

Juvenile justice system in chaotic situation

Reveals study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The juvenile justice system in the country remains in a chaotic situation as there are dozens of judgements convicting the youth offenders under the Children Act 1974, although there cannot be any punishment to children under 16, says a study.

“Our scrutiny of the cases and judgements by different trial courts, tribunals and juvenile courts clearly indicate a chaotic state of law and its understanding by different judges and courts,” said the study on 10 juvenile offenders at two correction centres in Tongi and Jessore.

Conducted by Supreme Court lawyer Shahdeen Malik, the study titled ‘Impact of state intervention on children in conflict with the law’, was disseminated at a discussion at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

Save the Children UK and Department of Social Services organised the discussion.

There are now 170 detainees who have been kept at Kishore Unnayan Kendra (KUK) (Juvenile Correction Centres) in Tongi and Jessore.

The study said there have been a number of recent state interventions including expansion of facilities at the KUKs, establishment of

more such centres, instructions to police for more child-friendly treatment, but with little impact as of today.

The child offenders, who should be tried in the juvenile courts and rehabilitated in the society, were sentenced to life-long imprisonment or so, said Shahdeen Malik, also a teacher of Brac University, while presenting his study.

Such judgments clearly indicate that there is a clear lack of understanding about the purposes of Children Act suggesting that neither the bar nor the bench is aware of the Children Rules, 1976, he said.

“More alarmingly, even where the judges pronounced themselves as the judges of the Juvenile Courts, they ignored the elementary provisions of the Children Act,” Malik added.

Justice Fazlul Karim said it is unfortunate that the cases of the juveniles are tried in the ordinary courts instead of juvenile courts.

It is the most important thing to identify the age of the juvenile offenders, he said, adding that the magistrates should ascertain their ages to ensure the justice.

“The police should be given more training for this and every magistrate’s court should have a protection officer,” said Justice Karim, who was the chief guest at

the discussion, and added that those who use the children for criminal activities should be given stringent punishment.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Jalal Ahmed said because of various state interventions, the number of cases being produced in juvenile offenders has reduced compared to what happened just two years back.

“Our problem is identification of ages which is done by the police. And no child is produced before the court whose age is shown lower than 16 in the police report,” he added.

Jalal said absence of a correction centre in the city however prompts the court to send some juvenile offenders to the jail emphasising the need for having probation officer at thana level and more training for the police.

Director General of social services department Hafizul Islam Mian said poverty, lack of love and affection, and familial crises lead juveniles to crimes, and they should be taken care with more attention.

Justice Iman Ali and Save the Children UK Head of Programme (Protection) Advocate Habibunnesa also took part in the discussion chaired by Secretary to social welfare ministry MA Hye Howlader.



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia along with party leaders and activists offers prayers at a doa mahfil and discussion programme marking the 71st birth anniversary of late president Ziaur Rahman. BNP organised the programme at the Institution of Diploma Engineers in the city yesterday.

Shaheed Asad Day observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation observed Shaheed Asad Day yesterday commemorating the supreme sacrifice of Asaduzzaman Asad, a student leader, during the mass upsurge of 1969, which culminated in independence.

Asad, a final year MA student of the history department of Dhaka University, was killed on January 20, 1969 when police opened fire on a procession brought out by the Students Action Committee for realisation of the 11-point demand.

Shaheed Asad Parishad observed the day with elaborate programmes and placed wreaths at the memorial to Asad in front of Dhaka Medical College Hospital and at his grave at Shibpur in Narsingdi.

Bangladesh Chhatra League, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, Chhatra Sangram Parishad, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal, Bangladesh Chhatra Maitree, Bangladesh Gorib Mukti Andolan and former leaders of Dhaka University Central Students Union paid homage to Asad by placing wreaths at the memorial and held discussions.

Jatiya Party, Bangladesh National Awami Party (NAP), Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Mukti Andholon and Bangladesh

Sammyabadi Dal (M-L) also held discussion in the city.

The speakers said the sacrifice of Asad at the height of the mass movement expedited the fall of military ruler Ayub Khan and intensified the Bangali nationalist movement, which eventually led to the emergence of independent Bangladesh in 1971.

They lamented that the dream of establishing a non-exploitative, non-communal and democratic Bangladesh for which Asad sacrificed his life still remains unfulfilled.

They blamed the major political parties for obstructing the flow of democratic process in the country for the sake of personal interest.



Shaheed Asad Parishad places wreaths at the memorial to Asad near Dhaka Medical College Hospital in the city yesterday to mark the Shaheed Asad Day.