

Inspector of Factories, Fire Service chief get HC flak

Strict adherence to fire and safety laws ordered

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed the authorities concerned to ensure strict adherence to factory laws and fire and safety acts to check accidents in garment factories.

The court further directed that no licence should be issued if the requirements specified in factory laws are not met.

The directives were issued by a Division Bench of the HC while disposing of a rule issued earlier in a writ petition filed by the Ain-o-Salish Kendro (ASK) regarding safety and security of workers in garment factories.

Advocate Salma Sobhan filed the petition on behalf of the ASK in 1997 for proper implementation of provisions of the Factories Act and the Fire Service and Civil Defence Act to prevent incidents of fire in garment factories, which occur frequently and cause numerous deaths.

The HC Bench comprising Justice Shah Abu Naim Mominur Rahman and Justice Khademul Islam in its judgement held the Inspector of Factories and the

Director General of Fire Service and Civil Defence responsible for negligence and lapses in observing the rules that led to such accidents.

The Bench ordered the authorities concerned to inspect whether the factories were equipped with fire fighting equipment and emergency stairs to prevent accidents.

It observed that banks should provide loans to the factories to enable those to purchase necessary equipment.

The court also directed formation of a team consisting of the Director General of Fire Service and Civil Defence, Inspector of Factories and representatives from the Commerce Ministry, Investment Board, Export Promotion Bureau, Rajuk, Bangladesh Garments Manufacturer and Exporters Association and Dhaka Electric Supply Authority to monitor compliance with the rules for safety and fire prevention in the factories.

Advocate Nijamul Huq Nasim, Dr Faustina Pereira and Abu Obaidur Rahman appeared on behalf of the ASK and Assistant Attorney General Zahirul Islam appeared for the state.

Khaleda decries 'false case' against 30 partymen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday protested filing of a 'false' case against 30 party leaders and activists.

In a statement, she said the government filed a false case against Mirza Abbas, Sadeque Hossain Khoka and 28 others, as they protested the obstruction to food distribution among the destitute on the 20th death anniversary of President Ziaur Rahman.

She said the 'vindictive' government at the end of its term has intensified repression on the opposition and is now desperate to file false cases against opposition leaders and activists. She demanded immediate withdrawal of the false cases.

The leader of the opposition said the 'repressive' government could not protect itself from miserable consequences by resorting to repression.

In separate statement, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment to those who attacked BNP leaders and damaged vehicles at the first mazar premises of President Ziaur Rahman on Wednesday.

Terming attackers 'government agents', Bhuiyan said the people have been paying tributes to late Zia at his first mazar for last 20 years, but for the first time this year, the BNP leaders could not visit the mazar as the 'government agents' attacked them.

Condemning the attack, the BNP secretary general demanded immediate arrest and trial of the attackers.

AL leaders still tight-lipped over content of new bill

'Secured government accommodation' linked to Hasina's personal security after term as PM

REAZ AHMAD

A former prime minister can be given security by the elite Special Security Force (SSF) under existing laws if he/she is declared a very important person (VIP) by the government.

But declaring Sheikh Hasina a VIP and providing security by the SSF will not be enough to ensure her security during the tenure of the caretaker government, some senior leaders of ruling Awami League told this correspondent yesterday.

Referring to alleged failed attempts on Hasina's life in the recent past, they said a 'secured government accommodation' is 'closely linked' with her personal security during the period.

But they would not say whether the proposed law being drafted now for Sheikh Hasina's security would allow her to stay at the Ganabhaban during the tenure of a caretaker government.

But the issue is being talked in different circles despite protest by opposition political parties and other quarters.

The SSF provides security to a VIP under the Special Security Force Ordinance, 1986.

In defining a VIP, the Ordinance says, "Very important person means a head of state or Government of a foreign state and includes any other person who is declared by the Government by notification in the official gazette, to be such person for the purpose of this Ordinance."

The ruling party leaders said there is no novelty in a former premier getting SSF coverage during the tenure of a caretaker government. Any one declared a VIP by the government is entitled to SSF security coverage, they said.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is due to hand over power to a caretaker government on June 13.

They noted that the President's Pension Ordinance, 1996, also provides for the same.

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Tribals stage rally against eco-park

Government decision termed a 'political game'



An aged tribal woman listens intently as speakers at a rally at Moulvibazar on Wednesday protest the government decision to set up an eco-park at the Khasia and Garo hills.

NAIMUL HAQ, back from Moulvibazar

Garo and Khasia tribal people held a big rally at Muraichhari in Moulvibazar district on Wednesday protesting the government's decision to build an Eco-park in the Khasia and Garo hills by evicting them.

The rally was addressed by Garo leader Nikhil Mankin; Khasia leaders Jotish Rangsha and Anil Young; Jatirindria Bodhipriya Larma alias Shanto Larma, Convener of Adbashi Forum and President of Parbatya Chattagram Janashanghati Samity (PCJSS); Pahari Chatra Parishad General Secretary Akhya Shil Marma; Gano Forum leader Pankaj Bhattacharyya and Dhaka University teacher Mezba Kamal.

They said the Eco-park is being built by evicting the tribal people from their ancestral homes, which is inhuman and undemocratic. This will also destroy the ecology of the area, they said.

The tribal leaders urged the government not to evict the people and warned of "serious consequences". The planned Eco-Park is nothing but a political game, they said.

The Tk 11 crore Eco-Park to build a tourist spot near the Madhabkunda waterfall and 'preserve rare animals, birds and plants' will displace about 1000 Khasia and Garo families, sources concerned told this correspondent.

The twin project will be built on 840 acres of land in Madhabkunda and on 660 acres in Muraichhari.

Condemning the decision, Larma said, "We are forced to re-think about existence of indigenous people. Khasia hills belong to Khasia people. They have been living here for centuries. It is mysterious why the government has targeted us".

Larma said, "The decision reflects Awami League government's undemocratic attitude. They are out to snatch away our basic rights. I hope the government will reconsider the decision and not create any more trouble."

The PCJS will extend all-out support to the Garo and Khasia people in preserving their rights, he said.

Demanding immediate cancellation of the project, Pankaj Bhattacharyya said, "The government is talking of democracy but the tribal people here are being displaced from their ancestral homes against their will".

The project will also destroy natural forests, he said.

Earlier, during a visit to some punjis (small clusters of tribal habitations in

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Create awareness of tobacco hazards, says President

UNB, Dhaka

President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday called for training up teachers, religious leaders and cooperative and NGO workers to create awareness among the rural masses about tobacco hazards.

He also called upon all to remain vigilant against ill motives of tobacco companies trying to relocate their business in African and Asian countries following reduction in the number of smokers in developed countries, like the US.

"There is no doubt that use of tobacco causes untimely death, disability and many other diseases", the President said expressing concern over the increasing trend of smoking in the country.

President Shahabuddin was

addressing a function jointly organised by anti-tobacco organisation ADHUNIK and the apex body of 21 such organisations, Coalition Against Tobacco (CAT), at Osmani Memorial Auditorium on the occasion of "World No Tobacco Day 2001".

Lauding the role of ADHUNIK and CAT, President Shahabuddin Ahmed called for intensifying the awareness campaign against tobacco.

He pointed out that tobacco causes 30 per cent of cancer deaths in the developing countries and that passive smoking also increases the risk of cancer. Mothers who smoke give birth to under-weight children, he said.

The President stressed the need for creating awareness against the

hazards of smoking among school children and youths of the country.

The function was also addressed by founder-advisor of ADHUNIK Dr Nurul Islam, Secretary General of ADHUNIK and Chief Editor of UNB Enayetullah Khan, CAT President Amanullah Khan, WHO Consultant Dr Derek Lobo, CAT secretary general Ali Niamat and Dilruba Anguri, wife of state minister for information Prof Abu Sayeed.

State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed, Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Mohammad Farashuddin, Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, VC of BSMU Prof Mahmud Hasan, Editor of daily Jugantar Golam Sarwar and social welfare organisations Hamdard

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217m people in SAARC region will still go hungry in 2015: WFP

UNB, DHAKA

Over 217 million people in SAARC countries, including Bangladesh, will still be going hungry in 2015 if the present trend continues, World Food Programme warns in a publication.

The publication titled "Enabling Development: Food Assistance in South Asia" was recently published by Oxford University Press based on inputs from eminent authors from all the SAARC countries.

WFP Representative Pieter Dijkhuizen handed over the book to State Minister for Planning Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir at his office here yesterday.

Taking stock of the current situation of hunger and malnutrition in the region, the book observes that South Asia is home to more chronically food insecure people than any other parts of the world.

The book examines ways of dealing with the problem and offers both short and long-term solutions to hunger through food assistance programmes based on successful experiences within the region.

Prayer Timings		
June 1		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fazr	4-15	4-45
Juma	12-15	1-20
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-46	6-50
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation



Disney dreamlights

A caterpillar-shaped float decorated with colorful electric bulbs attracts viewers to a preview of Tokyo Disneyland's new attraction "Electrical Parade Dreamlights", on Tuesday at Urayasu city in suburban Tokyo. The new night parade, scheduled to start today 01 June, is a 700-metre long glittering entertainment spectacle featuring Disney's famous movies "Cinderella", "Bug's Life" and "Beauty and Beast", with one million sparkling lights, over 100 dancers, and various Disney characters.

Hunger strike demanding varsity in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Fifty persons led by Kazi Md. Zunnun, chairman of Rangpur Poursava, here observed an eight-hour token hunger strike yesterday, demanding establishment of a university in Rangpur and declaration of the district a division.

Pourasava commissioners and members of different socio-cultural organisations took part in it.

Upgrading of Rangpur Radio Transmission from 20 K.W. to 100 K.W., setting up of a full-fledged TV station, allocation of adequate funds for development of Rangpur Poursava, and re-excavation of the century-old Shayama Sundari canal also figured in their demands.

5 injured in blast while making bombs

UNB, Gazipur

Five youths were injured in an explosion while making bombs at Duttapara in Tongi upazila on Wednesday night.

Locals said Babul Mia alias 'Kora' Babu, Raju, Kamal, Hasan and Shantu were injured when the bombs they were making in an under construction house exploded at about 9 pm.

Of the injured, the condition of Babul Mia was stated to be critical as his wrists were blown off in the explosion.

He was admitted to Orthopedic Hospital in Dhaka.

Hearing on writ petitions Application of PSA "discriminatory"

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Hearing on the writ petitions challenging the Public Safety Act (PSA) continued in the High Court yesterday with eminent lawyer Dr Kamal Hossain arguing for its repeal as it is 'discriminatory' in application and it 'ultra vires' the Constitution.

A Division Bench comprising Justice MA Aziz and Justice Shamsul Huda is hearing those.

Citing the case against his client BNP lawmaker M Murshed Khan, charged under PSA for kicking a container of halim (a food item) at hotel, Dr Kamal said he (Khan) has been used for such a trifling matter.

Kamal noted that another lawmaker, Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, has been charged with

gunning down a person under the penal code. A man was shot dead in front of his residence and police seized arms and ammunition from his vehicle and residence. Under whose invisible directive, Chowdhury has not been sued under PSA, he asked.

The counsel contended that the two are of the same status as MPs but application of law has been different in their respective cases.

The constitutional law expert further said the PSA by denying bail to an accused has taken away the judiciary's right to grant it and this is an attack on the judiciary.

Referring to the judgement regarding eighth amendment to the Constitution, Kamal hoped the

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Freedom Party leader arrested from city hotel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Special Branch of police yesterday arrested a leader of Freedom Party from a hotel at Haji Osman Gani Road in the city.

Mohammad Abdus Satter Najee alias Kohinoor, who identified himself as the vice-chairman of the party, was arrested in the early hours of yesterday on charges of conspiracy.

Some valuable papers were recovered from his possession. He will be interrogated at the Kotwali thana.

Satter was staying at the hotel for about ten months, police said. He hailed from Sirajganj.

A case was filed with Kotwali thana.

S Asian confce on fundamentalism begins today

BSS, Dhaka

A two-day South Asian conference on 'fundamentalism and communalism and the role of civil society' begins in the city today.

About 41 delegates from Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Nepal are expected to attend the conference.

The conference is aimed at firming a regional platform to fight growing communalism in the region, organisers said.

Former Indian speaker P A Sangma will lead a 17-member delegation to the conference. The Indian delegation includes former minister Phulrenu Guha, filmmaker Mrinal Sen, journalist MJ Akbar and

Islamic scholar Maolana Wahiduddin Khan.

Former air chief Air Marshal (Rtd) Ashghar Khan will lead an 11-member Pakistan delegation. Historian Prof A H Dani, social scientist Prof Hamza Alavi, former chief justice Syed Sajjad Ali Shah, advocate Alamdar Raja, journalist MB Nakvi are among the members of the delegation.

Former speaker Daman Dhungana will lead a seven-member Nepalese delegation. The delegation also includes former minister and left leaning politician Jahlanath Khanal, historian Prof Rajesh Gautam and journalist

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Raped garment worker dies at DMCH

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A garment worker, who tried to commit suicide after being gangraped in the city on May 15, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) yesterday.

The victim Mukta, 20, poured kerosene on her body and set fire after being gangraped by a group of local youths at Dakhingao in the city's Sabujbagh area.

Mukta filed a case with Sabujbagh thana on April 29 accusing some local youths as they teased her. It angered the youths. They abducted her on May 15, took her to a nearby canal and raped her.

Family members rushed Mukta to DMCH, where she succumbed to her burn injuries at about 5:30 pm yesterday. The body was sent to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

A case was filed with Sabujbagh thana in this connection.

Will journalist Tipu remain disabled?



The Daily Star - প্রথম আলো

Tipu Treatment Fund

Donate generously to this Fund Save Tipu from Disability

Send donations to: Savings Account No. 25002111 Dhaka Bank Ltd, Karwan Bazar Branch, Dhaka