

Declare salish for settling rape cases a criminal offence

ASK seeks in writ petition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A leading rights organisation yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court, praying to it to declare salish (arbitrations) in settling incidents of rape as a criminal offence.

Lawyer Shahinuzzaman Shahin submitted the petition on behalf of Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), also requesting to the HC to issue necessary directives to ensure finishing trial proceedings of rape cases in 180 days in line with the relevant provisions of the Women and Children Repression (Prevention) Act, 2000.

In the petition, the organisation urged the HC to inquire how many rape cases were filed with the police stations across the country and how many rape cases were sent to the courts for their trial in last 10 years.

ASK in the petition also prayed to the HC issue a directive on the authorities concerned to implement the provision of holding closed-door trial of the rape cases.

Petitioner's lawyer Yeadia Zaman told The Daily Star that the HC is yet to set any date for holding hearing on the writ petition.



This walkway on the bank of Buriganga River at Munshikhola of Dhaka's Shampur remains in ruins. The structure couldn't bear the load of parked trucks and eventually fell apart, and authorities haven't taken any steps to fix it yet. The photo was taken earlier this week.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Article 70 crippled parliamentary govt system: GM Quader

STAR REPORT

Article 70 of the constitution has crippled the parliamentary government system, said Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader yesterday.

"MPs cannot vote against their party's decision due to Article 70 and this is why a dictatorship or autocracy has been established in parliament," he said while speaking at a joint meeting of Jatiya Sramik Party at the Jatiya Party chairman's Banani office in Dhaka, reports UNB.

According to Article 70, a person elected as a member of parliament (MP) in a national election in which he or she was nominated as a candidate by a political party shall vacate his/her seat if s/he a) resigns from that party or b) votes in parliament against that party.

Quader, also the deputy opposition leader in parliament, said parliamentary democracy had been introduced in the country as per outlines of the three alliances in 1991 as his brother HM Ershad quit power. "But in the name of establishing parliamentary democracy, an institutional dictatorship was established in the country by changing the presidential form of government system," he said.

As per the system, head of the party that gets majority votes in the election becomes head of the government and whatever s/he says will happen. Because, any MP speaking against the party will lose the post, he observed.

GM Quader said Jatiya Party is now the most promising political force in Bangladesh as people have become fed up with BNP and Awami League.

"It's right that Awami League has carried out various development activities by staying in power for a long time. But they also hurt people with their acts. People of the country don't remember the development, but they remember the sufferings for a long time..." he observed.

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BOOKS BRIEFING

Reopening holds prospects and pitfalls for bookstores

SHABABA IQBAL

As Covid-19 infections continue across the country, several bookstores in the capital are creatively rebooting.

In addition to selling books online, Bookworm Bangladesh, located at Old Airport Road, reopened their physical store with limited hours and stringent safety protocols involving face masks, sanitisers and disinfectant sprays. In an effort to engage with their audience, they are also planning to host virtual programmes called 'Bookworm Sessions', Ariz Hoque, Social Media Coordinator, tells The Daily Star.

However, the struggles of the past few months are yet to end. Due to travel restrictions and unavailability of stocks, the store is facing delays in incoming consignments. "We are noticing a drop in reprints from large publishing houses," Ariz said.

"All couriers from abroad were stalled until very recently," Minhaz Muhammad, a bookseller at Charcha, agrees. "Deliveries are still slow."

However, popular bookstore Baatighar are a bit luckier, having received seven to eight consignments, mostly from Kolkata. "We had placed our book orders around the time of the Ekushey Book Fair, so we were able to keep a good stock of books," says Dipankar Das, owner of Baatighar.

On the other hand, Bangladesh Culture & Books, the only bookshop at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (Departure Lounge, Terminal 2) has been severely affected due to the suspension of flights since March. Store Manager Michael G shares, "The pandemic has been a major setback for us. We closed our shutters for seven months." They continued their activities online though, by posting videos on Instagram and Facebook and inviting authors for virtual chats about their books.

The store has reopened on October 1, but profit remains below the margin. "We import our books from the USA, UK and India. These books used to reach Dhaka in seven to ten days, but each consignment takes at least one month now," Michael laments. "Shipping charges have also skyrocketed." There's also the added cost for health safety. "We sanitise our books with alcohol pads before packaging them and provide extra alcohol pads with every delivery," Michael said.

Banani's Keepsake, a gift and book, remained open both online and offline, but were not spared from similar issues. "Besides custom duties, transportation costs of consignments are much higher than the previous fiscal year. This has had a direct effect on our prices," explained Liaison Officer Md Sifat Kaiser Khan.

Fortunately for Worthy Books BD, despite a fall in spot purchases, the store managed to see a spike in online sales from an ongoing 10 percent discount on products. It is now gearing up for the future. "We will be launching our monthly magazine, Quirky, in November," shares co-founder Nuzaimul Hoque Xishan. "It will be similar to Reader's Digest, with segments devoted to health, advice, lifestyle, entertainment, business, food, travel and literature."

Follow Daily Star Books on Facebook and @thedailystarbooks on Instagram.



PHOTO COURTESY: BOOKWORM BANGLADESH

Mental health services essential to achieve SDGs

Says Saima Wazed Hossain at webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh National Advisory Committee on Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders Chairperson Saima Wazed Hossain on Sunday said mental health services are essential to achieve SDGs, and such ailments should be treated with care.

She was addressing a webinar titled "A day centre for people with mental health needs: A model care of Bangladesh", organised by Centre for Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP), on occasion of World Mental Health Day.

This year's theme was investment in mental health.

Saima appreciated CRP's contribution in the rehabilitation sector and pointed out the importance of mental health services. She asked for everyone's collaboration, not competition, and said there are no social and political barriers in this field.

Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed, associate professor at National Institute of Mental Health; Karen Heaslip, occupational therapist from Ireland; and Razia Sultana, project coordinator of Occupational Therapy Day Centre for People with Mental Health Needs of CRP, presented keynote papers.

In his presentation, Dr Helal showed the current scenario of mental health in Bangladesh, while Karen presented a brief overview of mental health in communities based in the UK and Ireland.

Razia described the activities and improvement of patients at the day centre through a video documentary and concluded by saying that CRP is trying from its position, and if they could enhance services at community-

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DEATH 'IN CUSTODY' 3 constables testify at court

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Three police constables yesterday testified before a Sylhet court in the case filed in connection with the murder of Rayhan Ahmed, who was allegedly tortured at Bandarbarazar police outpost on October 11.

The constables -- Shamim, Saidul and Delwar -- testified before Sylhet's Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Ziadur Rahman, said Amulya Bhushan Chowdhury, assistant commissioner (prosecution) of Sylhet Metropolitan Police.

This was the first day of court proceedings for the case, he said.

Inspector Mahidul Islam of Police Bureau of Investigation, the case's

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PADMA BRIDGE

Five km visible after 33rd span installed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around five-kilometre-long structure of long-cherished Padma Bridge is now visible, after another span of the bridge was installed yesterday.

The 33rd span linking the third and fourth pillar at the Mawa end in Munshiganj was installed around 12 noon yesterday, Dewan Md Abdul Kader, project manager (main bridge), told The Daily Star.

With the span installment, total 4.95km of the 6.15km structure is now visible, he said.

On October 11, the authority installed 32nd span, ending a four-month stalemate over installing spans due to flood situation and strong currents in the Padma.

"We did not face much problem with strong currents today [Monday]; we hope the situation will improve further in coming days," he said.

They have plan to install two more spans within this month and all spans within December, he added.

Authorities had planned to install all 41 spans within July, but it could not be possible due to the pandemic and strong currents in the river, project officials said.

When work of most development projects was suspended due to the pandemic, the Padma Multipurpose Bridge project work continued. But the work suffered due

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Fake currency factory busted, 4 held in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch of police in a raid at Noorjahan Road in Dhaka's Mohammadpur area yesterday claimed to have busted a fake currency manufacturing mini-factory, owned by one Humayun Kabir who had previously been arrested five times for the same offence.

Along with Humayun (47), Jamal Uddin (42), Taslima Akter (30) and Sukhi Akter (30) were also arrested during the raid on the second floor of a six-storey building by the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Gulshan division.

Jamal is also an accused in two fake note-related cases.

Humayun hired Taslima and Sukhi at Tk 15,000 and Tk 10,000 per month to prepare special papers and glue and to cut the fake notes into size.

Kawsar, brother of Humayun, who is also a fake note manufacturer, was arrested earlier and is now in jail. Taslima's husband Saiful Islam was arrested by Rab in January. He is now in jail.

"They make fake notes throughout the year but they have become more active

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The counterfeit notes and note making materials laid out on the floor after they were seized by law enforcers from a flat in Mohammadpur.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



Schools may be closed, but the children who used to zoom around the premises -- with cricket bats in hand in hopes of scoring big, or dribbling footballs to make that crucial pass -- are coming out of their homes again. The pandemic may have tried to cage the whole world, but these little ones just would not stay confined to their homes. This photo was taken from Gabtoli Govt Primary School.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

NEGLIGENCE IN RENOVATING TWIN TEMPLES

Legal notice served on govt after Star report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following a report published in The Daily Star, a Supreme Court lawyer yesterday served a legal notice on the government to form a committee in three days to probe the negligence in renovating two-century-old twin temples at Muktagachha in Mymensingh and to take appropriate action against the officials responsible for the negligence.

Lawyer Manoj Kumar Bhowmick sent the legal notice to the cultural affairs secretary and the director general of department of archeology requesting them to take necessary steps to this effect.

In it, he said he will take legal steps if the cultural affairs secretary does not form the probe committee and take action against officials concerned.

The Daily Star report published under the headline "200-year old twin temples in sorry state" yesterday said, "The two-century-old twin temples, Shree Shree Anandamoyee Shiva and Kali Mata Mandir, is in a dilapidated state for decades, thanks to the indifference of the authorities concerned."

Built in 1820 by Shreemoti Bimola Devi, mother of zaminder Maharaja Shshikanta Acharya Chowdhury, the twin-temple is awaiting loss of its architectural beauty as no steps are taken to renovate it, said the report.

Located outside the palaces of Muktagachha zaminders in Kalibari area, the temple is also known as "Dhaksinashar Mandir" where religious events including Durga Puja and sacrificial activities on the occasion of Kali and Monsha puja are held.

It is oblong in shape with conical shape tops and small corridors on a high basement which is connected to the staircase leading to a large pond. Special puja is also held there during every full moon and new moon and on the occasion of Pehela Baishakh, the report added.

COMPENSATION FOR JAHA ALAM

Brac Bank seeks SC stay on HC order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brac Bank Ltd yesterday filed a petition with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court seeking a stay on its High Court verdict that directed the bank to give Tk 15 lakh in compensation to jute mill worker Jaha Alam, who had suffered in jail for three years instead of the real accused in several corruption cases.

The bank filed the petition through advocate-on-record Joydul Abedin saying that the HC did not direct other banks concerned and the Anti-Corruption Commission to give the compensation to Jaha Alam, ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star.

He also said Brac Bank's stay petition may be heard before the court of chamber judge of the Appellate Division today.

On September 30 this year, the HC directed the Brac Bank Ltd to give Tk 15 lakh in compensation to jute mill worker Jaha Alam in a month after receiving the verdict as its two officials Faisal Kayes and Sabina Sharmin supplied the photo and information of Jaha Alam instead of real accused Abu Salek to the investigation officers of the ACC.

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