

# 'Enact law to ensure safety of journalists'

DU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday called on all political parties to come forward to enact a law ensuring security of journalists.

All the political parties should come on one platform now to ensure safety of the media persons, they said.

The School of Democracy and Governance organised the roundtable titled 'Measures to ensure security of journalists' at the Cirdap auditorium in the city.

The political parties should frame a policy together to stop torture and harassment of newsmen, said Mahi B Chowdhury, a BNP lawmaker and son of former president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury.

Demanding security measures for the journalists, he said the government should also provide insurance facilities to protect them from torture.

As the attackers now go unpunished, they even feel encouraged to attack the newsmen, Mahi said.

The journalists will have to put pressure on the government to get quick justice for the victims of harassment."

The School of Democracy and Governance would launch a series of programmes to create pressure on the government to this end, he added. Mahi is the president of the school.

Speaking as chief guest, the New Age Editor Enayetullah Khan said the journalists were being tortured due to absence of the rule of law and abuse of the law in the

country.

He said the district correspondents are more vulnerable to harassment than those working in Dhaka city. Sections 501 and 502 of the penal code are the main weapons to harass journalists, he added.

Awami League lawmaker Farook Kahn called on the politicians and members of the civil society to work together to enact a law ensuring safety of the journalists and quick justice for the victims.

Jatiya Party lawmaker GM Kader said the political parties use criminals during the national and local elections for their own interest. As a result, the elections were not held in a free and fair manner, he said, adding that if this process continues, no-one would be safe.

Saleem Samad, special correspondent of The Bangladesh Observer, presented a case study.

Tipu Sultan, staff correspondent of the Prothom Alo, stressed the need for raising a medical support fund for the journalists.

He also suggested building a network with the press clubs across the country in this regard.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haque Inu, AP bureau chief Farid Hossain and Khairuzzaman Kamal of Bangladesh Human Rights Journalists' Association also spoke.

The School of Democracy also presented a visual presentation on torture on Tipu Sultan and killing of Shamsur Rahman and Manik Chandra Saha at the beginning of the conference.



PHOTO: STAR

Members of the Supreme Court Bar Association ,top, and 11-Party alliance, bottom, took out processions in the city yesterday protesting attack on Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain and demanding immediate arrest of the culprits involved. The activists of 'Parbatya Sama Adhikar Andolon', an anti-peace agreement organisation, allegedly attacked Dr Kamal near the Godarpar Rubber Garden in Kawkhali on his way to a public meeting in Rangamati hill district.

## Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sharifa Khatun died on Sunday at her Nilphamari residence at the age of 70.

She is survived by her husband, five sons, four daughters and a number of grandchildren.

Her namaz-e janaza was held at the Nilphamari District Judge's Court premises after Asr prayers on Sunday. Sharifa was buried at Sheikhbandha village of Debiganj Thana in Panchagarh the same night.

She was the wife of former newspaper agent and social worker Matlub Hossain and mother of Ziaul Haq Swapan, senior sub-editor of The Daily Star, and Khademul Haq Suman, lecturer of the Department of Islamic History of Dhaka University.

Local lawmaker Asaduzzaman Noor expressed deep shock at the death of Sharifa Khatun.

# 12 mobile courts to enforce traffic law in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has pressed 12 mobile courts into service at 12 police stations in the capital to enforce traffic law, check sale of adulterated food and curb snatching and extortion.

The police stations are Motijheel, Ramna, Mohammadpur, Mirpur, Demra, Shyampur, Tejgaon, Dhanmondi, Pallabi, Kafur, Lalbagh and Khilgaon, said a circular issued by the home ministry yesterday.

The government decided to

introduce the mobile courts as it was elated at the performance of mobile courts during Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha, said an official of the ministry.

Other tasks of the mobile courts include seizure of defective and unfit vehicles, removal of illegal structures, setting up of traffic check-posts at important intersections and arrest of hoarders.

Besides, the courts will take stringent measures against stockpiling of merchandise and construction materials on roads, check illegal parking and halting of vehicles at

busy crossings, the circular added.

Twenty-five mobile courts, pressed into service during Ramadan, fined over Tk 42 lakh, filed 6,000 cases on different charges.

The courts also arrested 29 people and seized 42 vehicles for

violation of traffic rules. They also closed two factories for producing adulterated food.

During Eid-ul-Azha, the government introduced more than 12 mobile courts in the city to check extortion from cattle traders.

## DHAKA TODAY

### Best films of 2002-03

Zahir Raihan Film Society will screen some of the best films in world cinema of 2002-03. The films are: 'The Hidden Half' (2001) by Tahmineh Milani (Iran), 'Till Human Voices Wake Us' (2002) by Michael Petroni (Australia), 'Russian Ark' (2002) by Aleksandr Sokurov (Russia) and 'Lilya 4-Ever' (2003) by Lukas Moodysson (Sweden). Venue: German Cultural Centre, Dhanmondi. Time: 2.00pm, 3.45pm, 5.30pm and 7.15pm.

### Film show

Academy Film Society will screen an American film titled 'In Bed with Medonna'. Venue: Society auditorium, 21/ C Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

### Painting exhibition

As part of its fortnight-long programme to observe International Mother Language Day, Bangladesh National Commission for Unesco, in association with Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy organises a painting exhibition Venue: BIAM auditorium. Time: 11.00am.

### UNAB seminar

In observance of International Mother Language Day, United Nations Association of Bangladesh will hold a seminar. Venue: Scout Bhaban, Kakrail. Time: 4.30pm.

### Photography exhibition

The opening ceremony of annual photography exhibition of Aalok Group of Photographers will be held. Venue: Drik Gallery, Dhanmondi. Time: 5.00pm. A total of 120 photographs will be

on display. The exhibition will remain open till February 29 from 3.00pm to 8.00pm daily.

### Recitation

Muktak Padabali organises a session of poetry recitation with Partha Ghosh and Gouri Ghosh of Kolkata as guest reciters. Venue: Liberation War Museum, Segun Bagicha. Time: 6.00pm.

### Lecture

The Centre for Advanced Research in the Humanities of Dhaka University organises a lecture on the 'Life and works of Bonoful' by Dr. Sorojmojon Mitra, a former professor of Jadavpur and Kolkata University as guest speaker. Venue: Lecture Theatre of Dhaka University. Time: 4.00pm.

### BELA workshop

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, in collaboration with the Judicial Administration Training Institute, organises a workshop on 'Environment, Environmental Law and Justice.' Venue: CIRDAP auditorium, Topkhana Road.

### Lawyers' seminar

A seminar on the 'Role of lawyers in combating crimes', organised by Jatiyatabadi Jubo Ainjibi Oikya, will be held. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4.00pm.

### Inauguration

The inauguration of Basundhara Branch of Viqarunnisa Noon School will be held with Education Minister Dr M Osman Farruk as chief guest. It will be followed by a cultural function. Venue: Basundhara R/A. Time: 10.30am.