

# Discriminatory laws against Dalits to be repealed

Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday said discriminatory laws against Dalit and Harijan communities will be repealed, if there is any.

"If you can show me any laws discriminating against your (Dalit and Harijan) communities, such laws will no longer remain in the law books. I will repeal those," he said.

If necessary, new laws will be enacted to remove discriminations and obstacles both the communities have been facing during admission into educational institutions and in the professional fields, he assured.

"Every citizen of the country has equal rights. So, no one will face any discriminations for economic, educational and social reasons," he said.

The minister made these assurances at the concluding ceremony of a 10-day campaign organised on the occasion of the International Day

for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

The National Committee to Celebrate the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in association with Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) organised the programme at Mohanagar Natyamancha in the city.

Speaking as the chief guest, the minister said that legal rights of Dalit and Harijan communities will be ensured to establish their rights as people of these communities also participated in the liberation war and sacrificed their lives.

The law ministry is going to set up a directorate soon for providing legal and economic assistance for these marginalised people, he added.

In his keynote paper, PARITRAN Director Milon Das said though the constitution ensures equal rights of every citizen, but Dalit and Harijan communities are deprived of education, health

care, habitation and employment facilities and living in a humiliating condition.

There are about 55 lakh Dalit and Harijan people, who are known as untouchables in the society, live under marginal conditions in the country.

Milon demanded enactment of laws eliminating racial discrimination against them, formulation of a national development policy for incorporating the communities in the mainstream development programmes and ensuring their participation in all social activities.

Speaking as the special guest, lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon said Dalit and Harijan communities live in inhuman conditions.

The constitution ensures their rights, but it is not implemented properly, he said, urging the community members to launch their own organisational move on the rights.

Prof HKS Arefin said this is not racial discrimination,

rather the discrimination is ideological and involved with religion, adding that mere formulating a law is not enough, the prevailing social structure that deprives them of their rights need to be changed.

Narrating difficulties the women of the communities face, Dipali Das, a member of Dalit community, said the condition of women in the country is volatile and the condition of women of Dalit community is worst.

"We want to live like other human beings. We have the right to franchise and we want to live with self-dignity. Let us give the right," she said.

With Bangladesh Harijan Oikya Parishad President Krishna Lal in the chair, the programme was also addressed by Whip Shagufta Yasmin, MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam and Research Initiatives Bangladesh Executive Director Dr Meghna Guha Thakurata.

## Brand Forum seminar kicks off today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Brand Forum is set to launch a high-profile seminar in Dhaka today with a focus on the application of branding principles to help companies survive tough competition in business.

The two-day seminar to be attended by a host of guest speakers from home and abroad will take place at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Grameenphone Ltd is the 'platinum sponsor' of this event.

"Seven global speakers will provide inspiration to Bangladesh leaders on how to build strong emotional connections with customers," Brand Forum said in a press statement.

"Within the current global economic uncertainties, the Bangladesh corporate world is attempting to take an optimistic leap forward. While the world is reeling from the global financial crisis and many companies are battered, Bangladesh Brand Forum is taking a bold step in telling corporate leaders and marketers that their time to make their mark is now and this is through brands," it added.

"Brands in essence are a set of tangible and intangible promises made by the provider. They motivate providers to meet a guaranteed level of product performance or service delivery."

Some of the speakers who are scheduled to join the seminar are Sanjiv Mehta, chairman of Unilever North Africa and Middle East, David Mayo, president of Ogilvy & Mather Advertising Asia Pacific, Jeff Cacy, managing director (marketing services) of Boeing, and Santosh Desai, CEO of Future Brands (India).

## More students to get chance to study in Japan

Says JICA official

BSS, Dhaka

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) yesterday said more Bangladeshi students would get opportunities of higher education and research in Japan every year.

Chief Representative of JICA in Bangladesh Nobuko Suzuki Kayashima said this while addressing a seminar on 'Education in medical technology to enhance healthcare services in Bangladesh' at the LGED auditorium in the city.

Lawmaker Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin was the chief guest at the seminar organised by JICA Alumni Association of Bangladesh. Director General of the Health Directorate Prof Shah Monir Hossain, Dr Khurshid Jahan and General Secretary of JICA Alumni Association Mohammad Izar Uddin also spoke.

Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin urged the physicians to be more sincere and devoted in reaching the health services to the doorstep of all, particularly the poor people.

Stressing the need for quality education on medical technology for further progress in the country's health services, he said the present government would provide all support in the greater interest of the nation.



PHOTO: STAR

Guests hold a copy of 'Ekatturer Chithi' (Letters of '71') at a publication ceremony at Hotel Sheraton in the city yesterday. From left are Grameenphone CEO Oddvar Hesjedal, Rashid Haider, Maj Gen (retd) Amin Ahmed Chowdhury, Salahuddin Ahmed, Nasiruddin Yousuf and Editor of the daily Prothom Alo Matur Rahman.

'EKATTURER CHITHI' PUBLISHED

# Vivid memories of War of Liberation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pin-drop silence was there in the jam-packed ballroom of Hotel Sheraton when the letter of Nurul Islam, a freedom fighter, was read out. Nurul Islam sent this letter from the battlefield to his beloved mother which was published in a book yesterday.

Like the letter of Nurul, another 79 letters, which the freedom fighters sent to their near and dear ones from different battlefields during the liberation war in 1971, were also compiled in the book, jointly published by the Prothom Alo and Grameenphone.

Titled 'Ekatturer Chithi' (Letters of '71'), the book, first of its kind in Bangladesh, was launched in commemoration of the sacrifices made by the freedom fighters. At the same time, it will be a source of inspiration for young generations.

Each letter bears a vivid glimpse into the war and emotions of the freedom fighters

and their family members.

"Dear Mukul, a great tragic incident has already happened; we are now in a state of affliction and caught in exhaustion. Our dearly beloved Azad was killed with seven other comrades..."

freedom fighter Mujahidul Islam Selim, presently general secretary of CPB, wrote this letter to one Abul Quaiyum on November 16, 1971.

In a letter to his newborn baby, a freedom fighter wrote, "Dear baby, we, the 17 co-fighters, are now spending nights in a run-down, shabby building. Our guerilla operation will begin before dawn. I don't know whether I will be able to meet you. I only know that we are fighting to free the country for you. See you later if I am alive..."

Matur Rahman, editor of the Prothom Alo, said it is unfortunate that the complete history of the liberation war is yet to be brought out.

"This book is not a mere compilation of letters of the

freedom fighters or the history of our liberation war, it is an emotional as well as special effort to create hope," he said.

Grameenphone CEO Oddvar Hesjedal said these letters are a source of inspiration and strength for the freedom fighters as well as families of the martyrs.

"These letters will live forever in these pages to be passed onto the coming generations in order to inspire them to take this country forward," he added.

The first phase of the letter collection campaign started on December 16 last year. A five-member selection committee was formed headed by historian Prof Salahuddin Ahmed to sort out letters for publication from 180 letters received.

Maj Gen (retd) Amin Ahmed Chowdhury, writers Rashid Haider and Selina Hossain and cultural personality Nasiruddin Yousuf were the members of the committee.



PHOTO: STAR

The National Committee to Celebrate the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination take out a colourful procession in the city yesterday.

# UAE investments to grow in Bangladesh

Says UAE minister

UNB, Dhaka

UAE Foreign Trade Minister Sheikh Lubna Al Qasimi hoped that business and investment policies of the present government will encourage UAE investors to invest in various sectors of Bangladesh.

"Investments from the UAE to Bangladesh will continue to grow," Sheikh Qasimi made the remarks during a meeting with Commerce Minister Faruq Khan at her office in Abu Dhabi on Thursday, according to a release issued by the Bangladesh mission.

The commerce minister expressed the government's

keen interest in sending more professionals and skilled workforce from Bangladesh.

He also briefed the UAE minister on the visions of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government.

Sheikh Qasimi praised the present leadership of Bangladesh and hoped that Bangladesh will achieve its visions.

She expressed her satisfaction about the work ethics and discipline of the Bangladeshi expatriates and their valuable contribution to the nation-building endeavors of the UAE.

Lauding the present level of FDI from the UAE to Bangladesh, especially in

telecommunications (Warid Telecom), banking (AL Falah chemicals (RAK Ceramics, Emirate Cement) and other areas, the commerce minister welcomed more investments in power, port and other infrastructural sectors.

He thanked the UAE minister for continuing its support for various economic and social causes of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Ambassador to the UAE Nazmul Quaquein, Consul General Abdul Hye, Commercial Counsellor Mahmudur Rahman and UAE Director (Trade Negotiations & WTO Department) Juma Mohammed Al Kait were present at the meeting.

## Two firearms seized in Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) recovered two firearms and two round cartridges in two separate raids in the port city early yesterday.

Sources said a squad of Rab-7 raided the port city's East Shaheed Nagar area under Bayezid Police Station at around 2:00am and recovered a light gun (LG) and two cartridges from the rooftop of a public toilet near the house of one Emju Mian of the area.

In another drive in the port city's Khatiber Hat area at around 3:00am, the elite force recovered a single-barrel gun searching a bush near Gayebi Masjid of the area under Panchalaish Police Station.

However, no one was arrested in the raids.



PHOTO: STAR

Children engrossed in painting at a drawing competition organised by the National Museum on its premises in the city yesterday on the occasion of the Independence Day.

The Daily Star

Coming out tomorrow - Star Campus

## Linking Young Minds Together

The Daily Star offers campus based weekly magazine 'Star Campus' - the ultimate magazine for the young generation - a common platform for the college and university students and academicians - to share their ideas, thoughts, dreams, opinions and views. Star Campus is an endeavour to bring into the center stage the visionary aspects of our college and university students, alongside their lifestyle, cultural trends and their multidimensional talents. Star Campus is a magazine broadly based on campus life! It contains articles, academic news, achievements, travelogues, interviews, book reviews, quiz, milestones, academic tips, profiles of educational institutes, cultural and extra-curricular activities in campus, jokes, cartoons, photographs and much more. This is a magazine Of the Students, By the Students and For the Students. Star Campus helps link young minds together.



## Branch Shifting

With a view to providing modern banking facilities with state-of-the-art technologies, DBBL's Dhaka EPZ Branch is being relocated to a new premises from tomorrow, the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2009.

New Address

Dhaka EPZ Branch, Baipel, Savar, Dhaka

Our valued clients and patrons are requested to contact our relocated Dhaka EPZ Branch for availing all our banking facilities to meet their banking needs.



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