

Call to ensure equal rights for women

Int'l Women's Day observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International Women's Day was observed yesterday with a call to ensure equal rights for women. This year the theme of the day was 'Ending impunity for violence against women and girls.'

Different government, non-government, social and human rights organisations took up elaborate programmes to observe the day.

These included rally, human chain, seminar, opinion sharing meeting and cultural functions.

The Committee to observe International Women's Day began its programme with a procession joined by over two thousand women and men from Manik Mia Avenue in the morning that paraded through Mirpur Road, Pantha Path and Kalabagan area in the city.

The Committee later held a cultural function highlighting the theme 'No politics in the name of religion' at Kalabagan play ground.

The daily Prothom Alo organised a discussion titled 'Future of women leadership in the politics of Bangladesh' at the Liberation War Museum in the afternoon.

Rights activist and former adviser to caretaker government Sultana Kamal said the future of women's leadership in politics is

very bright as they have already a glorious history in politics including the Liberation War.

"But this potentiality could be hindered if we fail to stop fundamentalism and militancy," she said, adding, "We should get rid of the patriarchal mentality and ensure democratic and non-communal society where everybody would enjoy equal rights and opportunity as provided by the constitution.

Supreme Court Advocate Shahdeen Malik said if the level of violence against women diminishes, they would do better in politics.

At a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar, Samajik Protirodh Committee, a network of 40 rights organisations, expressed solidarity with the spirit of the day and stressed the need for their equal rights, dignity and human rights.

Nari Maitree formed a human chain at Moghbazar to raise awareness on women's reproductive health and other rights. The human chain was led by its Project Manager Masuda Begum.

Population Services and Training Centre (PSTC) organised a discussion attended by the representatives of Ain O Shalish Kendra, Bangladesh Mahila Samity, Hunger Free World, Water Aid Bangladesh



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Hena Das speaks at a rally marking the International Women's Day at Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday.

and Manusher Jonno Foundation.

Presenting a keynote at the discussion, PSTC Advocacy Officer Ahmed Mushfika Naznin said although women deserve extra health care they become victim of gender discrimination in this regard.

A total of 87 per cent mothers do not get proper support from doctors and 70 per cent of women suffer from various diseases and malnutrition, she said quoting a recent

survey.

Taking part in the discussion Advocate Sultana Kamal said since women, both poor and rich, cannot take decision of their own, they are deprived of healthcare rights.

Speakers at a discussion, organised by Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS), stressed the need for social mobilisation and changes in people's mindset to ensure women-friendly workplace

in the country.

Dhaka University Debating Society and Department of Women and Gender Studies jointly organised a debate on 'We want a world of equity'.

Biplobi Nari Sanghati, Development Organisation of the Rural Poor, Steps towards Development and Karmojibi Nari also organised separate programmes to mark the day.

Two killed in road accident in Kishoreganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Two people were killed and one critically injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Kishoreganj Highway in Pirojpur area at Bajitpur in Kishoreganj district yesterday.

The victims were identified as Abu Mia, 55, and his wife Sharifa Akhter, 40, of Bhatiapara village of Kotiadiupazila.

Locals said a speeding Kishoreganj-bound bus from Dhaka rammed a rickshaw that was coming from the opposite

direction, leaving two of its passengers dead on the spot and the rickshawpuller critically injured.

The rickshaw-puller was rushed to Bajitpur Medical College and Hospital.

Sources said the victims were returning home with their daughter who is a Dakhil examinee. She was left unhurt.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Bajitpur Police Station Mozammel Haq said locals detained the bus and its driver and handed them over to police.