

**DEMO AGAINST BCS QUOTA**  
**Demonstrators will get jobs if BNP gets power**  
*Says Khaleda*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday said students who waged demonstration against the quota system in government services would be provided jobs if BNP comes to power.

"Students carried out a righteous movement as their demand was just. We will provide jobs to students based on their merit, not the quota system," Khaleda told an iftar party hosted by Islami Oikya Jote, a component of the BNP-led 18-party alliance, at a hotel in the capital.

She also blasted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her speech that students who took to the streets and resorted to vandalism for cancellation of the quota provision would be excluded during their viva exam of Bangladesh Civil Service.

At a July 18 Awami League Working Committee meeting, the premier said images and video clips of the vandalism were provided to Public Service Commission to help identify the demonstrators.

Khaleda also said, "We will announce a peaceful programme after Eid and I urge all to participate in that programme."

**Obituary**  
 STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Paresh Chandra Mandal, former provost of Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University, died of old age complications at a hospital in the capital on Sunday. He was around 70.

He left behind wife and two sons.



**President Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and other distinguished guests offer munajat at an iftar party hosted by the president at Bangabhaban in the capital yesterday.**

PHOTO: PMO

**RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM**  
**Media should oppose**  
*Say senior journalists*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A number of senior journalists yesterday urged media organisations to take a strong stand against religious fundamentalism.

"The media should adopt a stance against politics that uses religion," said Samia Zaman, chief executive officer of Ekattor Television, at a seminar in the capital's Cirdap auditorium, hosted by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP).

The society is taking a backward step in recognising the rights of women and minorities by harbouring religious fundamentalism, top media representatives told the event, "The Role of the Media in Protecting the Rights of Women and Communal Harmony in Bangladesh".

"Our leaders don't comment on the injustices being done against other minorities, while alleged attacks against Islam are dealt more seriously," said The Daily Star's executive editor Syed Badrul Ahsan. "We are internationally known as a moderate Muslim country. Instead, we should try to build reputation as a secular nation," he said.

Prothom Alo Associate Editor Abdul Quayum expressed concern that the movement to secure the rights of women and other religious minorities would get hampered if fundamentalist characters continued to exist in society.

"People like Ahmed Shafi are backed by politicians. Which is why they can influence people into religious fundamentalism," said Ayesha Khanam, chairperson of BMP.

**PROVIDING PROSTHETICS TO RANA PLAZA VICTIMS**  
**Indian, Thai expert teams to arrive in Dhaka soon**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts from Thailand and India will arrive in Dhaka soon to provide artificial limbs to the maimed victims of the Rana Plaza building collapse, Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haque said yesterday.

At a press briefing at his ministry, he said the worst-ever industrial disaster maimed 36, while 80 workers were still receiving treatments in different hospitals.

During her visit to Thailand in May, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina requested her Thai counterpart to provide free artificial limbs to the victims, he said, while India had proposed to give the service.

As part of that, a team from Jaipur Foot in India will arrive on July 27 for an initial assessment, while a team from Thailand's Prosthesis Foundation of HRH The Princess Mother will arrive on September 19, the minister said, adding that the Indian team would decide what type of help they would offer after completing their assessment.

The nine-storey Rana Plaza crumbled on

April 24, killing over 1,130 people, mostly garment workers. Rescuers pulled 2,438 people alive from the rubble.

Haque said the Thai team would stay at National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (Nitor) to provide prosthetics to 100 people, including 25 out of the 36 maimed Rana Plaza victims. "During their 10-day stay, the Thai team will set up their mobile limb-making factory at Nitor."

The minister said the people who lost their limbs in different accidents could also sign up for the Thai team's service at Nitor between August 18 and 22.

Julfikar Ali Lenin, a director at the Prime Minister's Office, however, said of the 36, two died, nine were paralysed, and 25 lost their limbs while some of the 25 had already got artificial limbs in Bangladesh.

The minister said the PM had arranged "family saving certificate" worth between Tk 10 lakh and Tk 15 lakh for each of the 36 maimed, while 24 of them received the help.

**TRANSGENDER CHILDREN**  
**Facing transition amid near absence of support**

PANKAJ KARMAKAR

With the advent of some physical and psychological transformations from the age of nine, Nasima had started feeling uneasy in her body.

"I just did not feel like I fitted in with other boys. My gestures, behaviour, speech and walking styles were turning girlish. I started feeling good using cosmetics. But this all happened in my subconscious mind...I did not do it intentionally," said Nasima.

Though she was not responsible for the changes, Nasima's classmates in Faridpur district started avoiding her while her family confined her movements to within the house after school hours.

Within around two years, everyone around this 17-year-old teenager, then known as "Asif", had started calling her Nasima.

"They all also started calling me names like 'half ladies' and 'hizra'. If I sat at the front in class, teachers and classmates forced me to move to the back," she added.

Unable to bear with her surroundings, Nasima left her family at the age of 14, moved to Dhaka and started working as a garment worker. Sadly sexual

harassment by colleagues forced her to quit the job within three months.

Respite came to her in the form of some 10 transgender persons living together in a residence in the capital's Kakrail. They took her in under the care of their leader, "Guru Maa". She has been living there for the last two years.

This tale is not only of Nasima but of almost all transgender children and teenagers, who endure similar sufferings at this tender period.

Though different rights bodies, non-government and development organisations, government officials and mass media are ever watchful on protecting children's rights, there is hardly any organisation specifically working to protect the rights of transgender children.

"We are working for ensuring equal rights of all children. But we do not have any special programme for transgender children," said Unicef Bangladesh Communication Manager Arifa S Sharmin.

Neither does Save The Children. Its Deputy Director (Child Rights Governance) Shamsul Alam Bokul said there were very few organisations working for transgender people but nearly all of their programmes were based on HIV/AIDS prevention.

According to rough statistics of Bangladesh Hizra Kalyan Foundation, an NGO working for transgender people's rights, there are around 12 lakh transgender people in Bangladesh, said the foundation President Abida Sultana Mitu.

But she could not figure out the approximate number of transgender children and teenagers.

Department of Social Services is running a programme, "Improving life standard of transgender community".

Under the programme, transgender children pursuing education are provided a monthly stipend while those who dropped out are provided vocational training, said Nurun Nahar Begum, the department's assistant director and the programme's director.

Under the stipend, those at primary level get Tk 300, secondary level Tk 450, higher secondary level Tk 600 and higher education Tk 1,000, she informed.

Besides, Directorate General of Health Services is conducting programme to safeguard transgender children from contracting AIDS. However, it does not focus on their education, sanitation and other basic rights.

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Location: USAID/Bangladesh, deadline for application submission: August 13, 2013.

For a complete job description, required qualifications and detailed information on how to apply please visit USAID/Bangladesh website <http://www.usaid.gov/bd/employment.html> and [www.bdjobs.com](http://www.bdjobs.com) D-575

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  - Head Office, Facility Management Division, 2nd Floor, 29, Rajuk Avenue, Motijheel, Dhaka.
  - Gulshan Branch, Plot # 01, Block # CEN (H), Road # 109, Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka-1212.
  - Agrabad Branch, Chittagong Chamber House, 38, Agrabad C/A, Chittagong-4100.
  - Sylhet Branch, Laldighirpar, Sylhet-3100.
  - Rajshahi Branch, 138/144, Shaheb Bazaar, Rajshahi-6100.
  - Khulna Branch, 7, Old Jessore Road, Khulna-9100.
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**Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. Female candidates are encouraged to apply.**

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