

Dhaka should sign UN convention on refugees

Says UNHCR official

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh should immediately sign the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, said United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Representative in Dhaka Priti Phiri yesterday.

"This gives a legal framework and certain rights for the protection of the refugees. This is not emotional, but an obligation," she said while addressing a training programme organised by the UNHCR for the local journalists at a city hotel.

The signing of the convention will also give Bangladesh a weight and good will in the international arena, Phiri said, adding that she is trying to meet the foreign adviser sometimes this month in this regard.

She appreciated Bangladesh's decision allowing involvement of

other UN agencies in the refugee camps at Kutupalong and Ukhia in Cox's Bazar, enhancing the informal education from class five to class six and constructing new houses for them.

According to UNHCR, around 26,000 Rohingya refugees have been living there for the last 15 years.

A total of 236,599 Rohingyas have been repatriated since 1992, when an influx of refugees began from Arakan in Myanmar following religious and political persecutions.

"The refugees in the camps are living in a very deplorable situation, which must be improved," the UNHCR representative told the journalists.

"The best solution for them is returning home, but we, as a humanitarian organisation, must take care while they are in exile," she added.

Right to movement and work

also should be allowed for their empowerment, Phiri said, adding that learning certain skills and languages will also help them for resettlement.

She noted that the government of Canada has already accepted 23 Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh and 13 of them reached there last year.

The refugees of many countries however cannot fulfil the requirements of the receiving countries, which have annual quota for accepting refugees, Phiri said. The empowerment of the refugees through education and skills is, therefore, important for their resettlement, she added.

UNHCR Senior Regional Public Information Officer Kitty McKinsey of the Bureau for Asia and the Pacific and its Bangladesh Deputy Representative (Protection) Francis Tech conducted the training programme.

DMCH finally gets four ambulances

UNB, Dhaka

Believe it or not, there hasn't been any ambulance at the country's premier institution of healthcare Dhaka Medical College Hospital since its inception way back in 1946.

Gone are those days now, as the caretaker government provides a cure for the DMCH's chronic problem. Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday approved four ambulances for the country's biggest public hospital.

According to an official, the 1700-bed DMCH has got no ambulance service to bring emergency patients from different areas for saving their life.

It has been learnt that there was no provision of including ambulance in the requirement list of the hospital. Although health ministry allotted four ambulances earlier, the hospital authorities could not operate those for lack of guidelines for operational cost and maintenance of ambulance.

According to Health Ministry sources, initiatives had been taken to provide ambulance to the hospital since 1982, but the efforts "went in vain" for the legal sophistries.

The matter came to the chief adviser's notice and he took a quick action to heal the ills caused by legal complications as well as a mechanistic view of the law.

Extortionist arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested a notorious criminal at Nilkhel in the city yesterday.

The arrestee was identified as Shahadat Hossain Khokon, who allegedly used to extort money from the traders of Nilkhel area.

Khokon's gang hijacked Tk 50 thousand from a trader of Bakushah market two days ago. However, the mob caught Mithu, younger brother of Khokon, and handed him over to Lalbagh Police Station.

Later police arrested Khokon on the charge of mugging yesterday.

It is learnt that Bakushah market traders caught Khokon on January 30 while taking extortion money and handed him over to Nilkhel police.

He came out on bail recently and again began to extort money, traders alleged.

Schoolboy killed in road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A schoolboy was killed in a road accident on Dhaka-Aricha highway in Baniajuri Bus Stand area at Ghior in Manikganj yesterday.

The victim, identified as Rubel, son of Abdul Kader of Gilondo village, was a student of class X of Baniajuri Union High School.

Sources said the accident occurred at around 10:00am when the boy was crushed under the wheels of a Paturia-bound speeding bus while he was crossing the road on his way to the school.

However, police could neither seize the bus nor arrest its driver.

Obituary

Haji Bibi Mariam, mother of Anwar Hossain, an eminent businessman of Comilla, passed away on Thursday at the age of 91, says a press release.

She was buried at their family graveyard at Ghoshnagar near Comilla Cantonment on Friday.

Her qurkhani will be held after Asr prayers today.

Death anniversary

Today is the 16th death anniversary of Principal Abul Kashem, one of the architects of the Language Movement, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at Bangla College in the city at 10:00am today.

Abul Kashem initiated the language movement by forming 'Tamaddun Majlis' just after 17 days into the birth of Pakistan.

He even formed a Sub Committee of Tamaddun Majlis and other committees fight for establishing Bangla as the state language.

He presided over the first student rally in Dhaka University in 1947. As a member of the law commission, he first proposed Bangla as the state language and as the medium of education, which was later included in the first constitution of Pakistan.

Principal Kashem also played an important role in founding the Bangla Academy and was the founder of Bangla College.

He won Independence Day prize in 1993, Ekushey Padak in 1987, Bangla Academy Award in 1982 and Islami Foundation Award in 1988 in recognition of his contributions.

A dormitory of Bangla College and the road in front of the college is named after him.



PHOTO: STAR

Baridhara Society organises a clean-up campaign in the city yesterday to save Baridhara Lake from pollution.

CABLE TV SHOW BEGINS IN CITY

'Satellite channels have brought changes to people's life'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Satellite television channels have brought changes to the people's life, and as such further investment should be encouraged in this sector, business leaders said at the inauguration ceremony of the Cable TV Show-2007 yesterday.

They also criticized the Indian cable operators for not transmitting Bangladeshi satellite television channels for their audiences.

"As the Indian cable operators are not transmitting programmes of Bangladeshi satellite channels on some flimsy excuses, we have to decide on banning Indian channels," said Mir Nasir Hossain, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), as the chief guest.

Cable Operators' Association of Bangladesh (COAB) organised the three-day show at Bashundhara City Shopping Mall with a view to promoting their activities and having an

interaction among the satellite audiences, cable operators and satellite channel authorities.

The FBCCI president said that in this era of free market economy, there should not be any double standard regarding business and trade. It is very disappointing that despite having a common language, programmes of our channels are not shown in Kolkata, he added.

Nasir also assured the audience that the FBCCI would take necessary steps so that the government declares this sector as an industry.

While talking about the restriction of Bangladeshi channels in India, a spokesman for the Indian cable TV sector said programmes of Bangladeshi channels are not shown in India due to lack of proper marketing policies.

"Moreover, Indian audiences are not aware of such enjoyable programmes of Bangladeshi channels," said Binod Sancheti, president of Indian Cable TV Equipment Ltd.

Traders and Manufacturers Association (CTMA).

The major Indian channels have offices and marketing policies here while Bangladeshi channels have no such activities there, said Sancheti while talking to The Daily Star.

Mohammad Ali, first vice-president of FBCCI, SM Anwar Parvez, president of COAB, and its Secretary General Nizam Uddin Masud also spoke on the occasion.

A total of 33 organisations, including representatives of satellite channels, cable operators and cable equipment traders from home and abroad are displaying their services and products at the show.

The show is open for all from 10:00am to 7:00pm daily.

Local satellite channels like ATN Bangla, Channel i, Rtv, ETV, Bangla Vision, Boishakhi, S tv, and foreign channels including Al-Jazeera, ESPN Star Sports and Star India Pvt Ltd are taking part in the show.

Concern over death threat to Adviser Matin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mukti Joddha Sangsad yesterday expressed deep concern over a death threat to liberation war affairs ministry Adviser Maj Gen (Retd) MA Matin and his family members by certain quarters.

In a joint statement, Sangsad Chairman Principal Abdul Ahad Chowdhury and Secretary General Md Alauddin Ahmed said freedom fighters of the country welcome Matin's firm stand against the criminals, corrupts, godfathers and black money holders.

The freedom fighters would not tolerate any conspiracy against Matin, the statement added.

They also demanded immediate identification of those involved in issuing the death threat and their exemplary punishment, the release added.

Youngone to expand factory in CEPZ

UNB, Dhaka

South Korean company Youngone (CEPZ) Limited will expand its 5892 square meter factory area in Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ).

An agreement to this effect has been signed recently between Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza) and Youngone Limited.

Bepza Member (investment promotion) M Farhan Uddin and Youngone Managing Director CS Sohn signed the lease agreement for their respective sides.

Bepza Executive Chairman Brig. Gen. Ashraf Abdullah Yusuf, Member (Finance) Akmahabur Rahman, Secretary M Ali Akbar and General Manager (Investment Promotion) AZM Azizur Rahman, and Vice President of Youngone Group ASA Noor were, among others, present at the signing ceremony.

Youngone, a 100 percent foreign owned company, will also enhance investment by another \$5 million.

Youngone Group is operating 16 units in the EPZs of Bangladesh.

Rab nabs four, seizes 276 bottles of Phensidyl

Bss, Rajshahi

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab)-5, in separate drives arrested four alleged criminals, including two drug peddlers, and recovered 276 bottles of Phensidyl from different areas Friday night, Rab sources said here yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of the elite force conducted a raid on Tangon area under Motihar Police Station in the city and held two young drug-peddlers along with 276 bottles of Phensidyl.

The arrestees were identified as Jibon, 24, son of Inzar Ali and Selim, 23, son of Mosharraf Hossain. Both are the residents of the same locality.

In two other separate drives, the elite force picked up two absconding accused from Rangpur and Gaibandha districts. They are Lummi Chandra Das, 32, and Belal Sarker, 27.

The arrestees along with the seized goods were handed over to the concerned police stations.

152 sacks of urea fertiliser seized

Fake aluminium factory unearthed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

However, owner of the pharmacy Abdur Rob fled away.

DU signs MoU with Hiroshima University

Dhaka University (DU) and Hiroshima University (HU) yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on 'Academic and Educational Exchange', says a press release.

Under the MoU, students, teachers, researchers, administrative officers, journals and information would be exchanged between the universities.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Fazil and HU President Dr Taizo Muta signed the MoU in the city while DU Pro-VC Prof AFM Yusuf Haider, Director of Institute of Education and Research (IER) Prof Iqbal Aziz Mutaki, Prof Hideo Ikeda, Dr Taquya Baba and Norihiko Suzuki were also present.

They sealed the factory and seized huge amount of electric wire.

In another incident, police seized date expired medicine from a pharmacy at Baligaon Bazar at Tongibari upazila.

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Workshop

The inaugural ceremony of 'National capacity building workshop for blooming global initiative to reduce tobacco use', organised by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in association with World Health Organisation, will be held. Venue: Conference room of the ministry. Time: 10:30pm.

Launching ceremony

The launching ceremony of 'Bangladesh Country Environmental Analysis', jointly organised by Ministry of Environment and Forest in association with the World Bank, will be held. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 2:30pm.

Discussion

Bangladesh Adhikar Odhikar Andolon and Action Aid Bangladesh will hold a discussion on 'Violence against women and the rights and dignity of indigenous women'. Venue: WVA auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

Award giving ceremony

Sheltech will give away Sheltech Award 2006. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4:30pm.

Condolence meeting

International Centre for Study of Bengal Art (ICSA) will hold a condolence meeting to mourn the death of Prof Abu Imam. Venue: ICSA Library. Time: 4:30pm.

WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is also likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna and Sylhet divisions.