

Skop's ultimatum to govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sramik Karmochari Oikya Parishad (Skop) yesterday gave an ultimatum to the government to implement its demands by February 10.

At a rally at Muktaging in the city, Skop leaders said they would declare fresh programme on February 12 if their demands were not met by that time.

The government signed an agreement with the Skop on January 10 last year pledging its implementation within the next four months.

The demands included declaration of minimum wage for the employees, formation of labour code, re-opening of all closed mills and factories, and not to shutting down any industries in future.

Skop leaders also demanded payment of salary and festival bonus for the workers before Eid-ul-Azha.

"Eid brings joy for the people of upper class, but sorrow for us as we are not paid even our small amount of money on time to celebrate the festival with our relatives," said Jatiya Sramik Jote Bangladesh President Mezbah Uddin.

"The workers are living an inhuman life being deprived of their basic rights," said Skop Coordinator Dr Wazed Islam.

Sangujka Sramik Federation General Secretary Md Mokaddem Hossain, Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal General Secretary Jafrul Hassan, Jatiya Sramik League General Secretary Roy Ramesh, Trade Union Kendra President Nurul Islam and Labour Federation General Secretary Delwar Hossain Khan also spoke at the rally.



UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief Asma Jahangir exchanges views on current state of politics and human rights in Bangladesh with Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina at Sudha Sadan yesterday.

Rickshawpuller gets 32 yrs for throwing acid on wife

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court Saturday sentenced a rickshawpuller to 32 years' rigorous imprisonment for throwing acid on his wife.

Judge Md Quamrul Hossain Mollah of Fifth Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court handed down the verdict on convict Md Chhahir Uddin alias Kaltu.

According to the prosecution, Kaltu threw acid on his wife Sufia Bibi on the night of January 22 last year when she was sleeping at their rented house at Nayagram solum in Kamrangirchar area, severely burning her throat, chest and hands.

The reason for the acid attack was that the rickshawpuller tried to engage his wife in immoral activities, but she refused to do so.

The victim's father Mohammad Nasir Uddin of Bogra filed a case with Kamrangirchar Police Station under the Acid Control Act on February 1. And the investigation officer pressed charges against Kaltu on April 3.

Special Public Prosecutor Ilias Shah Ratan appeared for the state while Advocate Mahbubur Rahman defended the accused.

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'Electoral reform a must to ensure fair election'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Electoral reform making the election commission (EC) transparent and accountable is a must to ensure free and fair election, said the speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

They said independence of EC, depoliticisation of bureaucracy and education of voters can curb the influence of black money in the national election.

The roundtable on 'Total reform of electoral system and our role' was organised by the Communist Party of Bangladesh at the National Press Club in the city.

"The EC itself is a major source of corruption in the election process. Political appointments in the commission, lack of internal democracy in the political parties and the greed of the political leaders to cling to power have made the situation really bad," said Prof Muzaffer Ahmed.

He said political parties are not interested in registration as in that case they will have to be accountable to the EC.

"Godfathers of the criminals, looters and the corrupt businessmen, who can provide huge money, get the nomination for election. That is not election, but the victory of black money," said Dr Kamal Hossain.

He urged all to set people-oriented agenda and thus forming a mass movement to eradicate the criminalisation of election.

"The rule of law is totally absent in the country. I myself conducted many surveys that revealed that the police do not accept the first information report of the opposition political parties," he added.

Former secretary Rezaul Karim said the political parties pledge to reform the EC, but do not initiate it when in power because they want to return to power by influencing the

body. Justice Golam Rabbani said reform of the EC alone cannot make the election fair, rather political parties must involve the people with their movement and explain them of the nation's real need.

Awami League presidium member Tofail Ahmed admitted that criminal activities and influence of black money play a strong role in the election.

"The honest people are no more in the politics today, and taking that advantage corrupt politicians, who have no background of politics are dominating it," he added.

Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasnul Hui Inu, Hunger Project Director Dr Badul Alam Majumder, CPB General Secretary Muzahidul Islam Selim and Dhaka University Prof Asif Nazrul also spoke.

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