

Women face more barriers to accessing information

Reveals report by Manusher Jonno Foundation, The Carter Center

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Illiteracy, lack of awareness about where to go and how to ask for information, cultural constraints, and lack of time, mobility and security impede women from exercising their Right to Information (RTI).

A study jointly conducted by The Carter Center, a US based not-for-profit nongovernmental organisation founded by former US president Jimmy Carter, and rights organisation Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), showed women do not get the same facilities as men while seeking government-held information in Bangladesh.

Carried out in six districts, Dhaka, Khagrachhari, Khulna, Rangpur, Rajshahi and Sylhet, in 2015, the research findings were published in a report titled "Women and the Right of Access to Information in Bangladesh".

The report was launched yesterday morning at the capital's Six Seasons Hotel in Gulshan.

Laura Neuman, director, Global Access to

IMPEDIMENTS

- Illiteracy
- Lack of awareness about how or where to go
- Unfriendly mindset of officials
- Fear of reprisals for seeking information
- Concerns about mobility and safety

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Comprehensive study on how people are accessing information
- Barriers men and women face
- Joint venture among govt, civil society, Information Commission and rights organisations to mitigate obstacles

Information Program of The Carter Center, presented the report findings and highlights.

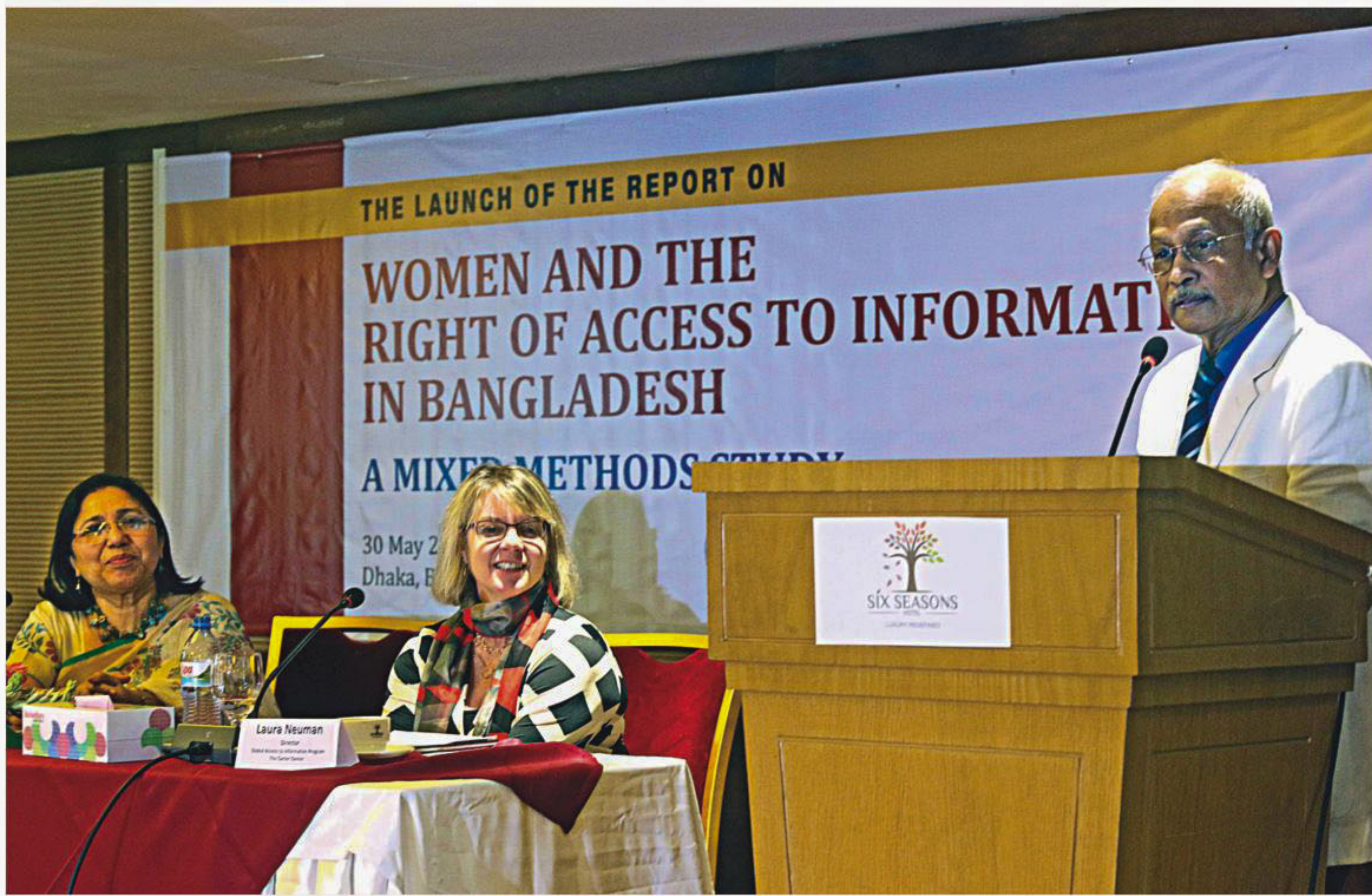
She said studies carried out in Liberia and Guatemala showed existence of similar inequity in the exercise of right to information between men and women.

The study was based on 550 interviews of experts, community leaders including teachers, business persons, religious leaders, public agency employees and citizens entering government offices for information or services, and observations of some 49 government offices.

Among the 128 community leaders interviewed, 89.8 percent identified illiteracy as a major barrier for women, while 81.2 percent perceived women's lack of awareness about how or where to go for information, as a key obstacle.

Other crucial impediments identified by community leaders include family members, who do not support women to go out

SEE PAGE 5 COL 3



Dr Md Golam Rahman, chief information commissioner, speaking at the launching of a report titled "Women and the Right of Access to Information in Bangladesh", at the capital's Six Seasons Hotel in Gulshan yesterday, while the other two discussants Laura Neuman, director, Global Access to Information Program of The Carter Center; and Shaheen Anam, executive director of MJF, look on.

PHOTO: STAR

AG gets death threat 'over war crimes trial'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam said to have received a letter yesterday afternoon with the sender introducing themselves as Jamaat-e-Islami leaders and stating that he would be killed in a month allegedly for his role in the war crimes trials.

"You have killed Salauddin Quader Chowdhury and now trying to kill Mir Quasem Ali," he quoted the letter while talking to The Daily Star last night.

His private secretary filed a general diary with Shahbagh Police Station. Officer-in-charge Abu Bakar Siddique said they were investigating the matter. Mahbubey earlier received a similar postal death threat letter on November 18, 2009.

Rangpur couple get death penalty for killing son

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A Rangpur court yesterday gave death penalty to a couple for killing their 5-year-old son.

Bipen Chandra, 40, is now in prison while his wife Aduri Rani, 35, of Chharan Hindupara village in Mithapukur upazila of Rangpur on the run, said police.

According to the prosecution, Aduri married Bipen, deserting her first husband Bikash Chandra

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

To love or not to love Canine conundrum in Sylhet city

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

Of late, the number of stray canines roaming the streets seemingly unperturbed by anything has increased in Sylhet city.

The absence of sterilisation or proper management programmes has in a way helped the dog population to rise rapidly, putting dwellers in much trouble, alleged residents.

Also, there have been no coordinated steps taken by the authorities concerned to address this issue, they said.

"I return home around 3:00am everyday after work from Jindabazar on foot," said Bikash Dutta, an employee of a local daily who lives in Ambarkhana, adding, "I often get attacked by groups of stray dogs."

Rojob Ali, a hotel businessman at Baghbhari Point in the city, said, "I used to see these dogs as our security option

and fed them regularly. But in recent days, their number has increased. So we complained to the corporation."

"Following our complaints, the corporation's van came in the evening and started executing dogs. But that was extremely brutal," he added.

According to the health department of Sylhet City Corporation, hundreds of dogs are being executed per year after getting complaints about dogs with rabies.

"Each year, when the population of dogs increases or citizens ask us to take steps, we execute some of them," said Enamul Habib, chief executive officer of SCC.

But no rabies test method is used before executing the dogs, SCC sources said.

Even though most of us see these creatures as a perfect carrier for diseases, we tend to forget dogs likely were the first animals to be domesti-

cated and shared a common environment with humans for over thousand years, said members of Pradhikar, a voluntary animal rights organisation comprising students of Sylhet Agricultural University.

Stray dogs are in a way societies' inability to care for what they have created, they added.

Pradhikar recently organised a de-worming campaign on the campus and its adjacent areas, where they fed medicine to over a hundred street dogs in the adjacent areas of Tilagarh, Nayabazar and Baluchar, under supervision of Dr Mahfuzur Rahman, faculty member of the medicine department of Veterinary and Animal Sciences of SAU.

In some areas, locals also assisted them, they said.

"Dogs are friendly and helpful by nature. But these stray ones are not

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4



In absence of a proper dog management programme, stray dogs wandering freely on the streets of Sylhet city have become a common scene. Inset, students of Sylhet Agricultural University have recently started de-worming these street dogs.

PHOTOS: STAR

BNP to brave all obstacles

Says Fakhrul on party founder Zia's 35th death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said no plot against the party would work because it would go ahead together with people braving all obstacles following its founder's ideology.

"There's a conspiracy to remove our chairperson Khaleda Zia from politics and eliminate BNP by alienating the party leaders and activists from the party through implicating them in false cases," he told reporters after placing wreaths at BNP founder Ziaur Rahman's grave in the capital.

BNP is used to overcoming adversities; so conspiracies will not succeed, Fakhrul said.

Earlier, Khaleda Zia along with party leaders and activists, including Fakhrul, placed wreaths at Zia's grave at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar and offered prayers there, marking the former president's 35th death anniversary.

Replying to a question, Fakhrul said BNP had not backed off from Zia's principles and ideals. "We're following his ideology, and we'll go ahead with it braving all barriers."

He said they vowed on this day to restore democracy

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

2 RU students arrested on charge of being JMB members

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Two Rajshahi University students were arrested in their rooms in Shahid Habibur Rahman Hall early yesterday by detectives on charge of being members of banned Islamist terrorist outfit Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh.

Third year students of crop science and technology, Abdul Gaffar and Mahbubur Rahman confessed their involvement, Rajshahi Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner Ifte Khair Alam told The Daily Star.

Police are now conducting operations taking the two along and scrutinising

SEE PAGE 5 COL 3

WAR CRIME TRIALS

Six Gaibandha suspects to be tried

Decides tribunal after they ignore ad ordering appearance; cross-examination of first prosecution witness against two Shariatpur suspects ends

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With none of six Gaibandha men, including a former Jamaat-e-Islami lawmaker, responding to advertisements seeking their appearance, International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday decided to try them in absentia over crimes they allegedly committed during the 1971 Liberation War.

Moreover, defence counsels completed cross-examining the first prosecution wit-

ness, Abdul Aziz Sikder, in a similar case bringing four charges against two Shariatpur men, Sulaiman Mollah, now in jail and pleading not guilty, and Edris Ali Sarder, now on the run. The tribunal fixed June 8 to continue proceedings.

In the Gaibandha case, the three-member tribunal led by Justice Anwarul Haque appointed Gazi MH Tamim to represent the accused and fixed June 16 to start

SEE PAGE 5 COL 7

Cabinet okays Moheshkhali power plant deal draft

Host of proposed acts also approved

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet yesterday approved a draft agreement under which Bangladesh and Malaysia will set up a 1,320 mega watt capacity coal-based thermal power plant at Moheshkhali in Cox's Bazar.

The plant will be a 50-50 joint venture between Bangladesh Power

Development Board and a consortium of two Malaysian companies Tenaga Nasional Berhad and Powertek Energy Sdn, Bhd, Cabinet Secretary M Shafiul Alam told the press after the cabinet meeting at Bangladesh Secretariat.

The cabinet also approved in principle the draft of "The Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution Act-

2016", aiming to update and standardise the existing law and make it more time befitting.

As per the proposed law, if anyone produces and markets goods without having the BSTI licence, they would face a two years' imprisonment and a fine of Tk 1 lakh. The draft law has

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

নির্বাচিত গল্প

আবুল হায়াত

“আবুল হায়াতের গল্পের কতগুলো নিজস্বতা আছে। চরিত্র সৃষ্টিতে তাঁর কুশলতা অবাক করার মতো। তাঁর গল্পগুলোও তিনি তুলে আনেন চেনাজানা পরিপার্শ্ব থেকে।”

—সৈয়দ মনজুরুল ইসলাম

নির্বাচিত গল্প

আবুল হায়াত

Download

The Daily Star

iPhone & Android Apps

The Daily Star Online

Fresh | Bold | Fast

Available on the App Store

Get it on Google play

Home Delivery Service

www.rokomari.com

16297

আজিজ সুপার মার্কেট, শাহবাগ: প্রথমা (৯৬৪৮২৫), কাঁটাবন: প্রকৃতি (০১৭২৭০২৮৭২০), বেইলি রোড: সাগর পাবলিশার্স (৯৩৫৮৯৪৪); বিমান বন্দর: বুক ওয়ার্ম (৯১০২০৮৭)। নরসিংদী: বই পুস্তক (০১৮১৮৫০৪৮৯৩); কুষ্টিয়া: বইমেলা (০১৭১১ ৫৭৫৬০৬)। চট্টগ্রাম: বাতিঘর (০১৭১৩০৪০৪৪), প্রথমা (০১৭১১৬৪৯৪২২)

Download

The Daily Star

iPhone & Android Apps

The Daily Star Online

Fresh | Bold | Fast

Available on the App Store

Get it on Google play

Home Delivery Service

www.rokomari.com

16297

আজিজ সুপার মার্কেট, শাহবাগ: প্রথমা (৯৬৪৮২৫), কাঁটাবন: প্রকৃতি (০১৭২৭০২৮৭২০), বেইলি রোড: সাগর পাবলিশার্স (৯৩৫৮৯৪৪); বিমান বন্দর: বুক ওয়ার্ম (৯১০২০৮৭)। নরসিংদী: বই পুস্তক (০১৮১৮৫০৪৮৯৩); কুষ্টিয়া: বইমেলা (০১৭১১ ৫৭৫৬০৬)। চট্টগ্রাম: বাতিঘর (০১৭১৩০৪০৪৪), প্রথমা (০১৭১১৬৪৯৪২২)