

Frequent bails encourage crimes in society Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Frequent bails to miscreants and terrorists considering political and religious affiliations encourage crimes in the society, said the speakers at a workshop yesterday.

They said negligence of investigation officer, intentional passive role of public prosecutors, submission of fake documents in the courts and non-applying of courts' discretion are also responsible for granting easy bails.

The workshop on 'Law and practice relating to bail, administration of justice and areas of intervention' was organised by Power and Participatory Research Centre (PPRC) at LGED seminar room in the city.

The speakers comprising, jurists, public prosecutors, researchers, NGO activists and journalists suggested formation of a separate investigative cell in police stations and ensuring adequate securities for the witnesses for proper dispensation of justice.

They said 'moving lawyers'

must be one of the sureties in cases like murder and rape and suggested imprisonment of the sureties or suspension of their bar membership for a specific period in cases of their failure to pay penalty of bail.

The speakers suggested increased salary and facilities for the prosecutors as there is allegation against them of taking bribe in moving cases.

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed said bail laws would be reviewed for necessary amendments if needed.

He said one should not be granted bail without a hearing from the other side.

Moudud also suggested a permanent public prosecution service.

He said because of weak investigation the conviction is very low.

Presenting the keynote paper Dr Asif Nazrul, professor of law department of Dhaka University, said out of 659 cases, 97 top terrorists including Subrata Bain and Tokai Sagar obtained bail in 512

cases.

He said out of 435 religious extremists including Bangla Bhai arrested before February 2005, 57 were acquitted of various charges and most of the others got bail.

Dr Asif said in May 1998, 41 extremists belonging to the Harkatul Jihad were given life imprisonment, but later all of them were given bail by the High Court.

Moderating the workshop, PPRC Executive Chairman Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman said the government has taken eight strategic agenda in the PRSP and criminal justice is one of them.

Terming the issue quite uncommon, he said it had never been researched before.

Law Commission Member Dr M Enamul Haque, Jurist Shahdeen Malik, Dhaka Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Abdullah Mahmood Hasan, Blast Coordinator Khandaker Abdul Mannan and World Bank Law Consultant Dr Syed Mynuddin Hossain also spoke at the workshop.

Expat killed by brother in Saudi Arabia

BNEWS, Jhalakathi

A Bangladeshi expatriate was stabbed to death by his younger brother at a town in Saudi Arabia on December 29.

The deceased was identified as Nazir Rahman, who hails from Krishna Kathi area in Jhalakathi.

Nazir was stabbed to death by his younger brother Yaad Hossain Ripon as a sequel to a dispute over money.

Saudi police arrested Ripon in this connection and it is thought that he has to face death sentence for the killing.

Nazir got married with Ajfa Begum the same area only six months ago.

Grief struck the family members of Nazir after they came to know about the sad incident.

'Recognise urban women migrant workers as labourer'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women migrant workers in urban areas should be recognised as labourer and have to be facilitated for organising themselves in order to secure their rights, said the speakers at a workshop yesterday.

They said the women workers coming from rural areas work mainly at garment factories, construction sites and houses as domestic help, and face problems at every step.

The workshop on 'Urban Migrant Women Development' was organised by Nagorik Uddyog, a human rights organisation, at its central office in the city.

The participants from different women's rights organisations discussed the problems of urban migrant workers and urged the government to take necessary steps to help them.

They pointed out that the women workers mostly become the victim of gender discrimination and get low wages for their labour.

"We have organised the first ever workshop on urban migrant workers to learn about their problems and we will seek help for them from the government and donors," said Nagorik Uddyog Chief Executive Officer Zakir Hossain while talking to The Daily Star.

He said the women workers must organise themselves to strengthen their power.

"Since these women are not educated enough to seeking legal aid, we will provide donor linkage to them," said Nagorik Uddyog Senior Programme Officer Md Faridul Alam.



Awami League leader Obaidul Kader inaugurates the 'Razakar Pillar', at Muktangan in the city yesterday to express hatred against the collaborators of occupation Pakistani forces.

'Major parties try to cash in on militancy issue'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Both the major political parties have been using the militancy issue as an election issue without taking the national interest into consideration, speakers at a discussion said yesterday.

"The major political parties will never reach a consensus on the militancy issue. So, we should try to persuade them not to make it an election issue," said Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Syed M Ibrahim Bir Pratik.

The daily Prothom Alo organised the discussion on 'Bomb attack, state security and the role of intelligence agencies' at a city hotel.

General Ibrahim also stressed the need to give the intelligence and law enforcement agencies more freedom to unearth the fact about the militants.

General people should be alert to the threat to national security, he said, adding that the media can play an important role in making them aware in this regard.

"As the election is nearing, both the major parties want to achieve political gains cashing in on the militancy issue," said Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Azizur Rahman Bir Uttam.

He urged the civil society members to be united as general people have confidence on them, not on the political parties.

There are no serious efforts to unearth the facts about the militants, he said, adding that the government also could not hold a single trial of any militant since the start of militant attacks in the country.

Criticising the home minister for his remarks that the crisis would be resolved within two months, Brig. Gen. (Retd.) Shahedul Anam Khan, a security expert, said, "It will be possible to uproot the militants only when we will be able to eradicate the ideology of Islamist terrorism."

A section of followers of Jamaat-e-Islami might have been carrying out bomb attacks after losing confidence on its leaders as they have failed to establish Islamic rule in the

last four and a half years, which is one of its main goals, he mentioned.

Maj. Gen. (Retd.) M Golam Qader stressed the need to form an independent counter-terrorism cell whose only task will be to monitor terrorist activities in the country.

He also called for modernising the madrasa education system.

Raising the question of the government's sincerity to curb militancy, Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Abdul Halim said, "Instead of checking the information given by lawmaker Abu Hena, the ruling BNP has expelled him from the party."

He also said such militant activities cannot be conducted without the assistance of neighbouring

countries.

Brig. Gen. (Retd.) Shakhawat Hossain said more attention should be given to internal problems than external problems to resolve the crisis.

He also called for making activities of the NGOs in the country fully accountable.

Expressing concern over repeated bomb attacks, former inspector general of police (IGP) ASM Shahjahan said there is no alternative to national unity in this critical period.

Matiur Rahman, editor of the Prothom Alo, was also present at the discussion.

People were insecure in last 4 years: Dr Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People were quite helpless and insecure during the last four years of BNP-led alliance government, said Dr Kamal Hossain, president of Gono Forum, at a discussion yesterday.

He said many innocent people were attacked by the extremists and the general people are passing their days under constant threat.

Dr Kamal was speaking as chief guest at the discussion organised to mark the 5th founding anniversary of Human Rights Implementation Society at IDEB conference hall in the city.

He said the countrymen fought against many adverse forces unitedly in last 50 years and brought victory, but they could not enjoy the fruits of their struggles.

"People are now ready to be united in the spirit of the libera-

tion war. We just need to go ahead with a determination to form an effective parliament consisting of people's representatives to whom they can rely," said Dr Kamal.

Major General (Retd) Subid Ali Bhuiyan presided over the discussion where former vice-chairman of Bar Council Barrister M Amir-ul-Islam spoke as special guest.

Amirul Islam said the rise of militancy has led the country to an unconstitutional rule where no trial or investigation could take place.

"It is time to work unitedly to resist the anti-constitutional, anti-liberation and anti-human rights forces," he added.

Former president of Supreme Court Bar Association Abdul Baset Majumder, Advocate Sahara Khatun and Advocate Abdus Sabur also spoke.



Bangladesh Garments Sramik Oikya Parishad stages a demonstration at Muktangan in the city yesterday protesting government's failure to protect workers' rights at WTO ministerial in Hong Kong.

4545 die in different incidents last year: HR reports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different human rights organisations in their annual reports yesterday said 4545 people were killed in different incidents and 538 people committed suicide across the country last year.

The reports also showed that 599 women and children were raped in the country last year.

Odhikar, a human rights organisation, in their annual report said 62 people were killed in bomb and grenade attacks, 396 died under the custody of different law enforcement agencies and 310 were killed for political clash.

A report of Bureau of Human Rights Bangladesh (BHRB) on human rights violation and law and order situation all over the country from January 1, to December 31, last year said 2773 were murdered in the country. Among them 438 were murdered in terrorist activities, 523 women and children died of repression and 194 were lynched.

The report disclosed that 322 people were killed in 'cross' fire with different law enforcement agencies and 53 prisoners and arrestees died in jail and police custody.

The report also said that 430 people committed suicide and 4420 died in different accidents throughout the country.

The Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR) in their annual report showed that 4545 people have been killed in bomb attacks, terrorist activities, acid burn, abduction, dowry, political rivalry and police custody.

The BSEHR report also said 599 women and children were raped in the country last year and 5953 people died in different accidents and natural disasters.

About 538 people committed suicide for different causes. Of them, 315 were women, 183 were men and 36

were children. Four women killed themselves after being victims of rape.

According to Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) 87 people died in jail and police custody across the country and 60 died of bomb attacks.

The report also said 377 people died in 'cross' fire with the law enforcement agencies.

CU Eid vacation begins today

CU CORRESPONDENT

The sixteen days of Eid vacation for the students of Chittagong University (CU) begin today.

Students of different dormitories started leaving the campus from yesterday to enjoy the vacation.

The classes will resume on January 17.

However, the offices will remain open till January 7. The administration works will resume on January 16.

Bomb hurled at Ctg mess, 2 women hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Two women were injured when some unidentified hoodlums hurled a bomb at mess at South Middle Halishahar in the city yesterday morning.

The injured are Nasima Akhtar, 28, and Morsheda Begum, 14, who worked as maids at the mess belonging to one Mohammad Iqbal. Mainly garments workers and some bachelors reside in the mess at Kuri Pukurpar.

Witnesses and police said the incident took place at around 10:00am when the two maids were cooking in the kitchen.

"Suddenly, I saw that an object, which was thrown from the nearby graveyard, landed on the kitchen floor and exploded with a bang. As smoke began to fill the room, I fell unconscious," said Nasima, who received injuries in her hands, legs and face.

But she could not say why the bomb was thrown and who were the targets. Nasima is now undergoing treatment at Chittagong Medical College Hospital while Morsheda, who was slightly injured, received first aid treatment.

Bandar police took Morsheda to the police station for interrogation.

A team of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized the parts of the bomb and hundreds of pieces of spikes from the spot.

Syeduzzaman, Irshadul new BRF chairman, vice-chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former finance minister M Syeduzzaman and former secretary Irshadul Haq have been re-elected as Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Bangladesh Rice Foundation (BRF) for a 3-year term.

The election was held yesterday at the annual general meeting of BRF at its Lalmatia office in the city.

Members of the BRF Board of Trustees and its general members were present at the AGM. The other elected office bearers of the Foundation are: M Mazharul Haq (Executive Director), Dr Sadiq I Bhuiyan (Treasurer) and Dr Md Nazmul Huda (Secretary).

The BRF, an agricultural research funding foundation, is affiliated with the Asia Rice Foundation (ARF).



Awami League presidium member Tofail Ahmed speaks at a discussion at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left are AL leaders Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and Rashed Mosharraf.

Process on to grant amnesty to JMB men

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underway to grant amnesty to the militants in a bid to use them in favour of the BNP-Jamaat coalition in the next elections.

Militants are kept in comfort in the name of 'long-time remand' and they would be released prior to the next election to be used against the opposition, the 14-party leaders said at a press briefing at AL's central office on Bangabandhu Avenue.

"Militant kingpins will not be arrested as the process of granting general amnesty to militants is underway," AL General Secretary and 14-party co-ordinator Abdul Jalil said at the briefing.

Jalil posed a question why it would take 119 days to grill military wing chief of the Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) Ataur Rahman Sunny and 89 days to grill Mufti Hannan when both of them confessed their guilt.

He described the BNP-Jamaat ruling coalition as the main patron of Islamist militants, and said the government is protecting the militants to ruin the country's democratic process.

The AL general secretary called upon the prime minister to stop the force of so-called 'remand' and 'TV drama' acted by the militants.

"Resignation of the government is the only way to solve the present crisis," Jalil said, urging people to strengthen the ongoing anti-government movement.

AL Presidium Member Tofail Ahmed said instead of recording confessional statement of Ataur Rahman Sunny under Section 164, the government is staging drama on the TV by airing statements of militants.

"There will be no legal value of the statement of the arrestee after the four-month remand," said AL

leader and lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta.

He said the present government would not try the militants, as they are the masterminds of militancy in the country.

Defying the reform proposals, the government has completed a blueprint for the next election, Gonotri Party President Nurul Islam said.

He expressed fear that the militants will be used to harm the ongoing movement and in the upcoming electioneering with a view to conduct the election as per the blueprint.

Opposition leaders Abdur Razzak, Mainuddin Khan Badal, Syed Jafar Sajjad, Obaidul Quader, Dilip Barua, Mazful Islam Khan Kamal and Anisur Rahman Malik were present at the briefing.

60 shanties gutted in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some unidentified miscreants set fire to a slum in the city in the small hours of Saturday.

A fire brigade source said around 60 shanties were burnt to ashes.

On information, the firefighters went to the spot at Uttar Mandla and doused the fire by 4.25am.

Sabujbag police however said the fire originated from an electric short circuit.

None was injured in the incident.

One beaten to death in Fatikchhari

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

A gang of miscreants beat a man to death at Fatikchhari upazila here on Friday night.

The victim identified as Mahmudul Haq Chowdhury, 32, is the younger brother of former upazila chairman Mujibul Haq Chowdhury.

Police said the incident took place at around 9.30pm at Chowdhurypara in Heyanko union when Mahmudul was returning home from a nearby BDR Camp. The gang stopped his motorbike and swooped on him with iron rods and wooden sticks.

The criminals fled the spot leaving him critically injured. Local people rushed him to the Feni Sadar Hospital from where he was shifted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) as his condition deteriorated. He succumbed to his injuries at 12.30am.

A case has been filed in this connection accusing topnotch criminal Babul and others.

Babul, formerly a BCL cadre and now linked with ruling party politics, is the chief of notorious Babul Bahini, sources said.

Family sources said Mahmudul in the recent past helped police and forest department seize huge forest woods, being smuggled by the Babul Bahini, and this might have a link to the murder.

None was arrested in this connection till filing of this report yesterday afternoon.



Sheltech Award announced

Noted Dramatist Montaz Uddin Ahmed and Film Director Shubhash Dutta were nominated for Sheltech Award 2005, says a press release.

Each award comprises prize money of Tk 50000 and a crest.

Sheltech introduced the award in 1998 to honour the distinguished persons of the country.

The award will be accorded in a colourful function on March 12, 2006 at the VIP Lounge of the National Press Club in the city.



DCAB executives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

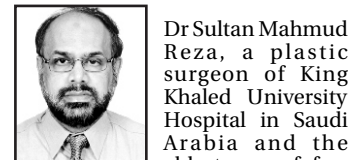
Anis Alamgir of the daily Aker Kagoj and Masud Karim of the daily Jugantar have been elected president and general secretary of the Diplomatic Correspondents' Association Bangladesh (DCAB) for the year 2006.

The election was held at the annual general meeting of the DCAB at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday with outgoing President Shamim Ahmad of UNB in the chair. All the office-bearers were elected uncontested.

Other office-bearers are: vice president - Shaikh Enamul Haq (daily Sangram), Treasurer - Mashudul Haq (daily Manabjamine), Members - Mahmuda Chowdhury (daily Dinkal), Imran Alam (daily Naya Diganta) and Rezaul Karim Lotus (The Daily Star).

Chairman of the Election Commission Hasan Shaharir (Executive editor of the daily Ittefaq) announced the result of the election. Farid Hossain (Bureau Chief, AP) and Shaikat Mahmood (General Secretary, Jatiya Press Club) were the other members of the Election Commission.

Obituary



Dr Sultan Mahmud Reza, a plastic surgeon of King Khaled University Hospital in Saudi Arabia and the eldest son of former Secretary M A Rashid, passed away due to brain hemorrhage at his workplace on Friday at the age of 50, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, two sons, mother and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

All have been requested to pray for salvation for his departed soul.

WEATHER TODAY logo with sun and cloud icons.

Moderate fog likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry and moderate fog may occur over the river basins during early morning over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 28.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 7.5 degree Celsius at Srirangal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:23pm today and rises at 6:42am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Table with columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.

DHAKA TODAY Human chain Book launch New year cultural programme