



Trucks carrying essentials line up a road at Khatunganj, the largest wholesale market of Chittagong, yesterday. The market is now buzzing with lots of activities ahead of Ramadan.

PHOTO: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

## COUNSELLING CENTRE OPENS

### 'Violence leaves psychological scars in women'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The women and children affairs ministry opened the National Trauma Counselling Centre at the Department of Women Affairs building yesterday to provide counselling to women victims of violence.

The centre was launched under a joint venture project titled 'Multi-sectoral Programme on Violence against Women' undertaken by the Bangladesh government and the Danish government.

Speakers at the launching ceremony said the disarming variety of violence, including physical, mental and sexual abuses, leaves deep psychological scars in women, causing damage to their mental health.

The women victims require immediate psychological support to reintegrate into society with dignity, they added.

A study conducted in 2007 on the victims who received assistance at the One-stop Crisis Centre under the project shows about 91 percent of victims suffer from clinical anxiety and about 81.4 percent suffer from chronic depression, a mental disorder highly ignored in the country.

Post traumatic stress disorder, suicidal tendency, fear and loss of confidence are also among other psychological crisis facing these women.

Inaugurating the centre, State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury emphasised the need to establish a sustainable counselling system for women victims.

This type of support system tends to close down when the respective project reaches the closing stage, she added.

The centre must maintain the quality of its service, she stressed.

Dr Abul Hossain, project director of Multi-sectoral Programme on Violence against Women, said that apart from providing counselling, the centre will also work to create a network among the professionals working on the issue.

However, lack of trained therapists and other experts poses a challenge to the centre, he said.

The centre will also conduct research and organise training sessions for social welfare officers dealing with the issue of violence against women at different levels.

Rokeya Sultana, secretary to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, and Rawshan Ara Begum, director general of the Department of Women Affairs, also spoke.

## SAHR condemns attacks on Christians in Pakistan

METRO DESK

Members of the South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR), a human rights organisation, have vehemently condemned the violent attacks on Christians at Gojra in Pakistan on August 1.

More than 3000 people launched the attacks on Christian homes in the town of Gojra in the diocese of Faisalabad. This was subsequent to an attack on Christian houses in the village of Korian, a few kilometres from Gojra, on July 30.

According to reports, eight people were killed, 19 others injured and 60 houses were demolished in the armed attack on August 1.

While SAHR notes with regret the loss of lives and destruction, we also express our concern over the current situation in Gojra as the atmosphere remains tense with announcements in mosques about further attacks on Christian colonies and villages in the area," the organisation said in a statement.

"We note that the main causes of this problem have been lack of cooperation from the district administration, negligence of the law enforcement agencies and also the attitude of the Christian political leadership."

SAHR urges the district administration to take all necessary steps to compensate those affected by the brutal attack and also emphasises the urgent need for the law enforcement agencies and the political leadership to be vigilant and ensure that further attacks do not surface again and any conflict is resolved in peaceful manner.

## 2,755 more held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested 2,755 people on various charges in separate drives across the country in 24 hours as of 6:00am yesterday.

Eleven firearms, three bombs and 16 bullets were also seized during the drive, said a press release of police headquarters.

Three cases were filed under the Arms Act, it said.

Besides, 104 motorbikes were seized during the drive for not having valid documents. Some 315 cases were filed and two arrested in this connection.

## PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

# Fill up post of teachers staying abroad: PM

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed the authorities to appoint teachers at public universities on an ad hoc basis to the posts of teachers who did not return even after completion of their higher studies abroad.

At a regular cabinet meeting, she also asked the foreign minister to settle the maritime boundary issue with Myanmar through talks.

Hasina told the meeting that as Myanmar is a strategically important neighbour,

the issue should be resolved through talks, sources said.

About the absence of teachers, the meeting observed that a large number of university teachers go abroad for higher studies with foreign scholarships but most of them do not return even after completion of their studies, which badly hamper the academic activities of the universities.

It also observed that a number of teachers join various jobs abroad after completing their studies.

When a minister informed the meeting that the universities could not appoint teachers to those posts as they are not considered to be vacant as per the public university rules, the prime minister gave a directive to fill up the posts with new teachers so that higher education of students is not hampered.

The prime minister also

asked the ministry concerned to bring all foreign scholarships on higher education, especially for academicians and government officials, under a comprehensive policy to ensure best utilisation of the scholarships.

Besides, the cabinet renamed the EPZ Workers Organisation and Industrial Relations Ordinance (Amendment) 2009 as Workers Welfare Association and Industrial Relations Bill (Amendment) 2009, with its provisions remaining intact, Prime Minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad told reporters after the meeting at the PID conference room.

So far, 69 industrial units in Dhaka and Chittagong export processing zones (EPZs) have introduced workers' association on the basis of referendum by workers, sources said.

There are 124 more 'eligible' industrial units in these

two EPZs which will have to hold referendums by 2010 as per an earlier decision of the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza) on the basis of a 2004 act allowing trade union activities with representation of around 2,00,000 workers.

At the meeting, the council of ministers also endorsed the proposed Chartered Secretaries Bill 2009, Azad said.

Two reports on Bangladesh's participation in the 15th NAM Summit held in Egypt in July and in the 17th conference of education ministers from the Commonwealth countries held in Kuala Lumpur were also placed at the cabinet meeting.

Ministers, state ministers and secretaries concerned attended the meeting held at the cabinet division in the secretariat.

## BMCH interns continue strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Intern doctors of Bangladesh Medical College and Hospital (BMCH) in the city continued their strike yesterday demanding removal of its store officer.

Earlier, they postponed their strike on August 7 following assurance from the hospital authorities. Some 100 intern doctors were observing the strike since July 26.

Their demanding removal of Abu Sayeed Miah, store officer and general secretary of the Officers and Employees Welfare Association of BMCH, for his misbehavior with doctors.

The authorities on Saturday asked Sayeed to beg pardon for his misbehavior and cut off his ten-day's salary. But the doctors did not accept this 'minimal punishment' as he did such act several times and was excused.

A meeting of the executive council of the hospital will be held tomorrow to deal with the matter.



Newly elected office-bearers of Officers Club call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her secretariat office in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

# FM for working together to resolve their problems

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister (FM) Dipu Moni has called upon all to work together to resolve the problems of indigenous people.

She said difference between Bangalees and indigenous people was created when a quarter deviated itself from the spirit of the liberation war.

The FM was speaking as chief guest at the launching ceremony of a book titled 'The ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Populations 1957 and The Laws of Bangladesh: A Comparative Review' written by Chakma Circle Chief Raja Devasish Roy at the WVA auditorium in the city.

"The quarter which created gaps between Bangalees and indigenous people are still hatching conspiracy against the establishment of equal rights for all. We should resist them unitedly," she said.

"There are some anomalies in the laws for indigenous people of plain lands and hill areas, Dipu Moni said, adding, "The problems should be removed through discussions."

State Minister for



PHOTO: STAR

(From left) Raja Devasish Roy, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma, Dipankar Talukder and Panudda Boonpala hold copies of a book titled 'The ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Populations 1957 and The Laws of Bangladesh: A Comparative Review' written by Chakma Circle Chief Raja Devasish Roy at the WVA auditorium in the city yesterday.

Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Dipankar Talukder said the government is committed to implement the CHT accord.

He said the BNP and its Chairperson Khaleda Zia had opposed the CHT accord as they did not want peace in the region.

The state minister said there is nothing written about full withdrawal of troops in CHT accord except six cantonments will remain there.

The speakers urged the

government to ratify the ILO Convention No 169 which was adopted in 1989.

Chairing the programme CHT Regional Council Chairman Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma said the government has taken some initiatives for the development of the indigenous people but it should take more steps.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam, and ILO's Country Director Panudda Boonpala also spoke on the occasion.



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