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On the occasion of International Women's Day, six individuals were recognised as “Nirbhaya (fearless)” by The Daily Star and United Nations Development Programme Bangladesh at an event yesterday. The programme was supported by the Australian High Commission. The awardees are Chumki Biswas, Maria Mehedy, Mowon, Priyanka Rani Sur, Rukhsana Akhter and Samina Alam. The programme was organised at the capital's The Daily Star Centre. Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star; Stefan Liller, resident representative of UNDP Bangladesh; and Nardia Simpson, Australian deputy high commissioner, were present on the occasion.

Honouring the fearless

6 women receive ‘Nirbhaya’ award for their contribution to society

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

She faced the onslaught of bullies throughout childhood and grew up amid the disapproving looks of people. But nothing could stop transwoman Mowon from pursuing her dream of becoming an entrepreneur.

Defying the social pressure, she stood tall all these years. Mowon is now a successful make-up artist with 2,800 followers on Facebook. She now plans on uplifting the lives of other transgender people by providing training.

“People think transgender people like us are no good. But if we're given a little scope, we can prove our worth,” she said in her remarks after receiving the “Nirbhaya” award yesterday.

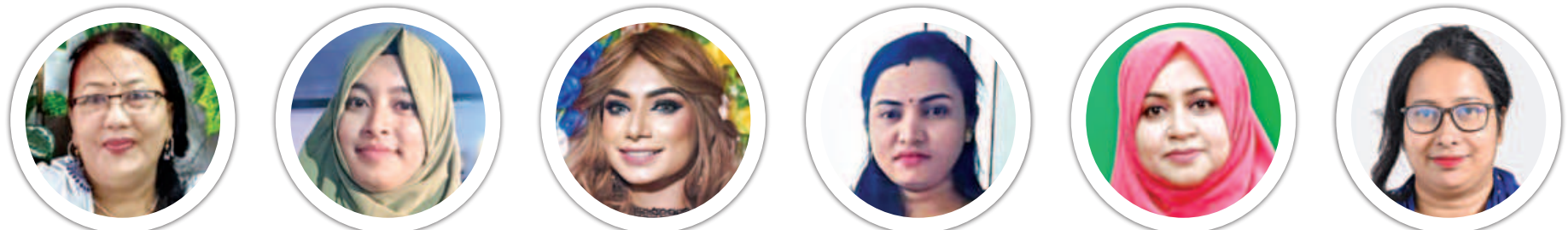
On the occasion of International Women's Day, six women including Mowon have been recognised as “Nirbhaya (fearless)” by The Daily Star and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangladesh. The programme was supported by the Australian High Commission in Bangladesh.

The other awardees are Chumki Biswas, Priyanka Rani Sur, Maria Mehedy, Rukhsana Akhter and Samina Alam.

They were recognised for fighting against all odds and becoming role models using digital platforms. They received crests and certificates during a ceremony at the capital's The Daily Star Centre.

They were recognised for fighting against all odds and becoming role models using digital platforms.

This was the third edition of the “Nirbhaya” initiative. Last year, five women received similar recognition for their selfless initiatives amid the pandemic.



- Chumki Biswas**

I had no idea about online business, but now I am able to send our products to various outlets in different parts of the world. I aspire to build a factory with accommodation facilities where women with disabilities can work together.
- Maria Mehedy**

My vision for Shuddhi is to make bio-degradable sanitary pads accessible to all women. I believe small actions can lead to significant positive changes, and I am determined to be a catalyst for that change.
- Mowon**

As a project coordinator at Pothchola, I got to help many transgender people. I dream of establishing a parlour and a boutique shop where I will appoint and train people from my community so they do not have to struggle for jobs.
- Priyanka Rani Sur**

Lugging three heavy laptops to the training centre, far away from my home was a challenging task. Yet I was determined to help the women in my community. In the future, I hope to keep growing my institute, and empower as many underprivileged women as possible.
- Ruksana Akter**

Working with Shikhhok Batayon inspired me to start my journey of establishing an online school. In the future, I want to focus on making science subjects more interesting, effective, and appealing to students. I also want to pursue a higher degree.
- Samina Alam**

This was a whole new experience for me, and I was able to learn how to set up and pilot a project. Hopefully, once my innovation in Improved Cooking Stoves (ICS) is developed, I will improve the lives of those living in the Chattogram Hill Tracts.

KHALEDA'S RELEASE

‘Govt to decide on extension after receiving application’

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said the government will take decision about extending the release of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia from jail after receiving application to this effect.

“We are yet to receive any application,” he said after attending an event for inaugurating the digital case trafficking system at Judicial Administration Training Institute.

Tony Blair pays homage to Bangabandhu

UNB, Dhaka

Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair paid homage to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by placing a floral wreath at his portrait at Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi 32 on Saturday.

Blair, the executive chairman of Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, was received at the museum by Deputy Minister for Education Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury. Blair also had a tour of the museum and signed the visitors' book.

DRAFT BIKE GUIDELINE

‘It should be realistic, not imposed’

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Motorcycle manufacturers and assemblers have formally opposed the draft that transport authorities have prepared to control bikes in a bid to curb road crashes.

A delegation of Bangladesh Motorcycle Assembler and Manufacturer Association (BMAMA) raised their objection at a meeting with ABM Amin Ullah Nuri, secretary of the Road Transport and Highways Division, yesterday.

The development came as groups of bikers have already protested the draft “Motorcycle Operation Guideline 2023” prepared by a government committee, that, among others, stipulates 30 km per hour as the highest speed limit for bikes in the city.

The secretary said the draft is at a preliminary stage, and they will talk with all stakeholders, including the manufacturers and assemblers, before finalising it.

A sharp and unregulated growth of vehicles, especially motorcycles and three-wheelers, over the last few years has resulted in a spike in the numbers of crashes and casualties, said experts and road-safety campaigners.

An investigation by a government committee into road crashes during last year's Eid-ul-Fitr holidays found a sharp rise in bike crashes and recommended banning motorcycles on national highways that don't have service lanes.

A proposal on banning motorcycles on highways was placed before the National Road Safety Council meeting on November 15 last year. But the council, led by Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, directed the authorities concerned to prepare a guideline instead.

Following the directives, a nine-member committee, led by a joint secretary of the division, prepared a draft.

As per the draft, the speed limit for bikes inside cities will be 30 kmph, and bikes below 126cc would not be allowed to operate on highways.



With nothing but a flimsy rope tying them together, construction materials protrude from the back of a truck. There's a private car right behind it. Due to the bumpy road, at any point, these iron rods can fall off and cause an accident. This photo was taken on Bijoy Sarani yesterday.

Stop cutting trees in Jhimai Punji

14 eminent citizens urge authorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fourteen eminent citizens yesterday urged authorities concerned to stop the initiative of cutting down trees in Jhimai Punji of Moulvibazar, home to the Khasi community.

The tea garden authorities have recently taken an initiative to fell at least 2,096 trees in the area. Among the trees, there are many that are ancient and mature, they said in a joint statement.

“If the trees are cut down, it will cause irreparable damage to the environment, and the tree-dependent Khasi people will lose their livelihood. Besides, wildlife will also be affected,” the statement read.

In the statement, the eminent citizens also

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NIKETAN AC BLAST

One succumbs to injuries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One of the two employees of a recruiting agency, who suffered burn injuries after an air conditioner (AC) exploded in the capital's Niketan area yesterday, died at a city hospital early yesterday.

Gopal Mallik, 28, an office executive of KM International, breathed his last around 12:30am while being treated at Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery.

He suffered 100 percent burns, SM Aiyub Hossain, resident surgeon of the institute, said.

The blast took place at the agency's branch office in the Niketan Society area on Road-6 around 6:15am.

Fire officials suspected that the AC exploded from an electric short circuit.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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