

VISAS OF 55,000 WORKERS Malaysia assures Bangladesh of all cooperation

UNB, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysian Minister for International Trade and Industry Mohd Yassin has assured Bangladesh of his government's all possible cooperation regarding visas of 55,000 Bangladeshi workers.

The assurance came on Friday when Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, now in Kuala Lumpur to attend a three-day general assembly of Malaysia's ruling party, met

Yassin, the next deputy prime minister of Malaysia.

Dipu Moni also called on Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Seri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi and handed over a letter of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Badawi, reported BSS.

The foreign minister informed Yassin about the current status of Bangladeshi workers and said they usually work in the sectors where Malaysian workers normally do

not work, said an official release.

"So, there should not be any misconception regarding loss of jobs," the release added.

When the foreign minister requested him for reconsidering the Malaysian government's decision, Yassin assured her of all possible cooperation in this regard.

Dipu Moni also urged the Malaysian minister to make efforts to increase investment in Bangladesh.

In response, Yassin said,

"Increased Malaysian investment in Bangladesh would be one of my priorities."

He also stressed the need for growing cooperation between the two countries in trade and commerce at this time of financial crisis.

Dipu Moni congratulated him on his election as the deputy leader of the ruling party and hoped that bilateral relations between the two countries would be strengthened further in the future.

Ensure enjoyable educational atmosphere for children Speakers say at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ensuring safe and enjoyable educational atmosphere is a must for proper mental growth of children, speakers at a seminar said yesterday.

Participation of children in the events that shape their life is also necessary for a better future and parents and teachers should listen to what children have to say, they said.

Mass-line Media Centre (MMC) and Plan Bangladesh organised the seminar titled 'Safe and enjoyable education: Things we can do' at the Shishu Academy as part of the Jatiya Shishu Mela under their project Agami.

Speaking as the chief guest, Mahbubul Alam, former adviser to the caretaker government, called for proper utilisation of the government funds for schools and improvement of basic amenities in schools.

"Most schools do not provide safe drinking water, sanitation, a library or even

proper seating arrangements. It is not possible to create congenial educational atmosphere without these basic elements," he said.

Edward Thomas Espey, country director of Plan Bangladesh, said that education is not a wish, it is a basic necessity. Success of a country depends on quality education.

Children's participation in all walks of life is also important, he said.

Children should have the opportunity to participate in the events that determine their future and to deal with issues that affect and shape their life, he said.

Prof Mehtab Khanom, psychology department, Dhaka University, said the character of a child starts developing at the age of 5 to 7. So, learning in schools should be more creative and enjoyable.

"Teacher and student ratio is very appalling in our schools. Moreover, teachers are economically deprived in

our society. In the circumstances, it is not possible for them to provide quality education," she said.

"Most violence against children takes place at home. Children must feel safe in their own home. Moreover corporal punishment should be abolished from schools. It creates fear in young minds," she pointed out.

Upama Dasgupta, coordinator of Agami, presented the keynote paper at the seminar moderated by Qamrul Hassan Manju, executive director of MMC.

Hamida Ali, former principal of Vigarunnisa Noon School and College, Tasik Ahmed, additional vice-president (transmission) of ATN Bangla, and Amirul Islam, senior programme manager of Channell, also spoke.

Members of the Children Communication Unit (CCU) from across the country also took part in the seminar and shared their views on safe school.

Dr Yunus to exchange views in US on Apr 14

ANA, Washington DC

Nobel laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus will exchange views with Bangladeshi professionals in the USA on April 14.

The programme will be held at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington DC from 3:00pm to 6:30pm.

Dr Yunus, founder of Grameen Bank, will be visiting the USA from April 14 to 16 to attend the International Health Service Conference as a special speaker. He will present the context of rural health and a plan on how the health care can be ensured for the poor people of Bangladesh.

Over 2,000 policymakers and senior officials from different countries will participate in the international conference titled "World Health Care Congress."

Mamun, Mallick KUJ president, gen secy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Mamun Reza, Khulna Bureau chief of the daily Samakal and Shudhangshu Mallick, Khulna correspondent of now-defunct the daily Aker Kagoj, were elected president and general secretary of the executive committee of Khulna Union of Journalists (KUJ) yesterday.

Asaduzzaman Khan Riaz, staff reporter of the daily Prabaho published from Khulna, was elected treasurer. The newly elected president got 34 votes while his nearest rival got 32. On the other hand, general secretary got 28 votes and his nearest rival got 27.

Death anniversary

BSS, Dhaka



Today is the 31st death anniversary of noted litterateur, scholar and social reformist

principal Ibrahim Kha.

On the occasion, Ibrahim Kha Foundation will organise a discussion in the seminar room of the Public Library.

Khandaker Abu Taleb

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



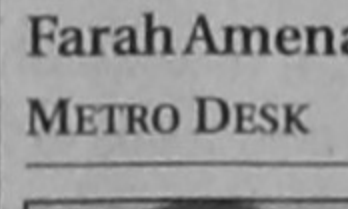
Today is the 38th death anniversary of Shaheed Khandaker Abu Taleb, a journalist and lawyer,

says a press release. He was brutally killed by the Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators on this day in 1971 at Mirpur in Dhaka.

On the occasion, special prayers will be held at his residence at House# 13, Road# 2, Block# B, Section# 10 at Mirpur in the city after Maghrib prayers and foods will be distributed among the destitute after Zohr prayers.

Farah Amena Rashid

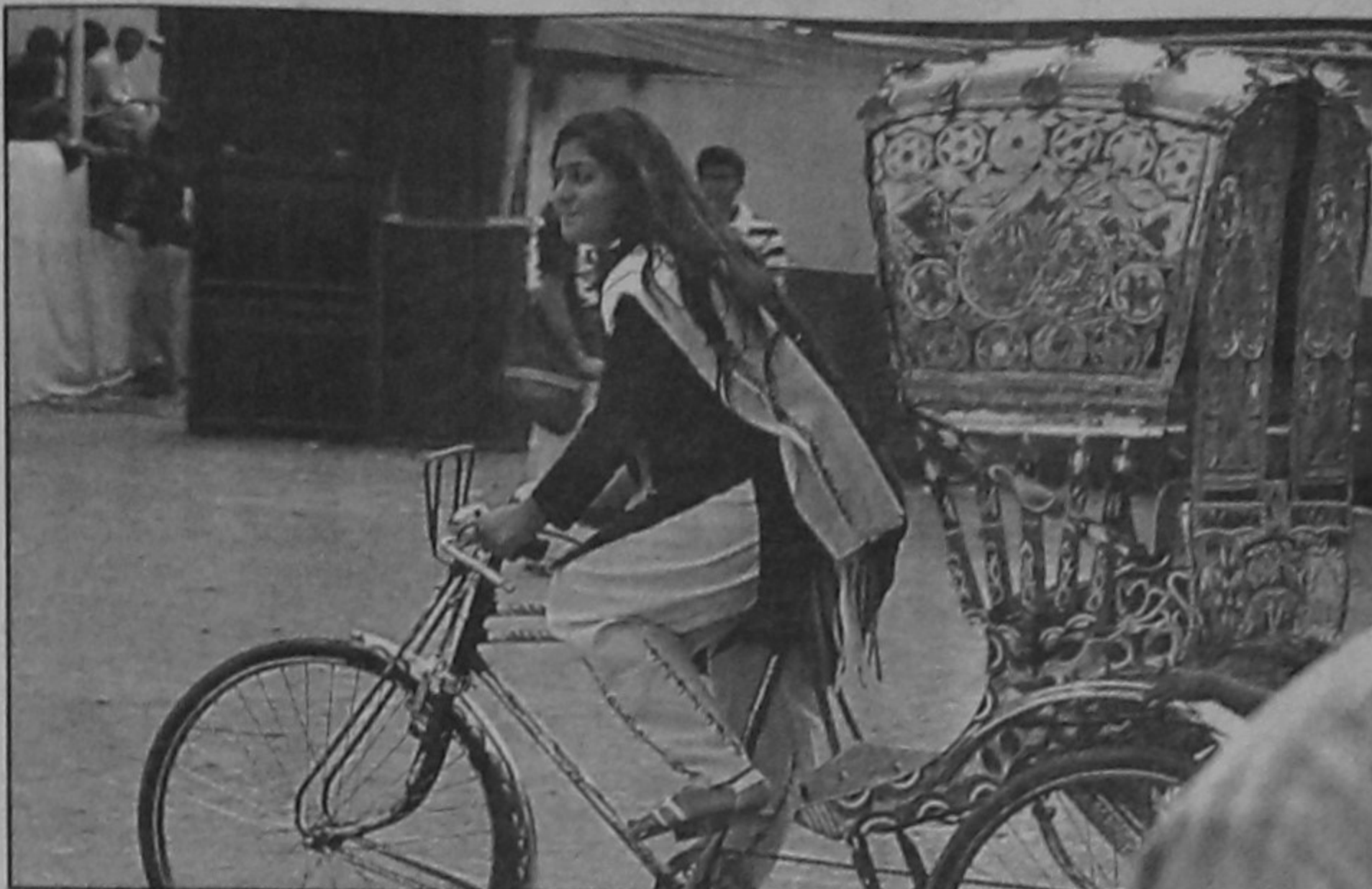
METRO DESK



Today is the ninth death anniversary of Farah Amena Rashid, only daughter of

Engr Mamun Rashid, says a press release.

On the occasion, Quankhwani, doa and milad mahfil will be held. Food will be distributed among the orphans of Wapda Orphanage at Motijheel in the city.



A girl pulls a well-decorated rickshaw at Lalmatia New Colony ground in the city yesterday during a rickshaw festival. Bangladesh Changemakers organised the day-long event.

'Change attitude towards persons with disabilities' Prof Dr Sultana honoured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a programme yesterday called on all to change the attitude towards the persons with disabilities in order to build a prosperous country.

One in every 10 people is suffering from some forms of disabilities, they said at a reception accorded to Prof Dr Sultana Sarwat Ara Zaman, president of Bangladesh Protibandhi Foundation.

The National Forum of Organisations Working with the Disabled (NFOWD) organised the reception and also honoured her with the lifetime achievement award for her outstanding contribution to the welfare of the persons with disabilities. The programme

was held at the RDEC auditorium in the city.

The speakers also called on mothers of the children with disabilities to bring their children to different social programmes for their mental growth.

Speaking as the chief guest, Social Welfare Minister Enamul Haq Mustafa Shaheed said the government is taking initiatives to update the Disabled Welfare Law 2001 to ensure the rights of the persons with disabilities.

To build a better Bangladesh, everybody should come forward to do something from their respective positions to help those who are socially and economically disadvantaged, he said.

The minister handed over a crest and a citation to Prof Sultana Zaman.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof Sultana, a recipient of Begum Rokeya Padak, called on all not to call the persons with disabilities 'Kana' (blind) and 'Boba' (deaf), saying that they have also the right to live their life with dignity.

Khandaker Jahurul Alam, president of NFOWD, urged the government to take steps to launch special programmes for women with disabilities.

Sitangsung Sen, director general of Social Service Department, Monsur Ahmed Chowdhury, managing director of the Jatiya Protibandhi Unnayan Foundation, and its Secretary General Jawaharul Islam Mamun also spoke.

Ensure HR for migrant workers Minister urges labour-receiving countries

METRO DESK

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Hasan Mahmud has called on the international community, especially the labour-receiving countries, to ensure human rights for migrant workers, says a press release.

He said it is an essential responsibility for all concerned, from an individual to the state machinery, to ensure that these rights are respected.

The minister made these remarks at the international dialogue on migration titled 'Effective respect for the human rights of migrants: A shared responsibility' in Geneva on Thursday.

Hasan said: "A huge number of migrant workers from developing countries remain untrained and ill-prepared to

cope with the life and work in a foreign country in an alien environment."

Most of them are unaware of the human rights protection regime and fundamental freedoms which they are guaranteed under international treaties and national laws.

In addition, migrant workers' rights and fundamental freedoms are gravely endangered when they are recruited, transported and employed through informal channels, he said, adding that when an undocumented migrant worker is treated as a violator of immigration laws, his rights as a worker, and most importantly, as a human being are often violated.

"A migrant worker, whether documented or not, is a human being who is already a victim of poverty and most of the time of

undesirable handlings," the minister said.

With a view to fighting undocumented labour mobility, Hasan stressed on measures promoting economic development and thereby narrowing the gap between the developed destinations and the developing countries while creating employment opportunities in developing countries.

He said the government had taken steps to boost manpower sector through skill development training, strengthening welfare for the migrant workers, ensuring more transparency in the recruitment process, special focus on migration of female workers and strengthening of capacity and capabilities of Bangladesh missions abroad.



Desh TV video editing incharge killed in road accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Aftab Khokon, incharge of video editing of private television channel Desh TV, was killed and video editor SM Alam Monir injured in a road accident at Jatrabari in the city last night.

Jatrabari police said Alam, 30, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) while the body of Khokon, 40, was sent to Sir Salimullah Medical College Morgue for autopsy.

Police said the accident took place when a truck hit their motorbike in front of Dhalpur Community Centre at Dhalpur around 8:00pm, leaving Khokon dead on the spot and Alam injured. They were going to a hotel at Jatrabari riding the motorbike from their office at Mouchak in the city.

Sub-Inspector Rafiqul Islam Khan told The Daily Star that they arrested helper of the truck identified as Mohammad Akhter Hossain, 35, while its driver managed to escape.

Earlier, Khokon worked for Channel I, Rtv and Ekushey TV.

DEATHS OF BDR MEN Independent probe demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of lawyers, human rights activists and professionals yesterday demanded an independent enquiry into the deaths of six BDR men during the investigation into the mutiny by BDR jawans.

"At least 6 BDR personnel have died in mysterious circumstances, causing public anxiety and concern regarding investigation process. The mention of blood clots in the inquest report of Lance Naik Mobarak Hossain who died on March 22 points to the use of inhuman torture during interrogation," they said in a joint statement.

"The use of torture during the interrogation process is not only a violation of human rights, it is also illegal and a punishable offence, as Bangladesh is a state party to the Convention Against Torture," said the statement.

The eminent citizens also called for proper investigation into the BDR mutiny and a fair and transparent trial.

"As the BDR is under the ministry of home affairs, not the ministry of defence, it is logical to expect that the trial of BDR personnel will take place in an ordinary criminal court," they said and called for holding the trial in a speedy trial court or a special tribunal.

The signatories to the statement are Shireen Huq,

Rahnuma Ahmed, Prof Anu Mohammad, Dr Shahdeen Malik, Khushi Kabir, Kamal Lohani, Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury, Prof Perween Hasan, Prof Firdous Azim, Mohiuddin Ahmed, Zakir Hossain, Samia Afrin, Shahidul Alam, Maheen Sultan, Rina Roy, Lamia Karim, Shaheen Ahmed, Saydia Gulrukh, Nahar Ahmed, Zakir Kibria, Sayeed Ferdous, Mirza Taslima Sultana, Sayema Khatun, Sadaf Noor, Nasrin Khandoker, Tarek Omar Chowdhury, Bashirul Haq, Shipra Deori, Habibul Nessa and Mozammel Huq.

Zillur undergoes medical check-up

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman had a medical check-up at Green Life Hospital at Green Road in the city yesterday.

Vice Chancellor of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) and also ENT specialist Prof Dr Pran Gopal Dutta and Prof Dr M Shamsul Alam, chairman of Department of Conservative Dentistry and Endodontics of the same university examined the president.

President's personal physician Brig Gen M Sayedur Rahman was also present.



Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind may occur at one or two places over Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong divisions in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:14pm today and rises at 5:53am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 35.2 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chuadanga and lowest 15.7 degrees Celsius at Srimongal.

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	33.4	20.6	56	47
Chittagong	30.8	20.3	67	81
Rajshahi	34.2	19.5	64	58
Khulna	33.7	21.0	79	52
Barisal	32.7	19.5	81	69
Sylhet	32.0	19.0	57	40
Cox's Bazar	32.6	23.3	72	71



Seminar

WFP, UNICEF and Institute of Public Health Nutrition jointly organise a seminar on 'Presentation of preliminary results on household food security and nutrition assessment: Impacts of changing food prices'. Venue: Sonargahon Hotel. Time: 9:30am.

Workshop

Department of Environment and Waste Concern jointly organise a workshop on 'RETA 6361: Managing hazardous waste'. Venue: Spectra Convention Centre. Time: 9:30am.

Seminar

Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) organises a seminar on 'earthquake housing for sustainable development in Bangladesh'. Venue: IEB conference room. Time: 5:00pm.

Poetry recitation

Bangabandhu Abriti Parishad organises a recitation and cultural programme marking the birth anniversary of Bangabandhu. Venue: TSC auditorium. Time: 5:00pm.

Buet student, brother drown in Pirojpur

UNB, Pirojpur

The bodies of two brothers who drowned in the Sandhya river at Bejkati village in Swarupkathi upazila on Friday were recovered from the Korsha canal yesterday.

The victims were identified as Rejai Rabbi, 23, a final year student of Computer Engineering Department of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) and Srishti, 16, an SSC examinee. They are sons of Advocate Shahjahan.

Witnesses said Rabbi and Srishti along with their father went to their village home from Dhaka on Thursday to attend the chehlum of their grandfather.

The siblings were washed away by a strong current when they had gone to the river along with their uncle for taking bath at 2:30pm on Friday.

Despite hectic search in the river the bodies could not be recovered on Friday.

Local fishermen found the bodies in Korsha canal at 11:00am yesterday.

They were laid to rest in their family graveyard.

10 shops gutted in Ctg fire

CU CORRESPONDENT

Ten shops and nine thatched houses were gutted in a fire at Cheragi Pahar intersection in Chittagong yesterday.

Sources said the fire broke out at a shop of the area at around 4:00pm and spread fast engulfing adjoining shops and houses. The fire was originated from an electric short circuit.

Eleven fire fighting units from different stations rushed to the spot and doused the fire after a one-hour effort.

Station Officer of Nandan Kanon Fire Station Mohammad Majid said the damages in fire could go up to Tk 13 lakh.

Obituary

METRO DESK



Mizanur Rahman, a businessman and social worker, and father of Rafi Hossain, a

journalist of The Daily Star, passed away on Friday at the age of 74, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, son, two daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

He will be buried at Sector-4, Uttara in the city after namaz-e-janaza at a mosque at Sector-3 after Zohr prayers today.

His qulhwani will be held at House-9, Road-19/A, Sector-4, Uttara in the city after Asr prayers tomorrow.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to join the programme and pray for his departed soul.

Golam Mortuza Majumder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Golam Mortuza Majumder, a member of the National Press Club, passed away due to cancer at Lab Aid Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 70.

He left behind his wife, three sons and two daughters to mourn his death.

His body was taken at Uttar Anandapur under Fulgazi upazila in Feni for burial after namaz-e-janaza at National Press Club compound yesterday.

National Press Club President Shawkat Mahmud and General Secretary Kamal Uddin Sabuj expressed deep shock at his death and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Mahzarul Hoque

METRO DESK



Hospital in the city due to a severe cardiac arrest on March 26, says a press release.

He was buried at his family graveyard at South Dhurag in Fatikchhari.

On the occasion, fateha will be offered at his village home today.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend fateha and pray for departed soul.

INFORMAL SECTOR Call to recognise female workers' contribution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday said contribution of female workers to informal sector, who are generally mistreated by the society, must be recognised by the state.

Women are deprived of their basic rights, including shelter, education and medical support. They do not have social and economic security, they added.

The speakers called on the government to take the responsibility for ensuring basic rights of female workers in the informal sector.

Titled 'Contribution of women workers to informal sector: State recognition and responsibility', the seminar was organised by Partnership of Women in Action in cooperation with Nagorik Uddog at the WVA auditorium in the city.

Noted economist Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said, "First step of ensuring rights of these women should start from home. We have to give them honour that they deserve."

Dyeing factory gutted in N'ganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

A dyeing factory was gutted in fire at Paglar Nandalapur in Fatullah under Narayanganj Sadar upazila yesterday.

Fire erupted at Roopnagar Dyeing and Finishing Factory at around 6:30am.

Fire fighters doused the fire with one and a half hour effort.

Fire service sources said an enquiry committee has been formed to find the cause of the fire and to ascertain the extent of losses. Owners of the factory claimed that the fire damaged around Tk 1.5 crore properties.