

Be alert as conspiracies against Bangladesh on

PM urges members of Ansar-VDP

UNB, Gazipur

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday urged the members of Ansar-VDP to remain alert and be active about anti-state activities that might create instability and chaos in the country.

Addressing the 26th National Rally 2005 of Bangladesh Ansar and Village Defence Party at its academy parade ground at Shafipur here, the PM cautioned that various conspiracies were on against Bangladesh.

"So, you'll have to be more alert now," she told the rank and file of Ansar battalion, normal Ansar, VDP and Town Defence Party.

Khaleda said peace and discipline are prerequisites to development, and asked them to remain vigilant so that none can break peace and discipline in the society.

"Never treat yourselves as little. You're the real representatives of the government in your respective areas and you'll have to take responsibility of maintaining peace and development in your neighbourhoods," she said.

Ministers, MPs, diplomats and high civil and military officials attended the function.

Appreciating their performance in various fields, including maintaining law and order and socio-economic development, she said the government has taken an initiative to raise



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia takes salute during the spectacular march-past of the parade by the members of Ansar and VDP at Shafipur yesterday.

six more new Ansar battalions of which already one male and another female battalions have been formed.

A full-fledged headquarters of Ansar-VDP will be set up at an appropriate place soon apart from making Ansar-VDP academy a full-fledged training institute and the work on it has started, she said.

A special training centre for interested women will also be set up to groom up skilled manpower suitable for getting jobs abroad, she added.

Khaleda hoped that Ansar-VDP would play a leading role in making each village self-reliant and their Samity would become the centre point of rural development and their own prosperity.

Earlier on her arrival at the parade ground, a guard of honour was accorded to her by a smartly turned out contingent drawn from male and female Ansar battalions, normal Ansar, VDP, and Town Defence Party.

She inspected the parade and

took salute from the spectacular march-past of the parade from a decorated dais flanked by State Minister for Home Lutfuzzaman Babar and DG Ansar-VDP Maj Gen M Akbar Akhter.

The PM adorned Ansar President Padak to Abdur Razzak for his three courageous anti-terrorism drives in Dhaka city in 2003-2004.

She also held a meeting with the Ansar-VDP officers at the academy.

PHOTO: PID

State minister for home blamed for detaining chief whip's son

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The state minister for home has been accused of detaining chief whip's son at Dhaka Jail to defame the family prestige of the victim.

The accusation was made by Khandaker Abdul Hamid Dablu, elder brother of Khandaker Akhter Hamid Paban, in a press release yesterday.

Dablu, a lawyer, said the jail authorities detained Paban 'illegally' even after receiving the release order on Monday.

Judge Mohammad Matiur Rahman granted ad-interim bail to Paban on Monday upon a bond of Tk 30,000 with two guarantors. Later, Dablu, accompanied by advocates Gazi Towhidul Islam, Shafiqul Islam and Azizur Rahman along with a court peon, went to the Central Jail to submit the release order at 3:00pm.

But the jail guard Prodiop informed them that Paban was placed on a 30-day detention as per the direction of the state minister.

They tried to get a copy of the detention order, but the on-duty officers at the jail gate said they were directed by the state minister not to supply it.

The press release claimed that the home ministry directed the jailer over telephone to detain Paban on Monday when the court granted him bail as his name was not in the first information report (FIR).

The preventive detention order on Paban by the home ministry was the first during the BNP rule, it added.



Acid Survivors' Foundation organised a men's rally on the occasion of the International Women's Day at the Central Shaheed Minar in the City yesterday. Poet Shamsur Rahman, second from left, inaugurated the rally.

PHOTO: STAR

'Stamp out all forms of violence against women'

Men's rally against acid attacks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different socio-cultural, non-government and women's rights organisations yesterday observed the International Women's Day with a call to stamp out all forms of violence and discrimination against women.

The Acid Survivors Foundation

(ASF) brought together men in a grand procession urging all men to play a vital role in eliminating acid violence from the country.

At a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar, the speakers demanded that the acid attackers should be given exemplary punishment under speedy trial act to discourage such heinous acts.

"It is now a must for men to join the movement against acid violence," said Abdullah Abu Syed, founder of Biswa Sahitya Kendra, while presenting a declaration of the rally.

About 300 women fall victim to acid attacks a year, he said, adding that such incidents are increasing alarmingly just because the enforcement of the existing laws cannot be ensured.

He also called on the political parties not to shelter the acid throwers. Poet Shamsur Rahman said women have proved their worth in many fields.

They should be provided with all facilities like men so that they can explore their potentials, he added.

Attorney General KM Hasan Arif called for raising mass awareness to put an end to acid violence.

Several women victims of acid attacks also narrated their experiences and demanded men's active role in resisting such social menace.

Dhaka University Vice-chancellor Prof SMA Faiz, Brac Executive Director Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury, FBCCI Director Dewan Sultan Ahmed, President of Jatiya Press Club Riazuddin Ahmed, cultural personality Mamunur Rashid, film star Riaz, writer Anisul Haque, cricket player Habibur Bashar Sumon and ASF Acting

Chairperson Shawkat Hossain also spoke.

Shamajik Protirodh Committee observed the day with the slogan 'Stop violence against women in family and social life and stop all state-sponsored violence'.

The Committee, comprising 30 rights organisations, held a discussion on the premises of the Institute of Fine Arts, with Vice-President of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad Bela Nahi in the chair.

Masuda Rehana Begum of Mahila Parishad read out a declaration demanding an end to violence against women, improving the quality of democracy and trial of all religious extremists.

Executive Director of Ain O Shalish Kendra Advocate Sultana Kamal, Vice-President of Bangladesh Nari Progoti Shangha Prof. Mahfuza Khanam, President of Karmojibi Nari Shirin Akhtar, President of Dhaka Development Forum Dr Mahmudur Rahman, Assistant General Secretary of Mahila Muktiyoddha Sangsad Farida Khanam Saki, Organiser of Sammitto Samajik Andolon Tarek Ali also spoke.

Mahila Awami League, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, Bangladesh Garments and Shilpa Samik Federation, Women voice - Bangladesh, Action on Disability and Development and Konnya Shishu Advocacy Forum also organised different programmes to mark the day.

Ensure adequate women's representation in polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Real empowerment of women does not lie in a quota system for them in parliament, said Science and ICT Minister Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan yesterday.

Rather, the political parties should ensure adequate representation of women in the general elections, he said at an International Women's Day festival in the city.

Women are often perceived as second class citizens, he said and

called for ensuring their representations in every sphere of society such as administration, teaching and local government.

The Khan Foundation organised the festival to mark the International Women's Day. Canadian High Commissioner David Sproule, Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri, and z attended the festival.

Khan Foundation Executive Director Advocate Rokhsana Khondker and Chairperson Korsheda Banu also

spoke at the inaugural session of the festival.

The speakers said although the country continues to lag behind in the area of women's rights, it has made great strides since independence.

The festival began with a number of dances and songs presented by young girls and women while event organisers wore vests promoting the theme, "Speak out, Reach out and Act Now".



Khan Foundation Executive Director Advocate Rokhsana Khondker speaks at the International Women's Day festival. Sitting from left are Khan Foundation Chairperson Korsheda Banu, Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri, State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Selima Rahman, Mrs Rosana, representative of Italian Embassy, Deputy Chief of the Mission of the US Embassy Judith Chamas, Mrs George, USAID Country Director Gene V George and Science and ICT Minister Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan.

'Improve law and order to encourage skilled migrants to return home'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop yesterday called for improving the law and order situation and creating a good working environment to encourage skilled expatriates to return home and contribute to the development of the country.

They also identified some factors that often discourage the migrants to come back home -- such as little scope for quality education and lack of better job opportunities, healthcare facilities and technological development.

However, the present trend of establishing private universities, transnational companies and NGOs is creating opportunities for the expatriate academics, observed the migrants who returned home after a stint abroad.

The two-day international workshop on 'Sustainable return of professional and skilled migrants' was organised by the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) in cooperation with Development Research Centre for Migration, Globalisation and Poverty at the Brac Centre in the city.

"People always want to go back to their root, and feel satisfied with their efforts to contribute to the welfare of their own people," said Dr Omar Rahman, a professor of Independent University, Bangladesh, who was once a migrant in the USA.

M Mushtaque Habib of North

South University said it is very difficult for a person staying abroad for a long time to come back home and adapt to the new situation, especially when the children are brought up and educated in a different cultural environment.

Yet it is possible provided the overall political and economic situation remains sound, he observed.

Prof Jamal Nazrul Islam of Chittagong University chaired a session on 'Experiences of return of academics and other professionals'.

He suggested that the skilled nationals living in different countries must come back home to form a strong civil society in a bid to bring a positive change to every sphere of society.

Presiding over another session, former advisor to a caretaker government Rokia Afzal Rahman said the education of a person must be goal-oriented and the goal should be to bring a positive change to the society.

Noted fashion designer Bibi Russel, filmmaker Tareque Masud, Cat's Eye Chief Executive Officer Sayeed Siddiqui, Bazlur Rahman of Bella Italia and Little Italy, banker Muztaba Mojumdar and performer Habib Wahid shared their experiences abroad and the success they achieved in the country after their return.

26TH SPECIAL BCS Psychological test April 8

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The psychological (written) test of the successful candidates in written test of the 26th special Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) will be held at 9:30am on April 8 instead of April 1 at the Dhaka Center due to unavoidable reasons.

The details of the examination, including seat arrangement, schedule and other directions, will be informed later through the national dailies, says a press release.

Int'l confce on civil engineering begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three-day long third annual paper meet and international conference on civil engineering organised by the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) will begin at IEB auditorium in the city today.

The leaders of Civil Engineering Division of IEB announced it at a press conference at IEB auditorium in the city yesterday.

IEB Civil Engineering Division Chairman Rezaul Karim, Honorary General Secretary ANH Akhter Hossain and Vice-President Nurul Huda spoke at the conference.

They said that around 500 engineers from home and abroad will participate in the conference while 61 papers will be presented. The papers contain the broad areas of engineering of structural, environmental, geo-technical, transportation and water resources.

Communication Minister Nazmul Huda will inaugurate the conference. The concluding session will be held on March 11.

Death anniversary



Today is the first death anniversary of ANM Shahi-dullah, a senior advocate of the Supreme Court and life member of Pabna Samity, says a press

release. A milad mahfil will be held at Minar Mosque, Block # C, Tajmahal Road, Mohammadpur, after Asr prayers.

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

DHAKA TODAY

<p>Reception Anti War Movement Bangladesh will host a reception in honour of British MP George Galloway. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4.00pm.</p>	<p>Science exhibition A three-day science exhibition of St Joseph High School will be inaugurated. Venue: School premises, Mohammadpur. Time: 8.30am.</p>
<p>Film show Zahir Raihan Film Society will screen two French films titled 'La Femme de l'aviateur' (1981) by Eric Rohmer, and 'La nuit americaine' (1973) by Francois Truffaut. Venue: Alliance Francaise Auditorium, Dhanmondi. Time: 5.00pm and 7.00pm.</p>	<p>Orientation The orientation programme of Spring-2005 of Manarat International University will be held with University Grants Commission Chairman Dr M Asaduzzaman as chief guest. Venue: University campus, Gulshan-2. Time: 3.30pm.</p>
<p>Exhibition Goethe Institut organises an exhibition titled 'Inclusive urban heritage of Kolkata' by Manish Chakraborti. Venue: Exhibition gallery of the institute, Dhanmondi. Time: From 2.00pm to 8.00pm till March 17.</p>	<p>Inauguration Inter-districts VOLVO Single Decker Bus Service will be inaugurated with Communications Minister Nazmul Huda as chief guest. Venue: Sheraton Hotel. Time: 10.00am.</p>