

All-female police contingent to be sent to UN mission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Sahara Khatun announced yesterday that the government will soon send an all-female police contingent to a United Nations peacekeeping mission.

Bangladesh will become the first Muslim nation in the world to commit an all-female contingent.

The home minister made the announcement while inaugurating the third meeting of the Doctrine Development Group (DDG) on Formed Police Units (FPU).

The meeting was organised by Bangladesh police and the UN Department of

Peacekeeping Operations and it was held at the Sheraton Hotel in Dhaka.

Sahara said that the decision to commit an all-female FPU contingent reflects Bangladesh's commitment to maintaining international peace and security.

She also said that Bangladesh police have made important contributions to UN peacekeeping missions over the last three years.

The DDG meeting aims to develop a uniform curriculum for FPUs in pre-deployment training.

FPU contingents currently follow curriculums developed by their own country before

joining UN peacekeeping missions -- so the standards can vary from one country to another.

Bangladesh is hosting the five-day DDG meeting, which involves 52 participants from 35 countries.

New York hosted the previous meeting and Italy was host in 2008.

Additional Superintendent of Police (UN Affairs) Mohammad Atiqul Islam said that Bangladesh has been participating in UN peacekeeping missions since 1980.

The first Bangladeshi FPU was sent in 2005.

There are currently 10 Bangladeshi FPUs working in

the Ivory Coast, the Democratic Republic of Congo, East Timor and Darfur. A total of 1,604 police personnel have so far been deployed on UN missions.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun was the chief guest and gave a speech during the opening session, along with State Minister for Home Affairs Shamsul Haq Tuku, Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder and Chief of Strategic Planning (development section) of the Deployment of Peace Keeping Operations Andrew Carpenter.

The meeting was chaired by IGP Nur Mohammad.



PHOTO: STAR

Recipients of Channel i lifetime achievement awards pose for photograph at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday. Channel i honoured top 10 women for their pioneering role in their respective fields on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day.

20pc women fall victim to repression in last 13 months

Says Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Accusing the ruling party men of repressing women, BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia yesterday alleged that the government has no control over its own party leaders and workers.

"Twenty percent of women in the country were repressed in the last 13 months of this government. The ruling party leaders, including Chhatra League and Jubo League, were behind the crimes, but the government is remaining silent," she added.

Khaleda said this at a view exchange meeting with a handful of women from different walks of life of the society.

Renowned women personalities, including foreign diplomats, academicians and politicians, were present at the programme organised by BNP at a hotel at Gulshan in the city.

The BNP chairperson greeted all the women on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day.

The government in one hand is saying for women empowerment and on the other hand remain silent over the repression on them by the ruling party men across the country, she said.

Asking the government to implement its election pledges, the opposition leader alleged that it is busier dishing out falsehood and changing names of institutions than doing any good for the countrymen.

"I hope the government will engage itself in doing welfare of the people and ensure honour and dignity of women," Khaleda said, adding that the situation of the country is not good.

The government has to work to implement its electoral pledges and help rid the country of the prevailing disastrous situation, she observed.

Women personalities Hasna Moudud, Taleya Rehman, Abdul Awal Mintoo, Shahida Rafique, Prof Tajmeri SA Islam, Elina Khan and BNP leaders Sarwari Rahman, Razia Foyez, Shirin Sultana, Rehana Akhter Ranu, among others, were present.



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Recipients of Radhuni Kirtimotee Award 2009 pose with guests at the award giving ceremony at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre yesterday. Square Consumer Products Limited awarded four women for their outstanding contribution on the occasion of the International Women's Day.

ATTACK ON HUMAYUN AZAD

JMB man shown arrested

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A member of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) was shown arrested and was taken on remand yesterday for his alleged involvement in an attempt to murder Professor Humayun Azad.

First Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Ali Hossain placed JMB member Saleuddin Ahmed alias Salehin on a four-day remand after Criminal Investigation Department produced him before it with a seven-day prayer.

In the forwarding report, CID Inspector Mustafizur Rahman, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, said, "Salehin was directly involved in the attempt to kill the victim. So he needs to be taken on remand to know the whereabouts of his other accomplices."

Earlier on October 20 last year, the same court ordered further investigation into the attack on Prof Azad and directed the CID to submit the probe report by December 20. But the investigation officer failed. Later the court again allowed the CID two and a half months more to complete the

probe. A gang of attackers stabbed eminent writer Prof Azad with machetes in front of the Bangla Academy in the capital on February 27, 2004, leaving him critically injured. After his recovery, Prof Azad went to Germany where he died on August 11, 2004.

Monjur Kabir, brother of Prof Azad, filed a petition on October 6 last year seeking further investigation into the attack on Prof Azad.

CID Inspector Kazi Abdul Malek, first IO of the case, submitted a charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka on November 15, 2007 against five JMB men, including executed JMB leaders Abdur Rahman and his brother Ataur Rahman Sunny.

But their names were dropped from the charge sheet as they were sentenced to death for killing two judges in Jhalakathi.

Among the three other accused, Mizanur Rahman Minhas and Nur Mohammad Shamim remain absconding while Nur Alam alias Anwar Hossain Shahid is now in Dhaka Central Jail after his arrest in 2005.

BCL factional clash at Salimullah Medical College

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), associate body of ruling Awami League, were locked into a clash at Sir Salimullah Medical College (SSMC) last night, leaving 12 students injured.

The clash ensued when a supporter of president group threw a chair on a supporter of secretary group all of a sudden while he was taking dinner in the canteen at the main hall of the college, an eyewitness said.

Incensed at the incident, the secretary group chased the supporters of rival group around 9:00pm. Four homemade bombs went off during the attack and counter-attack.

Ataul Karim Arbi, secretary of SSMC unit BCL, told The Daily Star that they themselves formed the committee without having approval from the central leaders.

"After declaring himself as president, Javed was engaged in illegal activities. His group attacked my supporters as I protested his activities," Arbi said.

Javed, however, claimed that the secretary group acted behind the attack.

Later, Kotwali police brought the situation under control.

Top 10 women honoured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Top ten women of the country, who were the first to occupy centre stage at the top of their professions, received lifetime achievement awards of Channel i yesterday.

First woman editor of the country Nurjahan Begum, editor of Begum, first female deputy leader of parliament Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, first home minister Advocate Sahara Khatun, also first to hold the chair along with first female Barrister Rabeya Bhuiyan, first Brig Gen (retd) Dr Suraiya Rahman, Ambassador Nasim Firdous, first Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and first female train driver Salma Khatun brightened up the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre with their presence.

Three valiant female freedom fighters -- Tara Bibi, Kakon Bibi and Capt (retd) Sitara Begum were also in the list. The private TV station honoured the women on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day.

The award recipients called on all to build a nation without discrimination, where women would not be persecuted on gender grounds.

They also called for providing equal opportunity for both male and female children to boost up their hidden talent.

While receiving the award, Sajeda Chowdhury said women's participation in every aspect of life is important. The present government is committed to ensuring their empowerment.

Dipu Moni said men must work together with their female counterparts to create a society based on equality, adding that it is necessary not just for women but also for the entire society, state and the universe.

Language movement veteran Rawshan Ara Bacchu attended the programme as the chief guest while Channel i Managing Director Faridur Reza Sagar and Director Jahiruddin Mahmud Mamun were also present.

The award giving ceremony was followed by a dazzling cultural show.

MADRASA EDUCATION

Govt moves to set up separate directorate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has taken initiatives to modernise the madrasa education system so that its students can get modern education apart from religious studies, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said yesterday.

"We want the madrasa students to become learned Aalims (Islamic scholars) and study science and technology so that they can also hold prestigious position in the society," he said.

Referring to the steps taken for the development of madrasa education, Nahid said the government decided to set up a separate directorate for madrasa education and increase its facilities and a process to set up the directorate is on.

The minister was speaking at a meeting with the representatives of Bangladesh Jamiatul Mudarresin, an organisation of madrasa teachers, on the development of the madrasa education.

The government distributed free textbooks to madrasa students for the first time and took initiative to improve the standard of its teachers' training institute, he said adding that the process of establishing an Arabic University is also on.

Nahid said they tried to accommodate opinions of the religious groups in the National Education Policy.

"Despite all these things, a certain quarter has been spreading confusion about the madrasa education and running a smear campaign against it," he said.

At the meeting, the representatives of Jamiatul Mudarresin placed some demands including increase of salary for the teachers of ibtedai (primary level) madrasas, relax the provision of women quota for the appointment of madrasa teachers and provide stipends to the madrasa students.

The minister assured them of meeting their demands in phases as the government is giving importance to madrasa education.

Meantime, talking to the reporters, Nahid cleared the government's stand on the National University (NU) saying that the government wants to reform and restructure the university to make it an effective institution.

Additional Secretary SM Golam Faruk, Prof Noman-ur-Rashid, director general of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, AMM Bahauddin, editor of Inqilab and president of Jamiatul Mudarresin, among others, spoke on the occasion.

HC DIRECTIVES ON PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Contempt petition filed against authorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA) yesterday filed a contempt of court petition with the High Court against the secretaries concerned and several organisations on charges of not complying with the HC directives regarding prevention of sexual harassment of women.

In May last year, the HC issued a set of guidelines asking the authorities concerned to form a five-member committee headed by a woman at every workplace and institution to investigate the allegations of sexual harassment.

The HC also directed the

government to make a law on the basis of the guidelines, and ruled that the guidelines will be treated as a law a law is made.

BNWLA President Advocate Fawzia Karim Firoze told The Daily Star yesterday that her organisation filed the contempt petition since most organisations have not formed the committees.

A total of 13 officials, including the law secretary, women and children affairs secretary, education secretary, labour secretary and information secretary, the representatives of BGMEA, BKMEA and Bangladesh Bar Council and the inspector general of police have been made respondents in the petition.

Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh



Md Zillur Rahman Khan, a renowned journalist and bureau chief of the daily

Sangbad, died of a cardiac arrest at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital early yesterday at the age of 54.

He left behind his wife, mother, a son and a daughter. Zillur Rahman had been elected secretary of Mymensingh Press Club for several times. He received a number of awards for his contribution to journalism.

State Minister for Health Mujibur Rahman Fakir and State Minister for Cultural Affairs Promod Mankin expressed deep shock at the death of Zillur Rahman.

Updated draft voter list for Ctg published

3.1 lakh new voters

UNB, Chittagong

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday published the updated draft voter list for Chittagong city and 14 upazilas of the district.

The updated voter list was made public simultaneously at the offices of the district election officer and all unions and wards in the morning.

Some 311,313 new voters -- 1.24 lakh in 41 wards of the Chittagong City Corporation and 1.86 lakh in 14 upazilas of the district -- were added to

the list that had been prepared before the 9th parliamentary election.

District election officer Dulal Talukdar told UNB that the EC will accept petitions containing demands, objections and amendments related to the list until March 23, and resolve them by March 30.

The voter list will be submitted to the EC in Dhaka on March 31 and the authorities will make a final decision on the amendments to the voter list by April 6.

The final voter list will be published on April 15.

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DHAKA TODAY

Symposium
United Nations Association of Bangladesh will organise a symposium in observance of International Women's Day. Venue: Bilia auditorium, Dhanmondi. Time: 5:30pm.

Seminar
Centre for Advanced Research in Humanities organises a seminar will be held on corruption. Venue: Dhaka University Lecture Theatre. Time: 4:00pm.

Candlelight vigil
Sajek Land Protection Committee will hold a candlelight vigil in memory of the ethnic people who were killed in Rangamati recently. Venue: Central Shaheed Minar. Time: 4:00pm.

Seminar
Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) organises a seminar on maternal safety of women at workplaces. Venue: National Museum. Time: 10:00am.