

Take necessary steps for women's empowerment

Speakers tell seminar on PRSP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday called on the government to include necessary measures in the upcoming Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) to ensure empowerment of women in every sphere of society.

They also said overall long-term plan with a clear roadmap to this end should be proposed in the PRSP.

At the seminar on 'PRSP analysis from the gender perspective', the speakers recommended that inclusion of 33 percent women in

the decision-making level of political parties should be made compulsory as proposed by the Election Commission.

They also called for steps to ensure that women make up 33 percent of the members in the decision-making level of the administration, judiciary, non-government organisations and private sector.

Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha (BNPS) and the Institute for Environment Development (IED) organised the seminar at Cirdap auditorium.

Presenting the keynote paper,

Rokeya Kabir of Nari Pragati Sangha said the status of women in the local government should be strengthened through capacity building.

She also recommended increasing political position of the ministry of Women and Children Affairs with provision of required resources.

Reviewing the gender perspective in the current PRSP, the speakers said that no analysis and recommendation was made specifically for increased political status, capacity and effectiveness of the ministry of Women and Children Affairs.

At the same time, general and traditional recommendations were made for eliminating violence against women, enhancing social status, inclusion of women's perspective in the service, agriculture and tourism sectors and their role in environment management, they said.

The first PRSP, which expires this month, addressed the needs of women but did not help realise their dreams, economist Dr Atiur Rahman said.

Stressing the need for linkage among the issues of gender gap, gender parity, gender focus and gender sensitivity in the PRSP, he urged the political parties to raise their voice on PRSP.

The 2nd PRSP would come into effect from July this year.

"The new PRSP should identify indicators for measuring invisible contribution of women. At the same time, it should incorporate budget, National Women's Development Policy, CEDAW and Beijing Platform of Action," said President of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad Ayesha Khanam.

Dr Kaniz Siddiqui, international adviser of finance ministry, pointed out the obstacles to meaningful planning. These obstacles include poor monitoring system, absence of proper data and information gap.

IED Executive Director Noman Ahmed, Gender Programme Coordinator of Oxfam Bangladesh MB Akhter and representatives of non-government organisations attended the seminar moderated by Prof Mahmuda Islam of Women for Women.



Visiting UK Development Minister for South Asia Shahid Malik pays a courtesy call on Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed at Army Headquarters at Dhaka Cantonment in the city yesterday.

GANGES WATER SHARING TREATY HC issues rule on govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule upon the government to explain within four weeks as to why it should not be directed to take necessary steps to ensure the availability of actual share of the Ganges water at Farakka point as per the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty between Bangladesh and India.

An HC bench of Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana and Justice Rezaul Haque also asked the government to show cause as to why it should not be directed to take steps to review the treaty according to the provisions of the international laws and conventions and to make alternative arrangement for the storage of water by building the Padma barrage.

Secretaries to the president and the cabinet division and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Water Resources, Forest and Environment, Relief and Disaster Management Affairs have been

asked to reply the rule.

The ruling came upon a writ petition filed by two Supreme Court lawyers MK Muraduzaman and Faruk Hossain.

They filed the petition as public interest litigation (PIL) on June 8 last stating that Bangladesh has not been getting actual share of Ganges water at Farakka as per different treaties and memorandums of understanding (MOU) with India.

The petitioners said due to severe shortage of water some areas of Bangladesh are going to turn into desert, and the Sundarbans, the biggest mangrove forest in the world, are going to die.

The court heard submissions from the counsels of both sides of the petition on June 17 and 18 last and fixed June 19 (yesterday) for the order.

Advocate Tajul Islam appeared for the petitioners, while Deputy Attorney General Idris Khan stood for the government.

Indian ship with 2,237 MTs of rice arrives in Chittagong

An Indian commercial vessel carrying about 2,237 metric tons (MTs) of rice arrived at Chittagong Port on June 18, says a press release of Indian High Commission.

This consignment is a part of Indian assistance of 40,000 metric tons of rice, including 10,000 MTs of wheat and 1,000 MTs of skimmed milk powder, announced in July in 2007 for relief and rehabilitation of people of Bangladesh affected by floods and other natural disaster.

With the arrival of this vessel, India has supplied to Bangladesh 18,288 MTs of rice and 1,000 MTs of skimmed milk powder under this assistance until June.



Women's League of Burma stages a demonstration in front of the High Court in the city yesterday demanding release of Myanmar's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Doctor sent to jail for torturing wife for dowry

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent a doctor of Samarita Hospital to jail rejecting his bail petition in connection with a case filed for torturing his wife for dowry.

Judge AKM Ishtiaque Hussain of the District and Sessions Judge's Court passed the order after Dr

Khondaker Abdul Asad along with his lawyers appeared before the court and sought bail.

Moving the bail petition, his lawyers Khondker Abdul Mannan and Abdur Rahman Howlader told the court that their client had appeared before the High Court (HC) seeking anticipatory bail on June 1.

After the hearing, Justice Sharif Uddin Chaklader directed the petitioner to surrender before the District and Sessions Judge's Court within three weeks.

In the meantime, the law enforcing agencies are directed not to harass or arrest the petitioner. The HC also in its order said the Sessions Court might consider the bail petition. Following the HC order, their client appeared before the court and sought bail, lawyers added.

On the other hand, the prosecution opposed it and said the petitioner, the prime accused in the case, had tortured the victim for dowry. So, the bail petition should be rejected and sent him to jail, prosecution added.

According to the prosecution, complainant Maksud Khanam, a banker, in the case filed with Khilgaon Police Station on May 1 said her husband tortured her for dowry on April 15. Her husband's parents, sister and brother had also tortured her for the same, she added.

But they got bail from the court of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate on May 25.

SHINE PUKUR SCAM Proceedings against Mahmudur stayed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday stayed for three months the proceedings against former managing director of Shine Pukur Holdings Ltd Mahmudur Rahman in a Tk 118 crore embezzlement case.

An HC bench of Justice Sharif Uddin Chaklader and Justice Md Emdadul Haque Azad also issued a rule upon the government to show cause within four weeks why the proceedings of the case against him should not be quashed.

The rule came following a petition filed by Mahmudur Rahman recently. The hearing of the petition was held yesterday.

Assistant Director of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Muhammad Mahbubul Alam filed the case with Motijheel Police Station on September 30 last year against Mahmudur Rahman, Shinepukur Holdings Chairman Sohel F Rahman, Vice Chairman Salman F Rahman and several others.

On June 16, the ACC sent the sanction letter for submission of the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court of Dhaka.

The other accused in the case are former director of Shine Pukur Holdings Ltd Iqbal Ahmed, former general manager of Sonali Bank Sheikh Amin Uddin Ahmed, the bank's Deputy General Managers Abu Taher and Abu Saleh Mohammad Nurul Haque. Abu Saleh's name was later included in the charge sheet as his involvement with corruption was discovered during the investigation.

The case said the accused embezzled Tk 108 crore in capital and interest from the Dhaka local office of Sonali Bank through a consortium, Shine Pukur Holdings Ltd, using fake documents.

The case also mentioned that principal accused Mahmudur Rahman drew Tk 60 crore of the loan sometime between August 13, 1998 and February 16, 1999.

During the investigation, ACC Assistant Director Amirul Islam, also the investigation officer (IO), found the involvement of the accused in embezzling Tk 118 crore and submitted the probe report to the authorities concerned for approval.

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Religious ministry's advice to haj pilgrims

UNB, Dhaka

The government asked the haj pilgrims not to deal any financial transaction with any agencies outside the published list of haj agencies.

The Religious Affairs Ministry came to know that a number of unauthorised haj agencies are collecting money from haj pilgrims, said a handout.

It said government would not take

responsibility if anyone transacts money with any agencies outside the published list of haj agencies.

Haj pilgrims have been advised to contact with respective DC offices, head and regional offices of Islamic Foundation, haj office, Uttara, Dhaka and Islamic Foundation Agargaon office in the capital to verify the published list of agencies before depositing money for haj. The last date for application of haj is July 6.

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