

# Change traditional attitudes towards women

## Justice Habibur Rahman tells Karmojibi Nari confce

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An improved situation, where all men and women can have the taste of creative and participatory democracy, gradually appears to be far reachable, said Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman, former chief adviser to a caretaker government, yesterday.

"It requires further thinking whether the decision on an issue of conflict should be taken immediately at a time of pre-election uncertainty or left for the next elected government of the country where it is easy to sow the seeds of conflicts, but difficult to root out them," he said.

Justice Rahman was speaking as chief guest at the national conference of Karmojibi Nari at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the capital. The conference was dedicated to Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imam. Justice Rahman said many laws have been formulated against repression on women and that helped its reduction to some extent, but repression against women still exists.

Lauding women's development in various sectors like garment industries, entrepreneurship and holding of posts in important institutions, he said, "We should learn from these developments and change our traditional attitudes towards them."

He said the constitution ensures that the labour laws will be implemented without any discrimination, but in reality the women workers have less security under these laws.

"Their rights are not protected by the laws despite the fact that the number of women workers increased massively in informal sector," he added.

Justice Rahman said there might be differences in terms of education, wealth, health and other issues among those who claim equal rights, but there will be no exception in the case of their equal right to have legal shelter.

Most women cannot make right use of their power and business chances due to lack of education



Former chief adviser Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman lights a lamp to inaugurate a national conference of Karmojibi Nari at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday. Eminent lawyer Dr Kamal Hossain and Norwegian Ambassador in Dhaka Ingebjorg Stofring are also seen.

and social bars on their movements, he added.

He said the Citizenship Law of 1951 is an example that narrowed women's right while there is lack of equality in some criminal laws.

"Our success will depend on many issues. We should think of other deprived communities alongside the freedom of women. Men can be friends of women and true freedom of all depends on concerted efforts of men and women," he added.

Women and Children Affairs Adviser Rasheda K Chowdhury said it is not possible for government alone to fully implement National Women Development Policy, it requires pledges of political parties in their manifestos.

Women are the main vehicles for major achievements of the country, she said, adding it is the women who through their successes in micro-credit schemes helped a Bangladeshi win Nobel Prize.

Women may be lagging behind in tertiary education, but wherever they have a little chance, they are utilising it to advance their position, said Rasheda.

Speaking as special guest, Foreign Adviser Iftikhar Ahmed Chowdhury said a large portion of women contribute to economic activities in their families, but they are not recognised just because they are not paid.

"They need to be recognised," he said, adding that they are subjected to violence despite government's pledge for their equal dignity.

The corporate businesses should discharge their social responsibility towards their staffs and society, Iftikhar added.

Bangladesh Economic Association President Dr Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad was critical of the formation of a committee to review the women development policy and accepting its recommendations.

"I think the government's weakness is mainly responsible for unexpected militant activities by a section of people and the formation of the review committee," he said.

Karmojibi Nari President Shirin Akter called upon all to launch a greater movement to realise the just rights and dignity of women and eliminate fundamental elements from the society.

"Those committed crimes and looted the respect of women cannot be forgiven," she said demanding immediate formation of a tribunal to try the war criminals.

Women leader Hena Das, Karmojibi Nari General Secretary Sharmin Kabir, conference Convener Gulshan Manzur and Royal Norwegian Ambassador in Dhaka Ingebjorg Stofring also spoke on the occasion.

The conference was attended by over 3000 members of Karmojibi Nari which has around five lakh members.

## Karim made envoy to S Arabia

UNB, Dhaka

M Fazlul Karim, present Bangladesh Ambassador to Italy, has been appointed the ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

A career diplomat, Karim joined Bangladesh Foreign service in 1986. He served as a director in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, counsellor at the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington, Deputy High Commissioner at the Bangladesh high Commission in Islamabad, Consul General of Bangladesh Consulate in Hong Kong, Director General (South Asia, Saarc and United Nations) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## Unit-3 of Ashuganj Power Station inoperative

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

A unit of Ashuganj Power Station Company Ltd went remained out of order for two days as fire burnt a panel box of the unit on Tuesday.

According to the power station office sources, a fire originating from a short circuit of Unit-3 engulfed the panel box of the unit and burnt the cable including all vital ones.

As a result, the 150-megawatt power generating unit went out of order.

The engineers and technicians of the power station started repairing the damaged equipment and panel box of the unit. It will take three more days for them to repair.

When contacted, managing director of the power station said they are hopeful to resume the unit within three days.

## Nazrul University students protest fee hike

A CORRESPONDENT, Trishal

Students of Kazi Nazrul University in Trishal staged a protest rally on the university campus demanding abnormal hike in semester fees and hall charges.

Students collected mass signatures and submitted a memorandum to the registrar of the university. They did not attend the classes to protest the fee hike.

Sources said four students were suspended for 15 days from the campus in this regard.

Mentionable, the administrative authorities gave a notice fixing Tk 4,500 as semester fee a week ago. When the news spread among the students, they demanded for reducing fees.

Some students met the treasurer to get their demands fulfilled, but the meeting was not fruitful.

The students of Bangla Department began to collect mass signatures from the general students. Students of Bangla, English, Economics, Accounting, and Computer Science departments expressed their solidarity with the movement.

They submitted the memorandum to the university registrar.

Students yesterday staged a sit-in in front of the administrative building and left classes sine die. They raised slogans and expressed their wrath over administrative authorities.

The agitating students said we do not have facilities of library, TV, reading room, transport facility, and the system of refined water in the dormitory.

Nonetheless, the authorities are just making their new rules by increasing semester fees and hall charges.

Taruq, Babu, Milon, Mamun, Roni, Sajib, Jibon, Amanullah, Monir and Asik spoke at the rally among the agitating students.

## NIDs distribution in Sylhet from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Distribution of National ID (NID) cards will begin in the Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) areas today.

Election Commissioner Sohul Hossain will formally hand over the NIDs of the 2,56,000 voters in 27 wards of the SCC to the acting mayor at a function, sources said.

Back in 2003, the number of voters was 1,82,000.

The EC published the draft voters' list of SCC areas with 27 wards on February 18. Deputy Election Commissioner of Sylhet division and Additional Deputy Commissioner (general) are the revising authorities.

A copy of the final voters' list, prepared by the army was handed over to the election officials on March 26.

## RAMNA BATAMUL BLAST

# CID starts quizzing Huji leader Suman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) yesterday started quizzing Harkat-ul-Jihad (Huji) leader Arif Hasan Suman in connection with the Ramna Batamul blast during Pabela Baishakh celebration on April 14, 2001.

CID Inspector Abu Hena Mohammad Yusuf took Suman, who is also an accused in August 21 grenade attack on Awami League rally in 2004, to their custody in the afternoon.

Suman was produced before a court on April 28 with a prayer for a remand of 10 days, but the court granted three days.

"We will quiz him to collect information about the entire plan of the blast and the names of those behind the brutal incident," said the CID inspector while talking to The Daily Star.

Earlier, Huji boss Mufti Hannan in his confessional statement said Suman was the carrier of the bombs exploded at Ramna Batamul.

Intelligence officials said though

Suman confessed to his involvement in August 21 grenade attack before the magistrate on April 25, they are not satisfied with his statement.

They would interrogate Suman for more information about the August 21 grenade attack during his remand.

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) sources said they will also take Suman to TFI cell for squeezing in connection with the AL rally attack case.

## Historic May Day today

FROM PAGE 1

Different trade unions, professional bodies and political parties will observe the day by holding seminars, discussions and cultural programmes in the capital and elsewhere in the country.

However, all kinds of rallies are banned with state of emergency in effect.

The state-run Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar and private television channels will air special programmes on the day, while the national dailies are bringing out special supplements on the occasion.

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed have issued separate messages on the occasion, wishing the workers at home and abroad all the best.

The chief adviser will also inaugurate a three-day programme on May Day today organised by the Ministry of Labour and Employment at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital.

BNP standing committee appointed acting chairperson Saifur Rahman, acting secretary general Maj (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, standing committee member Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and BNP chairperson appointed

secretary general Khandaker Delwar Hossain in separate statements greeted the working class people of the country and paid rich tributes to those who sacrificed their lives for establishing the workers' rights.

Awami League (AL) presidium member Abdur Razzak at a May Day discussion, organised by Rickshaw Sramik League at AL's central office yesterday, asked the government to lift state of emergency, release Hasina and announce date for parliamentary election immediately.

Jatiya Sramik League (JSL) President Abdul Matin and General Secretary Ray Ramesh Chandra have also given messages on the occasion.

Bikalpadhara Bangladesh (BDB) President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury and Secretary General Maj (ret'd) Abdull Mannan, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haque Inu and General Secretary Syed Zafar Sazzad, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPD) Acting President Shahidullah Chowdhury and General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim in separate statements greeted the working class people.

The BDB, JSD, Dhaka Sub-editors Council, Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies, Make Trade Fair Alliance, JSL, Bangladesh Jatiya Mohila Ainjibi Samity, Bangladesh Garments Sramik Mukti Adolion, Sramik Karmachari Sangram Parishad, Dhaka Saw-Mills Workers' Union, Sramajibi Parishad, Kendrio Khelaghar, Asar, National Garments Workers Federation, Jatiya Sramik Party, Bangladesh Migrant Welfare Organization, Bangladesh Sanjukta Sramik Federation, Jatiya Samajtantrik Sramik Jote, Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Jote, Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra, Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad, Inmarat Nirman Sramik Union Bangladesh, Jatiya Sramik Jote Bangladesh, Jatiya Sramik Federation Bangladesh, Samajtantrik Sramik Front, Jago Bangladesh Garments Sramik Federation will hold discussions, solidarity rallies in different parts in the capital today.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Garments Sramik Trade Union Kendra and Gano Sangkriti Front protested the government ban on May Day rallies and demanded its immediate withdrawal.

## Court contempt ordinance okayed

FROM PAGE 1

criticism of final verdict of the court would not be treated as contempt of court.

According to a provision, willingly or by writing or verbally or in sign or indication or through any visible medium violation of any verdict, decree, order, writ or warrant of a court, campaigning ill propaganda against any judge concerned on the subject during discharging responsibilities as judge, affecting the normal course of trial process will be treated as contempt of court.

The punishment for contempt of court is simple imprisonment for maximum six months or Tk 2,000 fine, or both.

"If anybody accused of court of contempt applies for unconditional

pardon during proceedings of the case and if the court is satisfied, it can relieve the accused person of the accusation. The court can also reduce or waive punishment of the accused if the accused prays for unconditional pardon," says the contempt-of-court law.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed chaired the meeting.

The council also approved amendment to the Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council Act 1980 to make it up-to-date for control and registration of medical profession as well as ensuring its accountability.

Out of total 34 sections, amendments were brought to 15 sections of the Act.

As per provision of the amended act, if any physician prescribes

unapproved or banned medicine, they would be fined Tk 20,000 or awarded imprisonment, or both.

Any person, without being registered, cheats as physician and who encourages it would be imprisoned for two years or be fined Tk 50,000, or both.

The meeting also gave final approval to the Government Attorney Service Ordinance 2008 to give permanence to the service of the government pleaders as presently government lawyers for criminal and civil courts are being appointed on temporary basis, mainly politically, which causes loss in government cases after change of government.

The attorney service has been divided into two Branches—Supreme Court branch and District branch.

The meeting also approved a proposal for signing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Bangladesh and Oman on export of manpower to protect the rights of Bangladesh workers in the Gulf country.

A team led by the Foreign Adviser will go to Oman on May 10 when the MoU will be signed, according to Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim, who was present at the meeting.

It has been informed that in the first three months of the current year, 11,500 Bangladeshi workers have been recruited by Oman.

Presently some 1.75 lakh Bangladeshis are working in that country.

The manpower recruitment in Oman from Bangladesh remained stalled for 12 years since 1996 and resumed in November 2007. The manpower recruitment started in 1976.

Members of the Advisory Council attended the meeting at the CA's office. Cabinet Secretary and Secretaries concerned were also present.

## City water crisis eases a little

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that a huge queue forms in front of the water container every day.

The situation is almost similar in the nearby areas, he said.

Locals of Ulan in Rampura said they had been suffering from water crisis for the last ten days.

"We get a little water after 2 in the morning. It would be tough to live if the situation goes on like this," Rajib Ahmed, a resident of the area, said.

The Wasa keep their generators on only for a few hours during the load-shedding period, he alleged.

Talking to The Daily Star, the residents of Moghbazar, Mouchak, Mugda and old part of the city complained of dirty water with stink in their areas for the past couple of months.

"If you take a look at the water, you won't believe it is drinking water," Salauddin, a resident of Peyarabagh in Moghbazar, said. "The colour [of the water] is bluish. It looks as if it was the water of a contaminated pond," he added.

In front of Moghbazar water pump, people were seen waiting for water in a queue at noon.

"I am forced to come here for water almost daily as the Wasa water is so dirty," Mamta Begum, a resident of Madhubagh, told The Daily Star. She said that she works as a domestic help at a house and had to take some time off from her work every day to just collect some water.

"I had to wait for hours in queue here," said an angry Mamta, adding "None pay any attention though we have been getting stinking water for the last three months."

Many of the locals have been suffering from scabies by drinking the dirty water, she said.

Talking to The Daily Star, the pump operator said that scuffies among the people who come for water have become a regular phenomenon.

He blamed power outages that occur several times a day for the long wait, as the pump does not have any generator.



## Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Jessore, Kushtia and Comilla in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country. Mild heat wave is sweeping over Khulna division and the regions of Rajshahi, Ishwardi and Madaripur and it may spread over adjoining area.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 37.6 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and Mongla and lowest 22.4 degrees at Rangpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:27pm today and rises at 5:23am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	36.2	26.1	64	44
Chittagong	33.3	26.8	63	77
Rajshahi	36.6	26.2	76	51
Khulna	37.2	25.6	74	53
Barisal	36.3	25.3	80	70
Sylhet	35.0	25.5	72	61
Cox's Bazar	34.8	26.7	62	74



JAN Associates and Canon Singapore organises a workshop on Canon EOS 400 digital SLR camera for the photojournalists of The Daily Star at its office yesterday. Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, Abdullah H Kafi, managing director of JAN Associates, Wrixon Wong, marketing manager of Canon Singapore and SK Enamul Haque, chief photographer of The Daily Star, attended the workshop.

## Worry over possibility of political instability

FROM PAGE 1

Two most significant steps identified by the diplomats are lifting the ban on political activities outside Dhaka and clarifying the status of the two detained former prime ministers.

Recent meetings between Western envoys with the political parties have hammered home the urgency of holding dialogues to prepare for acceptable elections.

"Paving the way for elections by December remains a key challenge, but we're hopeful the government and political parties will both realise the need for acceptable elections," said a Western diplomat.

"We have said that everyone has a responsibility to hold these elections successfully," said one official. "Finding common ground does not mean they have to compromise on their party ideology or agenda."

One of the common threads among the interviewed diplomats is the urgent need to resolve the status of the two former prime ministers in order to allow their political parties to focus on reforms

and elections.

A number of envoys and senior officials from Western countries told The Daily Star the "uncertain" fate of the two former prime ministers -- BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina -- is confusing both political parties and the electorate.

At least one influential Western country has asked to sit in on Hasina's trial but has not received favourable responses from the government.

However, another senior diplomat said he feels this issue is not a deal-breaker and that too much focus on the two leaders would ensure "individuals remain more important than the parties".

The official said planned political reforms in all political parties, especially in the AL and the BNP, would allow the parties to take part in the elections without their leaders.

Hasina has already made it clear that AL would take part in polls even if she were not released. She is currently facing trial in an extortion case.

No charges have been pressed against Khaleda.

"There needs to be transparency in the legal and institutional aspects of these trials, and due process needs to be ensured," said one envoy.

Some of the diplomats said they also felt political reforms and preparations for the polls are lagging behind, but they differed on the reasons behind the slow pace.

Two diplomats also said parties' preparations for the elections have been obstructed largely by the ban on indoor politics even after it was partially lifted in September.

"If you cannot hold dialogues within parties, how do you expect big nationwide parties to discuss reforms, let alone an election strategy," said one prominent Western envoy who cannot be identified.

"There is disconnect between the party leadership in Dhaka and the rest of the country," said the official, adding that the ban has stymied nationwide political reforms.

Most of the interviewed diplomats agreed that these two matters must be resolved for political par-

## Death anniversary



Today is the 8th death anniversary of Maj Gen (ret'd) Abdul Mannan Siddiqui, former establishment and home minister, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his residence after Asr prayers in the city.

Relatives and admirers are requested to attend the programme.

## Mohammad Mahbul Karim



Today is the first death anniversary of Brig Gen (ret'd) Engr Mohammad Mahbul Karim, says a press release.

His family members requested all to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

## Abdur Rashid



Today is the 4th death anniversary of Abdur Rashid, a retired police official, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at his Kalabagan Lake Circus residence in the city.

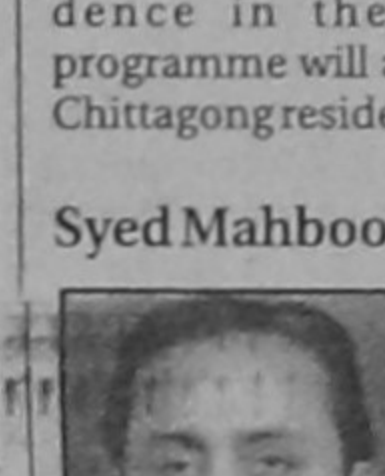
## Serajuddin Ahmed



The 23rd death anniversary of Serajuddin Ahmed, founder chairman of Elite Paint Group of Companies, founder director of Arab Bangladesh Bank Ltd, former president of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industries and former chairman of Tea Traders Association of Bangladesh (TTAB), says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his Gulshan residence in the city. Similar programme will also be held at his Chittagong residence.

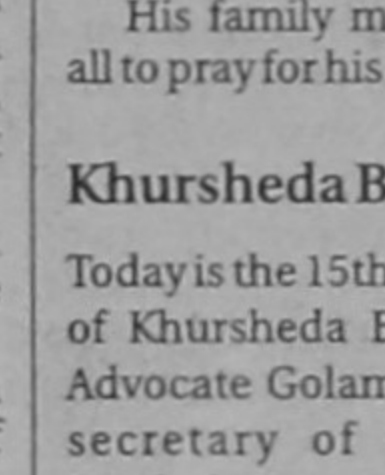
## Syed Mahboob Anwar Hafiz



Today is the 15th death anniversary of Syed Mahboob Anwar Hafiz, former governmental official and the first principal of Industrial Relations Institute, says a press release.

His family members requested all to pray for his departed soul.

## Khursheda Begum



Today is the 15th death anniversary of Khursheda Begum, mother of Advocate Golam Kadir, organising secretary of the Bangladesh Krishak League, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani and milad mahfil will be held at her village home at Nasiragar upazila in Brahmanbaria.

## Begum Rokeya Hamid



Today is the fourth death anniversary of Begum Rokeya Hamid, a social worker and wife of former chairman of Tangail Municipality Md Hamidur Rahman, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held after Asr prayers at her Akur Takur Para house in Tangail town.

Her family members requested all to join the milad mahfil.