

## Direct elections to JS seats for women demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women rights activists yesterday demanded introduction of direct election and reservation of 100 seats for women in parliament to achieve equal rights and opportunities with a view to contributing to the policy making.

They also called on the government to appoint women members at University Grants Commission, women vice-chancellor at public universities and recruit women at higher level of administration and diplomatic missions.

Leaders of Samajik Protirodh Committee, a plat-

form of 60 social, voluntary and rights-based organisations, at a press conference at the National Press Club also demanded implementation of the National Women's Development Policy 1997.

The press conference was organised to mark the 100 years of the International Women's Day on March 8 across the world. The theme of the year is 'Equal rights, equal opportunities; progress for all'.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Ayesha Khanam, also leader of the committee, moderated the programme while Executive Director of Nari Pragati

Sangha Rokeya Kabir delivered a written speech.

They demanded setting up of a different full-fledged ministry for women and enough budgetary allocation for implementation of women's development activities and projects.

The women leaders demanded also demanded reserving some seats in the parliament for physically challenged women.

The committee has chalked out a series of programmes, including women's gathering, cultural programme, rally, procession and women's fair this month.

Today, Communist Party

of Bangladesh (CPB) will launch the 'Women's awareness walk' at Muktangan to mark the day.

Karmajibi Nari (KN) also organised a media briefing on the eve of the day at the National Press Club. It also highlighted a series of programmes in March.

KN President Shirin Akhter demanded compensation for the victims of the devastating fire at a garment factory in Gazipur.

Amrai Pari Paribarik Nirjatan Protirodh Jote will also start a road show from Rangpur today and will end at Central Shaheed Minar on March 8.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveils an ambitious digitised telecoms plan styled 'Digital Bangladesh: Plan of Connecting People' at a city hotel yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

## JS passes National Science Museum Bill

BSS, Dhaka

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday passed the National Science and Technology Museum Bill-2010 aiming at expanding science education and popularising science and technology through establishing National Science and Technology Museum.

State Minister for Science and Technology Yeafesh Osman proposed the passage of the bill in the parliament.

The bill includes provisions for authorising Science and Technology Museum as an autonomous body.

With establishment of National Science and Technology Museum, the existing Science and Technology Museum will be abolished, the bill proposed.

The bill proposed handing over all officials and employees as well as all facilities of Science and Technology Museum to the new museum.



MJ Akbar, editor of Delhi-based The Sunday Guardian and chairman of Covert Magazine, speaks at the 13th convocation of Independent University, Bangladesh at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

## Regional cooperation vital to eliminate poverty

Says Indian journalist MJ Akbar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Regional cooperation is vital to eliminate poverty from the South Asian nations, said veteran Indian journalist and noted author MJ Akbar yesterday.

"If poverty cannot be eliminated from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bhutan in the next 30 to 40 years, then we are failed," said Akbar, editor of Delhi-based The Sunday Guardian and chairman of Covert Magazine.

He said this while talking to The Daily Star on the sidelines of the 13th convocation of Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) 2009 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city.

"Poverty elimination will be more difficult without regional cooperation. That is

why regional cooperation is vital," said Akbar, adding: "Don't forget... we work for equals... not that India is big and you are small. That does not matter. If equality is the foundation, the relationship will right go on and on."

There should be more shared economic development among the South Asian nations, he said. "Only sentiments don't work. You have to see practical benefits."

Stating that the India-Bangladesh relationship got a new strength with the recent prime minister-level summit, the veteran journalist said the close rapport between the two countries needs to be maintained to gain better results.

As the convocation speaker, Akbar said poverty on this part of the world is at

shameful level, which is regrettable. "I sometimes think why the poor allow the cars to ply on the streets, what do we give them?"

Calling on the IUB graduates not to forget the disadvantaged groups in society, Akbar, also a former member of the parliament, said education is not an exercise of selfishness, but of sharing in capabilities to contribute to equitable development.

It is not education if someone being a graduate forgets the values and the disadvantaged groups, he told the graduating students.

Improved quality of politics, gender equality and secularism are the other elements the states must have to be modern, Akbar added.

The university prepares not only dynamic professionals, but imparts the values of life as well as the society.

The VC called on the graduates to contribute to social development.

A total of 660 graduates were conferred degrees on the occasion.

Naomi Ahmed was selected as a valedictorian while Lameya Binte Ali, Sharmin Mahub, Md Azmal Hossain and SM Kaiser Ali received chancellor's gold medals for their outstanding academic results.

IUB Pro-VC Prof Omar Rahman, Governing Council Chairman Towhid Samad and Chairman of Education, Science, Technology and Cultural Development Trust Abdul Hafiz Chowdhury also spoke.

## Plans on cards to ease traffic jam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Construction of grade separators underpass at 13 important intersections, tunnel, bypass, four inter-district bus terminals and foot over bridge are under consideration in efforts to ease the traffic congestion in the capital.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam told this to the House while replying to lawmakers' queries.

He said project proposals to construct grade separators underpass at Shahbag, Sheraton, Banglamotor and Sonargaon intersections have been prepared. Nine such constructions at different important intersections would follow.

Besides, four inter-district bus terminals would be constructed, he added.

"On approval, it may take 18 months to complete the task," the minister said.

He said technical assistance proposal to construct a tunnel from Jahangir Gate to Rokeya Sarani and another proposal for a bypass from Mirpur Darus Salam to Kachukhet are at the planning commission for approval.

Asharful said the government has also taken initiatives to build new footpath, foot over bridge, underpass and setting up traffic signals to ease commuters' movement.

Major portion of the tasks will

be completed in next two years, he said.

The minister said, under private finance, construction of Jatrabari-Gulistan Flyover, major gateway of the city, would require three years for completion.

**Public Toilets & Waste** "Dhaka City Corporation is running 48 public toilets in the capital but it is inadequate compared to the needs," the LGRD minister said.

Construction of more

toilets could not be possible due to scarcity of space, he added.

In response to another query, the LGRD minister said 3,909 tonnes of waste is being produced every day in the capital city.

He said different types of proposals, both from local and international, to generate power from waste are now under consideration at the ministries of LGRD, power and environment.

## ODHIKAR REPORT

### 12 extrajudicial killings in Feb

UNB, Dhaka

Some 12 people were killed allegedly by the members of law enforcement agencies across the country last month, according to a report of Odhikar, a human rights organisation.

Besides, five Bangladeshi nationals were killed and six others injured during incidents of human rights violations allegedly committed by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) along Bangladesh-India border during the period, the report said.

Among the extra-judicial killings, the report said, seven people were killed by Rapid Action Battalion, three by police and two others killed during a joint drive by the police and Rab.

Ten people were killed during encounter or gunfight, while the remaining two died under custody of law enforcers.

Also, a total of 23 people were killed and 1,697 others were injured in political violence across the country last month.

A total of 54 intra-party clashes took place within ranks of ruling Awami League and eight clashes within the ranks of main opposition BNP.

Besides, 14 journalists were injured, eight received threats and eight were manhandled during the period, the report said.

## Truck, stolen iron rods recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A truck loaded with 15 tonnes of iron rods, which was taken away by robbers from Dhamrai two days ago, was recovered in the city yesterday.

Motijheel police said they seized the truck in the city's Shahjahanpur area in the early hours of yesterday when its colour and number plate were being changed.

Four members of the robbers' gang were engaged in painting the truck on the

roadside, which aroused the suspicions of patrol police.

But three criminals ran away when the police challenged them. Only one, Raihan, was caught.

Following the confession of Raihan during preliminary interrogation, the police also seized the iron rods, which were sold to a businessman in Kamrangirchar, said Motijheel Police Station officer-in-charge Toffazzal Hossain.

He said the criminals took away the truck in the early hours of February 28.

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- Proactive and able to work under pressure and minimal supervision.

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- Proactive and able to work under pressure and minimal supervision.

The above positions also demand good English communication and supervisory skills combining the requirement of extensive travel. Interested candidates are invited to send a resume with covering letter and a recent passport size photo to Human Resource Department, MJL Bangladesh Limited, Mobil House, CWS (C) 9, Gulshan 1, Dhaka, by post or email: [career@mobilbd.com](mailto:career@mobilbd.com). Application deadline: March 14, 2010. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for interview.

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