



Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, president of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue (Vatican's Department), speaks at a "Conference on Inter-religious Dialogue and Harmony" at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

# Inter-religious talks to solve conflicts stressed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has acquired a great patrimony in the area of inter-religious relations which can be placed at the service of the world, said Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue at a conference in the city yesterday.

The special envoy of the Pope Benedict XVI, who is on a five-day visit to Bangladesh also said that Bangladesh must be considered as an example of how people of different religions live, cooperate and co-exist peacefully.

"All the information I received, it appears to me that religion here is not used as an excuse for hatred, discrimination violence or conflict," said Cardinal Tauran.

Cardinal Tauran is the only high official visiting Bangladesh from the Vatican since 1986 when the then Pope John Paul the Second came here on a goodwill mission.

Representatives of religious groups, members of the diplomatic community, church leaders from across the country joined the inter-religious dialogue at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

The French born Cardinal Tauran said the very topic of inter-religious dialogue could be suspect to some minds since in some parts of the world religion is branded and

accused as the source and cause of intolerance and conflict.

The guests of honour of the conference Md Shajahan Miah, state minister for religious affairs and Promode Mankin, state minister for cultural affairs also emphasised the need of inter-religious dialogues to solve conflicts and overcome misunderstandings.

Shajahan Miah said that religion has always been a primary force for social and human development. Dialogue between the people with different faiths could surely resolve crisis, he said.

Promode Mankin, who also led a chore with the audience, said, "Our culture teaches us to respect all other religions. There are some isolated incidents of religious conflict, but the policy of the government and its constitution is clear about religious harmony".

Archbishop Joseph Marino, Vatican's Ambassador to Bangladesh, said that over the years he talked to the people of all walks of life and discovered that in Bangladesh people of all faiths genuinely live in harmony.

Muhammad Zamir, chief information commissioner, said that lack of dialogue among religious groups has encouraged wrong concepts in the minds of religious communities across Europe and also in the east. Dialogues could greatly remove misunderstanding, he said.

# PM iterates commitment to establish graft-free society

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday reiterated her commitment to establish a corruption-free society and ensure food security in the country.

"We're working hard and ceaselessly for the welfare of the people," she said, when visiting World Bank Managing Director Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala called on her at her office.

The World Bank top executive assured the prime minister of the bank's continued support to all development projects in the

country, including the Padma Bridge project.

Okonjo-Iweala praised Hasina for her government's efforts to ensure economic development and women empowerment.

She said despite global economic recession, the Bangladesh economy maintained GDP at satisfactory level.

World Bank Country Director Ellen Goldstein, Ambassador at-Large M Ziauddin, Principal Secretary MA Karim, PMO Secretary Mollah Wahiduzzaman and PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad were present.



Karmojibi Nari President Shirin Akhter speaks at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday. On her left is Mahmuda Imam and on her right is Rokeya Rafiq.

PHOTO: STAR

# Enact agri labour law

## Urges Karmojibi Nari

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Officials of Karmojibi Nari, a women organisation, yesterday demanded formulation of agricultural labour law for protection of rights of agriculture workers.

They also demanded implementation of the National Women Development Policy-2011 to ensure equal rights for women and trial of Fazlul Huq Amini, chief of Islami Ain Bastabayan Committee.

They placed the demands at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club yesterday, said a press release.

Organisation president Shirin Akhter, executive director Rokeya Rafiq, director Mahmuda Imam, among others, were present at the event.

Although agriculture workers put significant contribution in the country's economy, there is no recognition of their works. So, a law should be formulated for protection of their rights, they said.

Other demands include--ensuring representation of women as per two-third ratio at all levels of policy making.

They announced countrywide programmes to press their demands.

The programme include- protest procession and rally tomorrow at central Shaheen Minar; rally and candle lighting programme on April 30 in front of the press club, conference to mark the organisation's founding anniversary on May 5 at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city.

Press conference at six districts today, rally, human chain and discussion meeting at 20 districts on May 1 and submission of memorandums to deputy commissioners.

# 'Implement women development policy'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh (FNB) has demanded implementation of the national women development policy, said a press release yesterday.

The FNB said the policy would play an important role in ensuring socio-economic development of the women especially the poor ones and in protecting their rights.

A vested quarter opposes the policy excusing that the policy goes against Islam, but it is not true and the view is not the reflection of the country's people at all, it added.

# 'Amini misinterprets Quran'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students, teachers, and staffs of Jagannath University (JnU) yesterday slammed Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) for misinterpreting the Quran regarding the women development policy.

They also called upon IOJ to stop the propaganda on the women policy and urged the government to implement it soon.

JnU made the call at a human chain on the campus yesterday. JnU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Mesbahuddin Ahmed took part in the programme, says a press release.

Pesh Imam of JnU central mosque, Salah Uddin, said there is nothing contradictory to the Quran in the policy and requested people not to be duped by the propaganda.

JnU Treasurer Prof Dr Shawkat Jahangir, Science Faculty Dean Prof Hasnahena Begum, English department Chairman Prof Dr Shahinur Rahman, and accounting and information system department Chairman Dr Mohammad Ali Noor also attended the programme.

IOJ President Mufti Fazlul Haque Amini recently protested the proposed national women development policy and observed a daylong hartal to force the government to scarp it.

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