

Wage movement for professional freedom

Bhuiyan urges journalists

BSS, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General and LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday urged the journalists to wage a movement for professional freedom and expression of their opinion.

"The newspapers are free, but the journalists are controlled by their employers," he said while he speaking at the installation ceremony of the newly-elected committee of Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) here.

Information Minister M Shamsul

Islam, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed, Mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Huq Inu and Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim also spoke.

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil and president member Tofail Ahmed also attended the function with DRU President Shafiqul Karim in the chair.

Bhuiyan said many have brought out newspapers to make fortune and become editor-owner without having any background in journalism. But this practice should be stopped and a professional journalist must fill the post of an editor, he said.

Shamsul Islam said the government believes in press freedom and it has already ensured it. This government has never thought to curb freedom of the press. He also said the sixth wage board would be announced soon for the newspaper industry.

KPC BOMB BLAST

No progress in investigation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police here could not make any progress in the investigation into the Khulna Press Club attack case.

Seven out of eight arrestees are being quizzed by IO Asaduzzaman Faraze also Sub-Inspector of Khulna Police Station. The remand period of seven arrestees will expire today.

When asked, a senior officer of Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) said important clues have been obtained from the seven arrestees about the bomb blast during the interrogation.

DU exams postponed

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka University authorities have postponed all examinations scheduled for February 14 and 15 under its course and traditional systems, except for Post-graduate Medical Science and Research Faculty, due to unavoidable circumstances.

Fresh dates of the examinations will be announced soon, said a DU press release yesterday.

Khulna journos stage sit-in

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna journalists staged sit-in on the press club premises from 11:30am to 12:30pm yesterday protesting bomb attacks on Monday night that left four newsmen injured.

Former Additional IG of Police Abdur Rahim Khan and former Police Super Ataul Gani Badsha expressed solidarity with the sit-in programme.



PHOTO: STAR

Members of Shabdhartha, a poetry recital organisation, recite a poem at a programme marking the Ekushey February at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday. Sammilita Sangskritik Jote organised the programme.

'Awareness a must for proper waste disposal'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday stressed the people's participation and awareness as the main vehicle for proper primary waste disposal.

"Primary waste collection is the responsibility of individuals, not the Dhaka City Corporation," said Sohel Faruquee, chief conservancy officer of the DCC.

"But as we do not have the

capacity to place dump bins in front of every house, there should be a systematic collaboration among residents, community-based organisations (CBO) and the city ward officials," he added.

The seminar on Solid Waste Management was organised to share the outcome of a primary waste collection experiment in Mirpur ward No. 6 and ward No. 65 in Lalbagh, implemented by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) and the DCC. They embarked on the project on July 15 last year to explore an effective and sustainable method.

The seminar was geared towards an audience of ward commissioners from across the city as the project will be expanded.

Mamtazur Rahman Chowdhury, a representative of the Ward 6 committee, suggested fixing the garbage collection time, regular coordination meetings among the CBO, ward commissioner and the residents and the separation of household waste into two categories.

Chowdhury believes 50 percent of the local residents will cooperate in primary waste collection during the first year of the project and by the fifth year, the ward will be free from solid waste pollution.

A representative of ward 65 agreed and stressed that even

distribution of services is necessary.

JICA officials called for introducing the wheelbarrow on narrow roads and modifying the rickshaw van for optimal waste collection.

An organogram was also presented to assign different responsibilities for DCC, JICA, the ward Committee, CBO, primary waste collectors and residents.

However, the system will be decentralised so that the primary responsibility falls on the communities, the DCC officials said. DCC official Sohel Faruquee presented a ten-year goal, highlighting the need for guidelines, training manual, tools and financial support for the primary waste collectors.

He also called for a monitoring system over primary collection service providers.

Many ward commissioners expressed encouragement and commitment to the programme, although some expressed reservations about suggested funding methods such as microcredit.

Responding to this concern, Faruquee said, "Primary waste collection is sustainable through motivational training; money is not required for community work."

JICA officials hope that an effective waste management can be implemented in all 90 wards by 2012.

BAN ON RICKSHAWS

WB threatens to stop fund

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Banning rickshaws in the capital seems to have stumbled after the World Bank has threatened that it will not fund the programme unless the affected rickshawpullers are offered with safety-net schemes and more buses are introduced on the banned patches of routes.

"We have had a study done on the impact of the rickshaw ban. It showed although traffic system improved substantially because of the ban, it shrunk the income of the rickshawpullers by 30 percent and increased cost of commuting of the passengers," said Guang Z Chen, sector manager, transport, South Asia Region, yesterday.

"We have asked the government to take mitigation measures on these two issues by March 31 and suspend any more ban before the steps are taken," said Chen. "We will not support the Dhaka Urban Transport Project unless these measures are taken."

He said the second phase of the ban imposed in December last was supposed to incorporate the mitigation measures, but this was not done accordingly. Of the total 120km roads supposed to be off-limits to rickshaws, only 9km have been made free of the non-motorised vehicle. This has

adversely affected 9,000 rickshawpullers, Chen said.

He said the Bank has communicated its position to the government and the Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) and Dhaka City Corporation will meet in a few days to decide on mitigation measures.

Chen admitted that the safety-

net programme for the rickshawpullers would be a difficult one to chalk out but said retraining and micro-credit interventions could be the best solutions.

So far, the Bank has supported the DUTP with about \$85 million and is willing to continue its funding, if the mitigation measures are taken.

HABIGANJ CARNAGE

2 BNP men remanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two ruling BNP activists arrested in connection with the January 27 Habiganj grenade carnage were placed on a five-day fresh remand yesterday.

The arrestees -- Shah Alam of Shughor village in Laskarpur union and Joynal Abedin Jalal of Abdabkai village of the same union -- were produced before the Habiganj District Magistrate's Court yesterday on expiry of an eight-day remand.

The two, arrested on February 2 and brought to Dhaka on February 8

for quizzing by the Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC), were sent back to Habiganj yesterday.

Meanwhile, Abdul Quiyum, vice president of Habiganj district BNP and president of Zia Gabeshana Parisahd (Zia research council), and Joynal Abedin Momin, a BNP activist of Boilderbazar in Habiganj, are still being quizzed by the JIC, sources said.

Moreover, intelligence agencies in the capital are quizzing Zahedur Rahman Zahid, general secretary of Awami League Laskarpur union unit, who was picked up from Boilderbazar on Monday.