



The Action Network to Combat Violence against Women took out a procession in the city yesterday to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Stop domestic violence, torture on women

Rights organisations demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women was observed yesterday with a call to stop domestic violence and resist repression on women.

This year the theme of the day was 'Violence Against Women: Hindrance to Women's Development.'

Different rights organisations organised discussions, rallies, cultural functions and mass signature campaign to mark the day.

Committee to Implement International Demonstration Day on Violence Against Women, a network of 47 rights organisations, demanded reforms of the existing laws and their proper implementation to help the repressed women.

Addressing a rally at Mukta Mancha in Dhanmondi in the morning, the committee leaders also demanded strengthening of its standing committees in every union parishad to resist violence against women at local level.

Shirin Huq, a member of

Naripakkha, said institutional initiative is a must to stop violence against women.

"It is an achievement for us that the repressed women or the rape victims can now speak and claim justice," she added.

At another discussion at Mukta Mancha in the afternoon, Executive Director of Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) Advocate Salma Ali urged all to show respect to women at homes, roads, transports, offices and educational institutions.

She said neglect to elderly women in many families or discrimination of girl child on the basis of complexion is also a kind of repression.

Former Vice-president of BNWLA Advocate Fowzia Karim, Advocate Hasina Rashid, Jobaida Parvin, Nasima Sultana and Kohinur Begum were present on the occasion.

Democracywatch also organised a discussion at its auditorium to mark the day.

Speakers at the discussion said

people from all walks of life should come forward to resist domestic violence.

They urged the media to portray positive image of women and establish the concept of gender equality.

Presided over by Prof Latifa Akhand, the discussion was also participated by Dr Taherunnesa Abdullah, Prof Nazma Siddiqui and Ishrat Shamim of Dhaka University.

Action Network to Combat Violence Against Women also held a rally and organised a mass signature campaign at Central Shaheed Minar for creating awareness and involving people to resist violence against women.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad organised an opinion sharing meeting and a documentary show on violence against women at its auditorium.

Vice-president of parishad central committee Bela Nabi, Khaleda Mahbub, Hasna Banu, Nargis Zafar and Maleka Banu were present on the occasion.



Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz gives away a certificate to a student at the convocation ceremony of the Institute of Business Administration at the TSC auditorium yesterday.

Donors urged to help develop water resources management

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Water Resources Minister Hafiz Uddin Ahmad yesterday urged the donors to help develop water management and flood control system in the country.

Speaking as chief guest at a seminar, he said the major water problem of Bangladesh is its shortage in dry season and surplus in rainy season, both of which cause huge economic losses.

The problem has been created as upper riparian country India controls the flows of most of the 54 rivers, which are the main sources of fresh water for Bangladesh, he added.

The seminar on 'Water Resources Management and Flood Control in Bangladesh' was organised jointly by Franco-Bangladesh Association of Scholars and Trainees (FBAST), Cultural Section of French Embassy and French Trade Commission at the Spectra Convention Centre in the city.

"Our water management policy dictates maximum use of surface water to ease the pressure on

underground water, but it needs a huge fund," the minister said, adding that barrages might have to be constructed in Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna basins to store water for lean season.

He said the level of underground water is going down in an alarming rate and it may have disastrous effects on environment and agriculture in future.

"We are still having better harvest just because of the irrigation projects of Water Development Board, high yielding varieties of paddy and thanks to hard labour of the farmers," he added.

The minister blamed India for not holding regular meeting of the Joint River Commission, which is why the water-related issues could not be resolved.

He also recalled the support of France during the liberation war in 1971 and the devastating floods in 1988 and hoped that such help would continue in future.

Asked on the minister's seeking assistance from the development partners, French Ambassador

Jacques-Andre Costilhes, who was present as special guest at the seminar, said France alone cannot give any assistance for water management.

"There should be other financial institutions or donor agencies where we can participate to help develop water management of Bangladesh," he said, adding that France has enough expertise and technology in dealing such issues.

Asked if France would take any initiative in this regard, he said Bangladesh is a sovereign country and it should take its own decision.

"We can just help," he added.

On the Indian River Linking Project, the ambassador said this is a bilateral issue and it should be handled accordingly.

He, however, said it can also be an agenda of the Saarc and can be solved through it.

FBAST President Liaquat Ali Khan, Secretary General Md Serajuddin, and former state minister for Science and Technology Dr RA Ghani also spoke at the seminar followed by a technical session.

UNIFIED EDN SYSTEM

'12 lakh SSC candidates will face bleak future'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a meeting yesterday urged the government to cancel its decision of introducing unified education system in the country.

They also decided to launch agitation soon to compel the government to cancel the decision.

"If we fail to compel the government to cancel its decision, the lives of 12 lakh SSC candidates for 2007 will be destroyed," he added.

"We will definitely be able to force the government to cancel the decision as general people have already opposed it," said Prof Ajoy Roy, president of Shikkha Andolon Mancha.

He said his organisation will soon announce its different agitation programmes including rallies, processions and strikes protesting the unified education system.

Presided over by General Secretary of Shikkha Andolon Mancha Ashraf Uddin Akash, the meeting was also addressed by Dhaka University Teachers' Association President AAMS Arefin Siddique, Prof Shahidul Islam, Prof Amir Hossain, Progostishil Chhatra Jote leaders Khalequzzaman Lipon, Baki Billah and Taslima Akter Lima.



Nagorik Sanghati and Green Voice stage a demonstration at Shahbagh in the city yesterday demanding compensation from the Canadian company Niko Resources for Tengratala gas field blow-out.