'Implement Nat'l Women's Dev Policy 2008'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Congratulating the caretaker government for enacting the National Women's Development Policy 2008 in light of the policy of 1997 and as per the recommendations of the women society, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad yesterday urged the government to take necessary steps to implement the policy.

At a press conference at the Bangladesh Mahila Parishad office the speakers said that the progressive democratic political parties should take thoughtful steps according to the policy and the government should take necessary steps through the ministries concerned for its implementation.

The nation got the National Women's Development Policy in 1997, which was considered as a fruit of the women's long movement in the country. But in 2004 the BNP-led four party alliance government amended the policy on the sly and omitted the words hereditary, women's equal rights in resources, women's equal participation etc to curb their advancement, the speakers said.

Since then the women community had been demanding restoration of the National Women's Development Policy of 1997 and at last the caretaker government has finally announced the National Women Development Policy 2008 on March 8, the speakers added.

When asked about a group of religious organisations' opposing the policy on the point of women's share in resources, General Secretary of the parishad Ayesha Khanam said these groups did not say anything at the time of formulating the National Women's Development Policy in 1997.

Rather after 7 years they raised their heads in 2004 during the period of the BNP-led four-party alliance government and brought changes in the policy with utmost secrecy, she added.

"In a democratic society different views can take place, we know. But if we go through the history and try to find out the political role of the group since 1952 to 2008, we will see that they always opposed the progressive movements," Ayesha Khanam added.

Being cornered in the current political condition, the religion-based parties have become unnecessarily reactive on women rights issues, she added.

Rekha Chowdhury, secretary, mass media, read out the keynote paper while Advocate Masuda Rehana and Dr Maleka Banu were also present.

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PHOTO: STAR

Participants at a discussion on the draft of 'Right to Information Ordinance 2008' organised by information ministry at LGED Bhaban in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

Domestic violence responsible for death of highest number of women

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday stressed the need for brightening the image of police to encourage the victims of domestic violence to seek help from police.

The seminar titled 'The Role of Police in Preventing Domestic Violence' was also told that it is not maternal mortality, rather domestic violence that claims the highest number of lives of women.

Addressing the seminar, UNFPA Representative to Bangladesh Arthur Erken said 60 per cent women in the country are tortured either sexually or physically or both. He added that 1,884 women fell victim to dowry related violence between 2001 and 2007.

"Still police means a frightening factor to women. So the image of the police needs to be brightened," Adviser for the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs Rasheda K Choudhury told the seminar held at a city hotel.

She said police have success stories in small pockets, which need to be highlighted for brightening its image. She added that police can also take help from different women organisations.

Rasheda mentioned of an incident in Sylhet where police did not record a case when a victim of eve teasing went to the police station. But when she called the deputy commissioner, within two hours police went to her residence to record the case.

The adviser wondered why police do wait for an order from the high-ups.

"Police need to function as an organisation for brightening its image," she added.

Former adviser ASM Shahjahan said only reform in police will not do, the existing criminal justice system also needs to be reformed.

He requested the home secretary to take immediate steps to enact the draft Police Ordinance 2008, which is now at the Home Ministry.

Home Secretary Abdul Karim said once the Police Ordinance 2008 is enacted police will be in a better place to check domestic violence.

Barrister Sara Hossain presented the keynote speech on the occasion while Inspector General of Police Nur Mohammad and Additional Inspector General of Police NBK Tripura also spoke.

Boeing 747-200 to land at ZIA today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Boeing 747-200, which the Biman Bangladesh Airlines has taken lease from a Nigeria-based airline, will land at Zia International Airport at around 9:00am today, Biman officials said.

"The leased 542-seater Boeing aircraft will fly towards Dhaka from Nigeria at 6:00pm (Nigerian local time) and is likely to arrive here in ZIA at around 9:00am (Bangladesh local time) today," a Biman official told The Daily Star last night.

"We got the last overfly permission from Indian Civil Aviation Authority last night," added the Biman official.

Biman has leased a Boeing 747-200 from Nigeria-based Kabo Air Ltd in a bid to minimise the disruptions in flight schedules.

Under the Aircraft, Crew, Maintenance and Insurance (ACMI) lease process, the Kabo Air will provide all staffs and crew of the wide-body aircraft while Biman will supply fuel.

The leased aircraft will serve Biman for at least six months and its lease might be extended after that, following a negotiation between the two sides.

"Under the lease condition, Biman will have to pay Kabo Air Ltd $5,300 per every block hour (every flying hour from take-off to landing)," a Biman official said.

Earlier on July 2007, Biman Bangladesh Airlines Ltd purchased an Airbus A-310 from US-based Crane International for $12.4 million.

Security Service Group won't take licence from DMP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several Dhaka-based private security service providers yesterday said they would not take licence from Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

At a press conference at the National Press Club, the Dhaka Divisional Security Service Owners' Group also said they would not pay the security deposit, registration fee and renewal charges.

Group leaders Mohammad Rafiqul Islam Mollah and Maj (retd) Akhteruzzaman, also a former lawmaker, were present at the press conference.

The government recently asked all the private security companies to have licences. The companies in the capital should take licence from the DMP Commissioner's office while the district-level companies from the offices of deputy commissioners.

The last date of taking licence was March 5, which has now been extended up to March 31.

At the press conference, the Security Services Owners' Group alleged that the DMP commissioner had misused his power by issuing the order to take licences from the DMP.

Maj (retd) Akhteruzzaman' also alleged that some policemen had been warning them to take licences immediately and also demanding bribes from them.

When contacted, DMP Commissioner Naim Ahmed told The Daily Star, "The DMP Commissioner does not formulate any rules. As the DMP Commissioner, my responsibilities are to enforce the laws enacted by the government."

"If I do not follow the government directives, it would be an act of negligence and violation of rules," he added.

PHOTO: STAR

Participants at a roundtable titled "Let's start the process of trying war criminals" organised by Prothom Alo at its auditorium at Karwan Bazar in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

Star Campus-Drishty Debate at Sunshine School today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Chittagong*

The final round of Star Campus-Drishty Debate Competition Generation Next '08 of the Sunshine Grammar School will be held at 11:30am on the school campus today.

Revolutionary Binod Bihari Chowdhury is scheduled to be present at the ceremony as the chief guest.

Drishty, an educational and cultural organisation, is organising the competition.

The Daily Star is sponsoring the event while Radio Foorti is the radio partner.

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'Distribute NIC, voter ID cards immediately'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former chief election commissioner (CEC) Justice M Abdur Rouf yesterday said that national identity and voter identity cards should be distributed immediately so that people don't need to worry about the national election anymore.

"Many people are now anxious over the national election. The present caretaker government and election commission (EC) will have to take effective measures for eliminating the anxiety. For this reason, national identity and voter identity cards will have to be distributed immediately," Justice Abdur Rouf said while addressing a roundtable.

Bangladesh Sachetan Nagarik Samaj, (conscious citizens' group), organised the roundtable on 'National Election: Citizens' Views' at the National Press Club in the city where speakers urged the EC to declare the election schedule.

The participants also blamed the state of emergency for price hike of essentials.

Yusuf Ali, former vice chancellor of Rajshahi University (RU), said many corrupt individuals are still left out of the anti-corruption campaign.

Mohammad Kamruzzaman, senior assistant secretary general of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Shafiul Alam Pradhan of Jatiya Gonotantrik Party, Abu Naser M Nurunnabi Joni of Sachetan Nagarik Samaj and the New Nation Editor Mostafa Kamal Majumder also spoke.

New coaches for inter-city train

The Bangladesh Railway (BR) replaced 17 older coaches with new coaches of the inter-city train 'Turna Nishitha', which will run on Dhaka-Chittagong route from today.

The replaced coaches include four air-conditioned chair coaches, ten shobhan chair coaches, two dinning-cum-breaks and a power car.

Earlier on March 5 railway authority of East Zone replaced 15 old coaches with new coaches of another inter-city train 'Subarna Express'.

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