

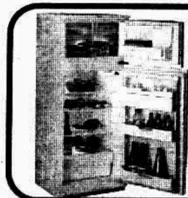


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'Intensify battle against enforced sexuality'

By Staff Correspondent

More than 300 women rights activists from around the world met in the city yesterday to hammer out strategies to fight and eliminate prostitution and sexual exploitation.

"We have gathered here today to reaffirm the fundamental rights to be free from sexual exploitation in all its forms as - sexual harassment, rape, incest abuse, wife abuse, pornography and prostitution," Aurora Javate de Dios, President of Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW), told the inaugural session of a three-day conference.

Dios said prostitution that used thousands of women and girls reaped enormous profit for organised crime in many countries all over the world. She said sexual exploitation, especially prostitution and trafficking, violated women's human rights and was a severe form of discrimination.

Imagine a world without prostitution and sexual exploitation. Women want to live life without fear of violence and sexual exploitation," she said.

"The CATW is seeking ways and means to combat this horrendous crime that is pervading all stairs of society all over the world - the crime of sexual exploitation," said Sigma Huda, a leading women's rights activist in Bangladesh and convener of CATW Bangladesh chapter.

Huda said the meeting would seek ways to curb forced prostitution and the smuggling of women, which she said had

reached an alarming proportion in Asia.

"We have organised the conference to raise public and official awareness of the magnitude of such crimes and the urgency to take action against them," she said.

The CATW, which represents 50 women's organisations in the Asia-Pacific region, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, was formed in 1988.

Huda said the Dhaka meeting was expected to formulate a unified action plan to intensify the battle against enforced sexuality and save women from the illegal trade.

"The conference was likely to formulate a plan of action including regional and international network, advocacy education, research direct services and human rights documentation to combat all forms of sexual exploitation," she said.

To women and children should be in prostitution any more. I do not want the next generations of women and children to be in it too," said Evelyn Asombrado, an ex-prostitute of the Philippines, told The Daily Star.

"Prostitution is a torture," said another woman, who quit prostitution recently.

She said women in prostitution should be decriminalised while governments must provide services and economic opportunities for them. Some 200,000 Bangladeshis

women and girls had been trafficked to Pakistan alone in the past decade, according to CATW.

India has 2.3 million women in prostitution, the Philippines has 300,000 including 75,000 to 100,000 children in full-time and part-time sex businesses.

In Thailand, estimates of women in prostitution range between 300,000 and 2.8 million, of which a third are minors and children, says CATW. The CATW urged governments around the world to not only make reforms or laws but to enforce them to ensure women were not sold for sex.

Women activists from South Asia held a four-day conference in Dhaka on sexual abuse and human trafficking in June 1998 calling on governments to crack down on offenders. That conference was also organised by the CATW.

The ongoing conference would formulate a plan of action including regional and international network, advocacy education, research direct services and human rights documentation to combat all forms of sexual exploitation.

Noorjahan Begum, editor of women's periodical Begum, inaugurated the conference while Dhaka Mayor Mohammad Hanif attended it as special guest.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia and poet Saira Kamal sent separate messages wishing success of the global conference.

Hasina visits Baker Hostel

CALCUTTA, Jan 27: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, now in Calcutta, today visited Baker Hostel of Islamia College where Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman spent his eventful college life in 1940s, reports UNB.

Sheikh Mujib was a resident student of Baker Hostel of the then Islamia College (Maulana Abul Kalam Azad College), established in 1910.

During the anti-British movement, young Mujib joined active politics and built up student movement in Calcutta after the arrest of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.

The West Bengal government turned room no 23-24 of Baker Hostel where Bangabandhu stayed during his college life into Bangabandhu Museum as a mark of respect for the great leader of Bangladesh.

While visiting the historic rooms, now turned museum, the Prime Minister was visibly moved recalling the memory of her late father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. She spent there for some time and went round the hostel.

Ctg JP leader expelled for filing nomination

CHITTAGONG, Jan 27: Chittagong division organising secretary of Jatiya Party Shamsul Alam Masteer has been expelled from the party for filing nomination paper for the upcoming municipal polls violating the party discipline, reports UNB.

JP presidium member and Chittagong region coordinator Mahmudul Islam Chowdhury today said that Alam has been expelled from the primary membership and from the post of organising secretary.

100 shanties gutted in city

By Staff Correspondent About 100 shanties were gutted when a fire broke out at a Gandaria slum in the city in the early hours of yesterday.

Police and fire brigade sources said the fire broke out at Ghanitgar slum just beside a rail line at Gandaria at about 3.15 am. The origin of the fire could not be ascertained immediately. The extent of damage could not be known either.

Apart from the shanties, the blaze engulfed nearby restaurants, shops, auto-rickshaws and rickshaw garages. Seven units of fire brigade from three city stations rushed to the spot and fought for about two hours to douse the blaze.

JCD leaders

From Page 1

Partha Pratim Majumder murder case. Partha, a leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), was killed in a gunfight between JCD and BCL activists in the city on April 23 last year.

DB sources said, acting on a tip-off, a group of plainclothesmen went to the city's Elephant Road area about 12.45 pm to nab Shishir. Sensing police presence, he tried to escape but police chased and arrested him from Hatirpool crossing.

According to DB sources, Shishir was also involved in various crimes including terrorism, extortion and illegal arms trading in the Dhaka University area.

Fair opens

From Page 1

friendship between countries, between nations and between societies. Books bring souls together."

She said books open up the colourful horizon of the civilization, refine the human soul and sharpen the conscience of the people, helping them to develop as good citizens.

"So, to develop a person or a society the need for reading more books is necessary. A coordinated and continuous effort is necessary to develop the habit of reading books. For this, we need a vigorous social movement. And a book fair can play an important and effective role in creating the social movement."

Hasina said book fair is an essential part of the cultural activities of the Bangalis.

"International book fair gives us the opportunity to know the world history. We're proud of joining the book fair which has created a big confluence of peace, progress and development."

Hasina said: "We don't have enough time to waste. We'll have to materialise the one-world theory if we want to make ourselves fit for a modern world."

She hoped that the book fair would play an important role in building cooperation among intellectuals and publishers of the Bengali-speaking people of Bangladesh and West Bengal.

Forty-five publishing houses from Bangladesh are taking part in this year's book fair. Bangladesh has been participating in the Calcutta book fair since 1995.

Earlier, the Bangladesh Prime Minister was given a hearty welcome at the entrance of the book fair where a group of girls showered petals on her. After the inauguration of the fair, Hasina opened the Bangladesh Gate and Bangladesh Pavillion there. She went round different book stalls of Bangladesh.

Ctg hartal

From Page 1

few rickshaws stayed off the roads.

The inter-district bus to and from the port pulled till 2 pm. Shops and markets were remained closed while offices were seen functioning with thin attendance, keeping shutters down.

Cargo handling inside port jetties was as usual though delivery of goods was hampered due to non-plying of trucks.

Truckloads of police were seen patrolling important points in the city during the hartal period.

Railway sources said train services to and from Chittagong was normal.

Lewinsky, 2 others to be questioned Senate refuses to dismiss impeachment case

WASHINGTON, Jan 27: The Senate refused today to dismiss the impeachment case against President Bill Clinton and extended the trial by authorising House prosecutors to question Monica Lewinsky and two other witnesses, reports AP.

Both votes were along party lines with a single exception. Wisconsin Democrat Russ Feingold who voted with Republicans. Senators voted 56-44 both to subpoena the witnesses and to reject a motion by Democratic Sen. Robert Byrd of West Virginia that would have dismissed perjury and obstruction of justice charges brought by the House against the America's 42nd President.

In remarks before the day's

votes, Majority Leader Trent Lott said. "There is a point when we will complete the work we are involved in and I believe it could be within the next 10 days, two weeks at the most."

Lott said he and other senators were searching for a bipartisan approach to ending the trial. He won over some wavering Republicans on the issue of deposing witnesses after House prosecutors Tuesday restricted their list to Ms Lewinsky, the former White House intern at the centre of the sex and cover-up scandal: Vernon Jordan, a Washington attorney and long-time Clinton friend, and Sidney Blumenthal, a White House aide.

The three would face private

questioning in sessions likely to be videotaped, so that all senators could watch the depositions and determine whether to bring the witnesses in for live testimony.

As for the remainder of the trial, Senators from both parties emerged from three hours of closed-door deliberations Tuesday claiming that revived negotiations were under way or a bipartisan timetable. If the talks were successful, the proceedings could end by the middle of next month, if not sooner.

House prosecutors on Tuesday asked the Senate to invite Clinton to testify, but the White House has rejected the idea and Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle said the proposal "is not going anywhere."

Daschle warned the trial would plod on indefinitely if witnesses were approved, and Clinton lawyer David Kendall said the White House would be "faced with a critical need" to review mountains of previous testimony before deciding whether to seek rebuttal witnesses.

Lott, sensing the Senate will not remove Clinton, is considering a proposal by Republican Sen. Susan Collins to end the trial with two votes: the first on whether Clinton committed perjury and obstruction and the second on whether he should be removed from office.

Int'l monetary expert says

Keep a tab on euro

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh should keep close watch on developments related to the euro, the single currency introduced in Europe, as it might create problems, according to an international monetary expert.

"There would be some effects on Bangladesh's economy due to the introduction of the euro as 45 per cent of the country's exports go to European community," said Dr Pikay Richardson of Manchester Business School in the UK.

If a big brother becomes bigger, it has happened in the case of the European Monetary Union, there is every possibility that some problems would be created," he said.

Richardson was delivering a lecture on "The economic and monetary union of Europe: Implications for Bangladesh" at the auditorium of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) yesterday.

The Young Entrepreneurs and Professionals (YEP) Forum organised the lecture in collaboration with The Daily Star and The British Council. DCCI president M H Rahman also spoke on the occasion.

"Nobody knows the actual impact of the euro but everyone is worried because it is completely a new concept in the world," Richardson observed.

Focusing on problems and prospects of the European Mon-

etary Union he said it would enhance economic activities by at least 20 per cent and lower the interest rates up to three per cent.

"But as all the powerful European countries come closer, it could pose a threat for third world countries," he commented.

He, however, did not rule out the possibility of failure of such an idea which the world never experienced in the past. "Even if it becomes weak the euro would have some impact on other countries," he noted.

The exporters, he said, will have to change their business strategy as the market is going to be controlled by a single organisation - European Monetary Union.

"The prices of the imported goods will also become almost same throughout Europe."

Presenting some positive features of the single currency, Richardson said that it eliminated the border controls on goods, controls on movement of citizens, made a common security arrangement, reduced the import tax on goods and harmonised the technical standards.

Khaleda, Ershad visit injured MP Amanullah Aman

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia and Jatiya Party chairman HM Ershad yesterday visited injured MP Amanullah Aman at a private hospital in the city, reports UNB.

Aman was seriously injured in police action on Topkhana road during Tuesday's hartal, said a party press release.

Begum Zia visited the injured party MP at Monwara Hospital in the evening. She spent sometime beside Aman and inquired about his treatment. Ershad visited him in the afternoon.

Bus services

From Page 1

pecially energy, trade and transport had figured in at their talks.

The two countries have agreed in principle to run bus services between Petrapur and Jessore and between Agartala and Akhaura, Singh said.

He said that a trade fair in Dhaka was likely to be held at the beginning of March and the date of his visit to Bangladesh would be finalised after consultation.

Referring to the Indo-Bangla cooperation in energy sector, the external affairs minister said the Bangladesh Prime Minister had suggested joint ventures in her country to tap 'great resources' of Bangladesh adding that India had agreed to examine these in detail.

As Singh refused to answer questions regarding trade balance between the two countries, his Bangladesh counterpart Abdus Samad Azad said that Sheikh Hasina had raised the issue during her meeting with Indian external affairs minister.

India's response on this issue, Azad said, was "good". Earlier, Congress leader Pranab Mukherjee called on the Bangladesh Prime Minister and had a "friendly personal discussion."

Emerging from his meeting, Mukherjee said he did not carry any message from Congress President Sonia Gandhi. "We took the opportunity to review bilateral relations and to strengthen regional cooperation. We just shared our perception regarding prevailing political situation in the two countries," he said.

Now ILTB?

From Page 1

When police reached the spot on Thursday, one Abdur Rahman alias Naya fled the scene leaving behind a briefcase there.

Police recovered 10 letterhead pads, a seal, a stamp pad and some white powder in a little bottle from the briefcase and three bullets from an almirah at Naya's house.

The pads belonged to the 'Islamic Liberation Tiger of Bangladesh' (ILTB) and the powder was suspected to be heroin.

The temporary address of the ILTB as shown on the pad is 112, Segun Bagicha, Dhaka.

Police arrested Sajeda Rahaman alias Saju, first wife of Naya and seized those from Naya's house.

Police on Thursday went to the spot to investigate a case filed by Naya's second wife, Jahannara Begum, who alleged that Naya had raped their maid-servant on January 15 and tried to violate her again on January 18.

Naya is still at large. Patuakhal Police Super visited the spot.

12 BNP activists arrested at Chandpur

CHANDPUR, Jan 27: Police arrested 12 activists of BNP from Uttar Sriramdi in the town today, reports APB.

They were arrested on charge of involvement in terrorist activities during Tuesday's hartal, police said.

Six separate cases were filed against them on various charges, including causing damage to different establishments and residences.

Meanwhile, local BNP has demanded immediate release of the arrested.

Khaleda

From Page 1

ropean Commission Ambassador Michael Drury.

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan was also present at the function.

Another source said while talking with the diplomats, Khaleda apprised them of ensuring municipal elections which has been boycotted by the mainstream opposition parties.

She told the diplomats that BNP and other opposition parties truly wanted to participate in the polls and put forward a 4-point demand to ensure a free, fair elections.

Mentioning some recent incidents, including the Election Tribunal ruling in favour of BNP candidate in June 12, 1996 parliamentary polls, she also said that these clearly proved that Chief Election Commissioner Muhammad Abu Hena is not at all neutral and is working as a subservient to the ruling party.

The opposition leader mentioned Tuesday's newspaper reports and photographs which, she said, are clear evidence of the government's atrocities. Details of the meeting could not be known immediately.

Talebani held

From Page 1

hari, near the Myanmar border, police said.

Ukhia police arrested two suspected Taleban members - Abul Khair and Abdul Hannan - from village Dargahabill in the area in November last year.

Jyoti Basu

From Page 1

of people who had come to listen to Bangladesh Prime Minister could not be accommodated in the opening ceremony of the fair.

He said he saw many people waiting outside, who mainly came to hear Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. But organisers could accommodate only 500 people for security reason.

He told Hasina: You came here earlier. But this is the first time you are here as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

"I'm very happy to welcome you here on behalf of people of West Bengal," said Basu.

About poet Shamsur Rahman, the chief minister said, "We were not sure if he would be able to come. We felt relaxed finding him in the same flight with Sheikh Hasina."

Lalkhan

From Page 1

acres of land.

The annual expenditure for this extremists' camp was estimated at Tk 41 lakh, of which Harkut-Uz-Jihad, Bangladesh raised Tk 100 lakh in different local sources. The bulk of the remaining money was regularly received from 'aboard', they said.

One Azharul Islam was responsible for bringing the money from abroad. He is now abroad to collect money from 'donors', they said. The investigators also claimed that they seized two bank accounts of the institution, one in a bank at Agrabad and the other at Lalkhan Bazar.

Corruption

From Page 1

able syringes each costing Tk 10 while those were available at Tk 2.20 each in the market.

At Chittagong Medical College Hospital, 6000 pieces of Tk 26 thread roll were purchased at the rate of Tk 160 each while a three-inch microphone cost Tk 1,050 against its market price of Tk 450.

The alleged corruption by the CS dominated the proceedings of a two-hour standing committee meeting at the Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

The committee had earlier detected corruption by six civil surgeons who were found to have pocketed Tk 20 crore.

The meeting decided that the six civil surgeons of Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha, Naogaon, Chapainawabganj, and Munshiganj along with one deputy secretary and senior assistant secretary and other persons including concerned officials of the finance ministry would be suspended and departmental action would be taken. The meeting also decided that anti-corruption cases would also be initiated against the officials.

Action against the contractors who supplied goods would also be taken. Meanwhile, the six CSs told the committee that they were willing to return the money they allegedly misappropriated.

3-day int'l fair opens Turn Dhaka into market of leather goods: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina opened a 3-day Dhaka International Leather Fair '99 at a city hotel yesterday hoping that it would be a milestone in the progress of leather industry, reports UNB.

"Let us see Dhaka as an attractive market for leather goods," she told the inaugural function at Sonargaon Hotel in the morning.

The fair first of its kind in the country, has been jointly organised by Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) and Bangladesh Finished Leather and Leather Goods Exporters Association (BFLLEA).

In all, 73 stalls - 14 from overseas - have been opened in the fair displaying a wide array of leather fashions to attract foreign buyers.

Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria was the special guest at the inaugural function, which was also addressed by Commerce Secretary Syed Alamgir Farruk Chowdhury, FBCCI President Abdul Awal Minto and BFLLEA President Abdus Sattar Bhuiyan.

In her inaugural address, the Prime Minister stressed the need for boosting exports through rapid industrialisation to achieve overall economic progress of the country.

"With this end, we've framed a liberal trade policy to create an atmosphere for both local and foreign investment," she said, attaching the government's priority to create a more favourable climate to boost industry and exports.

To ensure increased participation of private sector the government has offered incentives packages as well as infrastructural and institutional supports for export-oriented industries, Hasina said.

Opposition

From Page 1

draw their candidatures," the source said. The BNP men who will contest in the municipal polls will lose their party posts and even primary membership, according to a party decision.

BNP sources further said no incumbent chairman, except the one in northern Saidpur, filed nomination.

JP sources said that the party had already started taking "proactive action against the leaders who had submitted nominations for municipal elections scheduled for February 23-25. They said JP had already expelled Chittagong Division unit organising secretary Shamsul Alam Master.

Meanwhile, the opposition parties have decided to distribute leaflets in the municipal areas explaining the justification for the boycott.

The central liaison committee of the BNP-led opposition parties has also decided to despatch a number of teams comprising central leaders of the parties to the municipalities. The teams are expected to leave the capital in the first week of February.

Ershad leaves for London today

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad leaves for London today by a British Airways flight, reports UNB.

After staying four days in London, the former President will proceed to the United States to take part in the 47th National Breakfast Prayer

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

Published by the Editor from City Publishing House Ltd., 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000 on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C.A., Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmandi B/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 866772-4, Commercial: 866771, Fax No: 88-02-863035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA. Internet edition address: http://www.dailystarnews.com and Email address: dstar@bangla.net