

SALMA SOBHAN FELLOWSHIP FOR WOMEN IN JOURNALISM

# 'Vibrant media can help strengthen democracy'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Termining journalism a catalyst for changes, civil society members yesterday called for more responsible journalism in order to establish a truly democratic society and eliminate all sorts of injustices and discriminations.

Journalists stand by people at any crisis and they should perform their role in better ways, said the speakers at the certificate giving ceremony for the second batch of Salma Sobhan Fellowship for Women in Journalism (SSFW) 2006-07 at Brac auditorium in the city.

A total of 53 women from across the country, who received the training on broadcast journalism under a joint initiative of Brac and Protichi Trust in cooperation with private satellite television Channel i during last year, were given the

certificates.

A vibrant media can strengthen the civil society and empower people that contributes to development, democracy and rule of law, said Protichi Trust Chair Prof Rehman Sobhan.

Speaking as chief guest at the function he said the training of 300 to 400 women journalists will strengthen the base of journalism and it will add a new dimension to the development process of the country when women can see problems through their eyes.

The noted economist urged the Salma Sobhan fellows to be responsible and sincere to their profession and open a new era that Salma Sobhan envisioned for women's uplift in journalism.

He said they are planning to establish a news network with Salma Sobhan fellows.

"Journalists should have high values of life and dignity, because they are the ones who give directions to the nation," said Bishwa Sahitya Kendra Chairman Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed.

Speaking as main speaker he said journalists who reflected people's aspirations during the political governments and are doing the same now are the biggest power of the civil society.

"It is therefore very important for them to be honest and courageous. Dishonest people cannot do anything meaningful in the world," Prof Abu Sayeed said, adding that the journalists should also upgrade their efficiency through reading the best books of the world.

Ain O Salish Kendra Executive Director Advocate Sultana Kamal said journalists perform a very important task of informing people

and bringing changes in society, but at the same time their profession is also very sensitive, because lack of responsibility may lead to serious problems.

"Journalists therefore should be very alert," she added.

"We have many ideal people to follow, and late Salma Sobhan is one of them. She could live a comfortable life, but worked relentlessly to establish human rights and protested injustice," said Advocate Sultana Kamal, also former adviser to a caretaker government.

"We want educated women from the villages to come to the profession of journalism," Brac Founder and Chairperson Fazle Hasan Abed said, urging the Salma Sobhan fellows to follow the footprint of Salma Sobhan who was a courageous human rights activist.



Participants of the second batch of Salma Sobhan Fellowship for Women in Journalism 2006-07 pose with the guests at the certificate giving ceremony at Brac Centre auditorium in the city yesterday.

## CASE UNDER EPR HC grants bail to Hasina's personal assistant Babul

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday granted bail for three months to Mahmud Hassan Babul, personal assistant to detained former prime minister and Awami League president Sheikh Hasina, in a case under the Emergency Power Rules (EPR).

A division bench of Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury and Justice MA Hye passed the interim order upon a petition.

The High Court also issued rule suo moto asking Dhaka's Deputy Commissioner, DMP commissioner and Officer-in-Charge of Lalbagh police station to explain why Babul should not be cleared of the case.

"The rule is made returnable in three weeks," says the court order.

On February 22 last year, law enforcers arrested Babul under the EPR and he secured bail from the High Court on December 12.

He was released from jail on December 20 and rearrested soon afterwards.

Moving the petition, SM Rezaul Karim, a counsel for Babul, submitted that no specific case was lodged against his client nine months into his detention.

Referring to a November 11 report submitted to the DMP Commissioner by the Officer-in-charge of Dhanmondi police station, the lawyer told the court that the police did not find any information or ingredient necessary for initiating a case against Babul. "In spite of the police report, Babul was arrested."

He also submitted that when the High Court granted bail, Babul was arrested again without any specific charge.

## Extortionist lynched in Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

Angry mob lynched a miscreant and injured two others for extorting toll in the guise of Rab at Shantir Hat at Rangunia in the district yesterday.

The identity of the dead could not be known while one of the injured was identified as Yusuf, 35.

Sources said five miscreants went to a grocery at Shantir Hat Bazar at around 11:30am.

Introducing themselves as members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), they charged the grocer, identified as Kamal, with money laundering.

They asked the grocer to go with them and took away Tk 6 lakh from the cash box of the shop.

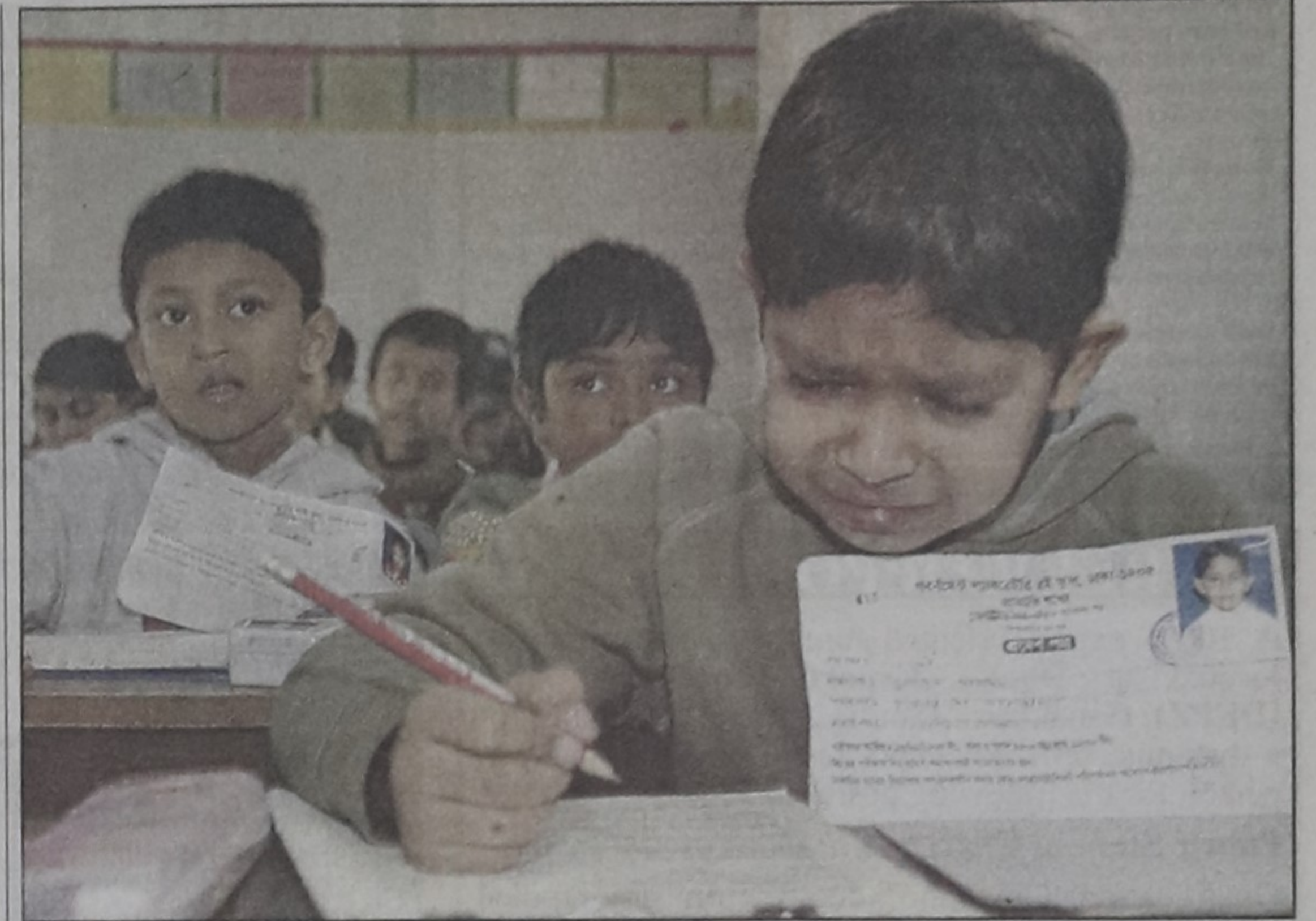
Three of the miscreants forced the grocer and Jasim, an expatriate, to board on a CNG-run autorickshaw while the other members of the gang followed them in another autorickshaw, said Officer in-Charge of Rangunia Police Station Mohammad Istesham.

It created suspicion and resentment among the businessmen in the area. They chased the autorickshaws and held three of the miscreants in the first autorickshaw at Nazu Mian Hat at Hathazari.

They brought the miscreants back to Shantir Hat when the mob beat them up mercilessly, leaving all injured.

Two of the gang were critically injured and one of them succumbed to his injuries on way to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

Yusuf was undergoing treatment at Rangunia Health Complex in a critical condition, police said.



Children take an admission test at Govt Laboratory High School at Dhanmondi as the tests for class one to nine in eight government schools under Group A in the capital was held yesterday.

# Govt must ensure welfare of indigenous people

## Speakers tell Gono Gobeshak Confce

ANWAR ALI, TANORE, Rajshahi

Speakers at the Gono Gobeshak Conference yesterday said the government must play a major role in ensuring welfare of underprivileged indigenous groups.

They said the achievements of different NGOs in development of neglected indigenous ethnic societies are small in comparison to their huge population. So, government should undertake an initiative to follow the examples of Gono Gobeshak (researchers among rural poor) programme.

Eminent litterateur Prof Hasan Azizul Haque attended the conference as the chief guest while Rabindranath Saren, general secretary, Jatiya Adibashi Parishad, Rina Roy, director (Rights), Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), and Tanore Upazila Nirbahi Officer Majedur Rahman Khan were present as special guests.

Sharmin Mustid, team leader, Setu Bandhan project of Brotee, chaired the event. Brotee organised the conference in association with MJF at Tanore to mark the third anniversary of Gono Gobeshak

programme.

Several hundreds of indigenous and common people from 18 villages at Tanore in Rajshahi and Manda and Mahadevpur in Naogaon districts joined the daylong programme.

Prof Hasan said indigenous people will continue to lose their lands, culture and heritage until a truly pro-people government takes measures to protect them.

The government must take responsibility to ensure primary education for all. Because, all attempts for establishing human rights will be foiled without it, said Prof Hasan, adding that it is shameful to identify human beings as marginal ones.

Rabindranath Saren said no development can sustain without state-protection for the indigenous people.

Miseries of the indigenous people are countless since they fall victim to the land grabbers and influential quarters.

The daylong programme began in the morning with a colourful rally. Gono Gobeshak team members shared their experiences in self-

motivated activities of eradicating poverty, protecting human rights and social reforms.

They revealed how 60-year old Majeda of Sikarpur in Naogaon is now receiving primary education.

They added the common people now respect them while the authorities were forced to provide proper healthcare opportunities.

They also detailed their anti-dowry, anti-child marriage, sanitation and infrastructural development activities.

Cultural presentations by different ethnic groups like Santals, oraons, traditional tribal dances and Bangla and indigenous songs were performed following the discussion.

Eighteen stalls were built at the conference venue for demonstrating elements of traditional Bangalee and indigenous cultures by Gono Gobeshak teams.

Brotee formed Gono Gobeshak teams with 10 young male and female members from both indigenous and Bangalee families in a village. The teams are guided by an advisory committee consisting elderly villagers.



Girls from indigenous community perform a dance number at a function marking the Gono Gobeshak Conference at Tanore in Rajshahi yesterday.

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