

Still deprived

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Foundation, conducted the programme.
INCLUSION IN DECISION-MAKING
Ensuring financial solvency for women, and including them in decision-making processes can contribute to stopping violence against women, said speakers at a discussion organised by National Girl Child Advocacy Forum at Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh. The organisation also brought out a rally and held cultural programmes.
The nation cannot achieve the development it has targeted by ignoring women, they said, expressing strong conviction that women should lead the country not only as members of parliament through reserved seats, but by participating in election.
Nasimun Ara Haque Minu, president of Bangladesh Female Journalists' Association, and journalist Shahnaz Munni were honoured at the programme.
Nasima Akter Jolly, secretary of National Girl Child Advocacy Forum, also spoke at the event.
INDIGENOUS WOMEN CANNOT BE LEFT BEHIND
Ensuring representation of indigenous women at different levels of government bodies is a must to empower them, recommended members of Bangladesh Indigenous Women Network (BIWN) at a programme at Faculty of Fine Arts in Dhaka University (DU) yesterday.
They also asked the government to secure quota for indigenous women at workplaces, so that they get equal opportunities.
Prof Sadeka Halim, dean of Social Sciences faculty of DU, said that the issues faced by indigenous women are seldom discussed, even though they frequently fall victim to violence and discrimination.
BIWN Coordinator Palguni Tripura said indigenous women do not have proper representation in different strata of the society, and this scenario must be changed to ensure sustainable development.
Member of the parliament Lutfunnesa Khan Beauty, Bangladesh Adivasi Forum General Secretary Sanjeeb Drong, educationist Anjalika Khisa, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) member Banchita Chakma were also present at the programme.



Dinajpur Women Bikers' Association organised a motorbike rally across the city, marking International Women's Day yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

They too want a voice

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said Joshiah Sangma, a Garo student, vying for a member post in central union polls from Bangladesh Chhatra League.
The indigenous students, from various ethnic and educational backgrounds, said they are contesting the polls as they too want to contribute directly to the policymaking.
Some of them are nominated by student organisations while others are contesting independently.
"I want to bring all cultural organisations of TSC under one umbrella, and promote diversity," said Kingsuk Chakma of Rangamati. The English department student is running for the post of cultural secretary in central union as an independent candidate.
According to indigenous student leaders, there are more than 500 indigenous students out of over 40,000 students at DU.
It is important that indigenous students come forward and raise their voice, said Rebang Dewan, a Chakma student leader of Bangladesh Adivasi Chhatra Sangram Parishad.
Besides, three indigenous female students are contesting the hall union polls.
Pramee Khisa of Rangamati, a first-year student of business, is vying for a member post in Rokeya Hall union polls from left alliance.
"Most female students do not get dormitories, so they are forced to stay outside. Not only do they have to spend a lot of money, security also remains a major concern," said the Chakma student. "I want to try my best to bring a change to that."
From the same hall, Kamala Marma is running for the post of indoor sports secretary independently while Nwaisin U Marma for Kabi Sufia Kamal Hall's social welfare secretary from BCL.
In addition, Mitramoy Chakma and Lenik Chakma are contesting for member posts in central union and Jagannath Hall respectively -- nominated by left alliance. Three Santal students -- Prabir Mornu (hall union), Nathaniel Tudu (hall union) and Jesan Arko Marandi (central union) -- are also nominated by the same alliance.

Abul Mansur Ahmad

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communal end," said Prof Anisuzzaman, who chaired the event.
The book, a compilation of seven satirical stories, is more about social than political aspects of the period, he said.
Rabindra University Vice Chancellor Prof Bishwajit Ghosh said the stories written 90 years ago appear to reflect present day social situations. They are as relevant today as they were then, he added.
The religious, social and political tensions and dilemmas of today are no different from those of the 1930s. "Abul Mansur Ahmad could speak his mind without fear, which is very difficult today," Prof Bishwajit said.
He tirelessly worked for self-determination and identity of the Bangalee Muslims through his works, he added.
Poet and researcher Sumon Sajjad in his keynote presentation said besides the issues of identity of the Bangalee Muslims, "Aina" also brings out the issues of economic depravity suffered by Muslim educated youths who were without jobs and any prospect of ameliorating their economic status.
"Abul Mansur Ahmad wanted a pluralistic society where all ethnic and religious communities will have their identity and rights," he said.
"One must read his seminal work 'Amar Dekha Rajnir Panchash Bachor' to really understand the importance of 'Aina'," Sumon Sajjad said.
Poet and researcher Ashique Reja lamented that there is a lack of the sort of courageous writings that Abul Mansur Ahmad wrote in his time. "We all should read 'Aina' to get the real picture of our present day society," he said.
Essayist Kudrat-E-Huda said Abul Mansur Ahmad, who grew up as a non-communal person from childhood and lived as such throughout his life, stood against the communal tendencies of his period and fought for the rights of all downtrodden people, especially the Bangalee Muslims.
Writer Mozaffar Hossain said Abul Mansur Ahmad used his writings as weapon for social reforms.
The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam, who is son of Abul Mansur Ahmad, thanked the panelists and participants at the discussion, moderated by writer Emran Mahfuz.

Media tech bootcamp kicks off at RU

RU CORRESPONDENT

A three-day media tech Bootcamp kicked off at Rajshahi University (RU) yesterday, aiming to give students a hands-on experience in coming up with innovative solutions to new media challenges.
Organised jointly by RU and Deutsche Welle Akademie, students of Mass Communication and Journalism (MCJ) and Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) are participating in the bootcamp, along with journalists from Radio Today, Channel i, and The Daily Star. The programme is being held at Dr MA Wazed Miah Academic Building on the RU campus.
On the first day, participants were divided into six teams, each tasked with devising solutions to ongoing national issues.
In the next two days, participants will develop a tool, project or app that can be used by media houses.
A jury will select the three best solutions from this challenge, and DW Akademie will help the winning teams realise their ideas -- with additional mentoring and funding worth Tk 2,00,000 for each team.

Absence of Ducsu for decades

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Student politics in the country took a sharp downward turn after 1990s. Ruling party backed student organisations established unilateral control on campus by driving out their peers associated with opposition parties, they observed.
Intra and inter party clashes in the name of student politics in recent times have claimed a number of lives.
Student politics is mainly controlled by major political parties, and as a result they lost their independent existence. The political parties found it easy to control student politics in absence of elected student unions in universities and colleges, they said.
Academics said that a more damaging aspect is that activists of student organisations associated with ruling parties are used as a force to resist any anti-government movement.
On many occasions, ruling party backed student organisations carry out lethal attacks. They also force students to join their programmes at hall guest rooms, terming it "guest room programme", and other political events, they said, adding that it could have been averted had Ducsu and other student union elections been held regularly.
When asked, Sultan Mohammad Monsur Ahmed, a former vice president of Ducsu, said student politics turned corrupt due to the absence of elections at public universities.
"Holding of central student union elections at public universities could create patriotic politicians in the country," said Monsur, a Gonoforum leader and also a lawmaker-elect.
Another former Ducsu VP Mahfuza Khanam also blamed the absence of student union elections for a long time as a key reason for the present sorry state of student politics in the country.
"There's none to represent the students. In the absence of Ducsu, cultural and social programmes hardly took place," she said.
The last general secretary of Ducsu, Khairul Kabir Khokon, said in absence of Ducsu election not only student politics lost its way but also it is now being controlled by others.
"Dominance of businessmen is increasing in politics as no new leadership has developed from Ducsu," he added.
Shantanu Majumder, Associate

Professor of Political Science of DU, said that nowadays student leaders are busy serving the "parent political parties". But Ducsu election can change the scenario, he hoped.
"If any student leader wants to take part in Ducsu election, he/she has to work on issues involving students and ensure their rights before seeking their mandate," he said.
Shantanu also feared that some civil society members are trying to stigmatise student unions in an attempt to keep general students away from politics.
Serajul Islam blamed BNP and Awami League for not holding Ducsu elections.
"Ruling parties after 1990s were responsible, as they did not want student union election. They feared that activities of Ducsu will go against their interests," said Serajul Islam.
Mahfuza said that successive governments might have feared that their party backed student organisation may not win in the Ducsu election. "That's why they didn't want election," she said.

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Resist those

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Parliament Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Education Minister Dipu Moni, former home minister and incumbent lawmaker Advocate Sahara Khatun, and first female Major General Susane Giti.
Congratulating them, Anisuzzaman said their examples will inspire other women.
Dipu Moni said, "Fundamentalism, terrorism and corruption are major barriers for women."
"Women need to be politically empowered to move forward," she said, asking women to reject the political force that indulges in fundamentalism, militancy and corruption.
Dr Shirin Sharmin hoped women will forge their path with courage and attain success.
Lawmakers Sajeda Chowdhury, Sahara Khatun and Major General Susane Giti expressed their gratitude to the trust for the honour. Sajeda became environment minister in 1996. She was Awami League's acting general secretary after the killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975.
Lawmaker Sahara played a vital role in the legal battle to free AL chief Sheikh Hasina during the caretaker government regime in 2007.
Three-time Speaker of Jatiya Sangsad Shirin has contributed to ensuring human rights.
In her illustrious career, Dipu Moni played a significant role in ensuring women's participation in politics.
Joining Bangladesh Army as a physician with the rank of Captain in 1986, Major General Susane has made contributions to the country's medical sector. One of her achievements is setting up a bone marrow transplant facility at Combined Military Hospital.
Prof Nasrin Ahmed, pro-vice chancellor of Dhaka University, presided over the programme.

Azibunnesa passes away

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar
Mst Azibunnesa, wife of former education officer Abdul Ali, died of cancer at the capital's Universal Medical College and Hospital early yesterday. She was 70.
She left behind her husband, two sons and two daughters.
Azibunnesa, from Habiganj town, was founder of Tegria Jamina Government Primary School in the town.
Mother of Sharif Jamil, joint secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, and Dr Arif Jamil, associate professor of law department at Dhaka University, Azibunnesa was buried at the Pegoria graveyard in Habiganj.

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