

## Govt to enact new law to end discrimination against women

Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday said the government will enact a new law, if necessary, to eliminate discrimination against women in society.

"The government is pledge-bound to empower women and remove all kinds of discrimination against them. We will repeal the laws which are responsible for creating any bar to establishing gender equality," he said.

The minister said the government would not enact any law which hurts the religious sentiment.

Shafique was speaking as the chief guest at a seminar on 'Status of implementation of national policies and other

commitments related to women in Bangladesh' organised by Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha (BNPS) at Cirdap auditorium in the city.

Moderated by BNPS Executive Director Rokeya Kabir, the seminar was addressed by Prof Monir Begum, chairman of Jatiya Mahila Sangstha, as the special guest.

The minister urged the women leaders to place to the government their specific recommendations for enacting any law or amending any of the existing laws to establish gender equality and remove any discrimination.

He said the government was sincere to enact a law for making marriage registration for Hindu community compulsory, but a group of Hindu community had seriously

opposed the initiative, saying that such law would hurt their religious sentiment.

"There is such a law in India. If a law is enacted making the marriage registration for Hindu community compulsory in Bangladesh, it will be better for them in many respects, including their jobs in foreign countries," he mentioned.

The minister went on saying that all the people, irrespective of men and women, should work unitedly to eliminate the social and family discrimination against women.

Parliament members Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury and Nilufar Chowdhury Moni, Shyamol Dutta, editor of the daily Bhoror Kagoj, and AM Saiful Hassan, director of NGO Affairs Bureau, also spoke.

## Disabled Welfare Act to be updated: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the government will update the Disabled Welfare Act 2000 and take special measures for education, employment, movement and communications of the physically challenged people.

She also urged all to cooperate with the physically challenged people with love and fraternity to ensure flourishing of their merit and talent.

A team of players with disabilities from Bangladesh won 21 gold medals in an Olympic competition in the USA in 1996. So disability is not a disease. People's cooperation and feelings of fraternity can play a great role in developing the talent of the physically challenged people, the prime minister said.

She was addressing a function arranged on the occasion of distributing wheelchairs to war-wounded freedom fighters and physically challenged people at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city yesterday.



PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina distributes wheelchairs among the war-wounded freedom fighters and physically challenged people at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city yesterday.

wheelchairs at the function.

Sheikh Hasina said the government would take steps to uphold social dignity of the physically challenged people.

The prime minister said Tk 8,247 crore has been allocated in the proposed 2009-10 budget for creating social safety net for the poorer sections of population which is Tk 729 crore higher than previous year's.

She said the beneficiaries under the disability allowance have been increased to 2.60 lakh from the previous 2 lakh, raising the monthly per-head annuity to Tk 300.

Sheikh Hasina said the government has taken step to introduce One-Stop Service to provide the physically challenged people with every necessary health service and aid instruments.

The freedom fighters are

the greatest sons of the soil. They fought in 1971 to give us an independent and sovereign state. Our obligations towards the freedom fighters are limitless," she told her audience.

Sheikh Hasina said the state is supposed to take care of the freedom fighters; but, after the killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975, anti-liberation forces were rehabilitated instead of the liberation-warriors.

The prime minister said the monthly allowance of the poor freedom fighters will be increased to Tk 1,500 from the previous amount of Tk 900 and the number of recipients be raised to 1.25 lakh from the present 1 lakh.

Besides, freedom fighters of 65 years of age or above will be given facility of free travels by rail, bus and launch, she said.

## 6,114 mobile phone sets seized at ZIA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials seized 6,114 pieces of cellphone sets and 1,118 pieces of MP3 and MP4 sets in 22 hand luggage left at a bandoned at ZIA International Airport (ZIA) on Friday night.

Assistant Commissioner (AC) of Customs at ZIA Mohammad Mujibur Rahman told The Daily Star that they found 6,114 pieces cellphone sets of different brands, including Nokia, Motorola, and Philips, and 1,118 pieces of MP3 and MP4 sets worth around Tk 3 crore.

The luggage were carried by a Bangladesh Biman flight from Hong Kong to ZIA around 11:00pm, he said, adding that customs officials found the luggage left abandoned at the passenger lounge.

But none was arrested in this connection.

## Govt mulls special BCS for deprived candidates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special examination for recruitment in Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) would be arranged for those who have faced discrimination in the past seven years, Prof Alauddin Ahmed, prime minister's adviser for education, said yesterday.

The age limit for the candidates would be 35 years, he added.

He said this during the foundation stone laying ceremony of Shaheed Rafiq-Zabbar Hall at Jahangirnagar University (JU) in Savar.

The adviser also said that the government has already started preparing database of unemployed youths to fulfil its election pledge to give job to at least one member of every family.

JU Vice Chancellor Prof Sharif Enamul Kabir, Prof Md Muniruzzaman, Prof Farhad Hossain and Prof Nasir Uddin were present at the ceremony.

## Bulbul elected IPI board member

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul, head of News & Current Affairs, ATN Bangla, and executive editor of daily Sangbad, has been elected an executive board member of the International Press Institute (IPI) for next four years (2009-2013).

The election was held on June 9 at the 58th general meeting in Finland's capital of Helsinki. The office-bearers were elected through secret ballot, says a press release.

The newly elected executive board officials are chairman -- Janne Virkkunen, senior editor-in-chief, Helsinki Sanomat, Finland; vice chairman -- Mark Damazer, controller, BBC 4 and BBC 7 of London, Carl-Eugen Eberle, director of Legal Affairs, ZDF of Germany and Simon Li, former managing editor, Los Angeles Times, USA.

N Ravi, editor of The Hindu, India, has also been elected as a board member.

IPI is a global network of editors, media executives and leading journalists.



PHOTO: STAR  
Firefighters try to extinguish a fire at chemical warehouses on Road No 23 of Rupnagar at Pallabi in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

## Two shot in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminals shot and injured two people in separate incidents in the city's Kafrel and Mohammadpur areas yesterday.

The victims were identified as Abdul Khaleque, 50, a security guard of a under-construction house, and Robo Arian, 28, an officer of Sabiha Real Estate.

At East Kazipara in Kafrel, armed extortions shot the security guard in broad daylight as they failed to realise toll from the house owner, Mofazzal Hossain.

The victim, Khaleque, was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

He said three extortions entered the building, shot the security guard in the stomach around 2:00pm and fled the scene.

Mofazzal told The Daily Star that the extortions sent a note through Khaleque to him 10 or 12 days ago demanding toll. Following the incident, he filed a general diary (GD) with Kafrel police station.

He added the note also contained a cellphone number, which was also reported to the police station.

Officer-in-charge (OC) Delwar Hossain told The Daily Star that one Masud demanded the toll and threatened the owner of the building.

The police are trying to arrest the criminals.

In the other incident, a gang of criminals shot Arian when he was buying medicines from a shop near Krishi market at Mohammadpur around 1:00am.

The criminals fled the scene by a private car.

The victim was admitted to the Square Hospital.

Proprietor of the Sabiha Real Estate Moniruzzaman filed a case with Mohammadpur police station.

In the case, he mentioned that Ward Councillor Sayeed Bepari and his two sons -- Shamim and Shaheen -- might have been involved in this incident as the company had a feud with them over a land dispute.

## Fire at RMG factory in Tongi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fabrics and machinery of a garment factory were gutted in a devastating fire in Tongi last night.

Sources said the fire started on the 4th floor of the factory of Northern Apparels around 9:00pm.

On receiving information, firefighters from Dhaka and Gazipur rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze after three hours of struggle.

Rafiqul Islam, deputy assistant director of Gazipur Fire Service and Civil Defence, told The Daily Star that the fire broke out at the knitting section of the factory, but the firefighter managed to extinguish the blaze before it could spread to other floors of the building.

He suspects that an electrical short-circuit might have sparked off the fire.

However, there was no report of casualty as all staffs left the factory after the working hour at 8:00pm, he added.

## 60 senior DU teachers honoured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The students of 1969 batch of Dhaka University yesterday accorded reception to their direct teachers.

The reception ceremony was held at Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) auditorium of the university.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique was the chief guest at the function and handed over honorary crests to the teachers, says a press release.

Prof Dr Sayedul Quaderi, a student of '69 batch and a teacher of biochemistry of the university, presided over the function.

Emeritus Professor Serajul Islam Choudhury, Prof Saaduddin Ahmed, Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley, Prof Hadizuzzaman and Prof M Aminul Islam spoke at the function.

Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique lauded the initiative and said this would help maintain a permanent relation between the teachers and students.

A total of 60 teachers were accorded reception at the function.

## Sufia Kamal a symbol of equality, freedom

Speakers tell memorial lecture

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a memorial lecture yesterday said poet Sufia Kamal is a symbol of equality, freedom and human rights which is a source of inspiration to build a peaceful society, says a press release.

"We can respect the memory of Sufia Kamal only by pledging to implement her set of values -- equality, freedom and rights," said Dr Shahidul Islam.

The eminent jurist said the principle of equal distribution is absent in the conventional definition of good governance.

"Without principle of equal distribution, disparity will increase between the rich and the poor, and ultimately there will be rise in conflicts and impatience, and democracy will be defeated," he added.

BMP General Secretary

Auditorium in the city where Shapta Begum Editor Noorjan Begum and anti-British movement leader Hena Das were conferred Poet Sufia Kamal Honorary Award 2009.

Begum Sufia Kamal was the founder president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad.

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"Without principle of equal distribution, disparity will increase between the rich and the poor, and ultimately there will be rise in conflicts and impatience, and democracy will be defeated," he added.

BMP General Secretary

## Nat'l Science Olympiad in January

METRO DESK

Bangladesh Academy of Science (BAS) will organise the National Science Olympiad on the 2nd Friday of January, says a press release.

Earlier, the Divisional Science Olympiad will be held on the 2nd Friday of December.

The decision was taken at a meeting recently with the representatives of other scientific associations and societies that operate independently in the country.

The secondary school level competition is expected to popularise the study on science subjects at school level and identify talented students.

The divisional level government officials, police officials, media personalities, teachers, eminent personalities and public representatives are expected to be involved in the Olympiad.

The organisation has a broad range of products and services, including medical imaging and information technologies, medical diagnostics, patient monitoring systems, performance improvement solutions, drug discovery and biopharmaceutical manufacturing technologies.

The theme of this year's WHD is "Hydrography-Supporting of the Marine Environment".

Like all other member states of International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO), Bangladesh will celebrate the effective hydrographic activities to minimise damage of marine environment, said an ISPR press release.

College students' union and a veteran of the anti-British movement, says a press release.

Qurankhwan and milad mahfil will be held at his village home at Kalaiya in Baufa under Barisal and in Dhaka.

## Healthcare initiative for rural people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Grameen Healthcare Trust and GE Healthcare jointly kick-started a new healthcare initiative titled 'Healthymagination' to offer more efficient and cost-effective healthcare services in rural Bangladesh.

Under the new initiative, GE Healthcare will provide Grameen Healthcare's primary care clinics with easy, affordable and technically suitable machines for rural Bangladesh to diagnose diseases at an early stage.

The announcement came at a press conference organised by GE Healthcare at a city hotel yesterday.

"We will produce machines and technology that will be tailor-made to the healthcare needs of the country, helping diagnose many diseases in rural Bangladesh," said V Raja, president and CEO of GE Healthcare India.

GE Healthcare is a unit of GE Technology Infrastructure which is a unit of General Electric.

The organisation has a broad range of products and services, including medical imaging and information technologies, medical diagnostics, patient monitoring systems, performance improvement solutions, drug discovery and biopharmaceutical manufacturing technologies.

The partnership will start its journey by providing services to pregnant women in rural areas.

GE officials said eight paramedics and a physician from Grameen Kalyan Centres have

## Hydrographic Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 4th World Hydrographic Day (WHD) will be observed today.

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Like all other member states of International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO), Bangladesh will celebrate