

# SNS opposes govt move to sign SOFA

By Staff Correspondent

Sammilito Nari Samaj (SNS) brought out a procession and held a rally in the city yesterday protesting the government move to sign the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with the US.

Urging all political parties to unite and oppose the agreement, SNS also demanded that the government immediately cease all discussion regarding the SOFA agreement with the US government.

In a written declaration of their programmes, SNS said Bangladeshi women will be subjected to repression if the SOFA is signed.

"Women had to face extreme dishonour in countries across the world which permitted US to set up military bases."

"Women repression, rape and using women as a commodity are very frequent as well as a normal practice in military bases," the declaration said.

"It becomes an unwritten obligation of the host government to supply women for the US soldiers," the declaration alleged.

Pointing to women repression at US military bases in the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Korea and Japan, SNS said the bases also helped spread sexual diseases including AIDS in those countries.

Following a rally in front of the National Museum at Shahbagh, the SNS procession paraded city streets and ended in front of the National Press Club.

The rally was addressed by Farida Akhter, Dr Naila Khan and Shamsunahar Jostna while Advocate Khaleda Khatoon read out the written declaration of the rally.

"The government will betray the people and the sovereignty of the country if it signs the SOFA treaty and permits US to set up military base," SNS leaders said.

"We do not believe the country which opposed our Liberation War, will help us in our distress and danger," they said.

"Presence of military in the CHT has jeopardised the security of women and hundreds of women have been raped and repressed at the hill," they added.

The rally was attended among others by Shaheen Anam, Hanza Sultana, Ferdous Akhter Lily, Seema Das Shimu, Natasha Ahmed, Saida Akhter, Arifa Akhter, Sajeda Begum, Sharmin Akhter, Aisha Arshad, Deloara Begum, Shamshun Nahar, Norrojanah Begum, Samra Begum, Mahfuza Touhida, Moinun Nahar, Rushia Begum, Lopa Ahmed and Selina Malik.

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Sammilito Nari Samaj held a protest rally in the city yesterday against govt move to sign SOFA. — Star photo

## Acute water crisis grips Sylhet Pourashava

SYLHET, July 21: The dwellers of the Sylhet Pourashava have been facing acute water scarcity since long, reports UNB.

Official sources said 10.50 lakh gallons of water are supplied through the eight deep tube-wells at 13 wards two times everyday which is half of the total requirement.

The pourashava authority collects Tk 4.50 lakh as revenue by providing water every month.

When contacted an official of the pourashava said an ambitious project is being implemented to ensure smooth supply of water among the dwellers.

He said the work of the project for water supply and sanitation development financed by Asian Development Bank (ADB) at a cost of Tk 6.10 crore is expected to be completed by the year 2000.

Ten more deep tube-wells to be set up by this time. Besides, 1300 water pumps will be set up in the pourashava area.

He further said with the implementation of the project the pourashava will be able to supply 30.90 lakh gallons of water everyday.

JS body reviews activities of Industries Ministry

The first meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce and Industries Ministry was held at Sangsad Bhaban yesterday with committee president Raziuddin Razu in the chair, reports UNB.

The meeting discussed overall activities of the ministry and related departments and directorates.

Draft import and export policy, ways of expansion of trade and commerce in CIS countries, currency value, and prospects of extensive business in computer industry came up for discussion.

The meeting expressed satisfaction over successful settlement of the existing problems of GSP and child labour in garments industry and export of frozen food.

Besides, the meeting laid emphasis on the role of TCB in controlling price hike of essential and reactivation of the export-oriented industries.

## Month-long fair of Iranian goods begins in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, July 21: A month-long exhibition of the Iranian goods began at the IFCCO Complex at Nasirabad here yesterday, reports BSS.

Chittagong City Mayor ABM Mahiuddin Chowdhury inaugurated the fair expressing the hope that this would positively help strengthen the existing relationship between the two Muslim countries especially in the fields of trade and commerce.

Presided over by leader of the International Furniture Company (IFCO), the inaugural function was addressed, among others, by representatives of Iranian business team Engineer Mohsin Magrey, Golam Reza, Ashadullah Haidari and local businessman Dost Mohammad.

The mayor said the Iranian products, being exhibited in the fair will greatly help Bangladeshi people familiarise with the standard of the Iranian goods.

DU authorities defend increase in tuition fees

The Dhaka University authorities have defended the enhancement of tuition fees at the university saying the increase was necessary to ensure the quality of education.

The meeting of the DU authorities on Sunday resolved that the increase of tuition fees was justified, says a press release.

The meeting chaired by Vice Chancellor Prof A K Azad Chowdhury was attended by syndicate members, deans, provosts, departmental heads, proctors and directors of the institutes.

It noted that the monthly tuition fees were increased to Tk 24 from Tk 12 from this year, annual examination fee by Tk 200 and registration fee to Tk 150 from Tk 100.

The meeting said the identity card fee has been raised to Tk 50 from Tk 10 as laminated identity card is being introduced from this year.

The authorities also introduced a Tk 300 academic development fee payable at a time for four years. The meeting mentioned that the tuition fees and other charges for students of Arts, Law and Social Science faculties had been increased to Tk 2020 from Tk 2730 — an increase of Tk 710.

The meeting said that stipends had been increased by Tk seven lakh to help the poor students.

The authorities pointed out that the university has to spend Tk 25,000 to 30,000 per student every year and 90 per cent of the total expenditure comes from government funds.

## British university to open centre for Indian food

London, July 21: A British university will open a centre for 'Indian food' -- as South Asian cuisine is referred to in this country -- in the wake of its massive success in Britain, reports IANS.

The Asian Centre of Culinary Arts will be opened by the Thames Valley University in west London near Southall. The new centre will be funded by a British government grant of 285,000 pounds.

"Indian food" is already a 2.5 billion pound (4 billion US dollars) a year business in Britain. More than 15,000 restaurants and take-away shops now sell South Asian cuisine in Britain. That is besides the massive sales of ready-made Indian food in supermarkets. The new academy will be "the only one of its kind in the UK," a spokeswoman from the Thames Valley University said.

The centre will provide training for new recruits entering the catering industry as chefs or food service staff and also offer opportunities to those already in the industry to "update and extend their skills, not only in food preparation and service but also in business and management techniques."

The Thames Valley University is not, however, a traditional university. It is among the hundreds of polytechnics renamed university by Margaret Thatcher to attract foreign students by upgrading their status.

The new centre is being funded by the government amid political disputes. British immigration has made it difficult at present to bring chefs and other staff over from South Asia. Officials are keen to promote opportunities for local people rather than importing talent through fresh immigrants.

Bangladeshi restaurant owners are actively campaigning to oppose the title 'Indian food'. About 85 per cent of restaurants serving Indian food are at present owned by Bangladeshis. The centre has taken the safe option of describing Indian food as South Asian cuisine.

A statement from the Thames Valley University acknowledged that there are "massive skill shortages in the hotel and catering sector" and that this is "acute in the Indian and Asian food sectors."

Apart from the growth in restaurants, the university says "demand for outside catering at events is growing at an even faster rate and the demand for curry meals is no longer restricted to Asian communities."

Andrew Ward, head of corporate relations at the university, said: "The Indian food sector is now a major industry and deserves the kind of support that other industries receive. The Thames Valley University is delighted to have won this award so that with partners in Southall and throughout the country, we can create a centre that develops skills the sector so urgently needs."

The centre will work in association with the Southall Regeneration Partnership that aims to promote and develop the restaurant and cafe sector in Southall as a major attraction.

The funding will be used to re-configure training kitchens with equipment needed to prepare South Asian food and also to develop a restaurant where trainees can develop their skills in a professional environment. Those already in the business will be offered a range of courses ranging from a day to a year-long tourist guide to Britain has proclaimed Indian food as the new British cuisine.

It says: "There are those who say Britain has no national dish. Others will tell you, with a misplaced sense of island-nation tradition, that it is fish and chips. They are all wrong. Britain has a national dish all right, and it is a world-beater: the Indian curry."

Britain, the official tourist booklet says, is "turning into a nation of curry-holics." One study by the Good Curry Guide figures that the total number of Indian restaurants in London alone — 3,800 — is more than the number in Delhi and Mumbai put together.

A survey by the BBC Good Food show revealed that 70 per cent British people visit an 'Indian' restaurant at least once a month. Three out of four Britons now cook 'curry', as the British still choose to call South Asian food.

A survey by the magazine Tandoori devoted to the Indian food business shows that 'Raj' is the most common name in such restaurants, though the growth of South Asia cuisine in Britain in the seventies and eighties has little to do with the Raj. There are 342 restaurants called Raj something or other. There are 130 Taj Mahals and a couple of hundred 'Gandhis'.

# Ulysses century's greatest novel in English

LOS ANGELES, July 21: Once-banned "Ulysses" was named on Monday the greatest novel in English this century in a 100-best list that doesn't include a single woman until number 15 and doesn't get to Ernest Hemingway until number 45, reports Reuters.

The list voted on by the 10-member Board of the Modern Library, the Random House imprint that specialises in classic literature, may be more notable for what it omits or relegates to the bottom than for what it puts at the top. Modern Library publisher Chris Cerf is delighted by the controversy.

"No two people are going to agree on a list of the 100 best English language novels but we have succeeded in getting people talking about classic literature again," he said.

The Modern Library web site was flooded with complaints from readers wanting to know why Nobel Prize winner Toni Morrison and popular arch-conservative novelist Ayn Rand were left off along with writers from Africa, India and Australia as well as "Gong with the Wind," one of the century's most successful books.

There were also complaints that the cult favourite "Nightwood" by Djuna Barnes, a novel once hailed as among the century's best by TS Eliot, was not

included nor was Thomas Pynchon, another of "V" and "Gravity's Rainbow."

James Joyce's "Ulysses" was ranked number one in voting by the Modern Library Board, which includes such distinguished writers as William Styron, Gore Vidal and AS Byatt, Bennett Cerf, Chris Cerf's father, was instrumental in getting the book published in the United States, where it was once considered obscene. The book is about one day in the life of several Dubliners.

Second on the list was F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" followed by Joyce's "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man." Fourth was another book that had to fight the censors, "Lolita" by Vladimir Nabokov.

In fifth place was Aldous Huxley's bleak novel of a future utopia "Brave New World," sixth was William Faulkner's "The Sound and the Fury," seventh "Catch-22" by Joseph Heller and eighth was Arthur Koestler's "Darkness at Noon."

In ninth place was "sons and lovers" by DH Lawrence and 10th was John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath." Steinbeck's popular "Of Mice and Men" did not make the list although Erskine Caldwell's "Tobacco Road" (Number 91) and Booth Tarkington's "The Magnificent

Ambersons" did (100). The first novel by a woman to make the list was Virginia Woolf's "to the Lighthouse" in 15th place. In all there were only eight women writers on the list: Woolf, Carson McCullers, Edith Wharton, Willa Cather, Jean Rhys, Irish Murdoch, Elizabeth Bowen and Muriel Spark.

Among the women writers left out were Doris Lessing, Mary McCCarthy, Nadine Gordimer, Alice Walker, Morrison and Harper Lee, whose "To Kill a Mockingbird" was a favourite of on-line readers.

Hemingway, credited by generations of English literature critics with reshaping the language, does not make the list until number 45 with "The Sun Also Rises."

Born, British resident Salman Rushdie's "Midnight's Children" ranked 90th but his "Satanic Verses," the book which earned him a death threat from Iranian religious leaders, did not make the list.

Joseph Conrad, whose first language was Polish and second French, is the writer with the most books on the list — four — but his "Heart of Darkness," a standard classic in any course, ranked 67 behind "Of Human Bondage" by W. Somerset Maugham.

## DU Authorities' statement protested

By DU Correspondent

A section of Dhaka University students yesterday protested a statement made by the DU authorities on Monday regarding increasing the tuition fees.

The protesting students, quoting newspaper reports, claimed the authorities gave some fabricated information regarding the increase of different student fees. Citing an example, a student body pointed out that the authorities said that the course examination fee was increased by Tk 200, which was actually increased from Tk 250 to Tk 800.

The Ganotantrik Chhatra Oikyo (GO), a platform of some left leaning student bodies, earlier called a students' strike on the campus on July 23 to protest the planned increase in educational costs.

In a press conference at Madhu's canteen on the campus yesterday reiterated its demand for the removal of DU Treasurer Prof M Shamsul Huq.

In his last speech on DU's budget for 1998-99, the Treasurer proposed that each student should pay Tk 10,000 a year for his educational expenses instead of Tk 2600 now.

Meanwhile, a section of general students under a platform to resist the increase in educational costs, has announced launching of a campaign on DU campus today.

They will collect signatures and bring out processions on campus to drum up support for materialising their demand of cancelling the move to increase fees and other charges.

## New chairman of Land Appeals Board

By Staff Correspondent

Dr Kamaluddin Siddiky, OSD (Secretary) in Establishment Ministry, has been appointed as the Chairman, Land Appeals Board, an official handout said yesterday.

Khan Amir Ali, another OSD (Secretary) has been appointed as the Director General of Anti-corruption Bureau.

A K M Shamsul Huq, Member, Planning of Water Development Board has been appointed as the Chairman of the board, the handout said.

## Swiss govt hands over documents on corruption allegations against Benazir, Asif

ISLAMABAD, July 21: The Swiss government has handed over a set of documents to Pakistan on corruption allegations against former Premier Benazir Bhutto and her husband Asif Ali Zardari, officials here said today, reports AFP.

The documents handed over by Swiss Ambassador Mare Andre Salamin on Monday include an original indictment order of Swiss judge Daniel Devoud against Zardari, they said.

The indictment order will now be served on Zardari who has been in jail since the ouster of Bhutto's three-year-old government in November 1996 on

charges of corruption and misuse by then president Farooq Ahmed Leghari.

The government accountability cell led by Senator Saifur Rehman said the papers include documents "showing proofs" of corruption charges against Bhutto and Zardari.

It alleged the couple stashed away millions of dollars "extorted through kickbacks and commissions" in award of pre-purchase inspection contracts to two foreign firms, SGS and Cotecna.

The documents revealed that the former Prime Minister and her spouse had a secret account