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# Strong political will vital to women empowerment

Roundtable on women rights told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women have to be brought into the mainstream of national development process through economic and political empowerment in order to accelerate poverty alleviation in the country.

At a roundtable in the city yesterday, women leaders and politicians said only strong political will can succeed in making women's empowerment a reality by eliminating all kinds of violence and discrimination against women.

PRIP Trust, Oxfam GB and The Daily Star jointly organised the roundtable on "Women as Citizen: Ensuring Women Rights in the light of Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)" at The Daily Star office in the city.

Participants at the dialogue

suggested that all political parties keep 33 percent of nominations from their parties for women leaders in the upcoming elections.

Former adviser to the caretaker government Sultana Kamal said the state has to take responsibility in empowering women economically and politically.

"Most women like to keep themselves invisible. Visibility of women will have to be ensured to reduce poverty because development is not possible ignoring women who constitute almost half of the entire population," the executive director of Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) said addressing the roundtable.

Awami League Presidium Member Motia Chowdhury said her party will try to ensure 33 percent nomination for women candidates in the upcoming election.

"Reduction of poverty is impossible without addressing the issues of discrimination, deprivation, devaluation and injustice against women," she said.

Motia criticised the PRSP saying poverty cannot be eradicated with the help of PRSP prescribed by foreign donor agencies.

"An additional four crore people are now living under the line of poverty due to price hike of essentials. What is the benefit of the PRSP when poverty has been increasing during its implementation?" she said.

She said politicians do not have any confidence in PRSP.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haque Inu said his party would try to ensure women's nomination for 100 seats in the parliament from the Awami

League led 14-party alliance.

"Around 85 percent of women are now living under the poverty line. We have to bring these women into the mainstream and that is only possible when their economic and political empowerment can be ensured," he said.

Kaniz Siddique, international consultant at the finance ministry, presented the keynote paper at the roundtable. She said women should be given space in political parties so that they can play a vital role in policy-making.

She also suggested one-third women representation in all parliamentary standing committees.

Workers Party of Bangladesh President Rashed Khan Menon said women have an immense contribution in the country's

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Participants at a roundtable on "Women as Citizen: Ensuring Women Rights in the light of Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)" held at The Daily Star office yesterday.

## JP leader, 3 others killed in car crash

RU CORRESPONDENT

Four people, including Jatiya Party's central vice president MA Hannan, were killed and two others critically injured in a road accident at Kathalbaria on Dhaka-Rajshahi Highway in Rajshahi's Puthia upazal yesterday.

The other deceased were identified as Hannan's elder daughter Roma 30, her son Noman, 5, and their car driver Ayub Nabi, 28.

The injured were the JP leader's younger daughter Soma, 27, and her son Nafiz, 6.

They were travelling to Dhaka from their Chapainawabganj home to celebrate Eid with other family members, relatives said.

Police said the accident occurred at about 7:30am when a speedy truck from Bogra failed to negotiate an overturned bus on the roadside and ran straight into Hannan's car coming the other way, killing him, Roma and Nabi on the spot.

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This boy named Suman lost his parents in New Market area in the city yesterday. Policemen are seen picking up the boy on a van to take him in their custody at the New Market Police Station but this frightened him.

PHOTO: STAR

## Mashud calls time on int'l cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Former Bangladesh captain Khaled Mashud has announced his retirement from all forms of international cricket.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) made the decision official yesterday after the stumper from Rajshahi tendered his letter of retirement to the board on Thursday.

He was the most successful wicketkeeper of the country with 169 catches and 44 stumpings and has been one of the key figures in Bangladesh's journey from associate membership to full Test playing nation.

"I have made this decision after a lot of soul searching and this is a very emotional moment for me," Mashud said yesterday.

"Over the last 13 years I have tried to serve my country to the best of my ability and I thank the board for putting faith in my capabilities both as a player and

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## 50MW PLANT IN CTG

# Power Cell seeks better bidders for rental power

SHARIEF KHAN

Despite disappointing experience in fast-track rental power projects, the Power Cell is again floating a tender for a 50-MW rental power scheme in Chittagong by modifying the bidders' criterion with the hope of attracting better bidders.

With almost no project in hand to fight the ever-increasing power crisis, the Cell chose this rental scheme to ease the power constraints in the port city where industrialisation is currently being compromised. This oil-fired 50mw plant in Shikabaha will be later expanded to 100mw capacity.

Weaknesses in the bidder selection criterion had previously allowed influential quarters to lobby for novice power companies like Energy Prima of the Hosaf Group, causing the government to fail in its fast track rental power

schemes. This time the Cell modified the documents for the Shikabaha bid that would be closed in mid-October. But sources say while these modifications seek better quality bidders, some of them are questionable.

"The Cell should address these if it really wants competent bidders who will deliver power, not penalty money," says a source.

The sources say the bid document for the Shikabaha project asks bidders to prove they have power plant equipment ready in their stock to be supplied particularly for this project.

The last bids allowed bidders to qualify using fake claims of possessing plant equipment. This allowed companies like Energy Prima to simply claim that they have plant equipment ready to be installed. But when the contract

was signed, they failed to present these machines in time. While these clauses might ensure genuine bidders, the bid terms grossly extend project implementation time. Whereas the past rental bids sought 120 days for project implementation, it has been extended to 180 days.

"This naturally raises question - why should we then go for rental power projects? If we allow 180 days for such projects, we can have small independent power projects (IPPs)," comments an official.

Rental powers are costlier than IPPs because they are set up and dismantled quickly. Besides, our

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## Pakistan troops kill 16 militants

### Gunmen kidnap Polish engineer

AFP, Khari Islamabad

Pakistani troops killed at least 16 Taliban militants after coming under attack in a tribal region near the Afghan border, a security official said yesterday.

Militants attacked three military posts near Khar, the main town in the restive Bajaur tribal district, late Saturday, but soldiers repulsed them with artillery and mortar fire, the official told AFP.

Early Sunday, helicopter gunships and fighter jets bombed militant positions in three villages in the district, he said.

"According to information gathered here 16 miscreants (militants) have been killed in the intense fighting since overnight," the official said.

There were no immediate reports of any military casualties, he said.

Pakistan's forces have launched a number of major military offensives in recent weeks against militants in Bajaur, which is thought to be an al-Qaeda stronghold.

The Pakistani military says more than 1,000 extremists have been killed in the six-week operation, including al-Qaeda's opera-

tional commander in Bajaur, Egyptian Abu Saeed Al-Masri. At least 27 troops have also died.

Earlier gunmen on Sunday kidnapped a Polish engineer in northern Pakistan, and shot dead his two drivers and a security guard during the abduction, police said.

The kidnapping took place near the village of Pind Sultani in Attock district of Punjab province, about 110km northeast of Islamabad, police said.

"Three Pakistanis, a security guard and two drivers, were shot dead by unknown gunmen as they kidnapped Peter Stanczak, a Polish engineer working with an oil company in the area," police official Kazim Ali told AFP.

The gunmen left the engineer's company car at the scene, fleeing in their own vehicle, he said, adding that police had cordoned off the area to search for the engineer.

Senior police were also meeting with officials from his company Geofizyka Krakow Limited about how to rescue him, an officer told AFP.

An AFP reporter later saw company officials and workers attending funeral prayers for the killed

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## Obaidul Qader gets nod to go abroad

### Flies to India today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) joint secretary general Obaidul Qader, who was barred at Zia International Airport (ZIA) from leaving the country on Saturday, will fly for New Delhi for medical treatment this morning.

Qader said he had secured clearance from the concerned authorities.

As per the recommendation of the medical board of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) where he has been undergoing treatment since his release on September 5, the AL leader will be

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## Fresh Lankan fighting kills 17

### Suicide bomb kills civilian

AFP, AP, Colombo

Fresh fighting around Sri Lanka's embattled northern region left 17 combatants dead on both sides, the defence ministry said yesterday.

Troops killed 12 Tamil Tiger rebels during clashes on Saturday.

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| Sehri, Iftar timings |       |        |       |
|----------------------|-------|--------|-------|
| Ramadan              | Sep   | Sehri  | Iftar |
| 28                   | 29    |        | 5-51  |
| 29                   | 30    | 4-30   | 5-30  |
| 30                   | Oct 1 | 4-31   | 5-19  |
| Prayer Timing        |       |        |       |
| September 29         |       |        |       |
|                      | Azan  | Jamaat |       |
| Fajr                 | 4-30  | 4-36   |       |
| Zohr                 | 12-45 | 1-15   |       |
| Asr                  | 4-45  | 5-00   |       |
| Maghrib              | 5-51  | 6-01   |       |
| Esha                 | 7-45  | 8-15   |       |

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Ctg transport workers clash with police over death rumour

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least ten people including seven policemen were injured in a clash between police and transport workers at Kadamtali Bus Terminal in Chittagong yesterday.

The clash, lasting for around three hours, was triggered by the rumour of a worker's death at the venue as police tried to break up congestion on a road.

People bound for their homes at the terminal and on the buses faced acute sufferings during the period.

A seven-member probe body led by Assistant Commissioner (AC) Itutmish of Double Mooring zone was formed to investigate the incident.

Police said the clash ensued after a driver of Balaka Bus Service of Chittagong-Ramganj road locked in an altercation with a traffic constable over removal of some buses parked haphazardly on the road by the busy Kadamtali Bus Terminal at around 11:00am.

Workers however alleged the constable demanded bribe from a driver named Shukkur who was trying to drive an empty bus into the terminal. They alleged that the constable hit the driver when Shukkur refused to pay a bribe.

Other workers at the terminal gathered around them resulting in scuffles with the constable, witnesses said.

Three other petrol police led by

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## US House okays N-pact with India

AP, Washington

The House voted overwhelmingly Saturday to approve a landmark pact that would allow the US to provide nuclear materials to India.

The deal still faces obstacles in the Senate, making prospects uncertain for passage before President Bush leaves office in January. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nevada, a supporter, promised a Senate vote on the accord in the week ahead, possibly Monday.

Hoping to raise pressure on that chamber, Bush quickly issued a statement praising House passage and prodding the Senate to do the same thing.

"I urge the Senate to quickly take up and pass this important

piece of legislation before their October adjournment," the president said. "Signing this bipartisan bill will help strengthen our partnership with India."

India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, addressing the Indian community in New York where he was attending the UN General Assembly, said "the journey President Bush and I embarked upon is nearing fruition."

"India will be liberated from the constraints of technology denial of 34 years. It will add an important strategic pillar to our bilateral partnership. We will widen our clean energy options," he said Saturday.

The House approved the measure 298-117 without debate in an

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