

Police station not a place to plan murder

IGP warns officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Benazir Ahmed yesterday said a police station cannot be a place to plan murder.

Recently, media published reports that such plans were hatched inside a police station. So, question arises whether police stations are safe? Will the police chief take any initiative to bring transparency in this regard?

In reply to these queries from a journalist, the police chief came up with the statement.

He said police stations should work for protecting peace and people's lives. It's not a place to plan murder.

"There are many complaints against police stations but we are working on them," said the police chief.

He said these at an event organised to introduce operational gears (tactical belts) for law enforcers at Rajarbagh Police Auditorium in the capital.

On last Sunday, Rab submitted the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



The High Court was a majestic sight in the colours of the Bangladesh flag on the eve of the country's Victory Day today. The city's many major structures were lit up at night to mark the occasion, celebrating the victory earned 49 years back after a nine-month bloody war with Pakistani occupation forces in 1971.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Give indigenous people stewardship of land

Speakers tell webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indigenous people should be granted stewardship for the land they exist on, said speakers at a virtual seminar yesterday.

Stewardship is a concept different from ownership because it makes the residents collectively responsible for maintenance of the land and its biodiversity. The webinar, titled "Inclusion, Cultural Integrity and Land Rights of the Indigenous Peoples in Asia" was jointly organised by Kapaeng Foundation, Bangladesh; Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD), and The Daily Star.

"It is only in the indigenous culture we can promote the culture of stewardship instead of ownership. They do not own the land but we are guided by nature itself to maintain the land in a way that will be good for all of humanity," said Dr Meghna Guhathakurta, advisor, International Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission.

"There is no indigenous custodian role over the reserve forests," pointed out Raja Devasish Roy, chief of the Chakma Circle.

Meanwhile, the reserve forests are being destroyed by those exploiting resources illegally. "If the people become custodians of the land that they have taken care of all this time, provided they protect it, there will be no need to take it into state ownership," said Gam A Shimray, secretary general, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact.

Pallab Chakma, executive director, Kapaeng Foundation said the Muraichhara Eco Park in Kulaura, Moulvibazaar affect the Khasi and Garo ethnic groups.

The Modhpur Eco Park and Reserve limits the access of Garo, Koch and Barman ethnic groups to lands they have traditionally used, while the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Wait for justice continues

Court still dealing with appeals of war-crime cases, years after verdicts

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

After so many years, people are still waiting to see justice for the crimes committed during the Liberation War, as appeal hearings of 27 war-crime cases were halted for years at the Supreme Court (SC).

When hearings resumed last year after more than three years, justice seekers were hopeful to complete the long-drawn trials.

But the process came to a halt again. No appeals were heard in the last one year, as the apex court is overloaded with pending cases and its regular functions slowed down due to the pandemic.

Now, the newly-appointed attorney general, AM Amin Uddin, said he will take initiative for hearing the appeals.

"I will inquire about the war-crime appeals pending with the Appellate Division. If they are ready for hearing, I will take an initiative in January for their hearing," he told this newspaper.

The last war-crime related appeal hearing took place at the Appellate Division of Supreme Court on December 3, 2019. Convicted war criminal Syed Mohammad Qaisar filed the appeal, challenging the death penalty handed to him by a war-crimes tribunal in 2014.

The Appellate Division has so far disposed of only nine such appeals, including the one Qaisar filed, in the last seven years.

Three appeals filed by former Jamaat-e-Islami ameer Ghulam Azam, former BNP minister Abdul Alim and former Jamaat-e-Islami leader Abdus Sobhan, against their jail sentences, were declared "abated" by the apex court, as the convicted died while their appeals were pending with the court.

Two International Crimes Tribunals (ICT) have so far delivered verdicts in 41 cases filed in connection with crimes against humanity and war crimes committed during the war.

After the verdicts, 39 appeals have been filed with the Appellate Division of SC.

An amendment to International Crimes (Tribunals) Act-1973 in February 2013 made a provision for disposing appeals against sentences in 60 days, raising hope that the SC would quickly deliver judgments.

But that hope died down when legal experts, including then law minister Barrister Shafique Ahmed, made it clear that the provision was merely a directive, and not mandatory to follow.

The Appellate Division is taking time for holding hearings and disposing appeals related to war crimes, as the court must deal with many other important cases, advocate Mohammad Shishir Manir, one of the defence lawyers, told The Daily Star.

He said the SC needs a long time for hearing and disposing a war-crime related appeal, and backlog of cases keeps growing. Besides, court functions slowed down due to the pandemic, he said.

On July 20, a virtual bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, said it will hold hearing on the review petition of war criminal ATM Azharul Islam when its regular functions resume after the pandemic.

On July 19, Azharul, convicted Jamaat-e-Islami leader, filed the petition with the SC, seeking review of its verdict that upheld his death penalty for genocide and crimes against humanity during the war.

Attorney General AM Amin said the Appellate Division is running judicial functions virtually due to the pandemic, and that is why it is now mostly hearing and disposing old cases.

The nine war criminals whose appeals have already been settled by the top court are Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Motiur

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

BERC chairman apologises for not complying with HC order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) Chairman Md Abdul Jalil yesterday offered unconditional apology to the High Court for not complying with its directive over fixing the price of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).

He tendered the apology through submitting a petition to the HC bench of Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Mohi Uddin Shamim during hearing a contempt of court rule issued against him over the issue.

The HC bench fixed January 11 next year for a detailed hearing on whether it will pardon the BERC chairman, his lawyer Abdul Matin Khasru told The Daily Star.

On November 29, the same HC bench issued the contempt of court rule against the BERC chairman for not complying with its directive over fixing the price of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).

In the rule, the HC asked the BERC chairman to explain in two weeks why contempt of court proceedings should not be brought against him and why he should not

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Many missing out on remote learning

Speakers blame lack of technical support; stress more budgetary allocation in edu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A large number of students with disabilities may drop out of schools due to the pandemic as they are not attending online classes for lack of technological support, said speakers at a webinar yesterday.

Campaign for Popular Education (Campe) organised the "Shikha Sanglap (episode-4) on Education for Persons with Disabilities: Challenges and Way Forward" to share grassroots experience on the impact of Covid-19 on education and livelihood of children with disabilities.

The event also sought recommendations from experts and civil society actors for strengthening policy advocacy particularly on SDG-4 (inclusive and equitable quality education).

AHM Noman Khan, founding executive director of Centre for Disability and Development, in his keynote, suggested to increase community awareness through mobilising accessible media and strengthening and expanding basic learning sessions through online communication.

Due to lack of appropriate communication methods such as sign languages, large screens and audio texts, students with disabilities are being affected severely, said Noman.

He said more engagement of experts and development organisations are needed in this regard.

Noman suggested home education supported by community teaching assistants and educators for students and also stressed the need for motivating parents through, if needed, counseling.

Rasheda K Choudhury, executive director of Campe, stressed the need for ensuring rights for all persons with disabilities.

More importantly, people need to change their mindset towards a person with disability, said Rasheda, also former adviser to a caretaker government.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Youths' interest in agri training skyrocketing

Youth Dev DG tell webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Admission to the government's training programmes on agriculture has apparently become highly competitive as a section of jobless youths is trying to survive the Covid-19 impact through farming.

The competition has become so intense that the Department of Youth Development (DYD) is struggling to accommodate candidates.

"There are 60 seats for training on agriculture but we're seeing number of applicants reaching 800-1,200," said Akhtaruz Zaman Khan Kabir, director general of DYD, yesterday while addressing a webinar.

ActionAid organised the programme to launch a survey report titled "Impact of Covid-19 in the life of young women for advocacy and policy intervention in a post-Covid world".

The survey was conducted on 550 young women aged between 18 and 35 in 10 districts -- Dhaka, Chattogram, Kushtia, Nilphamari, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Jamalpur, Dinajpur, Naogaon and Kurigram.

Addressing the programme as chief guest, Akhtaruz Zaman said many youths who have lost their livelihood due to Covid-19 left Dhaka for villages. Now, they are turning to farming.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



Rickshaw vans loaded with water hyacinth from Savar's Baliapur are headed to the capital. These aquatic plants, a fast-growing and invasive species of weed that is the bane to fish farmers, will be used as cattle feed at a dairy farm in Adabor. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



বঙ্গবন্ধু সার্বজনীন পেনশন বীমা
(আর্থিক নিরাপত্তা ও ভাবনাহীন অবসর জীবন)

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