



Speakers at a seminar, titled "Recognition of Unpaid Care Work: A Step Towards Financial and Social Empowerment of Women," yesterday. Manusher Jonno Foundation organised the event at a city hotel. PHOTO: STAR

Unseen and unrecognised

Speakers stress recognising women's unpaid care work

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Contribution of female unpaid care work, in GDP equivalent terms, is five times higher than similar contribution by their male counterparts, said speakers at a seminar yesterday.

They also noted that if a woman could work one hour less on unpaid care and domestic work, her probability of participating in the labour market would increase by 2 percent.

Additionally, having an under-five child in the family reduces a woman's probability of joining the labour market by 2.5 percent, they added.

These data were presented at a seminar, titled "Recognition of Unpaid Care Work: A Step Towards Financial and Social Empowerment of Women," organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) at a city hotel.

Referring to a 2021 survey

Recognition of care work is the first step towards establishing a care economy, and acknowledging its significance in society.

DR SAYEMA HAQUE BIDISHA
Prof of Economics at DU

We are trying to include unpaid care work in the budget. Because without care economy, the economy of smart Bangladesh will not be smart.

WASEQA AYESHA KHAN
State Minister for Finance

conducted by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), Dr Kazi Iqbal, research director at the organisation, said, "Women's household and care work was worth

Tk 5,307 billion, equivalent to 14.8 percent of GDP that year. Men's contribution to GDP that year was only 2.8 percent."

According to the study, women spend an average of 4.6 hours on unpaid household services for household members, such as cooking and cleaning, and 1.2 hours on unpaid caregiving services such as childcare and adult care, while men spend 0.6 hours and 0.2 hours on domestic and care work, respectively, he also said.

"On the other hand, women get only 1.2 hours for paid and self-employed work, while men get 6.1 hours for such tasks," he said.

Dr Sayema Haque Bidisha, professor of Economics department at Dhaka University, stressed the importance of recognising unpaid care work as the initial step.

Recognition of care work is the first step towards establishing a care

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Yunus accused of granting Tk 9.5cr loan illegally

Grameen Bank lodges complaint with ACC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Grameen Bank has filed a complaint with the Anti-Corruption Commission against its former managing director Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus, accusing him of illegally granting a loan to a company his family owns.

Tk 9.5 crore was given in loans illegally to Packages Corporation Ltd, Masud Akhtar, the bank's legal adviser, told The Daily Star yesterday.

In addition, Yunus also awarded work orders worth crores of taka for printing materials at higher rates without inviting any competitive bid, Pradip Kumar Saha, deputy managing director of Grameen Bank, told reporters.

He spoke to the media after lodging the complaint with the anti-corruption watchdog. The copy of the complaint was not available immediately.

In a press release, signed by Nur Mohammad, managing director of the microcredit institution, Grameen Bank said Yunus allegedly extended unlawful benefits on multiple occasions to Packages Corporation.

It alleged that Yunus formed the price-setting committee himself and without the consent of the board. It claimed that he breached Grameen Bank's procurement policy as well.

He was also accused of violating the Grameen Bank Ordinance 1983 by keeping the board in the dark and entering into a

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Launches remain docked at Sadarghat terminal yesterday. As cyclone Remal prepares to make landfall, vessel movement has been suspended. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

'River grabbers are criminals'

State minister for shipping tells conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government sees river grabbers as criminals, said State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday.

He said the political identity of encroachers, be it Awami League, BNP or Jatiyo Party, bears no significance to the government. The current establishment has a zero tolerance stance against all river grabbers, he added.

Khalid made these remarks at a conference at the Krishibid Institution Bangladesh at Khamarbari in Dhaka.

The two-day National River Conference 2024 was organised by the Association for Land and Development, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, Water Rights Forum, Riverine People and Bangladesh River Travelers Network.

Speaking as chief guest, Khalid said, "We face many problems while

freeing the river from grabbers. We can't handle the greed of sand... Who do I blame for this?"

The state minister reiterated that protecting rivers is a top government priority, highlighting they have enacted new laws on sand and soil management. There is a

Preventing river encroachment requires more than just laws. A stronger public outcry is necessary.

AINUN NISHAT
BRACU Professor Emeritus

directive from the prime minister that no balu mahal (designated sand quarry) can be leased without hydrography survey.

The government observes "river week" annually to create awareness in protecting rivers, preventing pollution, and ensuring their flow,

with this year's event starting on June 4, he added.

BRAC University Professor Emeritus Ainun Nishat said preventing river encroachment requires more than just laws. A stronger public outcry is necessary.

National River Conservation Commission Chairman Sarwar Mahmud emphasised the need for strategic collaboration with all stakeholders and community engagement to effectively prevent and address river encroachment.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of BELA, highlighted that 229 rivers are endangered across eight divisions. She called for a law to protect rivers, along with increased legal power, scope, and manpower for the NRCC as per the court order.

Nijera Kori Coordinator Khushi Kabir and ALRD Executive Director Shamsul Huda, among others, spoke on the occasion.

Hasan Mahmood Khan new air force chief

UNB, Dhaka

The government has appointed Air Vice



Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan as the new chief of Bangladesh Air Force by elevating him to the rank of air marshal.

He will take over as the new BAF chief on June 11 for three years, according to a notification issued by the defence ministry yesterday.

Hasan will succeed Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Shaikh Abdul Hannan.

Hannan will go on retirement the same day.

Stop activities of 'Silicon City' at Savar: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to immediately stop all activities of housing project "Silicon City" at Savar including its earth-filling, plot selling and registration.

Silicon City has been established under "Silicon and Land Development" allegedly by filling the main flood zone, reservoir and agriculture zone identified in the detailed area plan at Borobordeshi Mouja.

Rajuk chairman, DoE director general and Dhaka DC have been ordered to take necessary steps in this regard.

The HC bench of Justice KM Kamrul Kader and Justice Khizir Hayat Lizu issued the order following a petition filed by BELA.

GEOPOLITICAL COMPETITION Bangladesh needs to prepare better

Speakers tell book launch

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

As great power competition intensifies in the Indian Ocean region, it is high time that Bangladesh prepares better and plays its balancing act effectively to ensure its national interest, said international relations analysts at a book launch yesterday.

German think tank Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) published the book "The Changing Nature of Geopolitics and the Futures of Bangladesh" edited by Prof Imtiaz Ahmed, executive director of Centre for Alternatives. The book is written by 11 writers on various aspects of current geopolitical scenarios and the position of Bangladesh.

Addressing the event at Foreign Service Academy, Prof Imtiaz said the Indian sub-continent was once the second richest region after China, and that drew the British and other European countries to this region, particularly the Bengal.

He said after the fall of the colonies and the two world wars, two powers -- the US and the Soviet Union -- emerged. Now, with the rise of China and



other powers, the world is bracing multipolarity. And, the Indian Ocean has become the focus of the global and regional powers.

Bangladesh, which is located at the centre of the Indian Ocean and a rapidly growing economy with no enemy, has also become very significant.

"Against this backdrop, our engagement with the outside world also should be multiverse, multi-focused and multilayered," Prof Imtiaz said. "Are we ready to pursue effectively this policy? Is our education system ready? No," he said, suggesting that the technology, however, has created opportunity for the policymakers, diplomats and leaders to equip with the knowledge.

Mahfuzur Rhaman, former principal staff officer at Armed Forces Division, former state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, AK Abdul Momen, chair of Parliamentary Standing Committee on foreign ministry, FES programme advisor Shadhan Kumar Das and Diplomats World Advisor Dr Mohammed Faruque also spoke.