

Portray women's glorious role in liberation war

Speakers urge media

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday urged the mass media to highlight direct participation of women in the War of Liberation instead of portraying them as vulnerable object.

They said the media can play a significant role in upholding the glorious role of women in the liberation war before the new generation.

The seminar titled 'Women in the Liberation War and Mass Media' was organised by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP) at the National Press Club in the city.

In her introductory speech, BMP General Secretary Ayesha Khanam said the role of women in the liberation war was not presented with due respect in the mass media.

She said the women are often portrayed as commodity in media.

Highlighting the purpose of the seminar, she said it has been organised to sensitise media to focus the role of women in the liberation war with equal dignity of men.

Presenting a keynote paper, Shanta Maria, a member of Publicity and Mass Media Unit of BMP, said the role of women as freedom fighter in the liberation war was never presented properly in the mass media of a patriarchal society like ours.

She said women were always highlighted in the media as passive participant of the liberation war and never awarded at national level for direct participation in the war.

Shanta, also a journalist of daily Janakantha, elaborated the multi-role of women in the liberation war as direct and indirect participant, chief executor of economic activities and victim of sexual abuse.

She called upon the media to present the courageous role of women in the war properly before the new generation.

Anisul Huq, assistant editor of the Prothom Alo, stressed the need for sensitising the male media men as well as more participation of women in this field in order to bring out positive role of women in the liberation war.

He also called for political commitment to patronise the mass media in upholding a dignified image of women in the war.

Nurul Kabir, editor of the New Age, Shuvash Dutta, director and actor, Kazi Sufiya Akhter, editor of Publicity and Mass Media Unit of BMP and Selina Khalek, vice-president of BMP Central Committee, also took part in the discussion.

Call to name 2 city streets after Indira, Aurora

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday called on the authorities to name two city streets after former Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi and commander of Bangladesh-India joint forces during the Liberation War Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the Liberation War.

Bangladesh Mukti Joddha Kalyan Foundation organised the discussion at Cirdap auditorium in the city to commemorate the second death anniversary of Gen Aurora.

Speaking on the occasion, writer and journalist Shahriar Kabir said distorting history is the

number one corruption and the

hats who tried to distort the history of the country should be brought to book.

Convenor of the Foundation Maj Gen (ret'd) KM Shafiqullah chaired the programme addressed by Air Vice Marshal (ret'd) AK Khondaker, Maj Gen (ret'd) CR Dutta, Col (ret'd) Shawkat Ali, President of Mukti Joddha Sangsad Central Command Ahad Chowdhury and Prof Nim Chandra Bhounik.

BU film festival begins in city

BSS, Dhaka

A two-day film festival of Bangladesh University (BU) began on its campus in the city yesterday with a call for waging a movement against the trend of making unhealthy films.

Inaugurating the festival, eminent film director Chashi Nazrul Islam said cinema making has now become backdated due to the production of unhealthy films, detrimental to our long tradition and culture.

"This trend in film making reflects moral degradation," he said adding that the number of cine goers had drastically reduced due to this undesired practice in the country's film industry.

Chief Adviser of special Gen Bangla Shaiful Bari was the special guest on the occasion with BU Vice-Chancellor Kazi Azhar Alin the chair.

ETV TERRESTRIAL OPERATION

HC stays BTRC action for 3 more weeks

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday extended its stay order by another three weeks on the BTRC action suspending terrestrial frequency for operation of Ekushey Television (ETV) programme.

After hearing both the sides, a division bench comprising Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Quamrul Islam Siddiqui passed the order of stay.

In a letter issued on April 22, Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC) took the action as ETV failed to pay the rent arrears amounting to over Tk 30 crore within the stipulated time.

On the other hand, the court also granted for hearing government application that seeks modification of its interim order directing BTRC to regularise its VHF frequency to ETV.

The private TV channel resumed telecast on March 30, a day after the BTRC, in compliance with the March 7 High Court interim order, regularised its VHF frequency.

ETV was the first private-sector television channel with terrestrial facility from the state-owned BT. It went on air officially on April 14, 2000.

But it had been shut down for nearly five years after Supreme Court orders upheld a High Court verdict declaring illegal its licensing process.

Barrister Shafique Ahmed with Muzammel Huq appeared for the ETV, while Barrister Aneek R. Haque represented BTRC. Attorney General Fida M Kamal stood for government side.

Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Advocate Hemayetuddin Ahmed, an organiser of the War of Liberation and former president of district Awami League and Udichi Shilpi Gosthi, passed away at his residence at Fakirbari Road in the city yesterday at the age of 80.

He is survived by his wife, two sons, a daughter and a host of relatives and well-wishers.

Advocate Hemayetuddin was the founder of Barisal Diabetic Hospital, Heart Foundation and Hemayetuddin Education Trust.

Barisal City Corporation Mayor Advocate Majibur Rahman Sarwar, Awami League and its front organisations, Barisal District Bar Association, Barisal Reporters' Union, Sangskritik Sangathan Samannay Parishad, Nagorik Parishad and Nagorik Samaj expressed condolence at the death of Advocate Hemayetuddin.

Faizunnessa Begum

Faizunnessa Begum, mother of economist Prof Mahbub Ullah and senior media professional & environmentalist Mahfuz Ullah, died of old-age complications in the city on May 1 at the age of 86, says a press release.

She left behind four children, including two daughters, a number of grandchildren and great grandchildren and a host of relatives and well-wishers.

She was buried at Azimpur Graveyard.

Her quikhwani will be held at 169 Green Road, Dhaka after Asr prayers today. Relatives, well-wishers and friends have been requested to attend the quik.

Convention

The 12th annual convention 2007 of Lions Clubs International District 315-A, Bangladesh will begin. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 9:00am.

Convention

The 23rd National Conference of Bangladesh Cardiac Society will be held. Venue: Radisson Water Garden Hotel. Time: 9:00am.

Book launch

The launching ceremony of 'Peace makers on earth' by M Haider Uzzaman will be held. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 4:00pm.

Impromptu contest

Prattasha 2021 Forum organises an impromptu contest for school students. Venue: RC Majumdar auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

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Telltale evidence of corruption at PSC

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while disqualifying others. The viva voce for 100 marks usually adds with total marks of written examinations. As the pass mark in the viva voce is 40, a candidate getting below it in the viva voce disqualifies for the selection even if they score highest marks in the written examinations.

A large number of candidates who scored well in the written examinations were given below 40 marks in the viva voce, as they did not pay bribe, sources said.

"Out of 16,342 candidates taking viva voce test, around 5,000 who scored well in written examinations were given below the 40 marks," said an official who termed the matter a record in the history of PSC.

Sources also said a large number of bribe-offering candidates were placed before certain viva boards that gave them pass scores. To ensure interview with the particular boards on certain dates, candidates were asked to report as 'sick' and produce medical certificates.

Not a single viva candidate on October 12, 2006 and November 28, 2006 was successful. But 64 candidates in a batch of 250 on November 12, 2006 were given pass scores and offered jobs under different cadres.

Competent sources in the PSC said the corrupt syndicate had offered a 'package deal' to those 64 candidates assuring them of success at the preliminary, written and viva voce levels. "Each candidate paid Tk 8 to 12 lakh for ensuring job in their expected cadres," a PSC official said on condition of anonymity.

A few PSC directors pointed out that the question pattern of written psychological examination for 50 marks and the intelligence tests, vital

part of the viva voce, were not prepared according to the government's new notification-2005.

"The viva is supposed to determine the intelligence level. In the past we used to have a written psychology test for 100 marks, which was evaluated independently. After 2005, we slashed the written test mark to 50 and added an intelligence test component in the viva sessions," said a director.

A PSC source said bribes were transacted through joint bank accounts. It was alleged that Tk 12 crore collected from different aspirant candidates as bribe is deposited with an account of Sonali Bank PSC branch while another Tk 3 crore, collected in the same way, is kept in an account of a private bank.

In response to a query about the said account with the Sonali Bank PSC Branch, a responsible officer said, "I cannot tell you anything in this regard. Our regulations do not permit it."

PSC Member Prof Ashrafur Islam, who worked as the chairman of 27th BCS Examinations, admitted the existence of a corrupt syndicate.

"I informed intelligence agencies about the syndicate and asked them to identify and take stern action against the responsible persons but the BNP-Jamaat alliance government did not take any measure," Prof Ashrafur told The Daily Star.

He, however, denied the allegation of his involvement with the syndicate.

Suspicious roll numbers

Viva voce tests were taken from September 10, 2006 to December 21, 2006.

As many as 64 successful candidates who were selected under a

'package deal' had roll numbers that ranged from 52,001 to 54, 299 and they faced viva voce on November 12, 2006.

The 64 candidates include 23 for administration cadre, 15 for education, 10 for police.

It is also a strange coincidence that the PSC invited only 38 candidates for the viva under two viva boards on November 12, and 17 came out successful.

The 17 candidates' roll numbers ranged from 54,001 to 54,100.

In another incredible instance, the PSC gave pass marks to only nine out of 250 appearing at the viva voce on October 15. Interestingly, all of the nine were engineering students.

At the November 11 viva voce, only two candidates passed and were offered jobs in Foreign Service while 248 candidates failed.

Only one or two candidates were finally selected on many viva days as on September 13 and October 3.

Allegations of bribery

A successful candidate was offered service under the taxation cadre following September 10 viva voce. A PSC source claimed that this was done in exchange of Tk 12 lakh in bribe.

"A total of 25 candidates including four from the administration cadre and four from the education cadre in 24th, 25th and 26th BCS, and three Bangladesh Bank assistant directors faced viva voce on September 10, 2006 at a viva board but only one was selected for the taxation cadre, allegedly paying Tk 12 lakh as bribe," a candidate who faced viva voce on that day told this correspondent.

"A candidate from Sarkhira who faced viva voce on September 17, 2006,

paid Tk 6 lakh to a syndicate through a joint account and finally qualified for the post of an ASP," a syndicate member said.

Another candidate from Brahmanbaria district gave Tk 21 lakh to the syndicate under the 'package deal' from preliminary to viva voce and was finally selected for police cadre.

A candidate of Panchagarh who faced viva voce at a board led by the PSC chairman, was allegedly selected for the administration cadre by paying Tk 5 lakh.

Question leak

As many as 98 of the 112 'leaked' multiple choice questions (MCQs) of the preliminary test of the 27th BCS were found to be authentic and the matter was published in most of the dailies on November 19, 2005.

Despite widespread evidence of leaking of question papers of written examinations, especially Bangla 1st and 2nd papers, English 2nd paper, Bangladesh Affairs 1st and 2nd papers, and Everyday Science and Technology, the PSC summarily denied the allegation, claiming the complaints absolutely false and baseless.

There is another serious allegation that some written examination papers were brought from outside by the syndicate members after written examinations schedule.

Amid pressure, lobbying and bribery, the PSC finally selected 3,567 candidates for the cadres through the 27th BCS. Although mentioned 1,776 vacant posts in the advertisement.

PSC Member Prof Ashrafur Islam, chairman of 27th BCS Examinations, however, said they increased the number of posts as per the direction of the Ministry of Establishment.

Patients suffer as doctors, staff clash at DMCH

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hospitals in such a chaotic situation while many were seen lying without any care.

Sources said the clash began as Dr Monwar Hossain, a medical officer, engaged in an altercation with a gatekeeper at the hospital, Abdur Rahman, as he closed the gate during a routine visit by DMCH Director Brig Gen Sarker MA Matin. Rahman stopped three visitors to Dr Monwar, saying entry to the hospital is restricted during the director's visit.

Angered by the incident, Dr Monwar rebuked the gatekeeper and at one stage, Abul Hossain, a ward master, turned up there and sided with the gatekeeper.

And this led to the clash between doctors and employees that continued for about half an hour. The two

sides attacked each other creating panic among patients and their visitors.

Dr Monwar, Dr Zahid Hossain, Dr Khondaker Mehedi Hasan and Ward Master Abul Hossain suffered minor injuries in the clash.

Doctors at the hospital went on a strike from 2:30pm protesting what they said attacks by 'unruly' employees, and demanding punishment of the attackers and adequate security for doctors. The strike was however suspended after two hours following assurance from the DMCH director for proper inquiry.

During the strike, senior doctors as well as junior ones (interns) stopped all services at the hospital, including emergency services.

This correspondent found a number of critical patients waiting at

the emergency wing for admission.

An unconscious patient named Montaz Begum, 40, was referred by the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases. Her relatives brought her to the DMCH at around 2:45pm but finding no doctor, they shifted her to Mitford Hospital. But they brought her back to the DMCH two hours later as Mitford Hospital refused to admit the brain haemorrhage patient.

Then she was getting treatment there, relatives said.

Sonia Akhter, a four-year-old girl, seriously injured in a road accident in Gazipur, was lying in an emergency bed but no doctor was there until 3:15pm. Her parents and relatives were seen crying helplessly.

"Situation is now under control and there is no strike of doctors,"

Sarker MA Matin told journalists later, declining to make any comment on the incident.

Hospital sources said a four-member inquiry committee has been formed and it will start work tomorrow (Saturday).

Dr Mamun Shibley, a former leader of intern doctors association at DMCH, said they have suspended their indefinite strike following assurance of inquiry by the higher authorities. "But we will resume our programme if the culprits are not punished. After inquiry, the authorities should take action against whoever is found guilty -- doctors or employees," he headed.

Hasina urges

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donor of Bangladesh, would like to see that the caretaker government holds an early election.

The Centre for Ethnic Minority Studies of SOAS organised the lecture with Prof Werner Menski in the chair.

The AL chief was scheduled to meet Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon at 11:00pm yesterday Bangladesh time.

People in Bangladesh were being deprived of their freedom of speech and human rights, Indian daily Deccan Herald, Press Trust of India (PTI) and Indian news channel NDTV said quoting Hasina, former prime minister of Bangladesh.

"We are struggling for our democratic rights," she said adding that there were 19 attempts on her life so far and in the last attack, 24 people including 22 of her party men were killed.

The AL president said, "The electoral machinery and judiciary were politicised and the electoral rolls manipulated during the regime of Khaleda Zia government. We wanted the caretaker government to correct the electoral rolls and hold fair and free elections."

"According to the constitution, the election had to be held within 90 days but so far they have not even started revising the electoral roll. Instead of being a caretaker government it has become a takeover government," the Deccan Herald quoted the former prime minister as saying.

"I am leaving London on the 6th [May 6], reaching Dhaka on the 7th. After that I do not know what will happen. I am prepared to make any sacrifices for restoration of democracy," Hasina said.

She was supposed to return to Bangladesh in the last week of April but the caretaker government imposed a ban on her return on April 18, issued arrest warrant against her and asked the British Airways not to issue her a boarding pass. The ban was, however, lifted on April 25.

Corbyn said it was strange that the caretaker government levelled charges of murder and extortion against Hasina and when she said she would return and face the charges, the regime imposed a ban on her return.

No breakthrough yet in serial blasts probe

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members arrested on Wednesday in Dhaka were placed on a seven-day remand.

Meanwhile, law enforcers are on high alert in Bogra following information that an Islamist militant attack may be on the cards.

The investigators of the railway station blasts could not make any headway to unearth whether any new militant organisation or Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and their like-minded outfits were behind the explosions that left a rickshaw-puller wounded.

"We are working on it seriously taking everything into our consideration and it is not possible to say anything before the investigation completes," Director General of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) Hassan Mahmood Khandaker told The Daily Star yesterday.

Sources said the investigators are also trying to find out if any militant organisation in the country or outside has the record to circulate its identity as the new outfit Zaid al Qaeda did through inscription on aluminium plates.

Besides interrogating militant leaders already detained, the investigators are focusing the probe on organisations that are against the Ahmadiyyas and NGOs. They have not also ruled out the possibility of the incident being sabotage, the sources added.

Intelligence sources said they recently had information that a new militant organisation will be floated soon and it will announce its presence by distributing leaflets in Dhaka, Rajshahi, Chittagong and Bogra regions. But the intelligence officials do not think that the militant outfit will circulate its identity through bomb blasts.

CHITTAGONG

Our Chittagong correspondent

reports. The law enforcement agencies were looking for the woman beggar who gave the bag containing the bomb to the rickshaw-puller minutes before it went off.

They hoped that some clue might be known if she was found.

The suspected woman beggar, who went missing since the blast, might provide some clue although we are not sure of that, said Abul Bakar Siddique, assistant commissioner (Kolkata zone) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP).

The police on Wednesday night and yesterday raided different slums and railway stations in search of the woman and other suspects.

Meanwhile, the CMP has put five cops on guard in front of the Ahmadiyya mosque in the city's Chawk Bazar area since yesterday morning.

District Superintendent of Police Quamrul Hasan on Wednesday night held a meeting at his office with representatives from different NGOs and assured them of assistance regarding their security.

TWO SUSPECTS REMANDED

Two Hizbut Tahrir members, who were caught from Sontek of Jatrabari in the capital on Wednesday, were taken on a seven-day remand yesterday for interrogation, reports out court correspondent.

Investigation officer (IO) of the case Sub-Inspector Abdul Aziz of Jatrabari Police Station produced arrested Hizbut Tahrir member Golam Azam and worker Muzammel Hossain before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka with a prayer for seven days' remand for each.

The IO in his forwarding report said the arrestees are active members of Hizbut Tahrir and they might be involved in Tuesday's bomb blasts. If they are questioned, important information about the blast could be

revealed, he said.

Our correspondent in Khulna adds: Superintendent of Police in Khulna Belaur Rahman held a views-exchange meeting with 120 NGO officials of nine upazilas of the district at his office yesterday. The NGO officials expressed their anxiety at the militant outfit's threat.

Members of the Ahmadiyya community in Khulna also expressed concerns at the threat and requested the government to arrange adequate security for them.

HIGH ALERT IN BOGRA

Law enforcers in Bogra are on a 24-hour high alert since 10:00pm yesterday following secret information that Islamist militants may carry out attacks in the district, our staff correspondent in Bogra reports.

As part of the security measures, police were seen checking vehicles on streets of Bogra last night. Besides, police were posted in Qadiani Mosques, temples, public places and other important places to avert any possible attack, police sources said.

Sources said that a three-member Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) team entered the district town last night on a recce of their possible targets of attack. They also said that members of the law enforcing agencies particularly the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and judges might be possible targets of attack.

NGO WORKERS BRIEFED IN MAGURA

Meanwhile, police high-ups of Magura yesterday held a meeting with the representatives of 37 NGOs working in the district to create awareness about the security of NGO staffers.

District Superintendent of Police (SP) Mohammad Muslim and Addition SP Abdur Razzak briefed the NGO officials on security and distributed leaflets about ways to avert militant attacks, says a press release.

Prof Yunus gives up on political mission

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With this letter--his third one following two on February 11 and 22 through which he announced his decision to join politics and form a party--Yunus' brief and dramatic foray into politics ended.

Yunus, however, said he would give his full support to a new political party that would aim at providing a political alternative and take advantage of the "rare opportunities" presented by the state of emergency and its resultant reforms.

Sources meanwhile said Prof Yunus met with Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed for an hour on Wednesday night.

In the open letter, Yunus said he had been in regular contact with people who he thought would strengthen his party. "These communications have gradually made it clear that those who encouraged me will not join politics themselves and we will not publicly support me because they have their own problems," Yunus said.

He said in light of the absence of his supporters, "I opposed the creation of a weak team." It would be better to wait for others to build a strong team and succeed in creating a new stream of politics, he added.

He said the people he was engaged with to build his political team were politicians and those who are "interested and enthusiastic"

about politics.

"Those who are in political parties will not leave their parties--at least, not now. If the political situation changes, then they will come," said Yunus, adding that he could not make a "strong team" without the support of these persons.

He said he had already started to form a "strong" political team, and "The plan was to unveil the political team after the ban on politics is withdrawn and go forward with forming the party. But despite my all-out efforts I could not form a team that would give me confidence."

"I have found out that the people requested to present a strong and bright alternative will not be by my side," he said, adding, "From this process, I think, I would not be successful at [forming a party] even if I waited for a long time."

Yunus said he wanted to join politics in the context of opportunities presented by the declaration of the state of emergency on January 11, which he described in the letter as "a chance to escape a politics riddled with violence, divisions and conflict".

He added that he took the decision to join politics with the intention of creating a new course for politics and had abandoned all his life's work--his Nobel prize-winning organisation Grameen Bank--to pursue this objective.

He said the people know that this