



PHOTO: STAR

Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni speaks at a seminar on 'Rights and economic empowerment of grassroots women in Bangladesh' at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday. On her left are Selima Ahmed and Dr Akbar Ali Khan.

RESERVED SEATS IN PARLIAMENT

Update RPO to ensure women's participation

Says Dipu Moni

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Section regarding the reserved seats for women in parliament in the Representation of the People Order (RPO) ordinance should be updated to ensure their effective participation, Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni said yesterday.

"According to the law, the women MPs elected to the reserved seats have no certain constituencies to represent. So, they face difficulty while performing their duties and responsibilities," she said at a seminar on 'Rights and economic empowerment of grassroots women in Bangladesh'.

"If women are elected directly to the reserved seats, it would be easy for them to perform their duties and responsibilities," she added.

Dipu Moni said, "We need to ensure political empowerment of women to successfully achieve the empowerment of women. More women should be incorporated in the

polycymaking so that they can take important decisions regarding economic and political policies."

She also stressed the need to change the attitude towards women.

Bangladesh Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BWCCI) and the International Republic Institution (IRI) jointly organised the seminar in the city.

Dr Akbar Ali Khan, chairman of Regulatory Reforms Commission (RRC), said the banks should simplify the loan process to encourage more entrepreneurs and develop the economy.

"More women would be involved in economic activities if the banks simplify the loan process for new entrepreneurs," he said.

"The government should set a long-term target for the development of women so that they can take their own decisions in familial and professional affairs, and build their capacity," Dr Akbar

added.

He suggested the government prepare and publish the 'State of the Women Report' annually, and form an expert committee in this regard.

Selima Hossain, an eminent litterateur, said the government should take necessary measures to involve grassroots women in the mainstream politics and economy to empower them.

The government should also take measures to raise awareness among grassroots women about their rights and responsibilities, she added.

Ayesha Khanam, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, said the gender issues should get more focus in the national budget.

She also called on the government to take necessary measures to ensure proper utilisation of the budgetary allocation made for women.

Selima Ahmed, president of BWCCI, was also present at the seminar.

No decision yet on corrupt officials

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The government is yet to take any decision about corrupt government officials, who confessed their offences and sought clemency from the now-defunct Truth and Accountability Commission (TAC), although it (government) had announced around three months ago that action will be taken against them.

Some 456 corrupt people, including 351 government employees, had sought clemency from TAC and pledged to surrender illegal money amounting to Tk 36 crore during the previous caretaker government, sources said.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed, who had earlier announced that the dishonest officials would face dismissal, recently told The Daily Star that the government has not taken any final decision on this issue.

Asked about the government's plan regarding the corrupt officials, he said that his office has

already transferred its 23 corrupt officials, who confessed offences to TAC, to remote areas as punishment.

The minister, however, said that transfer is not any kind of punishment for corruption and that the government will take departmental action against them.

On March 31, Shafique Ahmed said that no corrupt government officials or employees should be allowed to continue their service and that those officials who have already retired should be punished by cancelling their pensions.

He also said a committee would be formed to probe the charges against the government officials who confessed their guilt to TAC.

Meanwhile, the High Court (HC) declared the TAC ordinance illegal, meaning that the self-proclaimed corrupt people now do not have any legal scope to defend themselves from the government action.

According to sources, the government has

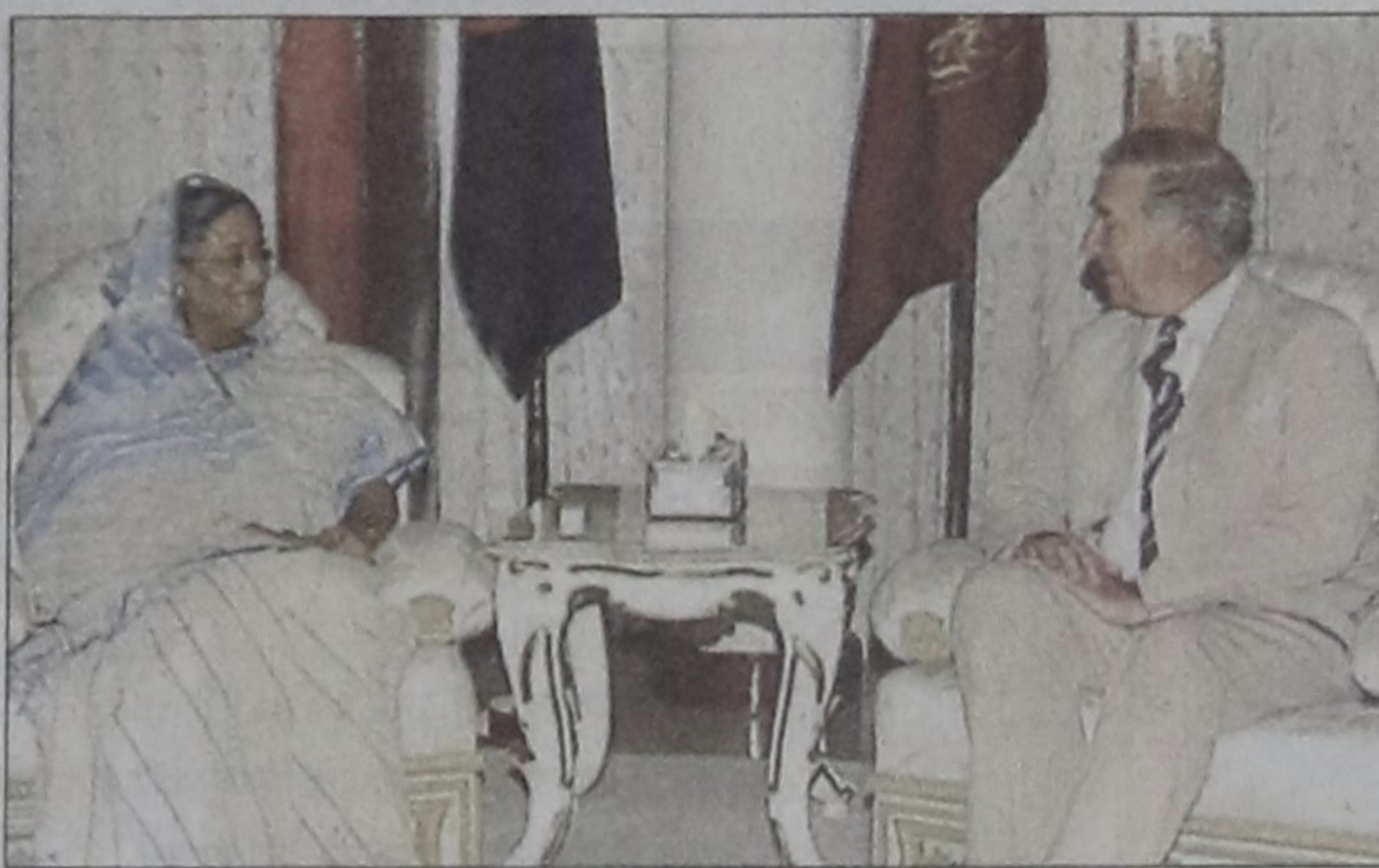
decided not to contest the HC verdict declaring the TAC ordinance illegal.

Some legal experts have said that following the HC verdict, the TAC actions confiscating the illegal money of the corrupt people have become illegal and the people who surrendered the money to TAC should be brought under trial.

Advocate Md Asaduzzaman, a lawyer for the petitioners challenging TAC ordinance at the High Court, said that the people who surrendered illegal money should be subjected to prosecution under the laws and rules of the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC).

Although the Appellate Division in November last year had stayed the HC verdict for one month, the ordinance, under which TAC was formed, has automatically been lapsed, he said.

Attorney general Mahubey Alam, however, said that if anybody is affected by the HC judgement, he or she could appeal to the Supreme Court against it.



UK Minister for Security and Counter-Terrorism Lord West calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Jamuna, left, and Leader of the Opposition and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office in the city, right, yesterday. (Story on Page 2)

PHOTO: PID & BNP

PP recommends withdrawal of 35 more cases

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The metropolitan public prosecutor (MPP) yesterday recommended for withdrawal of 35 more cases considering those as "political harassment and motivated" ones.

Sources said MPP Advocate Mohammad Abdullah Abu scrutinised the case dockets and documents and finally recommended to withdraw those cases.

The accused in the cases include former state minister for planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and former Awami League lawmaker Dr HBM Iqbal.

All the cases had been filed against them during BNP regime and the immediate past caretaker government.

The PP also asked the authorities concerned to send those cases to the Dhaka District Magistrate (DM) for final opinion for withdrawal.

Earlier on different dates, MPP had recommended for withdrawal of over 300 cases filed against political bigwigs including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury and Home Minister Sahara Khatun.

After receipt of the recommendations from the MPP on 200 cases, the district committee headed by DM reviewed the case documents and sent those to the home ministry for final opinion, sources said.

The home ministry then had finally decided to withdraw over 100 cases filed against Hasina and several other bigwigs.

Meantime, different political leaders, including BNP chairperson and former prime Khaleda Zia, petitioned for withdrawal of 2781 cases filed against them for harassing politically.

JALIL'S STATEMENTS ON PM'S ADVISERS

Hasina may seek clarification

HASAN JAHD TUSHER

Prime Minister and Awami League president Sheikh Hasina might ask the party's general secretary Abdul Jalil to clarify his stance on his recent speeches regarding her advisers, which the party leaders think is embarrassing for the government as well as the party.

Sources said the prime minister would talk to Jalil today or tomorrow in this regard.

During his speech at the budget session of the Jatiya Sangsad recently, Jalil said, "The advisers can't sit at the cabinet meetings; lots of secrets are discussed there. Ministers took the oath of secrecy, but they did not as per the constitution."

Later, one of the advisers to the prime minister, Dr Alaaddin Ahmed, made a counter attack on Jalil, saying that they do

not care about such statements, which also irked Hasina.

Sources said Hasina has already told the adviser that he should not have made such a comment on a party leader.

Talking to The Daily Star, some party leaders and ministers said that both Jalil and Alaaddin should not have made such statements. Rather, the AL general secretary could talk to the prime minister if he had any suggestions regarding her advisers.

Highly placed sources said the prime minister would also talk to some other party leaders, including president member Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, who were making remarks on just-retired army chief Gen Moeen U Ahmed and 1/11 political changeover in tune with the opposition BNP leaders.

Most AL leaders, including its joint general secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam, think

that Jalil should not have made such statements at this moment. But a section of leaders think Jalil had said the right thing.

Few party leaders are of the opinion that Hasina should take action against Jalil for his statements on different occasions, which caused embarrassment for the government and the party. On April 22, Jalil also alleged that many ministers are "paid agents of DGFI".

Highly placed sources said Hasina would not take any organisational action against Jalil and other leaders right now, as she wants to keep the party united and keep any rift at bay.

Sources said Jalil has become angry with the party chief as he has not been allowed to perform his duties as general secretary of the party. Joint general secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam is now performing the duties of the general secretary.



PHOTO: STAR

Industries Minister Dilip Barua speaks at a discussion marking the 154th anniversary of Santal revolution at the Engineers' Institution Auditorium in the city yesterday. Bangladesh Adivasi Odhikar Andolon O Ashray, a forum for movement for the rights of indigenous people, organised the event.

Dist, UZ level bodies to monitor distribution of textbooks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has formed two committees for each district and upazila to monitor transportation, storage and free distribution of primary, Ebtedayi and secondary level textbooks printed by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NTCB) for the academic year of 2010.

The district and upazila level committees will have 14 and 9 members respectively, said an official handout yesterday.

Deputy Commissioners (DC) of the respective districts will be the head of the district level committees.

The other members of the district committee are all upazila chairmen in the district, executive engineer of Public Works Department, all Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNOs), executive engineer of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), district primary education officer, a secondary school teacher nominated by the DC, a teacher of a government primary school, a journalist, a lawyer, an educationist, a social worker and the district education officer as member secretary.

The upazila level committee will be headed by UNO. The other members are all

union parishad chairmen in the upazila, upazila engineer of LGED, upazila primary education officer, a teacher of a government primary school nominated by the UNO, a teacher of a secondary school, a journalist, an educationist, a social worker and upazila secondary officer as member secretary.

On June 14, the govern-

ment formed a 13-member committee, headed by Prof Akhtaruzzaman of Dhaka University, to monitor the printing and distribution of textbooks for free at primary and secondary levels in 2010.

The initiatives of the government came following reported mismanagement in book distribution and printing of books over the years.

PILKHANA CARNAGE Court asks CID to submit probe report by Aug 16

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday asked Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to submit its probe report by August 16 on Pilkhana carnage on February 25-26.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mominul Hassan passed the order as the investigation officer (IO) of the case failed to submit its probe report.

CID has so far taken 1268 BDR jawans and civilians on remand for interrogation while 206 had given confessional statements to magistrates on different dates.

Meanwhile, jail authorities yesterday sent all the custody

warrants of the detained BDR jawans to the CMM court where the magistrate concerned put his signature fixing the next date of the case.

The authorities did not produce 1552 BDR jawans and civilians arrested in connection with the Pilkhana carnage before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court (CMM) of Dhaka due to security and accommodation reasons.

Earlier on April 2, the jail authorities produced 800 jawans and civilians before the court following an order of the CMM but trial proceedings of most of the courts remained suspended throughout the day due to security reasons.

Ensure transparency in spending public funds: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked for ensuring transparency and accountability in spending public funds like government dona-

tions and other allocations for the maximum welfare of the people.

She said the government will introduce e-governance in the country to ensure a corruption-free administra-

tion.

She said this at a meeting of Bangladesh Women Welfare Council at her official residence Jamuna.

The prime minister in the meeting approved a donation

of Tk 4,96,47,000 for the women council.

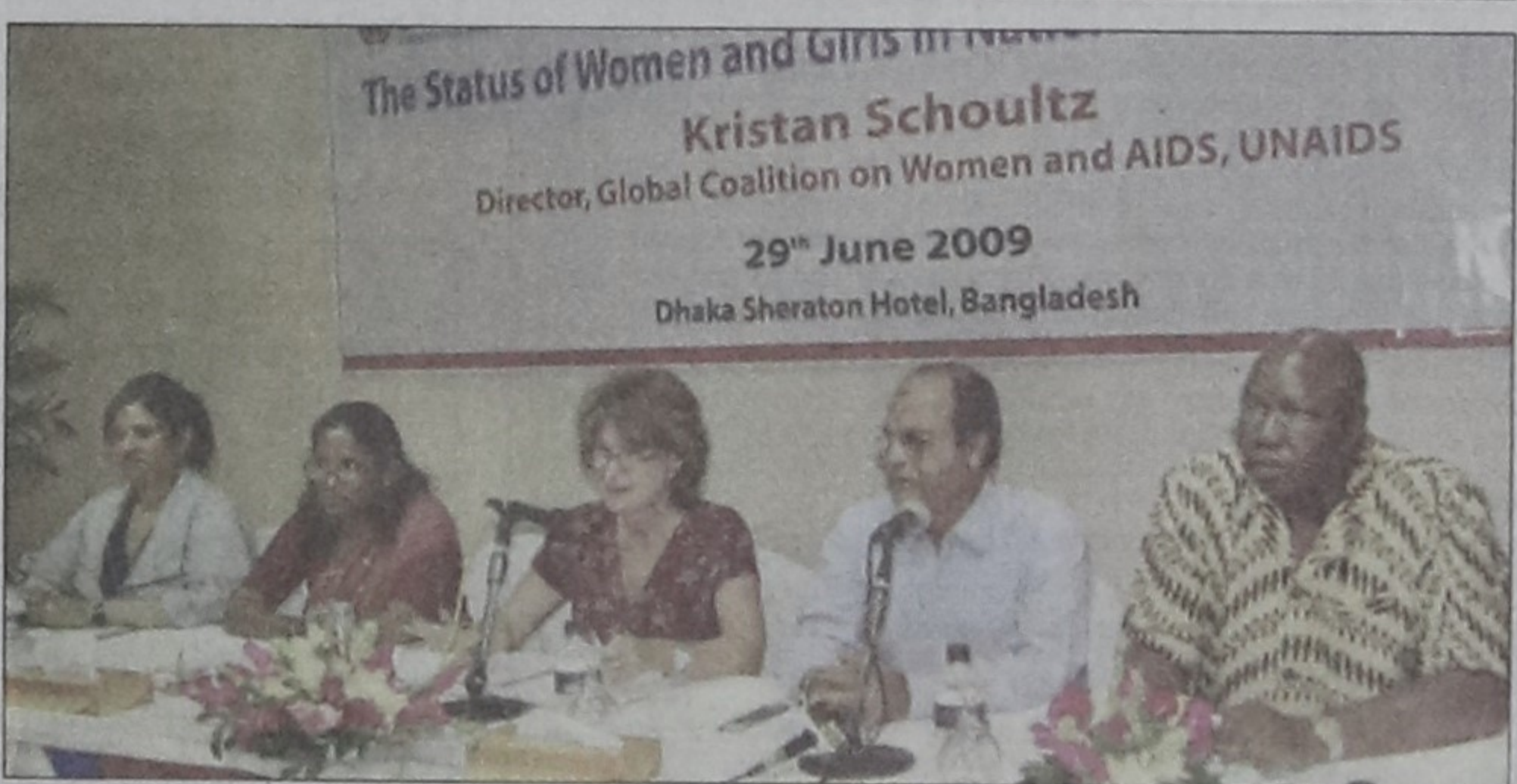
"Donation or any other allocation should be made much earlier of the fiscal year for its best use," she said about a change in the planning and spending of such government funds.

"From now on, no donation will be given after the month of April," she said and asked for scrutinising the use of the donations in the months of May and June.

Hasina said it has to be monitored closely whether the donations and other government funds are being used properly.

The prime minister reaffirmed her government's commitment to turn Bangladesh into a modern developed country.

Women and Children Affairs Ministry Secretary Rokeya Sultana and Prime Minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad were present.



Kristan Schoultz of UNAIDS speaks at a 'Meet the Press' programme on 'The status of women and girls in national AIDS responses' at Sheraton Hotel in the city yesterday. On her right are Anandi Yuvraj, representative of People Living with HIV and AIDS, and Nazneen Damji of UNIFEM, and on her left are journalist Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury and Dan Odallo of UNAIDS.

PHOTO: STAR

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মাত্র ৪.১৪ লক্ষ টাকা ডাউন পেমেন্ট দিয়ে
চাষি নিয়ে ড্রেড পড়ুন নিজের ফ্ল্যাট, বাকিটুকু ২০ বছরের কিস্তিতে*

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রূপায়ণ টাউন-এর ফ্ল্যাট কিনতে আগ্রহী হলে তাদের জন্য
ডিবিএইচ হোম লোন এখন একদম সহজ।

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