

## WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

## Call to review law to ensure rights

## STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a dialogue yesterday demanded the government take steps for immediate review of the existing laws and policies for persons with disabilities, because it has failed to address the needs of women with disabilities.

There is no mention of women with disabilities in Disability Welfare Act 2001 and National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 1995 and Prevention of Women and Child Repression Act 2000 amended in 2003, they added.

The speakers said even the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Cedaw) did not mention their rights.

The national dialogue on Women with Disabilities Rights Implementation was organised by Bangladesh Protibandhi Kalyan Samity (BPKS) at the National Press Club in the city.

The speakers also underlined the importance of changing the rules of business of every ministry to address the issue of disability.

Presenting a keynote paper, Ashrafun Nahar, coordinator of Women with Disability Network, BPKS, said

women with disabilities face triple disadvantages, first for their disabilities, secondly gender and then for poverty. So, the issue needs a special attention.

She pointed out that these women are easy target of physical, sexual and psychological abuses which often go unreported for lack of social and legal support.

According to a survey conducted by World Health Organisation in 2000, persons

with disabilities constitute about 10 percent of the total population in Bangladesh. The total number is around 1.5 crore. Of them, about 75 lakh is women with disabilities. Only two percent of these women get the opportunity of education.

Speaking as the chief guest, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said forming a law is not enough unless it is implemented with strict monitoring which requires political commitment.

She stressed the need to integrate persons with disabilities into mainstream development and create access for them into all spheres of life. To achieve that, it is urgent to find out the actual figure of the persons with disabilities.

On the other hand, Prof Imtiaz Ahmed of International Relations department at Dhaka University said currently war, terrorism and disasters, both natural and manmade, are the main reasons behind disability.

Rawshan Ara Begum, director general of the Department of Women Affairs, Abdus Sattar Dulal, founder and executive director of BPKS, Diane Lamberg-Liszakay, attaché of European Commission, and Lisa Johnson, capacity building officer of BPKS, also spoke.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni speaks at a dialogue at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## 'Save city parks, playgrounds'

## STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmentalists at a human chain yesterday demanded the parks in the city be saved.

They also demanded more open spaces and playgrounds to ensure sound physical and mental development of the children.

Save the Environment Movement (SEM) and WBB Trust formed the human chain in front of Faculty of Fine Art on Dhaka University campus.

Chairman of SEM Abu Naser Khan said physical

exercise and outdoor games are very important for sound mental growth of a man.

The children are being deprived of the opportunity to play outdoor games due to lack of playgrounds and parks, he said.

Project Manager of WBB Trust Syed Mahbubul Alam said people are suffering from different kinds of diseases like diabetes, obesity and cardiac problem due to lack of outdoor games and physical exercise.

The children are the worst sufferers of the process and to

address the problem it is necessary to ensure that they get outdoor games facilities since their childhood, he said.

Secretary General of Citizens' Rights Movement Tushar Rehman said amusement facilities should get special attention in urban planning.

Singer Abdul Kuddus Boyati, President of Nirapad Foundation Ibnul Sayed Rana and President of Khilgaon Samajik Unnayan Sangstha Hafizur Rahman Mayna also spoke.



Save the Environment Movement (SEM) and WBB Trust form a human chain in front of Faculty of Fine Art on Dhaka University campus yesterday with a call to save city parks and playgrounds.

## 'Comprehensive law a must to fight human trafficking'

## STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Poverty and lack of adequate legal framework potentially create obstacles to the fight against trafficking in women and children, experts at a seminar said yesterday.

"The primary barrier is the absence of a single comprehensive law to combat human trafficking," said Advocate Salma Ali, executive director of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA).

RDRS (Rangpur-Dinajpur Rural Service) Bangladesh organised the seminar on 'Dimensions of trafficking in women and children and barriers to implementation of laws' at Spectra Convention Centre in the city.

Dignity and privacy of a trafficked and sexually abused woman must be protected during the investigation and trial, Salma Ali said.

Stressing the need for integrated efforts by the countries concerned, she said extradition treaty is required to tackle the issue effectively and bring the accused back from abroad.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, trustee board chairperson of RDRS Bangladesh, said the police treat most cases of trafficking as abduction, which weakens the legal course and undermines the gravity of the offence.

State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury said the foremost reasons behind trafficking in women and children include poverty, lack of education, lack of social awareness and natural disasters.

Rasheda K Chowdhury, executive director of Campaign for Popular Education (Campe), said that

mass awareness about the issue could be raised by incorporating materials in the post-primary education curriculum or as supplementary reading. It can also be achieved through street drama, music and extracurricular activities.

Women and children are mostly trafficked to India, Pakistan and Middle Eastern countries, said Salma Ali.

## Delwar blames govt for oppression

## STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Khondaker Delwar Hossain yesterday accused the government of adopting autocratic attitude and continuing torture and oppression of opposition leaders and activists.

He also protested the imposition of a ban on a memorial discussion at Manikganj where he and BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury were invited as guests.

The meeting was scheduled for yesterday at Daulatpur Upazila, but the upazila administration imposed the ban as the ruling party's local unit also called a meeting at the same venue.

Delwar said the government has infringed the people's right to freedom of expression by imposing the ban on peaceful meeting.

Meanwhile, the BNP standing committee member Moudud Ahmed yesterday said it would not be a right decision to change the name, uniform and logo of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) only for a few people's sake.

"BDR has a glorious past. So, the issue should be discussed in parliament before making any changes," he told reporters at his Motijheel chamber in the city.

The former law minister also said the people expect quick trial of real culprits involved in the carnage at BDR headquarters, but a group in the government is hatching a conspiracy to delay the trial.



PHOTO: STAR  
Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus shares his experience in the US about receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom 2009, America's highest civilian award, with distinguished guests at the Grameen Bank auditorium in the city yesterday.

## Interview dates for DV lottery rescheduled

## METRO DESK

The consular section of the US Embassy in Dhaka has rescheduled interviews for Diversity Visa (DV) applicants with interview dates on September 8, 9 and 10, says a press release yesterday.

Individuals with interviews scheduled for one of those dates should have received a letter with the new interview date. Individuals may also check the embassy's website at <http://dhaka.usembassy.gov> for the new date.

If an individual fails to appear on his/her new interview date, it will not be possible to reschedule the interview for an alternate day.

Individuals may email [DhakaDV@state.gov](mailto:DhakaDV@state.gov) with any questions regarding their DV interviews or applications.

Please include the full name and case number in all email correspondence. The consular section regrets any inconvenience this may cause.

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