

TIB to publish a dozen reports on corruption

UNB, Dhaka

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) will publish more than a dozen diagnostic reports on widespread corruption in various vital service-delivering organisations between June and December this year, apparently in their effort to get the ills healed before the next polls.

The plan was disclosed yesterday by TIB executive director Dr Iftekharuzzaman in an exchange-of-views meeting between TIB and newly formed Reporters Against Corruption (RAC) at TIB office in Gulshan.

"As part of the research activities of TIB, between June and December we will publish more than a dozen diagnostic reports on corruption in vital service-delivering organisations," he said, adding, "The reports are on the way of completion."

At the meeting, both TIB and RAC decided to work together to

make the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) effective. It was also decided that TIB and RAC would work in partnership to combat the rampant corruption across the country.

The duo is likely to jointly organise roundtables involving different stakeholders to tackle the all-upsetting problem of corruption.

Iftekharuzzaman observed ACC might be a case of missed opportunity, as the government does not want to see the Commission effective. In this regard, he mentioned that the Commission was not given the control of its finance and appointing its own people.

On internal bickering among the ACC high-ups, he said, "Due to their internal feud, ACC is unable to exercise the limited power it already has."

Iftekharuzzaman said concerted efforts of all are needed to tackle widespread corruption in the country, but the government has to take the lead. "To eradicate corrup-

tion good political intentions are required, and there should be a commitment from the highest level."

Describing the objectives of TIB, the executive director said the main aim of watchdog is to create a demand among the people for fighting corruption in the country.

Warmly welcoming the RAC members, he said the role of media is very important in fighting the rampant corruption across the country.

On Bangladesh being billed most corrupt country in the world for a fifth successive year, Iftekharuzzaman said there is a misconception about it. "It is not said that Bangladesh is the most corrupt country in the world. Actually in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) Bangladesh topped, as the intensity of corruption is deep in here."

Selima Raman undergoes surgery in Bangkok

BDNEWS, Dhaka

State Minister for Cultural Affairs Selima Raman underwent surgery on the right knee at Bamrungrad Hospital of Bangkok on Tuesday.

Architect Nujhat Jerin, daughter of the state minister, said the operation starting at 9:00pm (BDT) took four hours and a half. She is now at the post-operative care unit of the hospital.

Family sources said she is gradually improving.

The state minister was injured in an accident while returning to Dhaka from Bhaluka, Mymensingh.

DU exams deferred

All the examinations of Dhaka University (DU) scheduled for today have been postponed due to unavoidable reasons, says a DU press release yesterday.

Schedules of other examinations will remain unchanged.

Fresh date for the deferred examinations will be announced later.

4 killed, trader shot in Kushtia, Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Four people including a college girl were killed while a trader was shot by miscreants in separate incidents in Kushtia and Jhenidah on Tuesday night.

In Kushtia, unidentified criminals abducted a youth named Shariful Islam, 17, son of Abu Taleb of Durgapur village under Mirpur upazila on Saturday over a previous feud.

The gang slaughtered him early Tuesday and phoned his family to recover the body from an under construction house at the village.

Police recovered the body at noon.

A college girl died mysteriously at Kortpara area in the town.

She was identified as Ismat Ara, 20, wife of Sayedur Rahman of Parbartipur village under Hanakundupur upazila in Jhenidah.

On information, police recovered the body from the outside of a private hospital SEBA at about 10:00pm.

She was a student of class XI at Kushtia Girls' College.

Police at Islamic University recovered the slaughtered body of an unknown person from Sonaidanga area on Kushtia-Jhenidah highway at about 12:00pm.

They suspect that criminals allegedly belonging to outlawed party carried out the killing of the youth aged about 24 years.

In another incident, criminals shot vegetable trader Khedu Mondol, 34, at Cheuria on the outskirts of the town.

Police said a gang of about 10 swooped on Khedu when he was buying cigarette at a shop near his home at about 10:00pm.

Five bullets pierced his body.

He is under treatment at Kushtia General Hospital.

Separate cases were filed with concerned police stations.

Stay in Jhenidah, cousins beat their brother to death after a feud over ancestral properties at village Chadpara under Kaliganj upazila in the district.

The dead was identified as Mofazzel Hossain, 45.

According to police, Mofazzel entered into an altercation with his cousin Shamsul over the distribution of their ancestral properties.

At one stage, Shamsul and his brothers attacked Mofazzel with lethal weapons causing his death instantly.

The killers are absconding.

A case was filed with Kaliganj Police Station in this regard.



Farmgate area during 14-party sit-in yesterday.

'Domestic violence claims lives of 3,043 women last year'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 3,043 women died in different incidents of domestic violence last year and of them, 1041 victims committed suicide, according to a report released by the Mass-line Media Centre (MMC) recently.

Repression and sexual harassment led most women to take their own lives while rape and abduction were identified as most common violations of child rights in 2005.

The women fell victim to repression and violence mainly because of dowry, conflicts in conjugal life and poverty, said the report.

The Mass-line Media Centre, supported by donor consortium Manusher Jonno, prepared the report titled 'State of women and children, 2005' on the basis of reports published in 12 national dailies and 198 regional dailies last year.

Among the six divisions, Rajshahi tops the list of suicide with 425 victims, followed by Khulna with 285 victims while 229 women committed

suicide in Dhaka, 106 in Chittagong, 24 in Sylhet and 81 in Barisal, the report said.

Most of the victims took their own lives either by taking poison or chemicals, or hanging themselves.

During the one year period from January to December, a total of 54,954 women fell victim to different forms of rights violations.

The report said 875 women were raped during the period and 165 were killed after rape. And 275 rape incidents, the highest at divisional level, took place in Rajshahi.

Some 1235 women fell victim to repression over dowry. Of them, 505 victims were killed and 428 others injured. Rajshahi division witnessed the most such incidents.

The forms of repression include beating, stabbing, acid attack, burning and forced starvation, the report said.

A total of four women were killed and 189 others injured in acid attacks during the period, but only 66 cases were filed and 50 arrested in this connection.

Besides, at least 195 women were abducted while 329 others fell victim to trafficking. The women were trafficked with a lure of job or marriage, the report said.

On violence against children, the report said 4,125 children were killed and 2,891 injured during the period.

Some 1427 children also fell victim to rape and sexual harassment and 95 children were killed after rape. Ages of one-fourth of such victims range between one and ten.

Besides, 775 children were abducted while 435 were trafficked and 204 went missing.

The highest number of 264 trafficking incidents took place in Khulna, the report said.

Despite a number of awareness programme conducted at government and non-government level, 112 incidents of early marriages were recorded during the period.

The number of child rights violations was the highest in Rajshahi with 433 incidents while 339 such incidents took place in Dhaka, 229 in Khulna, 227 in Chittagong, 139 in Barisal and 60 in Sylhet.

Discrimination between girls and boys still prevails in society, the report said, adding that 14 girl children were killed after birth.

FACTIONAL CLASH Sylhet JCD activist succumbs to injuries

UNB, Sylhet

A Jatiyatbadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activist, who was critically injured in a factional clash Monday, died at Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital early today.

Witnesses said a group of some 18 to 20 JCD activists, student of wing of ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), attacked their rival faction at Jindabazar area in the city on Monday morning leaving Redwan Ahmed, 15, a class X student and SSC examinee Sani, 16, and Jaber, 16, and Abdur Rashid, 17, critically injured.

The armed cadres stabbed Redwan, Sani and Jaber and Rashid mercilessly. They were later rushed to the Osmani Medical College Hospital where Redwan, son of late Mufti Foizur Rahman, succumbed to his injuries at 2:00am today.

A case was filed with the police.



Dr Yuree awarded Universal Grand Master of 2006

Grand Master Dr Yuree was awarded Universal Grand Master of the Year 2006, in the top category, which is a special honour for the grand masters of martial arts in the world, says a press release.

Dr Yuree, president of World Butthan Martial Art Federation, USA, is the first Bangladeshi and first in South Asia to receive the world's most prestigious award.

His outstanding research paper on Ancient Indian Unarmed Combat Method and Self-Defense Art and Skill as envisaged in science-based Butthan Martial Art, invented by him, was the prime consideration for the award.

Dr Yuree is also the editor of The News Brigade, the only defense and security journal in the country and the president, Bangladesh Defense Journalists Forum.

20th BCS Forum's reunion on May 5

The first reunion of 20th BCS Forum will be held at Ramna Chinese Restaurant in the city at 10:00am on May 5, says a press release.

All concerned are requested to contact cell phone numbers 0189827848 (Didar, Economic); 01199020471 (Safiul, Audit); 0152000477 (Mizan, T&T); 0152321631 (Masud, Taxation); 01711692965 (Anam, Railway); 01712013304 (Nahar, Police); 0171731851 (Iqbal, Information); 01713002250 (Mustafiz, Family Planning); 0189423267 (Khastagir, Foreign Affairs) and 01711391418 (Kamrul, Admin) for further information.



PHOTO: PID
Newly appointed Palestinian Ambassador Shaher Mohammad makes a courtesy call on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office in the city yesterday.

Concern over RU authorities' interference in dept exams

RU CORRESPONDENT

Academic committee of the management department at Rajshahi University yesterday expressed deep concern over the university authorities' interference in the department examination in favour of a Jatiyatbadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader.

The authorities gave special permission allowing RU JCD Joint Convener Masudur Rahman Rana, a second semester student of the department, to sit for the exam on a sick bed at the university medical centre on April 16 although he had no illness.

In an emergency meeting, the academic committee decided that they will not set any scheduled examination in future if the university authorities interfere in it and that the department will not mark Rana's answer script of April 16 examination.

A department teacher said Proctor Prof Enamul Haque personally collected question paper and other materials from the department for Rana one and a half hours after the exam began on April 16.

Prof Enamul also informed the chairman of the department examination committee that the VC had given special permission to Rana to take the exam at the sick bed.

China education exhibition begins tomorrow

Bss, Dhaka

The second China Education Exhibition jointly organised by the China Scholarship Council and North South University (NSU) will be held at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre on April 21 and 22.

Professor Dr M Asaduzzaman, Chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC), will inaugurate the exhibition at 10:30am tomorrow as chief guest, said a press release.

Chai Xi, Ambassador of China to Bangladesh, and NSU Vice Chancellor Dr Hafiz GA Siddiqi will attend the inauguration ceremony.

A total of 25 universities will participate in the exhibition.

'Allocate space at JU arts bldg as per master plan'

JU CORRESPONDENT

Teachers of English and Philosophy departments of Jahangirnagar University (JU) yesterday met the dean of arts faculty demanding implementation of master plan in allocating space at the newly constructed arts faculty building to resolve the crisis for classrooms and teachers' rooms.

The teachers made the demand in the wake of the university authorities' decision of shifting two more departments in the new building defying its master plan.

The departments of English and Philosophy were shifted to ground floor of the new building from old arts faculty building in 2001 with the promise to provide them with more rooms on completion of the first floor.

According to master plan, the ground floor can accommodate only one department along with a dean complex, conference and seminar rooms and teachers' lounge.

A total of 15 batches of students of English and Philosophy departments are attending classes in seven rooms and altercation between the students of different batches often takes place over the occupation of rooms during class-hour.

The English department has 12 rooms for teachers against a

demand of 17 while Philosophy has 10 rooms against 16.

Though teachers and general students of the arts faculty requested the university authorities several times for resolving the room crisis, no action was taken in this regard.

As the construction work of the first floor of the new building took more than four years to complete, room crisis became acute in other five departments located at old building, forcing university authorities to think of shifting two more departments in the new building.

In old arts faculty building, five departments including History, Bangla and Drama & Dramatics are carrying out academic activities in eleven classrooms.

Of them, only five are usable as the rest are too small to accommodate all the students of a batch.

Each department has at least seven batches of students and two to three teachers are sharing the same room.

"We need to hold a discussion between the teachers of all the departments in the faculty and authorities concerned as it is a long standing crisis," said Prof Md Nasir Uddin, dean of arts faculty.

With Sri Lanka talks off, what hope peace?

REUTERS, Colombo

With Sri Lanka's rebels pulling out of talks with the government, the peace process may falter, leading to more violence and a danger the island could revert to a ruinous two-decade civil war, analysts and diplomats said.

The Tigers said on Saturday they would not go to talks -- postponed once already -- that were scheduled in Geneva for April 24-25, due to problems with a requested safe-conduct transport of rebel commanders.

If making transport arrangements for a Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) huddle ahead of the Geneva meeting was this hard, then the talks themselves could hardly be expected to be productive, diplomats said.

But they would at least be talking.

At least 65 people have died

over the past 10 days in the worst violence since a 2002 truce, with neither the government nor the Tigers showing enough flexibility for the talks to take place in Geneva as planned, one diplomat said.

"There are various things that could be done that would not be very difficult that would allow the talks to take place," the diplomat said. "But neither side is willing to allow them."

Without the talks as a safety valve, ambushes against Sri Lanka's military and ethnic riots in the island's northeast are expected to escalate further.

Some experts fear that could even include attacks within the capital Colombo, which would wreck investor confidence in the \$20 billion (11 billion pound) economy.

RETURN TO CIVIL WAR?

Opinions are divided over whether more violence would

inevitably lead to a resumption of the island's civil war, which has killed more than 64,000 people on both sides.

"The bottom line is this -- for how long can the military remain restrained?" said James Defence Weekly analyst Iqbal Athas. "That we are just around the corner from a major confrontation is not in doubt."

The government has repeatedly said it will not start the war with any offensive of its own. Some diplomats believe neither side could win a war and so neither side will start one.

But with both sides saying they could win if war was forced upon them, others fear that escalation could rapidly turn into a full-on conflict in the north and east that could devastate communities also hit by the 2004 tsunami.

The rebels are estimated to have some 10,000-20,000 fight-

ers, attack boats and several light aircraft, as well as troops of suicide bombers -- much smaller than the military, but seen as a formidable adversary.

The Tigers, who want a separate homeland for ethnic Tamils, deny responsibility for the recent series of ambushes, but few analysts or diplomats believe them.

It is the second time such attacks have pushed the island to the brink of war this year -- the last was before the first round of talks was agreed. Some see them as a form of bloody brinkmanship and expect the meeting to eventually happen.

The rebels demand the government rein in and disarm a renegade group of ex-rebels led by former Tiger eastern commander Karuna Amman, who the LTTE say are now operating as army-backed paramilitaries and attacking the mainstream rebels.

OR PLAYING TOUGH?

The government agreed at the first round of talks in Geneva to stop armed groups using its territory, but now says it cannot find any to disarm -- a line that has upset the Tigers.

"I just see this as the LTTE playing tough," said analyst Rohan Edrisinha at the Centre for Policy Alternatives.

"The immediate goal of the LTTE is to see that the government does something to rein in or restrain Karuna's forces and they are going to use the threat of postponing the talks."

But for now, the talks remain off. The rebels say they will not go until they can meet with their eastern commanders, and the government is preventing them from being transported to the Tiger headquarters.

A convoy escorted by the unarmed Nordic-staffed Sri Lanka

Monitoring Mission (SLMM) was due to move the rebels by land and sea on Saturday, but the rebels cancelled at the last minute saying naval patrol boats were watching too closely.

Diplomats say the government could take the initiative from the rebels by agreeing to take the eastern commanders by helicopter.

But the suspected Tiger ambushes are seen as strengthening the hand of President Mahinda Rajapakse's hardline Buddhist and Marxist allies, who oppose any concessions to the rebels.

Rajapakse owes his election to a Tiger boycott that kept away Tamil voters seen as likely supporters of his more conciliatory opponent. At the time, some analysts took that as a sign the rebels might have judged they were gaining too little from peace.