

## Frame policy to stop sexual harassment

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop yesterday called on the industries to frame a policy to ensure gender equality and stop sexual harassment at workplaces.

Sexual harassment diminishes the productivity of women workers and ultimately affects the export-oriented industries, they said.

The Alliance for Women Workers' Rights (AWRR) in association with International Labour Organisation (ILO), Dhaka organised the sensitisation workshop on 'Gender Equality and Sexual Harassment at Workplace' at the National Press Club in the city.

Concerted efforts by the members of

trade unions, employers, representatives of the print and electronic media and law enforcement agencies as well as people from various professions can prevent sexual harassment at all spheres of our society effectively, said Prof Ishrat Shamim, chairperson of AWRR.

Jatiya Sramik Jote President Abdul Kader Hawladar said trade unions can play a pivotal role in achieving gender equality and preventing sexual harassment at workplaces, and assured that the Jatiya Sramik Jote would try to play its role accordingly.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Sramik Front President Jahedul Haque Milu said no nation can be civilised without showing due respect to women.

Speaking as the chief guest, National Coordination Committee for Workers' Education (NCCWE) Chairman Abdul Matin Master said the present government is planning to enact a new law to check sexual harassment at every level.

Other speakers at the workshop pointed out that unequal distribution of wealth put women in vulnerable position to be harassed. It would be possible to ensure good working environment for women through strong national policies, law and international instruments, they added.

AWWR member secretary Shamsun Nahar Aziz and its steering committee member Taleya Rehman also spoke.

## Execute laws to curb noise pollution

Environmentalists urge traffic police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Traffic policemen can play an important role in executing laws to curb noise pollution by punishing horn-happy motorists on the streets, said environmentalists at a sit-in programme yesterday, a press release said.

They said involvement of traffic police can make it easier to implement the existing laws, which has proved to be ineffective in controlling noise pollution due to weak enforcement.

Nirapad Development Foundation and WBB Trust jointly staged the sit-in in front of Fine Art Faculty on the Dhaka University campus marking the 15th International Noise Awareness Day 2010.

Speaking as the chief guest, Bapa President Abu Naser Khan said indiscriminate honking is the key reason of noise pollution.

Honking, hooting and others, including brick-grinding machines which are generously used in the residential areas, are

major sources of suffering to people, he added.

Prof Indiscriminate honking must be fined by traffic police and regular mobile courts need to be conducted to get hold of hydraulic horns, he added.

Nirapad Development Foundation Chairman Syed Rana said noise pollution is a dangerous form of pollution but its impacts are not fully realised immediately.

This is a major reason for weak implementation of the laws, he said, adding that mass awareness needs to be created in this connection.

Aminur Rasul, member secretary of WBB Trust, Nazmul Karim and Maruf Hasan, project officials, Nazimuddin, chairman of Old Dhaka Development Forum, and Amir Hasan, director of Green Mind, also spoke.

The day is observed in over 40 countries aimed at promoting awareness of the dangers of long-term exposure to noise on the environment and human health.

## Take stern action against BCL to stop campus chaos: Ruta

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi University Teachers' Association (Ruta) yesterday expressed its concern that different student organisations, especially Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), are creating chaos in most educational institutions, including Chittagong University, across the country.

The association thinks that the government's image is being tainted by students' destructive activities at educational institutions, it said in a statement signed by its president Dr M Azizul Islam.

They also hoped that the government, for the sake of implementing its election pledges, would take stern action against the students who have gone astray.

The Ruta also protested the killing of Chittagong University student Asad and expressed sympathy for the bereaved family. It also demanded exemplary punishment to the persons involved in the murder.

Talking to The Daily Star, Ruta President M Azizul Islam said the students who are staging protests at Chittagong University should remember that they would ultimately suffer for damaging university properties and hampering academic activities.

## WAR CRIMES TRIAL

### Concern over law minister's statement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight pro-BNP-Jamaat lawyers yesterday expressed concern over a statement made by Law Minister Shafique Ahmed on April 25 that the investigation agency would submit charge sheets against some persons for crimes against humanity within next month.

In a joint statement, they said the law minister's statement blatantly interferes with the independent functioning of the investigation and prosecution agencies of the international crimes tribunal.

Under section 9 of the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act, 1973, the proceedings before a tribunal will commence upon the submission by the chief prosecutor of formal charges, and the law minister has no role to play in it, the lawyers said.

Meetings and discussions between the ministers and the chief prosecutor and the chief investigator, proved that the executive government is in full control over these agencies and consequently will exercise effective control over the trial, the statement added.

Signatories to the statement are President of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) Khandaker Mahub Hossain, former speaker to Jatiya Sangsad Jamiruddin Sircar, former ministers Moudud Ahmed and Rafiqul Islam Mia, Jamaat-e-Islami leader Barrister Abdur Razaq, former state minister Nitai Roy Chowdhury, former attorney general AJ Mohammad Ali and former SCBA secretary Zainul Abedin.



Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, founder and chairperson of Brac, speaks at a seminar on 'Mothers and Babies Speak: Moving Forward with Lessons on Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health' at Brac Centre Inn in the city yesterday. On his right is State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury and on his left is Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haque.

## ACHIEVING MDGs IN CHILD, MATERNAL MORTALITY CUT

# PPP, digitisation of health sector stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts stressed the need for public private partnership, digitisation of health sector and ensuring services at the existing health facilities to achieve Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 that tells of reducing child and maternal mortality in the country.

They also reviewed the key developments in the MDGs in Bangladesh, ways forward and the barriers.

BRAC and Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) jointly organised the meeting titled 'Mothers and Babies Speak: Moving Forward with Lessons on Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health' at the BRAC Center in the city.

Bangladesh is supposed to reduce the child mortality rate to 50 per thousand live births by 2015, which were 151 in 1990 to achieve the MDG 4. At the same time the maternal mortality rate (MMR) should be reduced to 143 per 100,000 live births, which was 574 in 1990, and achieve 50 percent skilled birth attendants to achieve the MDG 5.

Though the child mortality rate has

reduced significantly, Bangladesh may not achieve the MDG 5 as still the rate is high, said Dr Mohammad Shahidullah, pro-vice chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University and chairman of the neonatology department, while presenting a paper.

"We need to ensure that home deliveries are conducted by skilled birth attendants (SBAs) but the progress in increasing the SBA is very slow that needs to be addressed."

Highlighting the success in reducing maternal mortality rate in Chowgachha upazila of Jessore through public private partnership where the MMR has reached to 42 per one lakh live births, Director General of the Directorate General of Health Services Prof Shah Monir Hossain said, "We had to find out the barriers why even after a decade of the success this model could not be scaled up."

He also talked on community participation by empowering the community and stressed the need for perinatal care programme to reduce the neonatal mortality.

"E-health can be a tremendous tool to deliver more health services," said Dr

Julian Schweitzer, chairperson of PMNCH, adding, "Maternal health is involved with nutrition, income generation, female and community education, so we should ensure these mechanisms."

Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haque as the chief guest highlighted the government's e-health programme that aims at reaching the people more easily and effectively.

"We've connected 482 upazila health complexes with internet. We're also trying to use geographic information system (GIS) to track the pregnant mothers. Pregnant mothers also can call to a particular telephone number for getting experts' suggestions in any case of their physical problems," he said.

Presiding over the session, Founder and Chairperson of BRAC Fazle Hasan Abed highlighted different programmes run by the non-government organisation to reduce maternal and child mortality.

State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury, Dr Kaosar Afsana, associate director of BRAC Health Programme, Anir Chowdhury from Prime Minister's Office and Dr Flavia Bustreo also spoke.



Nirapad Development Foundation and WBB Trust form a human chain in front of Fine Art Faculty on the Dhaka University campus marking the 15th International Noise Awareness Day 2010 yesterday.

## FRIGATE PURCHASE CASE

### Judgement on Hasina's petition May 18

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday fixed May 18 for delivering judgement on a petition by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for quashing the proceedings against her in the frigate purchase corruption case filed during the regime of BNP-Jamaat alliance government.

After final hearing on the petition, an HC bench of Justice Md Shamsul Huda and Justice Abu Bakar Siddiquee set the date for verdict.

This court in separate verdicts quashed proceedings of eight corruption cases against the prime minister in March and April.

## 2 to die for killing city AL leader

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced two people to death for killing Awami League (AL) leader Farid Uddin Sarker in the city's Shyampur area in August, 2008.

Judge Mohammad Rezaul Islam of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-4 handed down the sentence in absence of the convicts Mohammad Jasim and Kamal Hossain.

The court also acquitted Rajib Hossain, Tofazzal Hossain, Mohammad Zakir Hossain and Roni Ahmed Khan as the charges brought against them were not proved.

The punishment of the fugitive convicts will be effective from the day of their arrest or surrender, the court said.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence had completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 28 prosecution witnesses during trial of the case.

According to the prosecution, a gang of miscreants led by Jasim and Kamal entered the "Toma Hotel Sweet Fast Food & Mini Chinese Restaurant" at Rayerbagh at Shyampur in the city about 8:40am on August 23, 2008 and shot AL leader Farid Uddin Sarker, leaving him seriously injured. Farid who was owner of the hotel, was having his breakfast.

The victim was rushed to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) for treatment where the on-duty doctors declared him dead.

Following the incident, victim's wife Suraiya Khanam filed a murder case against Jasim and Kamal and four others with Shyampur Police Station.

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