

Cooperatives a tested strategy for dev: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called for strengthening the cooperatives movement in Bangladesh, saying that it can play a major role in the country's development.

"If the cooperatives movement can be carried out properly, development will be faster... I believe that," she said.

The premier was addressing a programme marking the 47th National Cooperatives Day and distribution of the National Cooperatives Award 2016 and 2017 at Bangabandhu International Conference Center (BICC).

Hasina emphasised providing training to youths to build them as skilled human resources, and "this is how the curse of unemployment could be removed".

"Cooperatives is a philosophy; it's a tested strategy for socio-economic development. In

the cooperatives-based development process, discrimination decreases as it ensures balanced and sustainable development."

The government has been working to improve the socio-economic condition of people, upholding Bangabandhu's dream and ideology. "In our development process, we're giving utmost importance to rural development," she said.

She also stressed the need for expanding the cooperatives movement for the optimum utilisation of land in food production.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain and State Minister Moshir Rahman Ranga attended the event as special guests.

The day was observed with the theme "Let's build cooperative-based society, ensure sustainable development".

Earlier, the PM distributed National Cooperatives Award among recipients.

No bar for ASM Feroz to contest polls

Says his lawyer, as SC stays HC decision to halt loan rescheduling

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed for eight weeks a High Court order that halted the Bangladesh Bank and Sonali Bank's decisions to allow M/S Patuakhali Jute Mills, owned by ruling Awami League Chief Whip ASM Feroz, to reschedule its loans of Tk 26.80 crore for the ninth time.

Following the SC order, there is no legal bar for the Patuakhali-2 lawmaker to contest the upcoming parliamentary polls, his lawyer Advocate AM Aminuddin told The Daily Star.

Chamber judge of the Appellate Division of the SC Justice Hasan Foez Siddique passed the order, following a stay petition filed by Feroz.

Advocate Aminuddin said the apex court judge passed the order as the Financial Loan Court concerned on November 15 passed a "Solanama (amicable settlement) decree" in favour of the Jute Mills through a compromise between the company and the banks after Bangladesh Bank approved

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Can university teachers run for parliament?

SAYYED MOHMUD ULLAH

Defying the Representation of People Order (RPO), at least eight teachers of two public universities have bought nomination forms to contest the upcoming national election. Of them, seven teach at Dhaka University and one at Jagannath University.

Election officials said RPO, the main electoral legal framework of the country, will be applicable for university teachers; and according to it, they would not be able to contest.

However, the nomination aspirants said RPO would not apply to them because universities are autonomous bodies and run by university ordinances.

According to the RPO, a person shall be disqualified for election unless a period of three years has elapsed since the date of

their resignation or retirement from public service.

As the teachers are still in their service, they will be disqualified to run the polls, said Abul Kashem, joint secretary of the Election Commission (EC).

"As per RPO, nomination of currently serving university teachers will surely be cancelled by the Election Commission," said former election commissioner Brig Gen (retd) M Shakhawat Hossain.

Of the eight aspirants, five want AL's nomination, two BNP's, and one from a faction of Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh.

As per the university ordinance, teachers need not resign until they file final nomination papers to the returning officer (RO) after getting the party ticket, said the teachers.

AKM Jamal Uddin, a professor of

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Defying the risk of death, passengers travel on the roof of a train, while pedestrians walk on the tracks. The situation prevails although the authorities have cleared the makeshift shops close to the rail line to ensure safety for all. The photo was taken at Karwan Bazar in Dhaka yesterday.

Hiring 'assistants' with half their own salary

ACC busts Wasa revenue officers' scam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

They were recruited on master roll (contractual) basis and their salary is not more than Tk 20,000, but some revenue inspectors of Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) recruited their "own assistants" at Tk 10,000 per month -- to do their dirty deed.

On behalf of the inspectors, these "assistants" used to visit households, tamper with meter readings and bills, and take bribes for doing so, said Md Salahuddin, Assistant Director of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) who led a drive at Dhaka Wasa's revenue office-10 in Mirpur.

"They recruited assistants to keep their image clean," he said, adding, "They gave Tk 10,000 to 12,000 per month to their assistants."

All these were found yesterday in an ACC drive, led by Salahuddin at Dhaka Wasa's revenue zone-10 office.

Later, Wasa sacked revenue inspectors Emdadul Haque, Ashrafur Hasan, Mahmudul Hasan, Badruzzaman, Abu Taleb and Abu Talha.

Salahuddin said they got allegations on

its hotline that revenue inspectors of Wasa's revenue zone-10 do not dispose of complaints on time, and prepare forged bills.

ACC's Director General and acting chief of prevention cell Dr Sarwar Mahmud sent a team at the spot to investigate the complaint.

In front of the ACC team, Revenue Officer of Revenue Zone-10 Shafiqul Islam asked revenue inspectors about the location of some holdings, but they failed to mention where they are.

At one point, they admitted of having "recruited assistants" to do their work.

Talking to the correspondent, Shafiqul said, "We have found irregularities against the revenue inspectors and sacked them."

Sarwar welcomed Dhaka Wasa's move to fire its inspectors, and said they will continue their drive to curb corruption at government offices, says a press release.

The boundaries for the Mirpur Revenue Zone-10 of Dhaka Wasa lies between Rokeya Sarani-Pallabi on the west, Bijoy Sarani on the south, Kochukhet-Cantonment on the east and Mirpur Ceramic area on the north.

GENDER VIOLENCE

Govt must have zero tolerance: Ayesha Khanam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad yesterday placed an 18-point recommendation including holding trials of all rape cases under the speedy trial tribunal, to prevent repression against women and girls.

The women's rights body placed the recommendations at a press conference at its auditorium in the capital, marking International Women Repression Resistance Fortnightly and World Human Rights Day-2018.

It recommended a stop to giving shelter to rapists and sexual abusers socially and politically, and introducing a website where victims can lodge complaints.

The Parishad also recommended implementing the High Court verdict that banned the "two-finger test" of a rape victim and implementing the Pornography Control Act-2012.

Ayesha Khanam, president of the Parishad, said patriarchal mindset and

discriminatory laws are at the root of violence against women in Bangladesh. Criminalisation of politics also impacts such violence, she added.

"If the state does not take zero tolerance policy against repression of women, this degeneration cannot be resisted," she said.

At the press conference, Advocate Maksuda Akhtar read out a written statement, while the Parishad's General Secretary Maleka Banu also spoke.

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

According to UN Women, from the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on November 25, to Human Rights Day on December 10, the "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence" campaign is a time to galvanise action to end violence against women and girls around the world.

As part of the globally observed campaign, a daylong fair was held at Cirdap in Dhaka yesterday. State Minister for Women

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40 girls and 1,420 women raped this year

Rights groups call on people to unite against violence towards women

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women face harassment and violence not only on the streets but also at home from their own family members and at work from their colleagues and those in authority.

A movement has been going on for decades against repression of women, but the latest statistics indicate little change in the overall scenario of women's safety in and outside their homes. This is the backdrop to Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) leading a 16-day-long campaign that began on International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women yesterday.

MJF along with over a dozen other rights organisations gathered at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka to call on people, irrespective of gender, to unite against discrimination and violence towards women.

The rally began with slogans demanding an end to gender vio-

lence, women's safety, equal rights and equal social status. The campaign will end on Human Rights Day on December 10.

Since 1997, rights organisations have been holding such programmes to protest violence

against women and girls. This year's theme is "#HearMeToo - End Violence against Women and Girls."

Speakers at the rally repeatedly urged all to listen to those raising their voices against harassment on social media, before questioning

the accusations.

MJF in a press release said there was an increase in the contribution and visibility of women in political, social and economic activities. But there is a serious lack of recognition of their work. To ensure social respect of women and to recognise their contribution, MJF began a movement called "Equality through dignity" in 2012.

The focus of the movement is still on achieving recognition of women's work in family and at social and community levels. The core belief behind it is that if women's contribution to economy is made visible, their status will be elevated -- resulting in a decrease in violence against them.

According to the 2015 violence against women survey conducted by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 74.8 percent of rural married women face violence while the

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Manusher Jonno Foundation launched the 16 Days of Activism Campaign 2018 for elimination of violence against women and children at Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

GATCO GRAFT CASE

Finish trial within six months: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the lower court concerned to consider their bail when they surrender before it.

The Anti-Corruption Commission filed the case with Tejgaon Police Station on September 2, 2007 against Khaleda, Galib, Tanveer and 10 others, on charges of corruption in awarding the contract for container management at inland container depots in Dhaka and Chattogram to Global Agro Trade (Pvt) Co Ltd (Gatco), causing a loss of over Tk 1,000 crore to the state exchequer, Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik told The Daily Star.

Barrister Ajmalul Hossain and Advocate Ahsanul Karim appeared for Galib and Tanveer respectively, while Advocate Khurshid Alam Khan argued for the ACC.

Tanveer.

The HC, however, asked the lower court concerned to consider their bail when they surrender before it.

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\$4.6m Korean aid to boost communities in disaster-prone areas

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

South Korea will contribute US \$4.6 million to support World Food Programme (WFP) operations in Bangladesh to help households and communities become more resilient in the face of natural disasters.

The funds will be disbursed through the Korea International Cooperation Agency (Koica), a governmental organisation for delivering assistance to developing countries.

The Building Resilience to Achieve Zero Hunger (BRAZH) initiative aims to reach over 4,000 families living in flood-prone areas in Kurigram Sadar and Chilmari sub-districts of Kurigram district in the northwest of the country, from 2018-2021.

WFP will be able to pilot a series of innovative approaches to resilience-building, including micro-insurance products to protect smallholder farmers and day labourers, forecast-based financing models to disburse aid before a predicted weather disaster, and seasonal livelihood planning to develop climate-resilient options, said a press release of WFP.

These activities will be conducted in close partnership with the Bangladeshi Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Department of Disaster Management, and local government, national and international technical institutes.

The forecast-based financing pilot project was tested last month in a dry-run supported by multiple donors, and

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Take action against illegal sand extraction

Demand environmentalists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmentalists yesterday demanded strict measures against the people involved in illegal sand extraction from the riverbed, which hampers the water flow and triggers erosion.

They also said the authorities should build infrastructures like bridges and dams and dredge rivers in a planned manner after consultation with experts.

The rivers are the lifeline of Bangladesh; if the rivers live, the country's people will live, they said at a discussion at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Bangladesh Nodi Bachao Andolon, a platform of campaigners for river conservation, organised it, marking the organisation's 14th founding anniversary.

The environmentalists also called upon the citizens

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Man held for making fake news sites remanded

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Enamul Haque Mony, who was detained by Rapid Action Battalion on charges of creating fake websites of news outlets, on a three-day remand in a case filed under the Digital Security Act.

Judicial Magistrate Rajib Hasan passed the order after Mizanur Rahman, sub-inspector of Bangladesh Railway Police Station, and also investigation officer of the case, produced him seeking 10 days' remand.

Deputy Assistant Director of Rab-2 Md Ekramul Haque Chowdhury filed the case against Enamul with Bangladesh Railway Police Station, Kamalapur in Dhaka, accusing him of creating fake websites and circulating false and "anti-government" news through them.

In yesterday's remand prayer, the IO said Mony was directly involved in creating websites identical to those of different local media outlets.

Defence lawyer Md Kabiruzzaman submitted a petition seeking bail alongside cancellation of the remand prayer, saying that his client was not

involved in such activities.

After hearing both sides, the magistrate rejected the bail petition and placed him on remand.

Rab on Saturday said Mony, 31, who his family says went missing from the Dhaka airport area on Wednesday, was in their custody. The law enforcement agency said they arrested Mony in Airport Railway Station area.

Clone websites of Bangla daily Prothom Alo, online news portal banglatribune.com and BBC Bangla were created in September and October to spread fake news.

Mohiuddin Faruque, additional superintendent of Rab-2, said during his stay in South Korea while pursuing a PhD degree, Mony created at least 22 such fake websites and got money for it.

Mony was involved with Islami Chhatra Shibir, he said, adding, they investigated the forgery upon receiving complaints from the authorities of a newspaper.

Mony completed his master's from Bangladesh Agriculture University of Mymensingh and went to South Korean Kyungpook National University as a PhD researcher in 2012.