

FOOD ADULTERATION

'Introduce capital punishment for dishonest traders'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka-based rights organisation yesterday demanded introduction of capital punishment for dishonest traders responsible for the adulteration of food items and mixing toxic chemicals with fruits, fishes and vegetables.

A law to this effect should be passed in parliament in order to safeguard the lives of the people, said Abu Naser, president of Paribesh Bachao Andolon, terming such traders the enemy of the nation.

He placed the demand at a press conference organised by the Citizens' Rights Movement (CRM) at the National Press Club in the city.

The leaders of the organisation also demanded introduction of the 'Consumers' Right Act' which was drafted in 1992.

They called on the government to continue the mobile court operation against adulterated food and unhygienic conditions in food factories. The mobile court led by a metropolitan magistrate has recently launched a crackdown on food shops, restaurants and hotels selling adulterated food items and preparing foods in unhygienic environment.

"These unscrupulous traders should be sentenced to death and their property and assets be seized," said Tushar Rehman, convenor of the CRM, in a keynote paper.

But at the same time, the law enforcers should be careful so that no honest traders are punished, he

added.

Unscrupulous traders always mix toxic chemicals with fishes, meats, fruits and vegetables and harmful colours with food items, which poses serious health hazards, said the leaders at the press conference.

They also suggested forming a platform with civil society members and representatives from NGOs and the government in order to check such illegal practices.

Policy for fibre optic lines on rlys, roads, highways soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to formulate a policy guideline for setting up optic fibre lines on railways, roads and highways that aims at increasing government revenue, creating competitiveness among the private telecommunication companies and providing modern communication facilities to the people at cheaper rates.

A recent meeting at the Ministry of Communications with the Minister Nazmul Huda in the chair took the decision and formed a high-powered committee comprising officials of Bangladesh Railway and Roads and Highways Department to make specific recommendations about this, sources said.

The committee has been asked to submit the draft report within ten days.

Some private telephone companies are using the optical fibre lines on the railways, but due to lack of comprehensive policy guidelines, the government is deprived of expected revenues.

Bangladesh Railway has already signed an agreement with a private telephone company for providing the optic fibre line service for 20 years without having any policy guideline.

The policy guideline is expected to bring the government a handsome amount of revenue from the private telephone companies.

Newspaper hawkers submit memo to DMP commissioner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Newspaper Hawkers Welfare Multipurpose Co-operative Society Ltd yesterday submitted a memorandum to Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) commissioner demanding arrest of Sarwar Hossain and his accomplices.

Prior to submission of the memorandum, they held a rally at Mukhtangon in the city yesterday demanding exemplary punishment to the criminals.

The leaders at the rally said "Sarwar Hossain alias Kala Sarwar, leader of an inter-district gang of robbers, and his accomplices looted cash and valuables from the association's central office on June 29." There are a number of cases in different police stations against Sarwar, they said.

The criminals cut tendon of a leg of an employee named Md. Rafiq Ahmed and assaulted many others during the robbery, they said. Rafiq is now fighting for life in hospital.

The leaders said the criminals are giving threat to kill them for withdrawal of the case.

"We the workers are very poor and we earn money by selling newspapers from door to door. But a vested quarter is trying to exploit us in many ways making our life insecure, said Syed Md Ismail, founder president of the association, in his presidential speech.

Association General Secretary Jalal Ahmed Jiadi, Morshed Alam, Md Bachchu Miah, Md Dulal Hossain and Nurul Huda Abdullah also spoke.

The rally was followed by a procession that paraded different streets in the city.



Sammita Ainjibi Samannaya Parishad forms a human chain on the High Court premises demanding appointment of judges on the basis of merit.

SCBA demands suspension of special judge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Supreme Court Bar Council (SCBA) yesterday demanded suspension of Mohammad Rezaul Karim Khan Chunnun, special judge of Dhaka Division, for his involvement in politics.

In a statement, SCBA President Mahubub Alam and Secretary Enayetur Rahim said Chunnun, also the secretary general of Judicial Association, is attending political rallies which is creating a negative impact on the judiciary.

"Despite being a sitting judge Chunnun is taking part in political programmes organised by the ruling BNP in Kishoreganj district and expressing his desire to contest the next general election," said the statement.

"It is very unfortunate that the government is silent about this matter although reports on Chunnun's involvement in active politics have been published in newspapers," it added.

The statement said the law ministry should take immediate departmental action against the special judge.

Vested quarters trying to divide nation in name of religion

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The national identity of the country has been at stake as some vested quarters are trying to divide the nation in the name of religion, speakers at a roundtable said yesterday.

The national identity of Bangladesh is based on Bengali nationalism, not on religion, they said.

The Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (Bilia) organised the roundtable at its auditorium in the city, with its Director Waliur Rahman in the chair.

Presenting a keynote paper, Dr Smruti S Pattanaik, a research fellow of the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis of India, said,

"Islamic parties are now emerging as the third force that will in the long run be a problem for Bangladesh."

The minority groups in Bangladesh are considered vote banks of the Awami League and they face problems when other parties come to power, she said.

Dhaka University teachers Dr Imtiaz Ahmed and Dr Sonia Nishat Amin and cultural personality Aly Zaker also spoke.

Dr Imtiaz said the Bengali nation loves peace and prefers democracy but hates religious fanaticism.

The Islamist extremists do not represent the face of real Islam, said Waliur Rahman.

Workshop on diabetics concludes

A three-day training workshop on "Diabetic Mellitus" ended yesterday at Birdem auditorium in the capital jointly organised by Diabetic Association of Bangladesh and University of Oslo, Norway, says a press release.

Prof. AK Azad Khan, president of the association, presided over the closing ceremony while Norwegian Ambassador Ad Lise Norheim was present as chief guest.

The three-day workshop started on Monday at Brac centre in Gazipur.

Prof AK Azad Khan, Prof Graham A Hitman, Prof Samad Shera, Prof Hajera Mahub, Prof Akhter Hossain, Prof Kishwar Azad and Dr C Sneholota presented research papers on the first day of the workshop.

Researchers and physicians from Norway, UK, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh took part in the workshop.



Bangladesh Hotel Restaurant Sweetmeat Sramik Federation stages a demonstration at Mukhtangon in the city yesterday demanding minimum wages and protesting arrest of its workers by the mobile court.

RU MUNNUJAN HALL Security of female students demanded

RU CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of different student organisations of Rajshahi University yesterday demanded security of the female students at Munnujan Hall as there was apparently no administration at the dormitory for the last two days.

They said there has been a vacuum in the hall administration following the resignation of the hall provost and all house tutors after a probe committee blamed them for their failure to stop violence at the hall a couple of days ago.

RU authorities said the resignations were not valid and the teachers intended to resign should ask the Provosts Council, not the vice chancellor.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Progressive Students Alliance (PSA) expressed concern over the authorities' reluctance to bring back normalcy at the hall.

They warned that the authorities have to bear responsibilities in the case of any untoward incident.

Provost Prof Irin Ara Lucy yesterday said they did their best to quell the violence, yet students confined four teachers for 11 hours. "It was not fair that the probe committee criticised our ability", she added.

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal's (JCD) female activists went on the rampage inside the hall in the early hours on July 31 as they were blamed for beating a student.

VC Prof Altaf Hossain said he is taking necessary steps in this regard.