

BAR TO CONVENTION  
Ahmadiyyas  
demand probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

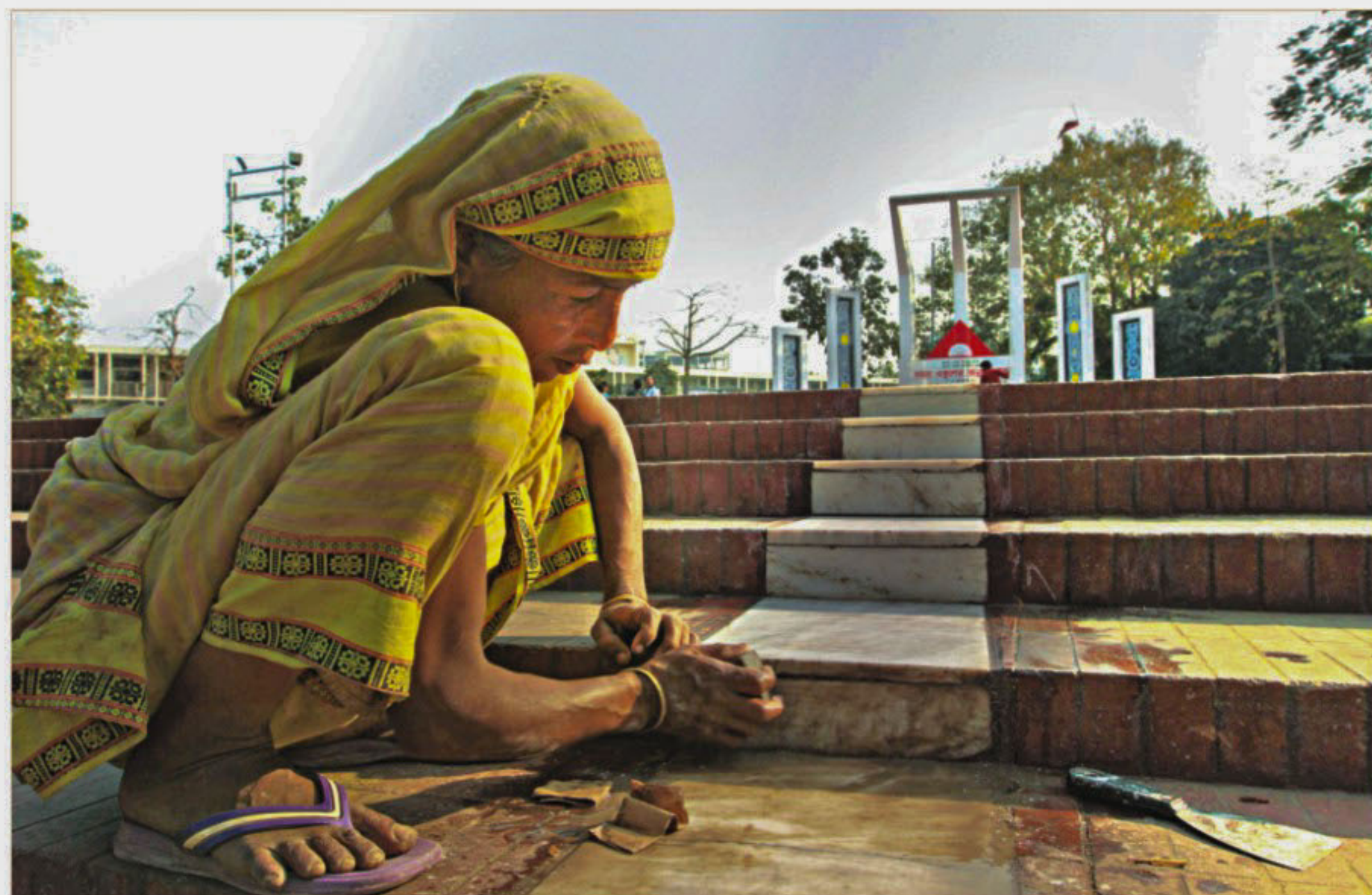
Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Bangladesh yesterday called for an investigation into the reasons that prevented the religious community from holding its annual convention in Gazipur.

The district administration of Gazipur on Saturday prevented the annual convention of the organisation, and slapped section 144 in and around the venue in the wake of protests from religious bigots.

The Ahmadiyya leaders suspect that the move was a result of threats from local fundamentalists in Gazipur.

The demand came at a press conference at the office of Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Bangladesh in Bakshibazar in the city yesterday.

The Ahmadiyya community leaders said they rented Bahadurpur Scout Training Camp to avoid problems with local religious bigots.



A woman scrubbing the stairway of the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday as cleaning of the memorial is in progress to give it a facelift ahead of Amar Ekushey February.

PHOTO: STAR

Call for 'climate ready' dev

BSS, Dhaka

Ambassadors, development and climate experts yesterday called for immediate launching of climate-ready development and implement actions on the ground to redress woes of climate victims as well as raise coping capacities of the people and community.

They also emphasised the need for climate screening and proofing all development programmes so that Bangladesh as the most vulnerable country can face adverse impacts of climate change and show the rest of the world her enormous resilience power.

"Climate change is undeniable. Now, we have to adapt and mitigate. My country Denmark and EU are cutting back emissions and will go for more

cuts. We highly commend Bangladesh efforts in adaptation," Ambassador of Denmark Svend Olling told a Public Lecture titled "Climate Change and Development Cooperation."

World Water Forum of Journalists (WWFJ) organised the event at National Press Club while its Secretary General Quamrul Islam Chowdhury was in the chair.

DFID Country Representative Chris Austin echoed Svend saying "Climate change and development cooperation are inter-linked. Delivering fast-start fund for actions can ensure end results and benefit people on the ground. We have to ensure poorest get the most. Bangladesh as the most vulnerable should get the priority."

Sabihuddin Ahmed, former ambas-

sador to Sweden and UK underscored the need for maintaining knowledge-based climate diplomacy to protect the interests of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) like Bangladesh in the global negotiation.

Quamrul Chowdhury suggested capacity building of private sector and line ministries and civil society bodies in accessing fast-start fund, green climate fund, Kyoto Protocol Adaptation Fund and CDM, LDC Fund and special climate fund.

Dr Ansarul Karim, BIDS Research Director Dr M Asaduzzaman, Dr Rezaul Karim, BAPA representative Kamrul Ahsan Khan, FEJB General Secretary Hasan Hafiz and daily New Nation Editor Mostafa Kamal Majumder also took part the public lecture.

BDR MUTINY TRIAL  
One pleads  
guilty

Trial adjourned till  
April 2

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One mutineer of 44 Rifles Battalion of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) pleaded guilty at a special court at Darbar Hall in Palkhona yesterday.

Besides, five witnesses gave depositions against 55 out of 675 alleged mutineers of the battalion and were cross-examined by the 55 BGB personnel.

Lt Col Maksudul Haque and Islamic Religion Educator of 44 Rifles Battalion Ibrahim Kholil Patwari, among the five witnesses, narrated how they saved their life after eruption of the mutiny at Darbar Hall.

The court adjourned the proceedings till 9:00am of April 2.

Patwari said he tried to go away through the north gate of Darbar Hall where he found many armed jawans waiting.

"On February 26, my roommate Nayek Subedar Siddique Islam of 44 Rifle Battalion came to the room. As I asked him where he was in these days he replied how did the soldiers get weapons if I hadn't opened the armoury", he told the court in his depositions.

Saarc charter of  
democracy  
adopted

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Saarc council of ministers yesterday adopted the charter of democracy in Thimphu, according to an official announcement.

Mooted by Bangladesh at the 16th Saarc summit held in Thimphu in April last year, the charter gives expression to the collective commitment of the member states to promote and preserve the values and ideals of democracy as well as democratic institutions.

The council of ministers comprises by the foreign ministers of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, who began a two-day long meeting in the Bhutanese capital, also approved the idea of run a cargo train from Bangladesh to Nepal via India.

Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni, who is leading the Bangladesh delegation at the meeting, called for early removal of all kinds of para-tariff and non-tariff barriers to realise the full potential of SAFTA.

She stressed the need to implement Saarc Agreement on Trade in Services (SATIS), as an instrument to allow freer movement of people and ideas, and also to create employment through flow of investments.

Dipu Moni called for collective actions to fight the menace of terrorism, trans-national organised crime, illegal trading of drugs and narcotic substances, regional extremism, money laundering, and reiterated Bangladesh's firm resolve to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestation and to extend support to regional initiatives on the same.

The council of ministers approved the rules, regulations and modalities of the South Asian University, and mandated a steering committee to complete the process of formation of South Asia Forum.

They directed the Saarc Food Bank Board to address the issue of price incentive and access threshold to enable release of grains out of its reserve.

আপনাকেই বলছি ...

কখনও কি ঢাকার কোন  
পাবলিক টয়লেট  
ব্যবহার করেছেন?

A delegation  
from University  
of Asia Pacific  
calls on  
President Zillur  
Rahman at  
Bangabhaban  
in the city  
yesterday.



PHOTO: PID

Form decentralisation commission  
Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Governance Advocacy Forum (GAF) yesterday urged the government to form a decentralisation commission soon as is said in the ruling party's election manifesto.

The forum emphasised that decentralisation commission is important to make effective the local government system.

The urge was made at a news conference organised the forum at Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) in the city. GAF coordinator Mohsin Ali read out the keynote paper.

The conference was a part of the platform's weeklong campaign for "democratic decentralisation and self-

regulated local government."

GAF leaders said there is no alternative to strengthening the local government for sustainable development and good governance.

Local government needs administrative and economic freedom to be effective, said noted economist Dr Qazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad.

The decentralisation commission, which would be a permanent and special institutional system, would help the government in this regard, he added.

"It (the decentralisation commission) will also prepare reports and will help the government implement the recommendations of the reports."

The speakers said key functions of the commission would be to prepare a "democratic decentralisation policy" in the light of the constitution, the government's election manifesto, and Vision 2021.

In the policy, the commission must ensure authority of the elected representatives of the local government and accountability and proper monitoring for an effective local government system, they said.

It would also review the local government laws and present recommendations for reformation to the government.

The document of the campaign was formally handed over to Meher Afroz Chumki, MP and Mohammad Israfil Alam, MP.

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