

# Respect human rights

UN Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Field Support Atul Khare urges peacekeepers while giving public lecture at the foreign ministry; his tour ends today

STAR REPORT

United Nations (UN) wants its peacekeepers to maintain the highest standard of integrity and respect for human rights in every aspect of personal and professional conduct, a UN official said yesterday.

"The uniform that they wear has over 60 years of tradition and prestige...they must abide by the international humanitarian laws and rules," said UN Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Field Support Atul Khare.

He said the UN was concerned over the allegations of sexual exploitation on vulnerable women by certain members of UN peacekeeping missions, and making reforms to address these issues.

Atul Khare, on a three-day tour ending today, was delivering a public lecture on the "challenges of providing support to UN peace operations" at the foreign ministry's conference room in the capital.

He said the UN wants to come out of bureaucratic attitudes and enhance its efficiency in ensuring peace and security in conflict-ridden regions of the world.

Bangladesh is the largest contributor to UN peacekeeping missions, having currently deployed over 9,500 mem-



bers of its armed forces and police.

Atul Khare highlighted that the UN peacekeepers need to be more accountable and efficient while its operations low cost.

He emphasised how the UN was working to promote the efficient use of water and energy and to protect the environment.

"Fifteen percent of energy required by the UN peacekeepers is being produced from solar power," Atul Khare said, adding that other measures to reduce fuel costs were also on the cards.

He urged the peacekeeper-sending countries to devise ways on how they could contribute to promoting accountability and human rights.

UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh Robert Watkins and the foreign ministry's Maritime Affairs Unit Secretary Rear Admiral (ret'd) Khurshed Alam also spoke.

Later, Atul Khare called on Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali at the ministry. He appreciated the role of Bangladesh's female peacekeepers and urged the major troops and police contributing countries to deploy more women at the missions.

The foreign minister observed that more Bangladeshis deserve to be appointed at policymaking and commanding

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## Democracy must see rising political role of people

Says Inter-Parliamentary Union marking International Day of Democracy today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The strength of democracy is equivalent to the strength of political participation of citizens and this must be increased for world peace, social cohesion, and development, said the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), marking International Day of Democracy today.

IPU called for a major stepping-up of efforts to involve the public more deeply in informal political processes and institutions, including parliaments.

In a release, it urged parliaments to be more open and accessible to people.

"Democracy as a concept is based on the

right of every individual to take part and be represented in the management of public affairs," said IPU President Saber Hossain Chowdhury.

"Although there are 190 parliaments in the world with the vast majority of parliamentarians directly elected, much more progress needs to be made on the actual practice of democracy."

The release said too few women, young people, minorities and indigenous people are represented in parliament and government. According to IPU data, women account for just over 22 percent of all parliamentarians in the world and less than

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## No democracy in country

Ershad claims again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former military dictator HM Ershad yesterday said there was no democracy in the country now.

"Democracy is now dead here; it is now only in the constitution, not in practice. A practice of partisanship and grabbing has been continuing in the country," he said.

The Jatiya Party chairman, also special envoy to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, made the comments at a party conference in Khulna.

He said the media could not publish facts because of

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## Iranian foreign minister arrives tonight

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT



Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif arrives in

Dhaka tonight on a one-day visit to brief the Bangladeshi leadership on the deal signed between Iran and global superpowers recently.

Tomorrow, Zarif will call on President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, hold bilateral meeting with Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali and meet the media, according to the Iranian embassy in Dhaka.

This July, Iran and six major world powers -- Russia, the United States, the United Kingdom, China, France and Germany -- reached a nuclear deal capping over a decade of negotiations with an agreement that could transform the Middle East.

Iran is eyeing wider trade cooperation with Bangladesh especially in energy sector.

## NEW DHAKA MASTER PLAN

# Wetlands, water bodies must be recovered

Urban planner tells Rajuk seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The draft master plan of the capital city has to have strategies to recover and conserve the proposed water retention ponds, water bodies, lakes, canals, and rivers, said a leading urban planner on the concluding day of a two-day national seminar yesterday.

The government has to take immediate measures to acquire such dedicated areas for conservation; or it will soon become impossible to reclaim those if they are encroached upon and see construction, said Md Akter Mahmud, general secretary, Bangladesh Institute of Planners.

The existing master plan dedicated 405 sq km area of the city as conservable flood flow zones and water retention areas, canals, lakes and rivers, and 330 sq km as agricultural land.

But experts now fear that real estate developers have ravaged most of those areas.

The Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakha (Rajuk) organised the seminar on the pro-

posed Dhaka Structure Plan 2016-2035 on its office premises.

While talking about open spaces and liveability, Akter, who took part in the discussion on the proposed 20-year draft structure plan of Dhaka Metropolitan Region, said the plan should propose a way to ensure access to open spaces like parks and playgrounds.

In the 151 sq km core city area, there is only 305 acres of parks and playground, most of which remain illegally occupied, he said.

He proposed involving mayors and councillors so that the parks and playgrounds remain open to the public and their total coverage increases.

The draft plan proposes development of a "green network" at Tejgaon old airport and should introduce aesthetic urban design, said Akter.

Zeenat Nahreen, a planner of the proposed plan's consultant Sheltech Private Ltd, said in her presentation on affordable

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## HC halts construction on Gulshan 'open space'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday imposed status quo on construction of commercial structures in 2.375 bighas of land in the capital's Gulshan-2, which some local residents claim is an open space.

In response to a writ petition, the court also questioned the legality of the conversion of the open space, divided into several plots, into a commercial area and execution of its lease deed for building commercial structures.

The court issued a rule upon the authorities concerned to explain in four weeks why these acts should not be declared illegal.

Four inhabitants of Gulshan-2 jointly filed the petition with the HC claiming that the seven plots are

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## TODAY'S LEADERS DEFINE THE NATION'S TOMORROW

### Congratulating the winners of 15<sup>th</sup> Bangladesh Business Award

Leaders are the aspirations. They show us the benchmark of excellence and performance. In that note, on behalf of Anwar Group, we heartily congratulate Muhammed Aziz Khan, Chairman of Summit Group, Rubana Huq, Managing Director of Mohammadi Group, SM Mahbulul Alam, Director of Walton Group and Anis A Khan, Managing Director and CEO of Mutual Trust Bank for winning the 15<sup>th</sup> DHL-The Daily Star Bangladesh Business Award.

The celebration of the future starts here!

