

Prepare list of language heroes: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to prepare a complete list of language heroes and martyrs and submit it before this court in the next six months.

In response to a writ petition, the court asked authorities concerned to form a committee, led by the cultural affairs secretary in a month, to prepare the list.

The other members of the committee must be those involved in the Language Movement or its research.

The government was also asked to submit a plan of the committee and its progress in this regard, within two months.

The HC also issued a rule asking the authorities to explain why they should not be directed to provide state honours and honorarium to language heroes and language martyrs, and to protect and preserve memories of the Language Movement.

The HC bench of Justice FRM Nazmul Ahasan and Justice KM Kamrul Kader came up with the order and rule following a writ

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PHOTO OF THE DAY

PRABIR DAS



Women become victims of violence, sexual harassment, rape and injustice every day, and their attempts to bring light to these crimes are constantly silenced. One woman holds a poster depicting this act of oppression at Bangladesh Centre for Workers' Solidarity's human chain marking International Women's Day. The photo was taken yesterday at Jatiya Press Club.

PARKING SPACE IN DHAKA

8 crore sqft needed just for cars: study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The key to resolving Dhaka's traffic chaos lies in bringing down the number of cars on the streets, said speakers at a discussion yesterday, citing a study that says the number of cars in Dhaka city would require a staggering 8 crore square feet of parking space.

They also urged the government to take necessary steps to reduce dependency on private cars and taking measures to encourage walking, cycling, using non-motorised vehicles and public transport.

The programme was jointly organised by Institute of Wellbeing Bangladesh and Work for a Better Bangladesh Trust, to unveil a publication titled "Parking, realistic planning and management."

According to July 2019 statistics of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), a total of 3,30,968 private cars were registered for Dhaka city. For these cars, 8 crore square feet parking space is required, said city planning expert Muntasir Mamun while presenting the keynote.

With this land, it is possible to develop employment opportunities for 26 lakh people, or habitation facilities for 53 lakh people, or playground or other mass transit facilities for 5 crore people, he added.

Muntasir said on an average, 62 percent space of Mirpur Road, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue and Satmasjid Road are being occupied by private cars, where it carries passengers on only 23 percent.

Suggesting amendment to the existing building construction rules, Muntasir said there is a provision in the building construction rules-2008 where keeping parking area is mandatory. It is indirectly encouraging people to buy cars, he observed.

Muntasir also said the Strategic Transport Plan 2005 recommended a "pedestrian first" policy, but costly projects like flyovers have been taken, ignoring walkways.

Only five percent people of Dhaka city have private cars, but all planning of the government is being taken to facilitate this small fraction, he added.

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'Play is the work of children'

Lego, the world's largest toy brand with annual sales of more than \$2 billion, was established by the Kirk Christiansen family in Billund, Denmark in 1932. It did not stop at selling toys, as the company continued to grow. In the 1980s, the family established Lego Foundation and donated 25 percent share to charity, which initiated efforts to make learning playful for children and help them become creative, engaged and lifelong learners. It now works in many countries, including Bangladesh. Lego Foundation CEO John Goodwin, who recently visited Bangladesh, shared its insights with Porimol Palma of Star.

TDS: What was the vision behind Lego Foundation?

Goodwin: It's not uncommon in Danish family structures to create foundations. The Danish people are very committed to community and society. As a consequence of that, the owners of companies often establish foundations meant to distribute their wealth back to the society. That was the big driver of the Christiansen family.

TDS: Why did Lego Group start a foundation for children?

Goodwin: Over the years, Lego Foundation conducted a lot of researches through many famous institutions like Harvard, MIT and Cambridge to understand the characteristics of play; what are the things that need to be present for children to learn and develop, and what are the skills that develop through the process of play and the links between play and neurological development of brain.

The research findings gave us a robust understanding that particularly during the years from 0-5, it is essential that children



It is very important that we start play as an effective way of learning during 3-5 years. You have to put the children at the centre of the learning journey and that's what learning through play does. Play is the work of children. It's the way through which the brain is stimulated and makes sense of the world around them.

get key stimulation that enables their brain to develop in the most effective way. That then leads to the skills in the future that's of such demand today -- creativity, collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving -- all of these skills lay the foundations in the

very early stage when their brain development formation is taking place.

Eventually, we've developed programme, research and advocacy in order to try and change society's minds around the importance of play and the role they have in our lives as human. Play needs to be placed very consciously in the lives of children to enable them to develop in the most effective way.

TDS: How does Lego Foundation operate?

Goodwin: We run a number of initiatives around the world that help us understand the research, the evidence we need. We test and understand how to adapt most effectively the plays in different environment and cultures and then advocate for change. For example, we have been working in South Africa for a number of years. We trained 150,000 teachers in the pedagogical approach of how to incorporate learning through play into the classroom. We run classroom training online for

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Govt to look into state counsels' unawareness

Says law minister on GK Shamim's bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said the government will examine the issues regarding the state counsels' (deputy attorney generals) "unawareness" about the High Court granting bail to GK Shamim, a notorious former contractor, in two criminal cases.

"The incident of state counsels' unawareness about the High Court granting bail to GK Shamim is unfortunate. As per relevant law, the court must hear both the state and defence counsels while granting bail to an accused in such a case. Deputy Attorney General FR Khan has said he did not know about the court's granting order to Shamim. It will be examined," he said.

The law minister was talking to reporters after attending a workshop on "ease of doing business initiatives" as chief guest, organised by Bangladesh Investment Development Authority at a city hotel.

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'Implement HC directives'

Demand speakers to ensure women rights

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

High Court directives to ensure women's rights must be implemented properly, demanded rights activists at a discussion yesterday.

While speaking at a views-exchange meeting on "HC directives to stop all forms of discrimination against women", they urged authorities concerned to take steps to stop "unnecessary" c-section, two-finger test of rape victims, amend a discriminatory section from "Kabinnama" and set up baby care corners at public places.

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) organised the event, at Bishwo Shahitto Kendro, marking International Women's Day.

Advocate Ishrat Hasan said the government should ensure adequate facilities for women so that they can work side by side with their male counterparts without any obstacle.

Ishrat had filed the petition that led to HC ruling on taking necessary steps to set up breastfeeding and baby care corners at all public places.

Advocate Sharmin Aktar, who had appeared for the petition to ban the two-finger test, urged all to stand up against discrimination towards women.

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B'BARIA TRAIN ACCIDENT

Families of 10 victims get financial support

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Railways Ministry yesterday provided financial assistance to the victim family members of a train accident in Brahmanbaria in November last year.

Minister Nurul Islam Sujon handed over Tk 1 lakh each to 10 families out of 17 affected ones at Dhaka's Rail Bhaban.

Assistance to the rest of the families will be given through the district administrations as some of them could not attend the programme while some could not yet decide on successors, the minister said.

On November 12, at least 17 people were killed and nearly 80 injured as an intercity train crashed into another at Kasba.

Although the Railways Act-1890 stipulates Tk 10,000 as compensation for death of a passenger in a train accident, the ministry provided the assistance as per its executive order.

Replying to a question in this regard, Miah Jahan, additional director general of BR, said after a major train accident in Tongi in 1989, the then president, through an executive order, sanctioned Tk 1 lakh for each of the deceased family members.

"Following the same executive order, we have been providing Tk 1 lakh to victim families after any major accident as financial assistance. In such cases, we provide assistance following the minister's directives," Jahan said.

The BR official said process to amend the act is ongoing and around five years ago, they had proposed to increase the compensation to Tk 3.5 lakh for each deceased in train accident.

Md Shamsuzzaman, director general of BR, was also present at the event.

'Finish registration for hajj on time'

State minister tells prospective hajis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saying there is no reason to panic over the coronavirus outbreak, State Minister for Religious Affairs Sheikh Md Abdullah yesterday urged prospective hajis from the country to complete their registration on time.

Otherwise, hajj aspirants might face problems in performing hajj this year, he said while talking to journalists at his office at the Secretariat about the registration process and management of hajj pilgrims in Bangladesh in the wake of coronavirus outbreak.

The state minister also said prospective hajj pilgrims' deposited money will be refunded if they fail to go to Saudi Arabia to perform hajj due to coronavirus.

He said hajj aspirants will be able to perform hajj next year without any additional cost, if anyone cannot go to Saudi Arabia this year due to the outbreak.

M Shahadat Hossain Taslim, president of the Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (HAAB), also said the entire deposit will be refunded if any intended hajis fail to perform hajj under private hajj management.

Hajj flights will start from June 23 from Bangladesh.

The holy pilgrimage is likely to be held on July 31, subject to sighting of the moon.

Confusion arose over holding of hajj this year due to outbreak of coronavirus in over 90 countries, including Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh. The Saudi government recently halted performing of umrah hajj. Visits to Mecca and Madina were also prohibited last week.

Referring to the fact that the number of hajj registrants is lower this year due to the coronavirus panic, the minister said so far only 485 hajj aspirants have registered to perform hajj under government management.

A total of 17,198 persons is scheduled to perform hajj this year under the government management, while 1,30,000 under private management.

The deadline for completing hajj registration under the government hajj management is March 15.

5-year-old raped in Jatrabari

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A five-year-old girl was raped by a youth in Jatrabari on Saturday evening.

The girl was taken to one-stop crisis centre at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday afternoon for treatment and forensic tests, police said.

Her mother said she was playing near their house in Kutubkhali area on Saturday afternoon, and remained traceless till evening.

"Worried, we searched for her, then became relieved as she returned home around 8pm. She did not say anything when we asked about her whereabouts," she added.

But around 11pm, she complained of pain in her body and the family came to know about the incident, the mother told reporters at DMCH.

Akhter Hossain, sub-inspector of Jatrabari Police Station, said, "The child was too young to give any information about the rapist. We are trying to identify and arrest him."



Three youths sit on a bench underneath a ramshackle metal frame while people walk by what once used to be a bus stop. Supposed to protect commuters from heat and rain, this shed in Mohammadpur Bus Station has become risky instead, with no initiative to cordon off the area or signs to alert commuters of the danger. As to why the authorities concerned did not dismantle it -- there's a notice on the frame that apparently says the High Court has issued a stay order against its removal, *inset*. The photos were taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

