

Chhatri Brigade has been floated by leaders of the Chhatri Sangsads of three women halls of Dhaka University with a view to looking after discipline in the Bangla Academy book fair beginning February 7, reports BSS.

Addressing a press conference at the National Press Club here Sunday evening, the Chhatri Sangsads leaders said they had taken this initiative, the first of its kind in the country, to guard against any untoward incident in the Academy premises during the book fair.

Shirin Sultana and Shahana Akhter Shanu, Vice-President and General Secretary of Rokeya Hall Chhatri Sangsad,

Irine Parveen Bandhan and Shahin Akhter Shimul, Vice-President and General Secretary of Shamsunnahar Hall Chhatri Sangsad and Shahna Parveen Sweets, Social Welfare Secretary of Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree hall spoke at the press conference.

The Director General of Bangla Academy, Dr. Harun-ur-Rashid, was also present at the press conference.

Describing the objectives of the floatation of the Chhatri Brigade, the sangsad leaders said the Brigade members to be drawn from each of the halls would ensure security of women and girl visitors in the fair. "Everyday a ten-member troop in special dress and

badge will remain on guard against any untoward incident in cooperation with the members of the law enforcing agencies," Shirin Sultana said.

Irine Parveen Bandhan said formation of the Chhatri Brigade was a symbolic protest against violence and teasing of girls which was a regular phenomenon at the Bangla Academy Book Fair in the past.

"We would not allow repeat of such incident from this year," she said urging all students, teachers and student organisations of Dhaka University to extend their cooperation to such a noble initiative.

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Inclusion of disaster preparedness in school curriculum urged

State Minister for Relief Lutfur Rahman Khan emphasised the need for inclusion of disaster preparedness in the curriculum of secondary school level for creating more awareness of the students to face the natural disasters properly and untidely, according to an official source, reports BSS.

He was presiding over the policy committee meeting of the disaster preparedness programme held at the conference room of the Relief Minister on Sunday.

He said, we want to curb as well as minimise the loss of life and property in times of disaster.

Lutfur Rahman Khan said,

the main objective of the democratic government is to ensure welfare and development of the people. Khan called upon the members of the committee and officials to discharge their responsibility sincerely, properly and dynamically.

Abu Yusuf Md Khalilur Rahman MP, M A Zinnah MP, Chairman and Secretary General of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, Director General of the Directorate of Relief and Rehabilitation, Director of Cyclone preparedness Programme and Additional Secretary in charge of the Ministry of Relief KLM A Hakim attended the meeting.

Japanese rotarians in city

A 19-member delegation of Japanese Rotarians led by Rtn A Handa arrived in Dhaka Sunday to visit some rotary financed projects in Chittagong, reports UNB.

District Governor Rtn Jalal U Ahmed, the district Governor nominee Rt Lk Siddique and Director, International Service, Rtn Syed Mahmudul Huq received them at the airport.

Sculpture to be unveiled on RU campus Feb 10

The unveiling ceremony of Liberation War Memorial Sculpture done by Nitun Kundu at the Mofthar campus of Rajshahi University will be held on February 10 at 10 am instead of February 8, the Memorial Sculpture Committee said in a press release in Dhaka Sunday, reports BSS.

Monday

5:00	Opening announcement Al Quran Programme summary
5:10	News in Bangla
5:20	Recitation from the Geeta
5:25	Cartoon film: The Great Space Coaster
6:00	Sports programme: Shikhhangan
6:30	Educational programme
7:05	Debate
8:00	News in Bangla
8:30	Health programme
9:00	Surer bhobon: songs programme
10:00	News in English
10:25	Parliament round up
10:35	Film: The Rescue
11:30	Khobar/The news
11:40	Tuesday's programme
11:45	Closing

Quamrul Hasan fought against fundamentalism

A discussion on "Artist Quamrul Hasan and his Art Work" was held with Prof. Kabir Chowdhury in the chair at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Sunday afternoon, reports BSS.

Patua Quamrul Hasan Otiya Parishad and the academy jointly organised the discussion on the occasion of the late artist's fourth death anniversary.

Speakers at the discussion said Artist Quamrul Hasan was an uncompromising figure throughout his life. They said he had struggled against injustice, exploitation, communalism and fundamentalism.

Director General of the Academy Kamal Lohani, Poet Shamsur Rahman, Dr.

Anisuzzaman, Dr Nowazesh Ahmad, Dr Syed Monzurul Islam, Artist Sayed Jahangir, Artist Rafiqun Nabi and Mizanur Rahman took part in the discussion.

Obituary

Former Registrar of Dhaka Medical College and renowned gynecologist Dr Mokhlesur Rahman died at his London residence Wednesday. He was 72, reports UNB.

He was suffering from old age ailments, family sources said in Dhaka on Sunday. He will be buried on February 5 at the Balham graveyard in London.

Weather

Rain with gusty wind likely

By Staff Correspondent

Met office Sunday forecast showers accompanied by gusty wind likely to occur at a few places across the country.

Night temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged throughout the country. Met office further said.

The highest temperature 27.6 degree Celsius was recorded in the country at Sakhira while the lowest minimum 12.3 degree Celsius was recorded at Rangpur.

Maximum temperature recorded in Dhaka was 26.4 degree Celsius and the minimum was 17.4 degree Celsius. The percentage of humidity was 86 at 9 am and 69 at 6 pm.

The sun sets today (Monday) at 5:46 pm and rises tomorrow (Tuesday) at 6:39 am.

Temperature and the percentage of humidity recorded in the major cities and towns Sunday are as follows:

Cities/Towns	Temperature		Humidity	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	26.4	17.4	86	69
Chittagong	24.2	17.2	83	84
Rajshahi	25.6	14.6	71	73
Khulna	27.3	17	87	77
Cox's Bazar	26	18	92	96
Rangpur	24.3	12.3	95	77
Barisal	26.5	17.2	90	97
Sylhet	21.7	14.8	97	86

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