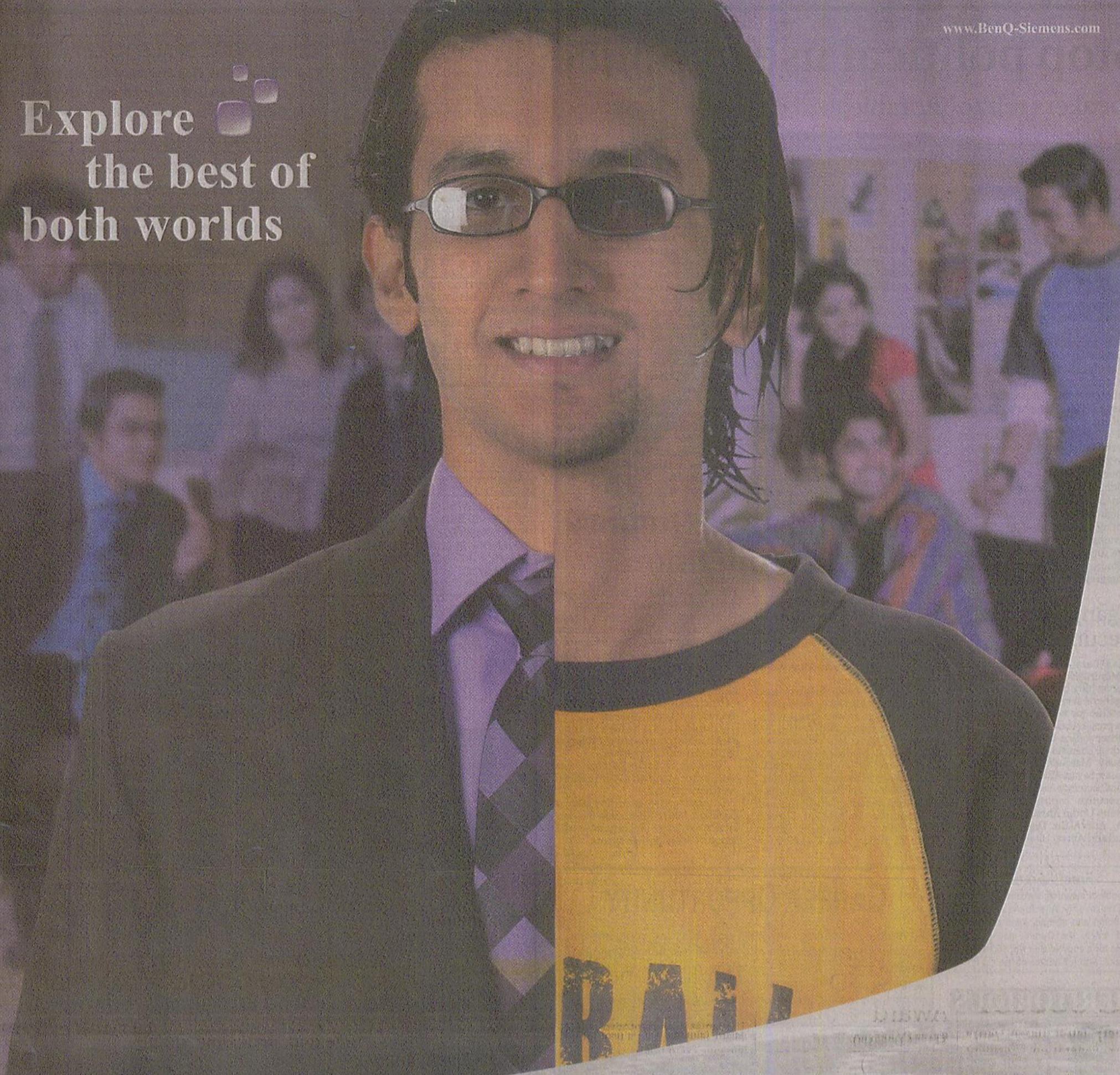


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Budget allocation for women meagre

Speakers tell dialogue

DU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a dialogue yesterday expressed dissatisfaction over the allocation in the national budget to put an end to violence against women terming the amount 'very scanty'.

They said the government took a number of steps nationally and internationally to combat violence against women and introduced laws.

All these initiatives, including poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) and related laws, will not function if the national budget does not have a supportive allocation in the sector, they warned.

They were addressing the final phase of the five-phase dialogue on 'National Budget 2006-2007: Gender Analysis' organised by Steps Towards Development (STD) at Cirdlap auditorium in the city. The topic of the day was gender-based violence.

Prof Khair Jahan Sogra of Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Dhaka University, read out a keynote paper on the issue.

She said allocation in the budget for Women and Children Affairs Ministry, Social Welfare Ministry and Youth and Cultural Affairs Ministry is only around one per cent of the total

budget, which will not be able to contain the increasing violence against women and children.

This year the government has placed the budget considering the gender perspective to ensure women's participation in the mainstream development, decision making process and political empowerment, to increase social safety net and to prevent violence against women, Jahan said. 'But the targets contradicted the allotted budget,' she added.

Addressing the dialogue, economist Prof Atiar Rahman said women pay indirect tax worth 40-50 per cent of total tax but the allocation for them is meagre.

He said changing people's perspective is crucial to prevent violence against women, so the budget should contribute to change perspective of the society towards women through creating awareness by training and media campaigning.

STD Director Rajan Karmakar, women leader Maleka Begum, Bangladesh Mohila Parishad General Secretary Ayesha Khanam, Bangladesh Women Lawyers' Association Director Salma Ali and other gender experts attended the dialogue.



PHOTO: STAR
Sammiti Sangskritik Jote forms a human chain in front of the Guide House at Bailey Road in the city yesterday protesting the closure of the Guide House auditorium in the name of renovation.

Agitated people lay siege to recruiting agency

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of agitated people laid siege to a recruiting agency office at Motijheel in the city yesterday demanding immediate measures to send them abroad for jobs.

A group of 50 people, who were scheduled to fly to Fiji for jobs yesterday, became agitated as the authorities of Al Zam International told them that the flight had been cancelled.

The angry people also confined four directors and other staffs to an office room for four hours.

Badiul Alam of Comilla said, "The agency promised us to send to Fiji as day labourers with handsome salary. It took Tk 2.5 lakh from each person and had been changing dates for the last two years. Our flight was scheduled for yesterday but at the last moment the agency told us that our flight had been cancelled due to authorities' incon-

venience."

Babul Rana, director of Al Zam International, said, "We were forced to cancel the flight of the 50 people, scheduled to fly to Fiji yesterday, due to sudden missing of my passport and 13 tickets from the Motijheel office along with Tk 1.85 lakh cash."

He said the unfortunate missing of his passport brought a halt to whole process of sending them to Fiji as he was to accompany them to that country to hand them over to a Fijian company.

A general diary has been lodged with Motijheel Police Station on Thursday in this connection.

The agitation ended when four directors of Al Zam International including Babul Rana, assured the victims of sending to Fiji by July 10.

Motijheel police said no case has been filed until 8:00pm in this regard.