Women repression prevention act to be amended to stop abuse

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Women and Children Repression Prevention Act will be amended to stop its abuse and victimisation of innocent people.

As the law is very stringent, many people became victims of false cases under it, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed said in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday, agreeing to observations by many lawmakers.

The rate of conviction in cases filed under the Act is only seven per cent, he said during the questionanswer session

Citing an example, Moudud said, in one court in Dhaka, the accused in only two out of 177 cases filed under the Act were convicted. The accused in the rest 175 cases were found not auilty

There are 38 special courts in the country, which try cases filed under

Replying to another question. Moudud said the government is planning to develop a 'public prosecution service' as recruitment o public prosecutors on politica considerations will not help improve justice delivery system

Lack of proper logistics for judges is a 'key weak point' in the judicial system, he said. "In many places judges have to share the same courtroom in two shifts in a day. We're now constructing 21 new court buildings in different districts to solve the problem."

To a separate question on delay in trial of cases, the law minister said the government is trying its best to expedite the process and has introduced speedy trial courts fort this. "A total of 1500 cases were disposed of in speedy trial courts in last nine months.'

The number of under-trial civil cases is 73,187 in additional district judges' courts across the country. The number of criminal cases is 85,997. Besides, there are 2,92,746 civil cases pending with assistant iudges' courts, he said.

ment has started implementing a

USAID-aided project for the reha-

bilitation of child workers from

from indecision in crucial issues," one BNP policymaker said. "It's unfortu-

nate because it now has more than

leaders feel that lack of coordination,

indecision and interference by a few

influential people have robbed the

Leaders of the BNP's alliance

artners have a similar view of the

They blame lack of dynamism in

the administration on 'stagnation' in

the Prime Minister's Office (PMO)

where important issues such as

promotion of bureaucrats have

A group of a section of officials and

political appointees at the PMO has

become influential and are making

fortune through various unscrupulous

deals, insiders say. Worst still, they are

"All the wings, particularly the personnel, administrative and press

wings, at the PMO are not able to

serve either the prime minister or her

that the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR)

had taken back the 213 people

between 2:00am and 2:30am on

people were no more visible from

early yesterday morning. "We don't

would be held at Coochbehar in

West Bengal today (Friday) to

discuss the tense border situation

is fixing a date for Foreign Minister

M Morshed Khan's visit to New Delhi

on an invitation from hisIndian

counterpart Yashwant Sinha.

Chowdhury, however, said those

A high-level flag meeting

tween the BDR and the BSF

Meanwhile, the foreign ministry

Sinha invited Khan Wednesday

In the wake of a tense situation at

Earlier, Bangladesh High

Sinha had assured Haider that

"There should be restraint on

Chowdhury said India must stop

Commissioner to India Tufail Haider

met Yashwant Sinha Wednesday

there would be "no escalation of

tension from the Indian side", the

rhetoric from both the sides and

India is keen to have best of rela-

tions with Bangladesh," Sinha was

its push-in bids because "there are

laid-down procedure to deal with the

issue of illegal immigrants". He

asserted, "There should be a per-

The foreign secretary

downplayed Indian Defence

Minister George Fernandes' claim

that the border situation 'has gone

there should not be any move for

'It is very much under control but

manent solution to this issue.'

night over telephone for a return

the border, Chowdhury termed the

invitation a 'positive development'

as "it would give a chance to discuss

different issues".

foreign secretary said.

quoted to have said.

beyond control'.

escalation of tension.

Wednesday in small batches.

know where they have gone."

the foreign secretary said.

office," said a disgruntled leader.

accused of inefficiency.

Dhaka

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dismisses

remained unresolved for months.

Some senior BNP ministers and

two-thirds majority in parliament."

administration of dynamism.

BNP men

Roundtable for saving children from risky jobs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil society members at a discussion yesterday stressed the need for a pragmatic national policy to spare children from hazardous jobs.

They also urged the integration of child labour issues into national development strategies

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) organised the discussion on "Child Labour Policy of Bangladesh: What are we looking for?" at CIRDAP auditorium to provide inputs to the national policy on child labour, drafted by the government.

A 1995-96 survey by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) suggested that child workers within the age range of 5-14 years number about 6.6 million and constitute 19.1 per cent of the total child population in the age group.

1.6 percent of the child labour force belonged to the 5-9 age group

and the rest to the 10-14 age group. Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya said e number may have risen to 7 to 7.5 million by now and about as much as 83 per cent are engaged in rural economic activities.

Lots of children are also involved in the 54 types of hazardous jobs

identified by International Labour Organisation (ILO), he added. Child workers in hazardous jobs

include those in tobacco factories, motor workshops, lathe factories and welding workshops. Members of parliament, aca-

demics, government officials, employers, business leaders and NGO representatives attended yesterday's discussion chaired by Syed Manzur Elahi. State Minister for Labour and

Employment Lutfar Rahman Khan was the chief guest while ILO Director Gopal Bhattacharya and CPD Executive Director Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya also took

part in the discussion. Dr Sumaiya Khair, associate professor of Law, Dhaka University,

presented the keynote paper. Meanwhile, in an effort to remedy the situation, the govern-

JS

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He referred to statements by Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan and Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury on the US terror-risk list on Sunday and push-ins on Monday.

The rest of the notices either lack sufficient evidence or are not on recent incidents and some of them may be based on hypothesis, he said. The Speaker gave decision on 82 out of 85

notices. Shahjahan Khan, Faruk Khan, Promod Man King, Shamsur Rahman Sarif, Advocate Rahamat Ali and Atiqur Rahman Atiq of the main opposition Awami League, and Golam Mohammad Qader and Mashiur

Rahman Ranga of the Jatiya Party submitted the notices. The chair also dealt with four

privilege notices by four opposition lawmakers. Three of them were sent to the standing committee on privilege. Yesterday's sitting, the first private

members' day since the session started on January 26, resumed nearly an hour behind schedule and dealt with four resolutions and one bill by private members. Ali Newaz Mohammad Khoyam piloted the Subordinate Enactment Control Bill.

Besides, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed tabled the Code of Civil Procedure (amendment) Bill, 2003.

Schoolboy murdered allegedly by peers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A schoolboy was murdered allegedly by his friends in Munshipara-Muktapur village under Charghat thana Tuesday night.

The victim was identified as Sumon, 14, son of Delshad Ali of the same village and a student of Charghat High School.

Police arrested one of Suman's friends Prabhat, 14, while two others -- one also named Suman. 15, and the other Ukil, 14, remained abscondina. Sources said Suman's friends

called him out of his house at around 8:00pm Tuesday to watch VCR together. The next morning local people found his body in a pool of blood in a wheat field in the village. The victim's throat had been slit. Sumon was killed following a

dispute over share of proceeds from the sale of a VCD that he and his riends had swindled out of a local store, said the sources. Father of the deceased filed a

case with Charghat thana.

5 killed, 7 hurt in Kushtia road mishap

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Five people were killed and seven others injured in a road accident on the Kushtia-Jhowdia Highway on Wednesday night.

The dead were identified as Alimur, 25, Hira, 18, Karim Ali, 42, Babu, 25, and Asgar Ali, 45. All the five were labourers and

nailed from village Mohiskhola in Gangni upazila of Meherpur district. Police said the accident occurred at around 11 pm when a bamboo

laden truck skidded off the road and fell into a roadside ditch near Badyanathpur in sadar upazila. The ill fated truck was going to a village at Badyanathpur with about

16 labourers on board. On information, police rushed to the spot, recovered the bodies and sent them to Kushtia hospital for

The injured persons were also admitted to the hospital.

Criminal Hirok & his 2 accomplices surrender to court in Khulna

and two of his accomplices -- Lipu and Rafiqul -- surrendered to the Special Tribunal Court at 10:35 am vesterday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Judge Mirza Mohammod Abdur Rouf sent them to Khulna District Jail at 11 am

Hirok, Lipu and Rafiqul are among six others who have been convicted ten years of RI each in a criminal case recorded with Sonadanga police station on August

The convicts were involved in bomb attack at Banargati bagar on August 22, 1997 in an attempt to kill former deputy mayor of KCC lkhtiaruddin Bablu.

Judgement in the case was pronounced on January 16 this

Two other convicted persons --Farid and Rezaul Karim Sharif -- are still absconding Mushfiqur Rahman Hirok is also

chargesheeted accused in Janakantha journalist Shamsur Rahman murder case.

MCCI

FROM PAGE 1

The MCCI also said the price increase would not help check fuel smuggling, as the petroleum price is still lower in Bangladesh than in

It asked the government to strictly monitor fuel stations so that they cannot cheat consumers on quality and measurement. "The vigilant units, which are due

to be appointed for this purpose, somehow have not convinced consumers because in all likelihood they will be from the ministry and the BPC (Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation)," the MCCI vicepresident said. As the price of kerosene has not

been increased. "it provides incentives for adulteration of other petroleum products". Such adulteration would damage vehicle engines and pollute the environment, he said. The MCCI delegation raised the

problem of low gas pressure hurting It also pointed out that delay in

setting up more CNG filling stations has set back the CNG conversion of

The chamber said the government should make its position clear on gas exports. "In principle, we support that surplus gas should be exported, but the destination of the export being India, there should be a trade-off," the MCCI said.



The newly appointed Kuwaiti ambassador to Dhaka Abdullah Masood Abdullah meets with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

Satkhira police on red alert, 10 nabbed for cop killing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

All police stations and outposts in Satkhira district have been put on high alert following Wednesday's killing of two police constables with manhunt for the killers intensi-

Ten people were arrested from different parts of the district on Wednesday for their alleged involvement in the incident. Eight of the arrested have been

identified as Selim Reza Sabuj former general secretary of Bangladesh Chhatra League's district unit; Mohammad Raihan, a cadre of Islami Chhatra Shibir; Alamgir Hossain, Abdul Hamid, Kazi Shahagir, Zahurul Haq, Raihan Ahmed and Kazi Roushonuzzman.

and examined the effectiveness of a

AK-56 rifle, one pistol and two revolv-

hired an autorickshaw at 6:30am.

Then, he along with Gittu Nasir, Azam,

Chhota Saiful and Baittya Alamqir

proceeded towards the Jamal Khan

residence of Muhuri. Chhota Saiful

remained in the autorickshaw and

Nasir entered the principal's room

while Montu was on guard at the

Azam, Baittya Alamgir and Gittu

Gittu Nasir asked the principal's

The principal appeared at the living

room from inside and sat on a sofa. At

this stage, Gittu Nasir shot twice on

Muhuri's head with his AK-56 rifle,

killing him on the spot, the verdict said.

After delivery of the judgement,

journalists rushed to the Jamal Khan

residence of Muhuri but found none of

the family members except one distant

relative. An on-duty police constable

there said Muhuri's family members

were not at their residence for the last

of arsenic and their impact on

There is a need to identify poten-

tial economic impacts of arsenic on

food chain and quantifying impacts

on agricultural productivity. Waste

disposal concerns dictate the need

for centralising waste treatment

from various units in operation, it

Department of Civil Engineering,

BUET, were also present at the

Dr. Ashraf Ali and M. A. Jalil of the

Arsenic

FROM PAGE 12

human health.

was recommended.

others entered the house.

entrance with a Spanish pistol.

On the day of the killing, Montu

ers and loaded those with bullets.

Muhuri killing

Police produced five of them --Sabuj, Shahagir, Alamgir, Hamid and Zahurul -- before a magistrate's court yesterday. They sought a seven-day remand for Sabui. Shahangir and Alamgir while the court granted a five-day remand. Police sources said none of the

10 arrested people confessed involvement in the killing of police Constables AK Fazlul Haq and Abdul Muttalib were stabbed to

death and and constable Ahad Ali was seriously injured by a gang Itagachha police outpost in Satkhira Sadar thana in the early hours of Wednesday. Ahad Ali's was admitted to the

250-bed Khulna Hospital and his condition was improving, hospital

When contacted over cell phone

the slain principal's son Saikat Muhuri

told this correspondent, "The court has

prits and gave them punishment. The

whether he was happy or not with the

the verdict proved that they were

innocent and wrongly implicated in the

Meanwhile, advocate Monjur

Ahmad Ansari who appeared for Gittu

Nasir said that he would appeal to the

1090 UNIKOM

A total of 1090 UN Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM) person-

nel will be temporarily relocated in

Bangladesh's agreement to UN

proposal for this eventual relocation

came in the wake of a military opera-

confidence in Bangladesh as a secure

place for its international personnel. It

also recognises Bangladesh's role and contribution to the UN peacekeep-

ing and Bangladesh's abiding commit-

ment to the cause of peace.

Foreign ministry sources said

The UN proposal demonstrates its

personnel to

be relocated

in Dhaka

BSS, Dhaka

Dhaka.

tion in Iraq

Saikat, however, refused to say

The acquitted three teachers said

truth has been upheld.

done its job well. It identified the cul-

Inspector General (IG) of Police

Mudabbir Hossain Chowdhury yesterday

murders were pre-planned and that the policemen were not cautious enough while on duty. A havilder, instead of a sub inspector, was in charge of the police outpost, he pointed out. If negligence of duty is proved

proper action would be taken within two or three days, the IG said. He also ordered a probe into why the three constables went out without All the killers would be netted

within a week, he added

Itagachha police outpost He told a press conference at Satkhira Circuit House that the

Saddam Hussain's regime was making an 'active and systematic effort to keep key materials and

"Bangladesh believes that this will

release said yesterday.

resolution no 1441," the release said, adding Dhaka would continue to follow the developments About the US stand on North

Korea, a self-proclaimed nuclear nower. Peters said the US is handling the issue at diplomatic level. The envoy said the US decision to

risk countries did not have any relation with the gas export issue. "It is totally nonsense if anybody thinks US took the decision to force Dhaka to export gas, Peters was quoted to have said. She also said if any Bangladeshi

Hossain, Prothom Alo Editor Motiur Rahman, Independent Editor Mahbubul Alam, Bangladesh Observer Editor Igbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Ittefag Editor Rahat Khan, Manab Jamin Editor Motiur Rahman Chowdhury, Managing Editor of The Daily Star Syed Fahim Munaim, Managing Director of BSS Amanullah Kabir, among others, were present.

Washington

closely followed the statement of Powell along with video presentation and also the debate that succeeded it.

enable the council to arrive at a well considered decision aiming at a resolution of the whole issue under the aegis of the UN," a foreign ministry "Bangladesh strongly urges that

include Bangladesh in the list of terror-

students are being harassed in the US after the tighter immigration rule they may contact her for help. She also reiterated that the names of all the nations would be included in the list by Financial Express Editor Moazzem

Iraq comply with the Security Council

people away from the UN inspectors.

Powell told the UN Iraqi President

Meanwhile, Dhaka said it has



A group of pilgrims who were cheated by a travel agent and could not go to Makkah for the Hajj protest in front of the

World debate

f (Iraqi) non-cooperation continues, this Council must meet its responsibilities," British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said.

Germany, a staunchly pacifist Security Council member, supported French proposals to step up the work of the UN inspectors in Iraq while admitting "concern" yesterday over indications that Iraq still possesses weapons of mass destruction.

Government spokesman Bela Anda added: "Together with the majority of the Security Council, the German government demands that the facts as presented (by Powell) be given to the inspectors and checked on the spot. In London, Prime Minister Tony

Blair yesterday met Blix and Mohammed ElBaradei, the head of the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), who is to accompany Blix to Baghdad tomorrow. The prospect of the new visit by Blix and ElBaradei and their

February 14 report to the Security Council added to a heightened sense of urgency to the debate. The success of this trip will be of paramount importance,

German Foreign Minister Joschka

Fischer said.

"I think we all feel that there is a countdown," Greek Foreign Minister George Papandreou said on behalf of the European Union. 'When that arm will tick to zero, I don't know exactly but obviously these reports will be very impor-

French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin -- who called for more intrusive inspections

DU rejoinder

Dhaka University issued a rejoinder regarding a news item published in The Daily Star under the headline 'DU law dept. chairman removed before expiry on February 4. Allegation of removing

Dr.Mizanur Rahman from the post of

chairman of the law department before the termination of his term is not true, the rejoinder said. It said the decision was taken after consultation with the attorney general who opined that Dr. Mizan's

term had come to an end on March 8 Our reply: The allegation in the news item was of immediate past chairman of the law department and the news also contained the views of the university authorities in this

following Powell's speech said yesterday: "There is an Iraqi risk and we hope Iraq will provide clear replies about the substance (of its alleged weapons), in particular on

chemical and biological weapons." But he said Powell had not provided any hard evidence to back up his claims. "Colin Powell's presentation provided no surprises or concrete proof. The US Secretary of State said himself

beforehand that it wouldn't." For its part, Baghdad immediately denounced Powell's presentation as "a typical American show

complete with ... special effects." Saddam aide General Amr al-Saadi insisted that Blix's UN Monitoring, Inspection and Verification Commission (UNMOVIC) and the IAEA were the "proper channel to process, verify and assess these claims.'

Al-Saadi added that the speech

nad contravened UN Resolution

1441, which demands that countries submit all evidence on possible Iraqi weapons to the UN inspection teams. Iraq's neighbours fear unilateral US military action against Baghdad will instigate a civil war, break up

the country, foster terrorism and

consequently destabilise the oil-

rich region. Saudi Arabia, Washington's main US ally in the region, has launched a new diplomatic offensive in a last-ditch bid to mediate on behalf of Baghdad, proposing to grant amnesty to members of the regime of President Saddam

BSTI seals fuel-flow device at 11 stations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institution (BSTI) sealed 68 fuel-flow adjusting devices in 11 filling stations in Dhaka in four days.

The drive was launched on February 2 upon a decision of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources after allegations of fuel

The BSTI dispatched two teams to the filling stations in Dhaka, who also sealed two units as they ran out

Nine teams will carry out the drive countrywide for the next two months, said a press release yester-

Bangladesh rice modified

FROM PAGE 12

to Bangladesh this year as soon as the country has its bio-regulatory measures," Datta told The Daily Star.

BR29, developed by the

Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) in 1994, is the most productive among 41 high-yielding varieties India, China, Vietnam, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar also cultivated

The BRRI director-general, Nurul Islam Bhuiyan, told The Daily Star that breeders at his institute would test its local adaptability. Bangladesh needs to have

biosafety regulations in place to check biohazards related to genetically engineered crops. BR29 will be brought home once

the National Committee on Biosafety of Bangladesh (NCBB) is formed. Datta, who worked with Prof Potrykus in Zurich, and now leading the IRRI biotech endeavour, said the rice variety developed resistance to

bacteria and two pests. The IRRI also experiments on two other Bangladeshi rice varieties, BR11 and BR28.

Efforts are on to enrich rice with iron and make it resistant to pests and diseases with the help of molecular biology. "We have also introduced a ferric

gene, FRO2, into a rice variety that enhances the uptake of iron by the roots," Datta said. "Our efforts to combine betacarotene with ferritin and lysine would lead to development of nutri-

tious rice with improved micronutrients, protein and vitamins." According to the World Health

Boost

Mashrafe-bin-Murtaza and Tapash Baisya each picked up a wicket and left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafigue put the brakes on the Natal innings with a very economical spell of ten overs in which he conceded only 23 runs.

Bangladesh lost Hannan Sarkar early, but the innings was stabilised by a stand of 65 runs for the second wicket between Al-Shahriar and Habibul Bashar, who contributed a breezy 20. Then came a partnership of 74 between Al Shahriar and 23vear-old Ehsanul which effectively won the game for the Bangladeshis. Tushar Imran was stumped for

18 with the score on 185 and Ehsanul fell with Bangladesh still two runs short of victory, his 92 coming from just 105 balls with eleven 4s. But Kapali (24 not out) and captain Khaled Mashud (nought) made sure there were no more hiccups and guided the team home with almost four overs to spare

(Scoreboard and other stories

Organisation, 230 million children are at the risk of clinical or sub-clinical vitamin A deficiency, a condition

billion people are estimated to be anaemic and 3.7 billion are irondeficient, the vast majority of them In Africa and Asia, the deficiency

According to Unicef, nearly two

results in approximately 20 per cent of all maternal deaths.

Bomb attack

largely preventable.

FROM PAGE 12 were carrying. Two persons have been taken into custody for interrogation but police

didn't disclose their identities for the ake of investigation. Earlier, cadres of PBCP (Rashid group) had threatened to blow up Kismat Khulna police camp and Naihati outpost following withdrawal of

the army from the Operation Clean Kismat Khulna police camp has

been withdrawn after yesterday's attack Over the last seven months, five policemen were killed and eight others njured in armed attacks by suspected

PBCP militants in the southwestern SI Altaf Hossain, constable Bipul Sarker and SI Elias were killed in Fakirhat, near the Jessore border and in Jhenidah at different times last year while constables Fazlul Huq and Abdul Motaleb were brutally stabbed to

No-man's land

told The Times of India that the BDR

death in Satkhira just a few days ago.

BSF Inspector General KC Sharma

Sharma told Times.

took back the stranded people at around 2:00am "We wanted the BDR to accept them in the presence of the media but just to save their face the BDR took

Sector Commander Colonel Enayet Lt. Col. Ashfaqul Islam, commanding officer of 19 battalion BDR, said the BSF took back the stranded

"It's impossible," retorted BDR

them back in the middle of the night,

. Wazed, a teen-aged villager, said he saw the people being shifted to somewhere in Satgachhia village in India by trucks. Villagers are also on vigil to thwart any more push-ins.

The simmering border confronta-

tion follows a statement by Advani

last month that some 20 million

people at around 3:30am.

"illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and Pakistan" would be deported. Within weeks, India started pushng Bangla-speaking Muslims into

Bangladesh. Dhaka responded by pushing them back.

Jatiya Press Club yesterday. They want the prime minister's intervention.