



PHOTO: STAR

Artistes render a group song at the Victory Day Festival 2003 organised by the Sammilita Sangskritik Jote at the open stage at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday.

Ensure women's participation in decision-making process

Speakers tell workshop on local govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop yesterday called for women's emancipation from illiteracy, superstitions and religious dogmatism to ensure their active participation in the decision-making process and development activities of local government bodies.

"Though women's political empowerment has been identified as a priority issue at both national and international levels, women's participation at grassroots level is yet to be ensured," said Advocate Shamima Begum of Khan Foundation Legal Cell in the keynote paper.

She said, "We think the provision of reserved seats in the local government bodies is a major setback for women's active participation in the democratic and developmental process."

The Khan Foundation organised the workshop on 'Active participation of women representatives: A pre-condition for strength-

ening local government' at its auditorium in the city.

Public representatives at grassroots level, legal practitioners, government official, NGO and media representatives took part in the workshop.

The workshop aimed at focusing on the issues of effective women representation in different tiers of the country's administration.

The local government representatives have a direct communication with the grassroots level people and they bridge the gap between the people and the central government, said Deputy Director of National Institute of Local Government Serajul Hossain.

"Women's participation in the activities of local government has to be ensured to consolidate the growth of democracy," Hossain said.

To strengthen the local government bodies, he suggested formation of a forum of the local representatives to put pressure on the policy-making bodies.

Hossain also said dependence

on the central government for resources constitutes an inherent weakness of local bodies.

Women have to come forward to establish their rights, said Advocate Zakia Anarkali.

Nargis Parvin, a member of Jinary Union Parishad under Palash Thana, said male members often tend to sideline the women members elected from reserved seats and that allocation of resource and authority is not equally proportionate.

"Women representatives have to exercise their authority at every local government sphere," said Arahazar UP member Rahima Akhtar.

Following a group discussion, the participants recommended that illiteracy, ignorance, religious dogmatism, and women repression have to be eliminated to empower women in true sense.

Qulkhwani



Qulkhwani of Alhaj Abdus Samad Khan, father of Brig. Gen. (Rtd.) Abidur Reza Khan, will be held at House # 51, Road # 19, Sec # 14, Uttara Model Town, at 5.30pm tomorrow, says a press release.

He died on December 14 at the age of 87.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers have been requested to attend the qulkhwani.

'Govt-pvt sector partnership can promote use of CNG'

SOHEL ISLAM from Manila

Speakers at a workshop yesterday stressed the need to develop partnership between the government and private sector to promote the use of alternative fuels across the world.

They said compressed natural gas (CNG) is the best alternative to diesel and petrol as it could reduce harmful emissions from vehicles and industries.

The first two-day workshop on

Asia-Pacific Natural Gas Vehicles Industry Development began in the Philippines capital of Manila yesterday, co-hosted by the Department of Energy of the Philippines, Korean Gas Corporation (Kogas) and the Better Air Quality 2003 Committee.

The workshop is a part of the Better Air Quality 2003 Workshop to be held on December 17-19, organised by the Clean Air Initiatives with the assistance of the World Bank and the Asian

Development Bank.

Air quality experts, representatives of alternative energy producers, government officials and journalists from 22 countries gathered in the workshop to share their experiences and ideas on the use of CNG and other alternative fuels in their countries.

As the countries across the world have recently started switching over to CNG vehicles, they should adopt proper rules and safety regulations, the speakers said.

Otherwise, this transition may not yield the expected results, they added.

They also suggested using the appropriate and quality conversion kit and exhausts in the vehicles and industries to contain hazardous emissions.

The participants also called for safety measures as the inappropriate and faulty conversion system may cause dangerous accidents like explosions and fire.

Addressing the workshop,

President of AFV Consulting LLC of USA WH Bill McGlinchey appreciated the current development related to alternative use of fuel in Bangladesh. McGlinchey visited Bangladesh recently.

Talking to The Daily Star, McGlinchey said it is a very good sign that Bangladesh has developed its alternative fuel sector. But it should adopt a slow but steady process to build its natural gas related infrastructure instead of doing something overnight, he added.

PM opens Military Hardware Display

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday inaugurated the Military Hardware Display jointly arranged by Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force at the National Parade Square.

The show, put up in observance of the Victory Day, will remain open for public from 9am to 5pm everyday till December 22 except on December 18 when it will be opened from 1pm to 5pm.

As soon as the prime minister opened the display by cutting ribbon, three F-7 aircraft of BAF flew past from north to south over the

area at a very low altitude.

At the naval display side, Khaleda talked with the Commander of BNS Gomuti over high frequency radio link. Gomuti is now in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on her way from UK to Bangladesh.

She exchanged greetings with the officers and sailors of the ship.

The prime minister who is also in charge of Defence Ministry went round different stalls and pavilions set up by the three services and witnessed heavy and light weapons and equipment at different stalls.

DHAKA
T O D A Y

Drawing competition
The Newway Bangladesh Ltd. organises a drawing competition for children to mark the Victory Day. Venue: Newway office, House # 39, Road # 21, Banani. Time: 10.00am.

Reunion
A reunion of freedom fighters living in Dhaka will be held, organised by Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka. Venue: Nagar Bhaban premises. Time: 12.00 noon.

Birthday of Sarada Devi
The Ramkrishna Mission will hold a discussion to celebrate the 151st birthday of Sree Ma Sarada Devi. Venue: Ramkrishna Mission. Time: 5.00pm.

Blood donation programme
The Angikar Club, Rotary Club of Dhaka Mid City and Rotaract Club of Dhaka Mid City Green have jointly organised a blood donation programme to mark the Victory Day. Venue: Plear Government Primary School, 66 Hossaine Dalan Road. Time: 8.00am to 5.00pm.

Cultural function
The Nazrul Institute organises a discussion and cultural function on the occasion of Victory Day. Venue: Institute auditorium, Dhanmondi. Time: 4.00pm.

Street drama
The 'Amra Muktioddhar Santan' (we are children of freedom fighters) organises daylong programmes, including street dramas and cultural function, on the occasion of the Victory Day. Venue: TSC road island. Time: 10.00am.

Voluntary blood donation
The ORCA Blood For Life organises a voluntary blood donation programme to mark the Victory Day. Venue: TSC premises. Time: 9.00am to 8.00pm.

Discussion
The World Federation of Homeopathy, Bangladesh chapter, will hold a discussion on the occasion of Victory

Day. Venue: 25 Shamsuzzoha Market (first floor), Bangla Motor. Time: 11.00am.

DHAKA
T O M O R R O W

Japanese animation film show
The Zahir Raihan Film Society will screen three Japanese animation films - 'The Castle of Cagliostro', 'Laputa-Castle in the Sky' and 'My Neighbour Totoro' by Hayao Miyazaki. Venue: Goethe Institut, Dhanmondi. Time: 3.00pm, 5.00pm, 7.00pm.

Street drama festival
A two-day street drama festival, organised by the Dristipat Natya Dal, will be inaugurated to mark the 20th founding anniversary of the theatre group. Venue: Central Shaheed Minar. Time: 4.00pm.

Cultural function
The Bulbul Lalitkala Academy organises a discussion and cultural function to mark the Victory Day. Venue: Shishu Academy. Time: 6.00pm.

Discussion
The Bangabandhu Society will hold a discussion to mark the Victory Day, with Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina as chief guest. Venue: Engineers' Institution auditorium. Time: 3.30pm.

Russian crystal fair
Russian crystal fair, organised by the Russian Cultural Centre, will be inaugurated. Venue: Exhibition hall of the cultural centre, House # 510, Road # 7, Dhanmondi. Time: 5.00pm. The exhibition will remain open from 11.00am to 7.00pm daily till December 25.

IUBAT seminar
The Centre for Management Development of IUBAT will hold a seminar on 'Strategic Dimensions of organisations' improvement: balanced scorecard Model'. Venue: IUBAT, Dhanmondi. Time: 3.00pm.

Police clueless about robbers in combat dress

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police are still in the dark about identity of the robbers in combat dress who allegedly looted about Tk 90,000 in cash and valuables from a house at Arambagh in the capital and fled in an olive coloured jeep in the early hours of Sunday.

None of the robbers could be arrested till the filing of this report at 8:00 last night.

In a case filed with Motijheel Police Station, Aleya Siraj, the landlady, alleged the robbery was committed by about eight young men aged about 25 and of five to six feet height -- some in combat dress, one in a naval uniform and others wearing plain clothes.

The army headquarters denied involvement of any army man or vehicle in the robbery.

The first information report (FIR) filed with police said the robbers knocked the door of the tin-shed house at around 12:30am.

"As I opened the door, they (robbers) said they have information that there are arms in my house. Then they entered the house, shut the door and raised the sound of television," Aleya said.

"They tied up my ailing husband and me, ransacked the room as if they were searching for arms. Then they asked for the key of our almirah, saying they need money to pay their boss," she added.

"They left the spot in an olive coloured jeep bearing the number AR-536. I shouted for help but none dared to come forward seeing their combat dress."

The gang took away two mobile phones, Tk 50,000 and about eight tola of gold, the FIR said.

In a press release yesterday, the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) termed 'false' newspaper reports that the olive-coloured vehicle used in the robbery passed through Shaheed Jahangir Gate of Cantonment.

There is no army vehicle bearing the number mentioned in the reports, the ISPR added.

Watch drama to celebrate victory

With the slogan, 'Watch drama to celebrate the victory', the Shomoy Sangskritik Goshthi will present its current production Bhager Manush, directed by Aly Zaker, at the Shawkat Osman Auditorium of the Public Library on December 16 to mark the Victory Day.

Mannan Hira adapted the play from Sadat Hassan Manto's 'Toba Taik Singh'.

US embassy closed today

UNB, Dhaka

All offices of the US embassy in Dhaka including Public Affairs Section, Information Resource Centre and Student Advising Centre will be closed today on the occasion of the Victory Day of Bangladesh, says a press release.

Obituary

Afsar Uddin, a member of the then Pakistan National Assembly and parliamentary secretary, died of old-age complications at a city hospital yesterday, says a press release.

A major of the then British army, he hailed from village Hizla under Barisal district.

He is survived by his wife, one daughter and three sons.

His qulkhwani will be held at his village home on December 21.

Advocate Kamrul Islam

Advocate Kamrul Islam died of old-age complications on Sunday at the age of 76, says a press release.

A senior advocate of the High Court, Kamrul hailed from Sariakandi of Bogra district. He is survived by his wife and one son.

His qulkhwani will be held at his Uttara residence after Asr prayers on Friday.