



## Stay alert

*Hasina at AL's March 7 rally urges people to remain united so that anti-liberation forces cannot come to power*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the people to remain cautious so that anti-liberation forces, war criminals, killers and looters of orphans' money cannot come to power again.

Addressing a mammoth rally at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan, Hasina also called upon all to work together to combat militancy, terrorism, and drug abuse.

The ruling Awami League organised the rally to commemorate Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's historic March 7 speech.

This year, the day is being observed with much fanfare as the speech has

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



Wearing red and green and with Awami League electoral symbol boat, people congregate at the Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital yesterday to commemorate Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's historic March 7, 1971, speech and listen to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Bangabandhu's speech was recognised as Unesco World Documentary Heritage last year. PHOTO: PMO

### Where history began

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People from different parts of the capital began their march from as early as 10:00am.

In large and small processions, they walked carrying the national flag, colourful banners, placards,

Awami League's election symbol 'boat', and portraits of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

In unison, they chanted "Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu".

Their destination was the grand rally at

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



MARCH 8, 1971

### Wind of Change

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following Bangabandhu's speech on the previous day, the air was thick with songs of self-determination.

After the March 7 Rally, "People's rule" by Bangabandhu became the order of the day. The Bangalees were supremely obedient and dedicated. Every man, woman and child thoroughly followed the orders of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Though Bangabandhu tempered his speech at Race Course Maidan (now Suhrawardy Udyan) stopping short of directly declaring independence, the statesman's words changed the trajectory of the nation going forward.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



### Time is now!

*Int'l Women's Day today; goal is to transform women's lives*

SHAHEEN ANAM

International Women's Day first emerged from women's labour movements at the turn of the twentieth century in North America and across Europe. Since then, International Women's Day has assumed a global dimension for national and international women's movement, strengthened by Four Global United Nations women's conferences strengthening call for women's rights and participation in political, social and economic arenas. The UN Beijing Conference

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

## I AM WOMAN

*Once penniless, Pabna woman reinvents herself as agriculture businesswoman*

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU with ANDREW EAGLE

The trouble was love. When Nurunnahar from Boktarpur village in Pabna's Ishwardi upazila married her husband in 1991, neither family agreed. The couple lived alone on five decimals of land behind her in-law's house. Her husband

was unemployed. Without the benefit of higher education and without taka in hand, Nurunnahar was determined to build a better future.

"I started my married life sleeping on a brick floor," she recalls. "I only had the land around the house. I planted pumpkin and bottle gourd. If I sold even Tk 1,000 of vegetables I was happy."

The following year she took a Tk 2,000 loan from a non-government organisation to expand her plot. She added brinjal and a few other vegetable varieties, to earn a more respectable Tk 15,000. It was enough to make her enthusiastic about farming.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Nurunnahar, who struggled to make ends meet when she got married in 1991, now farms on over 40 acres of land. The days of struggle are now a distant memory of the adept farmer.

PHOTO: AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

## Breaking the barriers

*Recognition for women who go the extra mile for change in society*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A room full of women -- young and old and wearing bright clothes and bindis with clinking bangles -- were in a celebratory mood on the eve of International Women's Day yesterday. Every single one of them had a success story following struggle and braving barriers.

Their stories could inspire other women and help them find their own identities. Bangla daily Prothom Alo brought together these personalities of inspiration to Chhayanaut in Dhanmondi yesterday for a reception and to let everyone know their unique tales.

Teenager Tisha Dewan came all the way from Rangamati to the capital for the first time to showcase her singing talent.

Before she was called up to the podium, the curious audience learnt how a single video of her singing and playing a guitar went viral on social media and made her famous.

Associate Editor of Prothom Alo Anisul Hoque greeted Tisha and her proud mother on the podium with flowers.

And then came Col Nazma Begum, the first ever female contingent commander of Bangladesh Army to a United Nations peacekeeping mission; Joya Chakma, who works as a coach at Bangladesh Institute of Sport for male and female footballers; and Fatema, who was once a house help but now is a brand ambassador of Microsoft, Bangladesh.

Every word they spoke reflected their determination to bring change, in their lives and the lives around them.

Khurshida Begum, a simple village woman of Kerontali near the Naf river in Cox's Bazar, had only studied up to class-VIII. She formed a team of 28 women in 2004 to prevent felling of forest trees in the area.

Her love for forest and wildlife prompted her to stop rampant deforestation by illegal loggers.

Her deed did not go unnoticed.

The Collaborative Partnership on Forests, an international consortium of 14 organisations, secretariats and institutions working on international forest issues, gave the first ever Wangari Maathai Forest Champion Award to

RELATED STORIES ON PAGE 3

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

International Women's Day

সব বাধা ভেঙ্গে  
যে এগিয়ে চলে  
সেই তো জয়া...

আন্তর্জাতিক নারী দিবসে সকল অদম্য নারীদের অভিবাদন

জয়া

সিহিয়ে থাকবো না

Introducing Jyoti