

'Reform existing laws in light of Cedaw'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad has urged the government to fully ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Cedaw) and reform existing laws of the country in the light of that convention.

The demand was made in a resolution adopted at the end of its three-day national parishad meeting at CIRDAP Auditorium in the city yesterday.

The parishad called for reservation of one-third seats in parliament for women and direct election to

those seats as per Cedaw.

It also demanded separate special tribunal for every district and enactment of new laws to stop violence against women.

The meeting expressed concern at the deterioration of law and order and condemned the killings by different law enforcement agencies in the name of ensuring law and order.

It also urged the countrymen to unite against communal and fundamentalist forces.

At the meeting, representatives of different districts shared their experiences and demanded qualitative changes in the organisation.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) took out a procession in the city yesterday demanding resignation of the government and protesting price spiral of essentials.

Political parties urged to show respect to democratic norms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lack of mutual respect among politicians and desperate attempt to assume state power are mainly responsible for the growing intolerance in politics, speakers at a roundtable said yesterday.

To solve the prevailing political situation, major political parties have to show respect to democratic norms and the parliament should be the centre of all political debates, they said.

Prajanma Academy, a youth group, organised the roundtable on 'Current intolerant politics of Bangladesh: causes and remedies' in the city.

Presenting the keynote paper, columnist Farhad Mazhar blamed the attitude of the two major political parties to each other for the prevailing situation.

Genuine politicians of both the

parties do not get priority in decision-making, he said, adding that rather, the businessmen now influence the process.

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed said democracy and intolerance cannot go together.

It is possible to stop infiltration of black money and criminals into politics if the BNP and the AL become sincere in this regard, he said.

The law minister also said political parties should evaluate dedicated leaders and workers while nominating candidates for the election.

Referring to the AL's demand for resignation of the government, Moudud said, "Please don't ask for resignation. We will not step down before our tenure is over and you (AL) have to wait till next general election."

AL presidium member Suranjit

Sengupta said currently politics of the country was not only intolerant but also full of clashes.

He said the parliament is now running at the dictate of the prime minister and lack of respect towards opposition has aggravated the situation.

The AL leader also said the judiciary is now under threat as the government has appointed judges on the basis of political ideology.

Presided over by Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, the roundtable was also addressed by State Minister for Water Resources Goutam Chakrabarty, Advisor to ATN Bangla Saiful Bari and Advocate Abdul Baset Majumder.

Dhaka on track to meet target of reducing child deaths

Pace of progress globally is too slow: Unicef

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

New country-by-country data revealed alarmingly slow progress on reducing child deaths despite the availability of proven low-cost interventions, according to a Unicef survey.

The Unicef said that while 90 countries, including Bangladesh, are on track to meet the target of reducing child deaths by two-thirds by 2015, 98 countries are considerably off track, and globally the pace of progress is far too slow.

"A child's right to survive is the first measure of equality, possibility, and freedom," Unicef Executive Director Carol Bellamy said, launching the report, Progress for Children, in New York on Thursday, said a Unicef press release.

One of the world's largest child populations lives in South Asia. Bangladesh, with lower rates of

child mortality than both India and Pakistan, is on track to meet the UN Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target of reducing by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five years of age.

On Bangladesh's situation, Morten Giersing, Unicef Representative in Dhaka, said: "Recent mortality surveys indicate that an estimated 250,000 children still die each year, out of which 90,000 newborns die before they reach their 29th day of life, 61,000 children die due to ARI, and 30,000 children die due to injuries, particularly drowning, which is the leading cause of deaths in the 1-4 year age group."

Giersing added: "Unicef's future child survival support is prioritised for improvement in peri-natal and neo-natal health services, prevention of child injuries and accidents, and improvement in control of major

killers such as ARI, diarrhoea and vaccine preventable diseases."

"Unicef will also continue to provide its support to the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) and micro-nutrient supplementation."

The Progress for Children report makes clear that those countries that have fallen short on progress since 1990 now have a much more daunting task.

At least 39 countries must now reduce mortality by more than 8 percent a year, on average, during the remaining years to 2015 in order to reach the goal.

Child mortality rates vary considerably among regions and countries, but the most disturbing findings are those countries whose annual rate of progress has been negative; in other words, they are heading in reverse, with rising child mortality rates.

In several countries in sub-Saharan Africa and the Commonwealth of Independent States, children are less likely to make it to their fifth birthdays than they were in 1990.

HIV/Aids remains one of the chief underlying causes affecting child mortality trends, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

Botswana, Zimbabwe and Swaziland, which registered the second, third and fourth fastest increases in under-five deaths, also have the world's highest national HIV prevalence rates - about 37, 25 and 39 percent respectively.

AL distributes relief among tornado victims in Tongi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Main opposition Awami League (AL) yesterday distributed relief materials among the members of 600 tornado-hit families in Tongi.

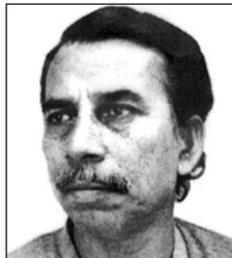
A relief team led by Sheikh Hasina's Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury distributed rice, dals and other materials among the victims at Kolabagan, Jinat Textile, Aaus Para and Kha Para.

AL leaders including Asaduzzaman Nur, Nazma Rahman, Shariful Arefin Tutul and Jahid Ahsan also visited different hospitals and gave financial assistance to the injured people.

They criticised the government for not providing any help to the victims after the 24 hours of tornado.

They also urged the people to come forward to oust the Khaleda-Nizami government to save the country.

Some other political, social and cultural organisations also distributed relief among the tornado-victims.



Death anniversary of Farhad today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 17th death anniversary of Comrade Mohammad Farhad, former general secretary of Communist Party of Bangladesh.

A milad mahfil will be held at the residence of his wife at 94/F Azimpur Colony in the city.

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

Obituary

Dr Mohammad Ishaq Talukder, former economic minister at the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh in Geneva, died yesterday morning at the age of 63, says an official handout.

He is survived by his wife, one son and one daughter.

He was buried at Banani graveyard.

Badrul Huda Damal

Badrul Huda Damal, president of Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Prokoushali Forum, died of a cardiac arrest at Birdem Hospital in the city on Thursday night at the age of 48, says an official handout.

He was the younger brother of Communications Minister Nazmul Huda.

Badrul is survived by his wife and three sons.

His quikhwani will be held at his home at 31, Road # 5, Dhanmondi after Maghrib prayers on Sunday.

DHAKA
T O D A Y

Reception
Vigyanissa School and College will host a reception for the meritorious students who made outstanding results in HSC Examinations this year with Education Minister Dr M Osman Faruk as chief guest. Venue: College Auditorium. Time: 10.30am.

Award giving ceremony
The award giving ceremony of Golden Nest Cultural Reporters Award 2003 will be held with Information Minister M Shamsul Haque as chief guest. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 6.00pm.

Prize giving ceremony
The prize giving ceremony of Sher-e-Bangla Cup Debate Competition, organised by Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, will be held with Education Minister Dr M Osman Faruk as chief guest. Venue: University Auditorium. Time: 6.00pm.

Publication ceremony
The publication ceremony of a quarterly magazine on art, literature and culture titled 'Abasarer Gan' will be held. Venue: Bichwasahitya Kendra Auditorium, Bangla Motor. Time: 10.00am.

Rotary Dhaka Central
Weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club, Shahbagh. Time: 1.30pm.

Rotary North West
Weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka North West will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club, Shahbagh. Time: 5.30pm.

Furniture show
The second wood-metal creative furniture show of Rokonuzzaman Babu will be inaugurated. Venue: Zainul Gallery, Institute of Fine Arts. Time: 6.00pm.

Inauguration
Under the auspices of the National Revenue Board, the web site (www.rivarproject.org) of Reforms in Revenue Administration will be inaugurated. Venue: Board conference room, Segunbagicha. Time: 3.00pm.

JETRO seminar
Japan External Trade Organisation will hold a seminar on 'How to penetrate into Japanese IT market'. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 4.30pm.

WEATHER TODAY

Moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at most places over the country with heavy to very heavy falls at places over Dhaka and Sylhet in the next 24 hours till 6.00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged during the period, Met Office said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 30.5 degree Celsius was recorded at Khepupara and the lowest of 21.5 degrees at Rajshahi.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:37pm today and rises at 5:54am tomorrow.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	26.8	23.8	77	79
Chittagong	28.7	24.5	97	82
Rajshahi	27.0	21.5	78	86
Khulna	29.5	23.7	84	-
Barisal	29.4	23.8	89	87
Sylhet	28.4	23.2	91	95
Cox's Bazar	29.0	25.0	92	98



M Mahbubuzzaman, former president of Bangladesh Scouts, gives away the highest award Silver Tiger to a dedicated Scouter at the council meeting of Scouts at Mouchak National Scout Training Centre in Gazipur on Thursday. Manzoor UI Karim, president of Bangladesh Scouts, and M Fazlur Rahman, chief national commissioner, were also present.



Bangladesh Academy of Ophthalmology organised a scientific conference in the city on Thursday, with renowned eye specialist Prof MA Matin as chief guest. The 'OSB Directory 2004' was also launched at the conference attended by 300 eye specialists.



Lady Jay, wife of Sir Michael Jay, British Permanent Under Secretary of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, visited the UK-supported Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP) in Savar during her recent visit to Bangladesh.