

Int'l Women's Day

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Copenhagen, Denmark in 1910, declared the day as the International Women's Day to express their solidarity with the suppressed women labourers in New York.

German socialist movement leader Clara Jeklin proposed the declaration.
On the occasion, President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages.

President Badruddoza Chowdhury in his message called for strengthening of the continuing trend of women's education and welcomed the measures undertaken by the government and non-governmental organisations for women's development.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in her message underscored intensification of the global movement for empowerment of women and establishment of their rights.

"Peace will be established in society, the image will be enhanced, if women are empowered and their rights established," she said.

Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina recalled the people's contributions to empowerment of women and to the struggle for establishing their rights at local, national and international levels.

In a joint statement, President of the Bangladesh Mahila Parishad Hena Das and its General Secretary Ayasha Khanam have expressed grave concern over the rise in the killing, rape and harassment of women.

The Bangladesh Mahila Parishad has organised a three-day exhibition of pictures — painted by women — today at the Zainul Gallery of Institute of Fine Arts.

The Acid Survivors Foundation and the Daily Prothom Alo will jointly bring out a procession today from the Central Shaheed Minar at 9:30am, which will end at the Jatiya Press Club.

Former chief justice and chief advisor of the caretaker government Habibur Rahman will inaugurate the procession.

Male representatives of the society Prof. Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, journalist Ataus Samad, Chairman of BRAC Fazio Abed Hasan, Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Anwarullah Chowdhury, BGMEA President Kutubuddin, actors Razzak and Ali Zaker, magician Jewel Ich and singer Tapan Chowdhury, among others, will participate in the procession.

The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs has organised a function at the Ziaur Rahman

Auditorium of Bangladesh Shishu Academy.

Minister for Women and Children Affairs Khurshid Zahan Haque will attend the function as chief guest.

Prof. Jahan Ara Begum, the prime minister's advisor for primary and mass education, Dr. Suniti Acharya, WHO representative in Bangladesh and Advocate Sigma Huda, general secretary of the Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights, will be present as special guests.

The International Women's Day Observation Committee will bring out a procession with a slogan "guardianship of children: equal rights of mother-father" at 9:00am from in front of the Jatiya Sangsad. The procession will end at Panthakunja.

BGMEA, Bangladesh Women's Chamber of Business and Industry, Bangladesh Garments Workers Protection Alliance, Bangladesh Mahila Awami League and the Hunger Project have also chalked out different programmes.

Bail petition of Dipu Chy rejected

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, yesterday rejected the bail petition of Dipu Chowdhury, son of former state minister for shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, in a criminal case.

Judge Ahmed Jamil Mostafa passed the order following a criminal appeal for bail by the defence lawyers.

In its order, the court mentioned that the charges brought against Dipu were primarily proved although his name was not included in the FIR (First Information Report). So, the bail petition is rejected.

The defence lawyers submitted a criminal appeal to the Session Judge's Court, Dhaka on January 23.

The CMM's court on December 31 last year rejected the bail petition of Dipu.

The case was filed with Uttara thana on May 26 last year against three unidentified people.

But Dipu was shown arrested in the case on December 27 the same year although his name was not

Cases crawl

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The cells were set up to provide legal aid to women who face repression in various forms, including divorce, family feud, quarrel between husband and wife, leading to separation. The settlement of familial disputes requires mutual understanding, legal assistance, and realisation of dues, shelter and security.

Each cell comprises one project director, one magistrate, one police inspector, one advocate, one legal officer and five hearing officials — all female.

The biggest problem with not having a magistrate is that the accused cannot be produced before the cell for hearing unless a warrant of arrest is issued.

"On many occasions, we failed to produce the accused (husbands) before the cell for hearing because police have to have a warrant of arrest," said a police officer.

"Often police stations are requested to help arrest the accused, but such informal 'requests' were mostly found ineffective," said a source in the department.

Each cell receives about five complaints on average a day.

Based on the complaint, the investigation is initiated and both the plaintiff and the accused appear before the officials.

Namaj

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At this stage, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed took the floor to recommend that the chair defer the bill. "The honourable member [Quader] wants to defer his bill, Mr. Speaker. It is better to be deferred," Moudud said.

Moudud and Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, an adviser to the prime minister on parliamentary affairs, were seen talking with Quader for quiet sometime immediately before the speaker took up the agenda.

"I defer the bill as desired by the member concerned," the speaker told the House.

The bill was also listed in the order of the day on February 14, but it was not raised was absent on the day.

The proposed bill suggests that a Muslim citizen be fined up to Tk 10,000 if he/she does not offer prayers five times a day.

It says offices, courts, schools, colleges, shops and bazaars must remain closed and transports parked at the nearest mosques during the prayer times and any violator would face the penalty.

The bill provides for the formation of a commission headed by the president to establish practice of namaj in the country. The commission will have its branches across the country.

Face global challenge

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Bangladesh have stagnated.

He observed that if these industries cannot survive in a market of 130 million people, then they are 'good for nothing'.

Prof. Sobhan said Bangladesh's transition to an investment-propelled globalisation from trade-driven globalisation is going to be a difficult process. He added that domestic and foreign direct investments have close connection.

Speaking at the session, Hasanul Huq Inu, general secretary of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, said more funds should be pumped into the rural economy.

Earlier, speaking at the working session, Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, executive director of the CPD, termed the ongoing process of globalisation unbalanced and inequitable because of the 'asymmetrical power relationship' in the world.

He said the least developed and the developing countries are facing increasing marginalisation in the context of globalisation, originating from market access problems and supply side bottlenecks. About 40 per cent of the country's economy is now interlinked with the global economy through trade, services, the FDI and foreign assistance.

Moreover, the country's transition from aid to trade dependence also made it vulnerable to external shocks, he said.

To integrate successfully with the global economy, the country now needs to make a second generation transition from trade-driven globalisation to investment-propelled globalisation, he added.

To make the second generation transition successful, the country will need to put in place the necessary fiscal, financial and institutional incentive structures to promote investment, Dr Bhattacharya mentioned.

Although the process of globalisation poses formidable new challenges, it also holds new opportunities provided adequate and appropriate domestic and global initiatives are put in place, he observed.

Presenting a paper on 'Economic Fallout of the September 11 Terrorist Attacks in the US', Professor Ayubur Rahman Bhuiyan of the Dhaka University said the major weakness of Bangladesh's export sector is the acute dependence on a few export destinations and also on a narrow range of products.

To attract private investment, strong and effective steps are needed to improve the law and order, fight corruption, rid the privatisation process of political considerations, implement reforms in labour and financial markets, and create a congenial environment for private sector development, he suggested.

Media men

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Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, Opposition Chief Whip M Abdus Shahid took part in the discussion.

Besides, Acting Editor of The Daily Ittefaq Rahat Khan, Managing Editor of The Daily Star Fahim Monayem, Deputy Editor of the Prothom Alo Mozammel Hossain, Director General of Bangladesh Television M Nazmul Alam Siddiqui, Deputy Director General (news) Faruq Alamgir, Managing Director of ETV Simon Dring, Chief News Editor Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul and special correspondent of BSS Zaglul Ahmed Chowdhury took part in the discussion.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar said the success of parliamentary democracy depends on the smooth publicity of parliament activities.

Mujib's portrait

FROM PAGE 1
ments, including imprisonment, for undermining of father of the nation's portrait and indecent remarks about him.

In the bill, Pramanik claimed that the law on father of the nation's portrait denied contributions of late president Ziaur Rahman and other national leaders to the nation's war of independence.

"There is no instance of making a law for display of someone's portrait. People did not accept late Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the father of the nation, and his becoming so is still controversial," he said, calling the display of the portrait at government offices illogical.

He also referred to an executive order by the post-independence government making mandatory the display of portraits of the heads of the state and the government.

"The bill is aimed at freeing the nation from an unexpected compulsion," the treasury bench MP said in a statement on the objectives and reasons of his bill.

Bank robber

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dacuity in Tongi.

The DB team also recovered the license of a pistol issued on May 29, 2001. The pistol however could not be found in the house. The shotgun was purchased through TCB on 6 February 2002, police said.

The team also seized three mobile phones from the possession of the arrested. DB sources said Selim is member of an organised gang of bank robbers.

ADC Ruhul Amin told newsmen that it would now be easier to arrest the rest of the gang as one member is in the hands of the police.

Masked armed bandits looted over Tk. 17 lakh in cash and prize bonds from the vault and counter of the Sonali Bank branch at the Jute Research Institute at Manik Miah Avenue Monday morning.

Earlier on Tuesday, detectives picked up six persons including four bank employees for interrogation, later releasing cashier Amirul Islam.

The arrested persons are Akhter Faruq, warehouse keeper cum clerk, Abul Hashem, warehouse guard, Selim Miah, a part-time sweeper, Ali Akbar, the keeper of a shop in front of the bank, and Munshi Ruhul Amin, manager of a canteen housed on the ground floor of the bank. They are all being interrogated by detectives at the DB office.

NCBs

FROM PAGE 1
mergers by June.

Rupail has identified 82 branches in the red and aims to abolish 41 of them, 16 through merger by June.

The banks will sit among themselves and also with the Bangladesh Bank for follow-up. Sonali Bank will lead the team.

Donors have long been asking the government to close down the loss-making branches. The finance ministry sources said the country's chances of getting the much-needed loan from the IMF hinges greatly on the success of the scheme.

Behind bars

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are fast learners of all dirty tricks.

A senior official at the Dhaka Central Jail told The Daily Star that he had run into a boy in his early teens in the jail in 1996. The boy was arrested on charge of rioting in his locality. In 2000, when the official was going around the jail, he found that the boy had gone out of the jail only to be nabbed and put behind bars again. This time he was facing murder charges.

The official, speaking on condition that he not be named, said that although the Children Act 1974 does not provide for juvenile delinquents to be put into jail, the very act itself seldom comes into force.

Additional Inspector General of Prisons Abdul Zahir said, "The magistrate's court sends juvenile delinquents to us and asks us to produce them before it. And we do our job accordingly. It does not fall into our jurisdiction to see under which act or law they are to be tried."

A metropolitan magistrate, preferring anonymity, said that under no circumstances should the adolescents be put into jail. If the government cannot put them into their correction cell, it can set up an enclosure in the jail to keep them away from the association of notorious criminals.



Participants at a people's consultation to prepare a country report on sustainable development jointly organised by environment ministry, the FEJB and local civil society bodies at Barisal yesterday.

People's consultation in Barisal

FROM PAGE 12
Environment and Forest Ministry, Divisional Commissioner's office and Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB) and local civil society bodies organised the daylong people's consultation as part of a process to prepare a country report to be presented in the August 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Whip Mujibur Rahman Sarwar opened the divisional level exercise, the fifth of its kind, which was attended by Zahiruddin Swapan MP, Secretary of Environment and Forest Sabihuddin Ahmed, Professor Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam, FEJB chairman Quamrul Islam Chowdhury, Managing Director of Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, Dr Ahmed Kamal of Dhaka University, Director General of Department of Environment Hedayetul Islam Chowdhury, and Dr Mahfuzul Haque of Environment Ministry, Acting Divisional Commissioner of Barisal Lokman Hakim presided over the inaugural function.

Deputy Commissioners of the districts of Barisal Division, officials of different department, NGO activists, journalists, teachers, representatives of different professional, women and ethnic minority groups joined the exercise in three groups.

They identified the issues and problems of the region, reviewed the development interventions in the past decade and suggested ways to overcome the problems and development strategies involving stakeholders of all development programmes.

Whip Mujibur Rahman urged all to "act locally and think globally" in carrying out all development activities and ensure an effective coordination between the Environment

Ministry and all government and private organisations concerned to minimise 'tampering with nature.'

Identifying the dangers of the current donor-sponsored development models, he said even in the riverine region unplanned irrigation projects were being carried out without assessing the necessity causing a negative impact on the water bodies as well as traditional livelihood.

Lawmaker Zahiruddin Swapan said preservation of nature and environment must be seen as priority issues as the existence and livelihood of human being depends on them.

Environment secretary Sabihuddin Ahmed said the government wants the people at the grass-roots to design the development strategies as stakeholders identifying their issues and problems. In the past, millions of dollars were wasted for "dictated" programmes like massive installation of tube wells which later appeared to be counter-productive, he said.

Prof. Sirajul Islam Chowdhury said the role of the state was crucial for protecting the environment and cited the example of the ban on polybags saying that despite such a long-felt necessity, the ban could only be imposed through government intervention.

Prof. Islam criticised the developed countries for their "profit-oriented" attitude and blamed it for environmental degradation across the world. "We are the victims of development of the developed world," he said.

Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam termed environment as an "irretrievable resource" saying the destruction of environment would destroy the existence human beings on earth.

He said many of the so-called

achievements in national life in fact proved to be counter-development as "we have attained self-sufficiency in food at the cost of soil fertility due to overuse of fertilisers and pesticides or have urbanized at the cost of health, like asthma to our children."

Outlining the objective of the workshop, FEJB Chairman Quamrul Islam Chowdhury said this was the first such exercise in the country for accumulating public opinion in framing development strategies to ensure sustainability of development programmes as well as protection of environment.

Prof. Ahmed Kamal said poverty and environmental degradation are closely inter-linked as environmental degradation later intensifies poverty.

Citizens' body

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that more stringent and quick actions against the law violators irrespective of their party affiliation are now needed.

The meeting discussed the present law and order of the country and expressed deep concern over the worsening situation.

Meeting sources said some committee members, who are not in government service, blamed the ruling party and the police administration for the failure to control crime. They also made a number of recommendations on improving the situation.

A combined combing operation by the BDR and the police to arrest the criminals in the Dhaka city was also suggested.

The committee will again meet next month to review the situation.

Frazzled face of 'posh' Gulshan

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and the new beneficiaries filled part of the lake and built structures, not leaving an inch of space between the lake and the new buildings. If Rajuk now wants to build its planned walkway along the lake, it has to fill it to do so.

At Gulshan Avenue, most of the residential plots, each measuring about one big.ha, are now being converted into large shopping malls.

According to Rajuk sources, there are now half a dozen such under construction malls and 18 more are awaiting Rajuk approval for construction.

High-rises constructed or under construction at Gulshan-1 and 2 roundabouts and at Gulshan Avenue hardly have adequate parking facilities or approach ramps. For instance, officials at the 23-storey Navana Tower at the Gulshan-1 roundabout admitted that they do not have adequate parking facilities for their commercial venture.

The Navana Tower has two underground car park floors, one of which has been kept aside for air conditioner and emergency power generator for the building. The remaining floor can hardly accommodate 18 vehicles. "We have applied to Rajuk for allocation of the open space behind our building so that we can build a multi-storey car park," said Zakir Alam Khan of Navana's sales section.

Half of the open space behind Navana Tower at the intersection of roads 18 and 20 has been encircled with a boundary fence made of corrugated tin. Rajuk has temporarily leased it out to Navana for keeping its construction materials, Rajuk's Chief Town Planner told this correspondent.

About 20 makeshift restaurants, motor repair workshops and tea stalls have been set up on the remaining half of the open space. At one corner, half a dozen taxicabs were parked under a signboard which read Designated Space for Car Park.

Local residents complained of 'total nuisance' imposed on them at

their doorstep. They said the park is a den of drug traffickers and mastaans.

They said the space had always been a small public park with several trees and a grassy lawn. Two large mango trees could still be seen.

"About 18 months ago, I saw a Pajero car parked near the open space.

A young man was giving instructions to some labourers working there. People told me he is the son of an influential minister living at Uttara," said a resident of the area pleading not to be named.

He also said that on the same day, a group of people built the shops. With the change of government, 'people in-charge of the park have also changed their political colour.'

Local people, including shop owners and leaders of an association called Gulshan Chinnomul Babshayee Samabaya Samity, alleged that Gulshan police station is now 'greatly benefiting' from unauthorised commercial activities at the public park.

Officer-in-Charge of Gulshan thana Mohammad Iftekar Hossain however denied it.

At the nearby Gulshan Avenue, a play ground has disappeared. The space has been encircled with at least three separate fences, announcing plans for construction of multi-storey commercial complexes.

Residents said part of the play ground was earmarked for construction of Gulshan thana but big developers have grabbed it in collusion with a section of Rajuk officials.

At Gulshan-2 roundabout, at least three public parks have disappeared or are in the process of disappearance. Rajuk recently leased out 42 kathas of land to Borak Real Estate, which is also constructing a controversial 24-storey five-star hotel nearby.

six plots would be to build at least four floors of parking facilities before they build any shopping centre or housing complex.

Borak is planning to build a shopping complex-cum-residential unit on the stretch of land situated in the residential area and two blocks away from the officially declared commercial zone.

Meanwhile, Rajuk's official map of Gulshan, repeatedly revised by unscrupulous officials involved in the city's booming real estate business, show these open spaces as residential plots.

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has taken over two large public parks in Gulshan. Near the roundabout at Gulshan-2, part of a large public park is a trade centre for construction materials like brick and sand.

More than half of this park has been converted into makeshift housing colony for DCC's drivers and other employees. Similarly DCC's sweepers have taken over an entire park near Gulshan-1. Just beside the park, more than one bigha of public land has been taken occupied by a 'pir,' who has set up a mosque-cum-madrassah and his living quarters.

Rajuk officials, when asked about anomalies in plans for the area, readily pointed their finger at these two parks occupied by DCC men. But they failed to recover these from the illegal occupiers.

"None has the right to do what DCC has done in the city, plundering public parks and open spaces. They (DCC) leased out the large park at Gulshan-2 without Rajuk's permission and converted it into 'Wonderland, a sort of theme park,'" said a resident of Gulshan.

The Wonderland authorities have embarked on building additional shops along the park without any authorisation whatsoever.

"DCC was given the responsibility of looking after the parks but it is not understandable under which authority, they are leasing out those," said another resident of the area.

Nasim's bail prayer rejected, sent to jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, yesterday rejected the bail petition of Bahauddin Nasim in foreign currency smuggling case and sent him to the Dhaka Central Jail.

Metropolitan Magistrate Kazi Meraj Hossain passed the order following a report by the IO of the case.

Bahauddin Nasim, special assistant to Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, was not produced before the court.

Nasim was placed on a 10-day remand in two separate cases and the court directed the IO of the cases to produce the accused on expiry of the remand in foreign currency smuggling case.

The remand of Nasim in the case was expired on March 5. But the IO of the case did not produce the accused before the court.

The court also passed the order on two separate petitions by defence lawyers seeking division for Nasim in the jail and the bail hearing in his presence on Saturday.

The prosecution side opposed the petition for bail hearing in presence of the accused due to security reasons.

After hearing both sides, the court rejected the bail hearing in presence of the accused and asked the defence lawyers to appeal to the District Magistrate for division.

"Nasim was tortured during the workshop. So, the IO of the case did not produce him before the court on expiry of a five-day remand to hide marks of torture," the defence lawyers argued.

The lawyers also appealed to the court to write down their submissions in the order sheet regarding irregularities and violation of the court order.

Following the appeal, the magistrate took note of the submissions.

Danish, German envoys

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him and viewed that initiatives taken so far have not been enough to improve the situation.

"Very sorry to see so many cases of crimes reported in the press. Crimes seem to be increasing. Law and order does not seem to have improved since the election," said Danish Ambassador Munk in an interview with the UNB.

Such a problem was there before the election also and the government could not do enough to improve it, he observed, giving his frank views on Bangladesh's state of democracy, governance, law and order, corruption, investment climate, poverty reduction and development priorities.

The Danish diplomat quoted from the ruling party's declared election manifesto where law and order topped its agenda.

"The government has all the good intentions, political will ... but implementation is going slow," he said.

The emissary of a major bilateral development partner aiming to assist poverty reduction said they were unhappy to see Awami League not coming to parliament. "For the democratic process, it is unfortunate that the parliament is not yet complete."

Referring to government move to establish the office of Ombudsman, he said such a move requires a complete parliament to ensure that the person enjoys full support of the people.

Hasina tells Mar 7 rally

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The AL chief also alleged that her assistant private secretary Bahauddin Nasim was forced to put signature on a blank paper so that he could be implicated in false cases as the government wished. "My APS was taken to DGF and CID offices and tortured in such a way that he became sick and was not produced before court."

The former prime minister referred to recent incidents of rape of Mahima and some others and 'attacks' on Christian community in Pabna. She said that after every such incident, the home minister visited the places of occurrence and then the police and the administration kept on pressuring the victims not to disclose identity of the offenders as they belong to BNP.

"The way this government is ruling the country for the last five months, it appears it has dug up its own grave. People of the country will definitely resist them," Hasina observed.

Termining the BNP-Jamaat government a 'government for repression on women,' she said, "Those who form government in alliance with Jamaat and Taliban can never be democratic."

The opposition leader criticised the home minister for his recent remark on law and order. She said the people were surprised to hear the minister's remark that 'crimes did not mark increase though killings increased in the country.' So in his eyes, murder is not an offence, she noted.

Hasina demanded of the government to 'stop repression and filing of false cases.' She expressed deep

The Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka on Wednesday stayed till March 13 the order for remand of Nasim in the case filed with Madaripur thana in connection with firing on the motorcade of the then leader of the opposition Khaleda Zia.

The judge, Ahmed Jamil Mostafa passed the order when defence lawyers submitted a criminal revision, seeking stay on the remand order passed by the CMM's court.

Nasim was arrested from ZIA on February 27 on charge of smuggling foreign currency. Later, he was shown arrested in the case filed with Madaripur sadar thana.

Fahima case

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Suman and his accomplice Halim were surrendered to the Mirpur police on Wednesday.

According to the police, Suman and his accomplices abducted Fahima from Tolarbagh area on Sunday, took her to Sardar Heramat Garment and raped her.

Anisur, another accused in the rape case is now on a two-day remand. He was arrested by Mirpur police immediately after the incident.

Amu