

Withdraw reservation on CEDAW articles

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday urged the government to withdraw its reservation on articles 2 and 16.1.GA of Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to eliminate all sorts of discrimination against women as well as to establish equal rights regarding guardianship of children and marriage and divorce before submitting the 6th and 7th periodic government report by December.

Giving the excuse of religious sentiments, the government still keeps the reservation on the articles, depriving half of the country's population of the rights they are entitled to as per international law and the constitution, they added.

Representatives of Citizens' Initiatives on CEDAW Bangladesh, a national platform of 38 rights organisations, held the discussion on 'CEDAW and Bangladesh' at Cirdap auditorium in the city with a call for full implementation of CEDAW.

Although almost 25 years have passed since Bangladesh had signed the convention, the government is yet to approve all the articles of CEDAW, said the speakers.

While submitting the per-

iodic reports, the government always pledges to withdraw the reservation but that never becomes a reality, said noted human rights activist Dr Hamida Hossain in her keynote.

She stressed full implementation of the CEDAW and incorporating the guidelines of CEDAW into national law to ensure equal rights of women, especially regarding ancestral property and children's guardianship.

Emphasising dissemination of the government periodic reports, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Ayesha Khanam said it is important to make public who are preparing the report and what does the report actually contain to make the government more accountable.

Referring to the article 7 of CEDAW, Ayesha Khanam said the government should focus more on political rights, especially the issues relating to marginal women because they have little chance to reach the policymaking level.

"Although women in the country are advanced socio-economically, they are still lagging behind in domestic life since we always see women facing discrimination in family life or private life," said Shaheen Anam, executive director of Steps Towards Development.

Foundation.

She also said that the government should make it clear why it is incapable to cancel the reservation on the specific CEDAW clauses.

The platform also placed a set of demands, including forming a gender equality commission consisting of women lawmakers and representatives from Law Commission and women affairs ministry, appointing more female teachers in all academic institutions and creating women-friendly environment, allocating more funds to women healthcare sector, taking steps to ensure women rights on lands, initiating more agriculture programmes for women, giving women agriculture loan on easy conditions and ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

President of Women For Women Salma Khan presided over the discussion also addressed by Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh, Advocate Salma Ali, executive director of BNWLA, and Rangan Karmakar, executive director of Steps Towards Development.

Cabinet decides to set up hi-tech park

Okays three bills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet at a meeting yesterday approved three bills, including Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority Bill 2009, and decided to set up a hi-tech park to fulfil the Awami League's electoral pledge to build a 'Digital Bangladesh' by 2021.

Two other bills are Mobile Court Bill 2009 and Vested Property Return (Amendment) Bill 2009.

The hi-tech park would be built on 232 acres of lands at Kaliakoir in Gazipur. The land ministry has started the infrastructure development work for the park at a cost of Tk 25 crore, the prime minister's press secretary Abul Kalam Azad told reporters after the meeting.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chaired the meeting held at the Prime Minister's Office.

Process on to hire 2 Boeing-747 aircraft for hajj pilgrims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The process of hiring two wide-body Boeing-747 aircraft is under way to carry hajj pilgrims to Saudi Arabia, the civil aviation and tourism minister told the parliament yesterday.

GM Quader replying to a query from Awami League lawmaker ABM Abul Kashem said the two Boeing aircrafts would add to the Bangladesh Biman fleet to carry the pilgrims.

The minister also told the House that arrangements to carry around 60,000 hajj pilgrims have been made this year.

Replying to a query from AL lawmaker Moshtak Ahmed Ruhil, the minister said Biman made a profit of Tk 5.91 crore in fiscal year 2007-08 after it had been turned into a public limited company.

The civil aviation and tourism minister replying to another question said a total of around 2,65,905 foreign passport holders visited Bangladesh until December, 2008 of FY 2008-09 and the government has earned US\$ 88.07 million dollars from this sector.

The minister hopes the earning will be increased to US\$ 92.50 million in the next financial year.

Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A four-year-old Yasin Arif Swadhin has been suffering from blood cancer for last one year, says a press release.

He is now undergoing treatment at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) under the supervision of Prof MA Mannan.

Swadhin is staying at Ashiq Shelter, a shelter for childhood cancer patient at Hatirjheel, as it has become tough for his father Abul Hashem to keep his son at the hospital for treatment due to financial crisis.

Hashem has already spent about Tk 4 lakh for the treatment of his son.

According to the doctors, Swadhin needs an amount of about Tk 7 lakh for his treatment.

But his father, a master tailor and founder of a non-government primary school, is unable to arrange such a big amount of money.

So he has made a fervent appeal to well-off people of the society for financial assistance to save the life of his son.

Contributions can be sent to Abul Hashem, Savings Account No 9385, Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd, Karwan Bazar Branch, Dhaka.

The government has meantime decided to take punitive actions against the former army

Proper implementation of CHT projects stressed

ADB official meets state minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Asian Development Bank (ADB) Country Director Paul J Heytens met State Minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Dipankar Talukdar at his secretariat office yesterday and discussed the 2nd phase of rural development project in CHT.

Presently, the first phase of the project is being implemented with the financial assistance from ADB.

At the meeting, the state minister stressed the need for proper marketing of commodities produced in CHT, development of road network, supply of water during dry season by harvesting rainwater, prevention of land erosion and development of infrastructure.

He also laid emphasis on monitoring for proper implementation of the projects.

WEATHER TODAY

Light rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at many places over all the six divisions in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are also likely to occur over the country, Met Office said.

It also said day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 7:07pm today and rises at 6:43am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 33.1 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 23.6 degrees Celsius at Cox's Bazar and Sylhet.

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	30.5	26.6	79	89
Chittagong	30.5	24.5	85	88
Rajshahi	29.3	24.8	98	98
Khulna	31.0	24.5	92	93
Barisal	33.6	25.5	84	88
Sylhet	33.1	25.4	95	77
Cox's Bazar	31.0	24.2	96	95



PHOTO: Grameen Bank

Rene Carron, centre, chairman of Credit Agricole, a leading French bank, with the borrowers of Majhira branch of Grameen Bank in Bogra. A team of the bank led by Carron visited various field level projects of Grameen Bank on Tuesday. Carron also attended the third Board Meeting of Grameen Credit Agricole Microfinance Foundation hosted by Grameen Trust yesterday.

Man run over by train at Parbatipur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A man was crushed under the wheels of a goods-laden train here at Parbatipur upazila in Dinajpur yesterday.

The dead was identified as Shunil Chandra Roy, 28, son of late Batashu Chandra Roy, of Stationpara under the same upazila.

BR police said the accident occurred at 12:30pm when the victim was crossing the rail line near Bhabanipur railway station with his cattle, but the train ran over him.

'Pay salary, bonus to journos'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) in a joint statement yesterday urged the owners of newspapers, news agencies and electronic media to pay salary and festival bonus to the journalists and other staff before the Eid-ul-Fitr.

They also urged the owners who are yet to implement the 7th wage board to pay dues to the journalists immediately.

Signatories to the statement were BFUJ President Ruhul Amin Gazi, Member Secretary MA Aziz, DUJ President Abdus Shahid, and General Secretary Mohammad Baker Hossain.

They also greeted journalists in advance on the occasion of the Eid-ul-Fitr.

The rights activists also urged the US State Department should give guidelines on how to stop human trafficking and ensure safe migration.

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

BDR jawans seized two kg ganja (cannabis) and arrested a smuggler in this connection from Durgapur area of Benapole yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, they raided Durgapur area and recovered the ganja and arrested Liton Roy, son of Bishu Pada Roy of Nawapara in Jessor, for possessing the illegal item which was smuggled in from India.

The arrestee had been smuggling ganja, wine and other narcotics from India for long. He supplies those items to different areas of the country.

A case has been filed with Benapole Police Station.

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

'Drop name of Bangladesh from US watch list'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Human rights activists yesterday expressed their concern at US State Department's annual 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2009' that termed Bangladesh a source and transit country for men, women and children trafficked for the purposes of forced labour and commercial sexual exploitation.

The US should drop the name of Bangladesh from its watch list for the sake of the country's manpower export sector, said Salma Ali, chairman of Action Against Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children (ATSEC), at a press conference at the National Press Club.

In its report, the US State Department placed Bangladesh on the Tier 2 watch list, saying that 'Bangladesh does not comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.'

ATSEC Co-chairperson Masud Dhalu said the statement that the government did not take any steps to stop human trafficking is wrong.

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instead of blaming the country for "insufficient steps to stop human trafficking".

The Trafficking in Persons Report, which was published on June 16 worldwide, also said that Bangladeshi law enforcement officials identified 251 trafficking victims and referred 204 victims to care facilities run by the government or NGOs.

ATSEC Bangladesh organised the press conference.

No-one was in the flat at that time as Milon, an employee of Dhaka Education Board, and his wife Kamrun Nahar, a banker, went to their offices after locking the door from outside.

Kadamtali police broke open the door of the flat on the second floor of a five-storey building around 5:00pm and recovered the body.

The police, however, could not ascertain the motive behind the suicide.

Local people informed the police after they saw a body hanging in the flat.

Shahzad had been working in the flat for over four years, the police said.

Both the bodies were sent to Sir Salimullah Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Qulhwani of Ahmed Faruk Hasan, deputy editor of the daily Jugantor, will be held at the daily Jugantor office at 4:00pm today, says a press release.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend the programme and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

A condolence book has been opened at the Jugantor office in memory of Faruk Hasan.

Death anniversary

STAR CORRESPONDENT

Today is the second death anniversary of Begum Farida Rouf, former lawmaker, organising secretary of Bangladesh Mahila Awami League and wife of Gono Forum President Member Abdur Rouf, says a press release.