

SEXUAL ABUSE AT WORKPLACE Victims don't file complaints

Fear of losing jobs, stigma keep women from seeking redress, say speakers at discussion organised by Prothom Alo with help of MJF, SIDA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women facing sexual harassment at work often do not lodge complaints due to fear of losing jobs and being stigmatised, speakers told a roundtable.

Many employers also try to keep the allegations of sexual harassments to themselves to save the companies' image, they said.

Addressing the discussion at the Prothom Alo office in the capital, the experts said fewer women would join the workforce if the offenders were not punished.

They also called for speedy trial of the cases of sexual abuse.

The Bangla daily organised the discussion with help from Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

The nature of sexual harassment and its extent at the workplaces are changing with the increasing use of technology, the speakers said.

Mujibul Haque, chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour and Employment Ministry, said the trial of the sexual harassment cases should be held quickly.

MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam said women who protest sexual harassment should not be in fear of losing their jobs.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



With no safety gears, a worker dangles from a makeshift rope ladder while painting a footbridge in Darussalam area of the capital's Mirpur. He runs the risk of falling to the busy street below and getting hit by vehicles. The photo was taken a couple of days ago.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

'Robber' killed in 'gunfight' with cops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A suspected robber was killed in a "gunfight" while in police custody in Senbagh upazila of Noakhali early yesterday.

The dead is Anwar Hossain Yousuf, 44, of Purba Lautoli village in Begunganj upazila of the same district.

He was the ringleader of a notorious robbery gang and had at least 12 cases filed against him, seven of which were related to robbery, police said.

Mizanur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Senbagh Police Station said Anwar was arrested in Jamidarhat area of Begunganj around 9:30am on Monday.

On information, a police team, along with Anwar, conducted raid in Bircoat area to prevent a robbery. As soon as the law enforcers reached there, Anwar's cohorts opened fire, forcing them to retaliate, he claimed.

At one point of the "gunfight", Anwar sustained bullet injuries. He was then rushed to Naokhali General Hospital.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

DU expels 67 for various offences

They were involved in exam fraud, drug abuse, possession of illegal arms

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University last night expelled 67 students over their involvement in admission test forgery, drug abuse and possession of illegal arms, said a DU press release.

The students had earlier been asked to show cause within seven days as to why they should not be expelled. Since the explanations provided by them did not satisfy the authorities, they expelled the students following recommendations of the university disciplinary board, the press release said.

Of the students, 63 were allegedly involved in question leak and digital forgery, while the rest possessed illegal arms and abused drug. Police last year had pressed charges against the 63 in a case filed over forgery in admission tests.

The DU syndicate also suspended nine other students for their involvement in digital forgery and admission through illegal means, and 13 students on charges of mugging on the campus. These

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2

Ensure accountability of public employees

Experts urge govt about execution of SC directives on saving rivers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government needs to ensure accountability of its officials and hold them responsible if they fail to execute the directives of apex court on saving rivers, speakers said at a seminar.

Though the prime minister herself is willing to save the country's rivers and had several times instructed the administration to evict all river grabbers and stop river pollution, the administration has still failed to execute it in the last 10 years as many of the field officers have connections with the offenders, speakers said in a seminar on the River Commission Report-2018.

The seminar, on how to overcome the challenges to implement recommendations, was organised by the National River Conservation Commission (NRCC) yesterday in its auditorium.

Experts, environmental activists, academicians and civil society members were present in the seminar and exchanged their views on the matter.

Dr Mujibur Rahman Howlader, chairman of the River commission, said that in the last published annual report, the NRCC had enlisted total 49,162 river grabbers in 64 districts.

All the government agencies that were given the responsibility to save the rivers from pollution and encroachments did not do their jobs properly.

Lately, they have started evicting encroachers, but only those who are poor.

"Some of the river grabbers are so influential that even the district administrations hesitate to evict them. But in many cases, grabbers and polluters make an underhand dealing with the local administration," said Mujibur.

The government is also implementing some of the development projects on river lands without assessing the impact on the rivers, the chairman said.

"What they are doing will be a disaster after a few years," the chairman said and asked all to stand beside the NRCC to save the country's rivers.

He said the commission currently does not have any executive power. It can just send recommendations to different government agencies to take action against grabbers and polluters.

Advocate Sultana Kamal, president of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa) said, the prime minister herself is very willing to save the rivers, but the administration could not build the institutional capacity needed to execute her directions in the field level.

Though the same party is leading the government, headed by the same prime minister for last 10 years, her directions on saving rivers are

SEE PAGE 8 COL 5

Glass frogs reappear in Bolivia after 18 yrs



AFP, La Paz

A rare species of frog native to the eastern slopes of the Bolivian Andes has been spotted in the South American country for the first time in 18 years, the investigation team that made the discovery told AFP.

The Bolivian Cochran frog is notable for its transparent belly, leading to its nickname, the "glass frog".

"The rediscovery of this species fills us with a ray of hope for the future of the glass frogs -- one of the most charismatic amphibians in the world -- but also for other species," said investigation team members Rodrigo Aguayo and Oliver Quinteros, from the Natural History Museum "Alcide d'Orbigny", and Rene Carpio of the San Simon University in Cochabamba.

The team came across the frogs on January 8 during a mission to rescue reptiles and amphibians

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2

GAZIPUR RAPE All 4 culprits drug addicts, dropouts

Say cops, locals

STAR REPORT

All of them were school dropouts with an unflinching addiction to drugs.

They used to squander most of their time on tawling in tea stalls, teasing girls, and doing drugs -- even in broad daylight.

Although exasperated by their recklessness, locals barely went that far to confront them fearing harassment.

Their parents attempted several times to keep a tight rein on them, but in vain.

Unruliness of the four youths came to light after they allegedly raped a 15-year-old girl in Gazipur's Sreepur upazila on January 15.

What was even more shocking that they filmed the incident and shared it on social media. They also

SEE PAGE 8 COL 5

INSIDER ATTACK Taliban kill 11 Afghan policemen

ALJAZEERA ONLINE

At least 11 Afghan police officers have been killed after Taliban fighters stormed a police base in Pul-e Khumri, the capital of Baghlan province, local government officials told the Associated Press yesterday.

The fighters first overran a checkpoint near the base late on Monday and were apparently able to breach the compound with ease because a sympathetic policeman opened a door for them.

Details were provided by Mahbobullah Ghafari, a Baghlan provincial

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3



PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 29

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:35 12:45 4:15 5:46 7:15
JAMAAT 6:10 1:15 4:30 5:50 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Sticks in their hands, some locals make two bulls lock horns during an annual bullfighting contest in Sylhet's Sahartari area yesterday. Animal rights activists want such competitions to be banned because of cruelty towards animals.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Trump unveils ME peace plan

Israel hails 'historic day', Palestinians reject deal

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump unveiled the long-delayed US-Israeli plan yesterday amid repeated rejections by Palestinians.

"Today, Israel has taken a giant step toward peace," Trump said as he announced the plan at the White House with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at his side, saying he also sent a letter about it to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

"My vision presents a win-win solution for both sides," he said, adding that Israeli leaders have said they will endorse the proposal, which is referred to as the Middle East peace plan.

Before the proposal was announced, Palestinians called it dead on arrival, saying it was an attempt to "finish off" the Palestinian cause.

Abbas was expected to make a statement.

Trump's initiative, whose principal author is his son-in-law Jared Kushner, follows a long line of efforts to resolve one of the world's most intractable issues. Israeli-Palestinian peace talks collapsed in 2014.

Palestinians have refused to engage the Trump administration and denounced its first stage - a \$50bn

SEE PAGE 8 COL 5