

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION LAW

Mostly ineffective, a decade on: research

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Legal experts and rights activists yesterday expressed concerns over the effectiveness of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010, a decade after it was promulgated.

Implementation of the law has been very weak in most districts of the country, according to a recent study commissioned by ActionAid Bangladesh. Findings of the study were shared at a virtual roundtable yesterday.

Prof Taslima Yasmin, associate professor of law at Dhaka University, conducted 60 qualitative interviews -- including of 20 survivors, and a number of legal service providers, law enforcement officers and other personnel linked to domestic violence cases this year, and analysed around 90 case records for her study titled "Exploring the obstacles in accessing justice for survivors of domestic violence: How effective is the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010".

"For example, 19 of the 20 survivors never heard of the DVPP Act, under which they could get remedy for violent incidents," said Prof Taslima, while sharing her findings at the event.

"Even when they went to seek remedy from law enforcement agencies or administrative officers, they were not informed that they can get remedy under the law," she added.

The study also found that victims only go to seek remedy when the physical torture reached severe levels, or until they were denied access to the conjugal residence, or the husband remarried.

"Although a victim can go to court to file a petition under this act, the official data provided by the Chief Judicial Magistrate Court of Bhola and Sherpur showed no petition filed under the act during the past 10 years,

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The Dhaka-Aricha highway near Aminbazar is not only harmful to the lungs, as dust covers the entire location, but pedestrians are also in immediate danger of road accidents. Due to poor visibility, anyone jaywalking through the road, in this case a woman with a child, would fail to see how far fast-moving vehicles are from them, while drivers may also be blindsided by the dust. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Mixed use of land to harm Dhaka: BIP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

City planners of Dhaka yesterday demanded that the authorities should revise its decision of using land of Dhaka city in an indiscriminate way, as mixed use of land will harm the city.

According to draft of Detailed Area Plan (DAP) for the capital, different kinds of use in different floors of a building is allowed, said members of Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) in a press conference at its office.

At the press conference, members of BIP spoke at length about the flaws in the DAP draft, which has been formulated by consulting firms Sheltech and DDC under a work order by Rajdhani Uন্নayan Katrapakkha (Rajuk).

"A building situated beside a 20 feet to 80 feet wide road will be eligible for different kinds of mixed use (like commercial use and residential use) based on floor area, which will create an anarchy in using a building," said Adil Mohammad Khan, general secretary of BIP.

He said though they have mentioned it as conditional in the draft, they did not mention the conditions specifically which

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Dhaka airport gets its first full-body X-ray scanners

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) for the first time has installed four full body X-ray scanners at the pre-boarding security checkpoint at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA).

With this new technology, security officials will be able to detect any hidden or unwanted materials on or inside the body of outbound passengers, Group Captain AHM Touhid-ul Ahsan, director of HSIA, told The Daily Star.

Under a project of Japan International Cooperation Agency, CAAB procured the scanners from Japan, he said.

Conventional scanners can only detect metallic objects, but X-ray scanners can detect non-metallic objects too.

Although the machines have already been installed, they will go into function after five to six months.

"Due to the pandemic, trainers of those scanners are yet to come to Dhaka from Japan. After the situation becomes a bit normal, they will come and train our people to operate the machines," Touhid told this correspondent.

Authorities will continue using manual scanners like metal detectors and archways, despite setting up the new technology, sources at HSIA said.

Buet interested to join cluster admission test

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), which had earlier shown reservation about joining centralised admission test, is now interested.

Buet, in a letter to University Grants Commission (UGC), said it is willing to join the cluster of engineering universities for the entrance test.

So far, authorities of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology, Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology and Khulna University of Engineering and Technology, in principle, decided to join the cluster system.

"We have received a letter from Buet authorities, and they have expressed desire to join the cluster admission system in the engineering cluster," UGC member Prof Mohammed Alamgir told The Daily Star.

"We will forward the letter to authorities of other engineering universities that have, in principle, decided to join," he said.

He said UGC would soon sit with

vice chancellors of all agricultural and engineering universities to know their current stance on the cluster admission test. He hoped all universities would join the new system.

Buet Pro-vice Chancellor Prof Abdul Jabbar Khan said the academic council, in principle, has decided to join the cluster system. "We will need to discuss the matter in the academic council again," he said.

On January 23, UGC announced that it would go for a uniform admission test for 2020-2021 academic year. Later in February, it was decided, in principle, that universities would hold admission tests following a cluster system.

Five leading universities -- Dhaka University, Buet, Rajshahi University, Jahangirnagar University and Chittagong University -- had shown reservations.

On Tuesday, it was decided that 19 public universities will enrol students through a centralised admission test for the next academic session.

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PHOTO COURTESY: BENGAL FOUNDATION

One can enjoy "Baseer: An Eloquent Mind" from their home through the virtual tour.

Experiencing Baseer in VR

Bengal Foundation launches online virtual tour of eminent artist's exhibition

PRIYANKA CHOWDHURY, A & E Desk

Bengal Foundation launched their very first virtual tour of an ongoing exhibition titled 'Baseer: An Eloquent Mind' for the online audience. The online platform for the full-fledged gallery tour has been designed by Artcon, a specialised agency that covers all modes of services in the art field.

'Baseer: An Eloquent Mind' is now underway at Bengal Shilpalay in Dhanmondi. It will remain open to all till January 16, 2021, from 3pm to 8pm. The venue is closed on Sundays.

Although the coronavirus crisis brought many obstacles for artists in the country, they are slowly adapting to virtual avenues. A R K Ripon, Founder of Artcon, stressed on the possibilities opened up by new techniques that can enrich the art market. The cutting-edge technology for the virtual tour offers features such as 360-degree view, hot spots that allow viewers to move close to or far from the artworks, stereoscopic view on VR headset and the dollhouse effect.

"Virtual tours not only project what is in the exhibition but also connect us to other networks through hyperlinks. The QR codes provide audio and text content in multiple languages and the viewership is unlimited," he explained, "A special feature lets viewers experience this exhibition both in day and night modes. The mood of the exhibition is captured with it."

Murtaja Baseer (1932-2020) worked in many mediums, such as drawing, printmaking, watercolour, oil paint, mixed media and mural. His greatest mastery was in oil paintings. Covering a period from the fifties to the present, the exhibition includes the artist's photographs, letters, sketches, collages, posters, paper cuttings and key paintings from several private collections, many of which are being exhibited for the first time.

Director General of Bengal Foundation, Luva Nahid Choudhury, expressed her enthusiasm for the virtual tour.

"An immense amount of research and energy was invested in the creation of the exhibition. Showcasing the works of one of the most influential modern artists of Bangladesh is even harder. The virtual tour allows us not only to archive the exhibition as a whole, but also to travel beyond borders," she said.

With increased restrictions on public gatherings, the use of augmented reality has emerged as a solution to the immediate crisis. It can create opportunities for collection and purchase of artworks from different parts of the world. However, it also comes with certain requirements such as a high speed internet connection, suitable gadgets and an understanding of the virtual platform for users to enjoy the experience fully.

Seven to die for murdering freedom fighter

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal yesterday sentenced seven people to death for killing and burning the body of freedom fighter Atik Ullah Chowdhury in December 2013.

The convicts are: Gulzar Hossain, Md Asif, Shihab Ahmed, Ahsanul Kabir Emon, Tajul Islam, Jahangir Khan, and Rafikul Islam. Jahangir and Rafikul are in jail.

Judge Abu Jafar Md Kamruzzaman of Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 of Dhaka handed the sentence in presence of three accused.

The tribunal also acquitted another accused Shampa, as her involvement with the killing was not proved.

On July 2, 2015, the tribunal had framed charges against eight accused.

The punishment of the fugitives will be effective from the day of their arrest or surrender, the judge said.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments, while the court recorded statements of 11 prosecution witnesses including the complainant of the case.

During the investigation, Shampa and Asif gave confessional statements before the magistrates on different dates.

Establish the 99th Brigade promptly

JS body urges defence ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday strongly recommended that the defence ministry completes work of the project for establishment of 99 Composite Brigade for overall safety of Padma Multipurpose Bridge project as soon as possible.

The parliamentary standing committee on the defence ministry said this in a meeting at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Ruling Awami League MP and committee chairman Mohammad Subid Ali Bhuiyan presided over the meeting.

Defence Secretary Dr Md Abu Hena Mostofa Kamal informed the parliamentary watchdog about the progress of different issues including providing rations to retired members of the armed forces in lieu of allowances, introduction of "One Person, One Rank" in the Armed Forces and increase in insurance for pilots.

The meeting reviewed the latest status of Bangladesh Armed Forces activities in UN peacekeeping missions, construction of BNA Bangabandhu Complex, progress of Patenga Chittagong (2nd amendment) project, and establishment of 99 composite brigade for overall security of Padma Multipurpose Bridge project.

The committee also discussed the need to increase the number of women peacekeepers in missions to achieve the goals set by the United Nations.

Committee members Muhammad Faruk, Md Motahar Hossain, Nasir Uddin and Begum Nahid Izahar Khan participated in the meeting, along with senior officials of the army, air force, navy and defence ministry.

Four indicted in Sagira murder case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday framed charges against four accused in connection with the killing of Sagira Morshed in the capital 30 years ago.

The accused are Sagira Morshed's brother-in-law Hasan Ali Chowdhury, his wife Sayedatul Mahmuda alias Shahin, brother-in-law (wife's brother) Anas Mahmud alias Rezwana and the alleged hitman Maruf Reza.

The four, now in jail, pleaded not guilty and demanded justice after KM Emrul Kayesh of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka read out the charges to them.

Meantime, the judge granted bail to Sayedatul Mahmuda on grounds that she would submit her passport to the court.

The judge fixed January 11 for starting trial of the case.

On July 25, 1989, 34-year-old Sagira was shot dead on the road, while going to Viqarunnisa Noon School to pick up her daughter Sahar.

Her husband Abdus Salam Chowdhury filed a murder case against unknown people with Ramna Police Station the same day.

But trial of the case had been stayed for the last 28 years following a High Court order.

PADMA BRIDGE RAIL LINK PROJECT

All sleepers to be made in Faridpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujon yesterday inaugurated a factory at Faridpur's Bhangra, which will supply sleepers for Padma Bridge Rail Link Project (PBRLP).

China Railway Group Limited (CREC), the construction contractor of the project, set up the factory to supply more than 3.7 lakh sleepers for the rail line.

"Sleepers are being produced here maintaining quality using machines," the minister told reporters after visiting the factory. CREC has brought technology and machines from China, he said. "We will decide upon consultation with CREC whether the factory can be used for producing sleepers for Bangladesh Railway after completion of the project."

BR is implementing PBRLP to connect the capital with Jashore with a 169km rail line for Tk 39,246 crore, with Exim Bank of China providing Tk 21,036.70 crore as loan. CREC built the factory on BR's land and will have to pay rent for it, a BR official said. However, the rent-related issues have not been settled yet, he said wishing not to named.

Wang Kun, project director for CREC, said they have set up the factory to dispel uncertainty over global procurement of sleepers amid pandemic, and to produce sleepers quickly maintaining quality.

Around 200 locals were given training for the works and the factory will be able to produce up to 500 sleepers daily.

The factory started producing sleepers from August on a limited scale, and the railways minister yesterday formally inaugurated it.



Pigeon fancying never seems to go out of fashion, and why would it? Seeing a flock of birds flying in circles under the clear sky should bring peace to anyone's heart. Many who start out as hobbyists eventually go into business of raising and selling the birds for others to experience their beauty. This picture was taken from the capital's Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Man sentenced to life term jail for rape 12 years ago

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, C13

After 12 years, a Chattogram court yesterday sentenced a man to life imprisonment for raping a girl after making false promises of marriage in 2008.

The convict, Md Saddam (30) from the port city's Patharghata area, has been on the run since the case was filed in 2008.

Judge Md Moshir Rahman Khan of Chattogram Women and Child Repression Prevention Tribunal-1 gave the verdict, said Public Prosecutor Advocate Jesmin Akhter. She further said the court also fined the perpetrator Tk 20,000.

According to the case statement, Saddam, who was 18 at the time, raped the victim, who was his neighbour, luring the 14-year-old by making false promises of marriage on February 7, 2008.

The victim was rescued from Saddam's residence and was admitted to Chattogram Medical College Hospital's One-stop Crisis Centre.

Later, the victim's mother filed a case, accusing Saddam on February 11 that year.

After investigating, police pressed charges against Saddam on March 27, 2008, while a court framed charges in the case on November 4, 2008.

Advocate Jesmin said nine witnesses testified in the case out of 10.