

Judges-lawyers cooperation a must for HR protection

Dr Kamal tells seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent lawyer Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday called for greater cooperation between judges and lawyers to protect human rights at the individual level as well as in society.

Cooperation between the media and human rights organisations is also vital to ensure human rights, he said at a seminar on 'The role of media in Public Interest Litigation (PIL) and advocacy'.

"When I joined the Supreme Court as a young lawyer in the 1960s, there was a great understanding and activism among lawyers and judges on the question of protecting human rights," said Dr Kamal.

The Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) organised the seminar at the National Press Club.

Referring to the rise in human rights violations, Dr Kamal, the chairman of the Blast, said the number of writ petitions filed with the High Court has increased markedly nowadays, compared to the previous time.

Those who have taken the oath to uphold the constitution are now becoming the violators of the constitution, he regretted.

Referring to the deaths in 'crossfire', Dr Kamal said, "The state minister for home himself is violating the constitution although he took an oath to uphold it."

Speaking as special guest, noted journalist Altaus Samad said, "We are passing through a bad time due to prevailing confrontational politics."

The newspapers cannot cover many important events as the political scenario has become confrontational, he added.

"Politics has now become power-based and that's why the political parties are desperately running after power keeping aside all principles," said Aatus Samad, the advisory editor of the daily Amar

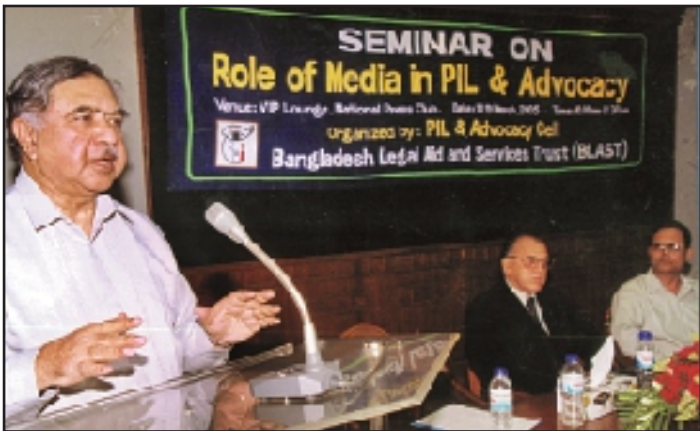


PHOTO: STAR

Eminent lawyer Dr Kamal Hossain speaks at a seminar on 'Role of media in Public Interest Litigation (PIL) and advocacy' at the National Press Club yesterday.

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He also pointed out that the political leaders engaged themselves in corruption soon after assuming power.

"After assuming power, they (politicians) always think how to become rich. Even their family members also start plundering the country's wealth," he said.

Justice Naimuddin Ahmed, vice-chairman of Blast, said it is not possible to focus on public interest litigation without the help of the media.

"The media persons should be careful while writing about the court and they should not write anything which may tarnish the image of the judiciary," he said.

He also said the definition of contempt of court should be applied carefully.

Giving references to some cases, he said, "The courts are sometimes influenced due to pressure created by the media. In some cases, it was seen that an accused received capital punishment, instead of minor punishment, just

because of the role of media."

Describing the deaths in 'crossfire' as custodial deaths, Justice Ahmed said every custodial death must be investigated properly.

Terming the custodial deaths illegal, he said it is the duty of law enforcing agencies to give protection to the arrestees.

The speakers suggested forming a monitoring cell comprising media persons and human rights activists in order to monitor the public interest litigation.

They also proposed setting up a separate bench in the High Court for quick disposal of such cases.

Moderated by Manzurul Ahsan Bulbul, executive editor of the daily Sangbad, the seminar was also

addressed by Shah Alamgir, chief news editor of Channel-I, Zayadul Ahsan, chief reporter of The Daily Star, Provash Amin, chief reporter of the Prothom Alo, Golam Mortuza, executive editor of the Weekly 2000, and Faruk Kazi, senior correspondent of the United News of Bangladesh.

India implementing river-link project tactfully: IFC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International Farakka Committee (IFC) has alleged that India is tactfully implementing its river inter-linking project keeping Bangladesh in darkness.

Speaking at a press conference, IFC Chairman Eusufzai said water of the Brahmaputra would be obviously extracted even though the project is not implemented in the Eastern Zone.

The press conference was organised at the National Press Club in the city yesterday after the IFC's two-day long march towards Chilmari in Kurigram in protest against the project.

The IFC is a New York-based environmentalist forum of Bangladeshi expatriates.

The IFC leaders said they are planning to go to the international tribunal against India's move to implement the IRLP violating interna-

tional water conventions.

"India has already dug up canals in the Southern Zone and is now digging in Guzrat and Hariyana," said Dr SI Khan, a former UN expert on environment.

He said there are loopholes in the speeches made by the Indian water resources minister in Kolkata and its high commissioner in Dhaka.

SI Khan urged the government not to 'fall in the trap of India's clever diplomacy'.

IFC Secretary General Syed Tipu Sultan said there can't be any bilateral discussion on the rivers that flow over more than two countries.

He called for multilateral agreement on trans-boundary rivers in cooperation with China, Nepal, Bhutan, India and Bangladesh basing on the international conventions with the United Nations as guarantor.

Death anniversary of Rumi today



release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his residence at 125 Monipuri Para after Asr prayers today.

Bangladesh Sports Journalist Association will also hold a milad in remembrance of Rumi, a former president of the organisation, at its office at 3:00pm on Sunday.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend both the programmes.

Missing



Md Soheli, 11, has been missing since February 15, says a press release. He left the house following an altercation with his parents. He is four-foot tall and has a fair complexion. If anybody finds the boy, he can contact the following address: Md Abdur Rahim Khan, 22/1-B Golapbagh, Dhaka-1213. Mobile No. 0176896979.

Call for more investment in agriculture

Int'l seminar on food policy Mar 13

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Food policy experts from home and abroad will gather at an international seminar in Dhaka on March 13, with a call to put agriculture high on the reform agenda.

Washington-based International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) and Bangladesh Rice Foundation (BRF) are jointly organising the event at Sonargoan hotel.

The seminar on 'Food policy in Bangladesh: Issues and perspectives' will put special focus on the need for placing agriculture high on Bangladesh's reform agenda, new agricultural strategy against the targets set under the Millennium Development Goal (MDG), food trade and aid flow, said M Syeduzzaman, BRF chairman and former finance minister, at a media briefing yesterday.

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman will be present as chief guest at the first working session while Agriculture Minister KM Anwar and Food and Disaster Management Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf will attend two other sessions as chief guest.

Titles of the sessions are 'Food security: Emerging issues and challenges,' 'Bangladesh's agricul-



PHOTO: STAR

Former finance minister M Syeduzzaman, centre, addresses a media briefing at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

tural strategy: New perspective,' and 'Disaster management: Safety nets and nutrition interventions.'

IFPRI Director General Dr Joachim von Braun, Director General of BIDS Dr Quazi Shahabuddin and Senior Research Fellow of IFPRI Dr Akhter Ahmed will present three keynote papers at the seminar.

Syeduzzaman, who is also a member of the IFPRI 2020 International Advisory Council, said that although the last one decade saw a marked rise in per capita food intake and the GDP growth rate was over five percent, more public sector investment is needed in agriculture particularly when the challenge is to

produce more food in less farmland for increasing population.

Dr Quazi Shahabuddin underscored the need to re-think the sustainability of rice-led growth in Bangladesh's agriculture while Dr Akhter Ahmed of IFPRI cast light on food-aided social safety net programmes like vulnerable group feeding (VGF), vulnerable group development (VGD), food for education (FFE) and School Feeding.

Member of the BRF Board of Trustees Reaz Ahmad also spoke at the briefing held at the National Press Club. BRF Treasurer Dr Sadiq I Bhuiyan and Executive Director Md Mazharul Haq were also present.



(Top) Zonta Club-III President Fahmida Karim, sitting third from right, and other members of the club and (bottom) students of the Sishu Bikash Kendra celebrated Zonta Rose Day on March 8.

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