

Enact special law to curb domestic violence

Experts tell BNWLA consultation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts at a consultation yesterday called for enacting special law to combat domestic violence.

They said there must be a strong legislative platform where women can seek justice against the crime.

The existing laws are not enough to deal with different forms of domestic violence, they added.

The national consultation titled 'Combating domestic violence: The way forward' was held at the Brac Centre Inn in the city.

Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) organised the consultation on the eve of the second phase of its programme 'Combating Domestic Violence' with the support of Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF).

In her welcome speech, BNWLA Executive Director Advocate Salma Ali said like many countries of the world, women in Bangladesh also face violence at home, which is not possible to address within the

existing legal framework.

She suggested for such an act that will be able to change the attitude of the society towards domestic violence.

Presenting a keynote paper jointly, Sadru Hasan Majumder, programme manager, and Advocate Fawzia Karim Firoj, acting president of BNWLA, underscored the need for community mobilisation to check domestic violence.

They said community counselling centres should be established in collaboration with the local governments in both urban and rural areas to address domestic violence.

MJF Director Rina Roy called for ensuring accountability at all levels along with the enactment of a legislative framework to combat domestic violence.

Rangita de Silva, senior adviser to International Programmes of Wellesley Centre for Women, USA said the definition of domestic violence is no longer confined to

physical violence, now the term incorporates mental, verbal and sexual torture of women.

She also suggested that the language of the law should be reader-friendly so that all can understand the law easily.

Ferdous Ara, member of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee, said special act should be enacted to eliminate violence against women at all levels.

She urged the authorities concerned to take strong stance against domestic violence like the ongoing anti-corruption drive.

She also called for taking initiatives to train up other stakeholders to combat domestic violence.

Nasrin Begum, joint secretary to the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Maleka Begum, visiting professor of women studies department, and Prof Sadeka Halim of social science department at Dhaka University also spoke on the occasion.

BSF kidnaps Bangladeshi fisherman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtha

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) abducted a Bangladeshi fisherman from a border point in Kushtha yesterday.

He was identified as Bablu Biswas, 32, son of Rabban Biswas of Insannagar under Daulatpur upazila.

According to BDR 32 rifle battalion, a BSF team of 94-Katcarharpura in Nadia district of West Bengal entered into Bangladesh territory and picked up Bablu when he was fishing in the river Padma near the main pillar no 153 at Thotarpura border at about 9:15am.

BSF also seized his belongings including nets.

After the incident, BDR officials visited the spot and sent a letter to BSF protesting the incident and asking for a flag meeting.

BSF, however, did not give any reply to the letter as of filing this report at 4:35pm.

According to sources, BSF abducted at least 60 Bangladeshis from different border points in southwestern region in last six months.

The abducted Bangladeshis included farmers, cattle traders, fishermen and innocent people.

Of the abducted, about 35 are still in different jails in India, and the rest were released after flag meetings between BDR and BSF.



PHOTO: STAR

Prof Hayat Mamud speaks at a discussion on 'Ongoing political reforms and the role of the civil society' at the Liberation War Museum auditorium in the city yesterday. On his right are Dr Syed Anwar Hossain and Ziauddin Tareque Ali and on his left is Adv Toarak Ali. Sammilito Samajik Andolon organised the event.

Caretaker govt urged to protect rights of people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a meeting yesterday urged the caretaker government to protect the rights of people.

They also stressed the need for maintaining link between the government and the civil society to carry out reforms in the society.

The view exchange meeting titled 'Political reforms: Role of the civil society' was organised by Sammilito Samajik Andolon, a citizen's platform, at the Liberation War Museum in the city.

In a keynote speech Ziauddin Tarik Ali, a trustee of the Liberation War Museum, said the ongoing drive is the retribution for corruption and abuse of power by the elected governments in the past.

He said major fundamental changes should be brought to political and social landscapes.

"But as it is a very lengthy process, so the government should determine some set of goals for immediate restructuring," he added.

Speaking as chief guest Prof Hayat Mamud called for concerted efforts to stop any further degradation of morality for the sake of a welfare society.

Pankaj Bhattacharya of Gonoform expressed his satisfaction over the activities of the government and asked them to be more cautious in their drive against corruption.

He said some of the anti-corruption committees at district level are consisted of former government's henchmen.

So far these committees will be successful in fighting corruption with these people in

chair?" he posed a question.

Major (Retd) Amin Ahmed Bir Bikram, however, observed that this government should carry on until the overall reform is achieved.

"The government should press ahead with its agenda for all-out reforms. The role of the army-backed government should be to bulldoze, we would form structures from the debris", he added.

He also criticised the role of the 'so-called' civil society.

Prof Shawkat Ara Hossain said if the citizens get annoyed with the unchecked price hike, the credibility of this government would be at stake.

She said the success the government has been dimmed due to constant price hike of essentials.

Garment workers block highway in N'ganj

UNB, Narayanganj

Garment workers put up barricades on Dhaka-Sylhet highway at Rupashi in Rupganj yesterday, demanding payment of salary arrears and overtime bills.

Witnesses said the workers of Shikder Apparel blocked the road as its management did not pay their salaries and overtime bills for the last two months.

During the hour-long blockade, the unruly workers also damaged a number of rickshaws.

However, they removed the barricades after the factory owner assured them of paying their salaries soon.

Heavy rainfalls cause sufferings to people in Khulna

UNB, Khulna

Heavy rainfalls under the influence of active monsoon for last few days caused untold sufferings to the people of this southern district.

Most of the city roads went under knee-deep water, forcing the dwellers to keep themselves inside the doors.

Most of the business establishments and educational institutions in the city remained closed.

The incessant rains damaged a large number of thatched houses and standing crops in the district.

Moreover, fishes were washed away from over 500 enclosures and ponds in nine upazilas.

Local Met Office recorded 108mm rainfalls in the district from 6:00am to 3:00pm yesterday.

5th unit of Ashuganj power plant resumes production

Bss, Brahmanbaria

The fifth unit of Ashuganj power plant, which remained out of order for the last one and a half years, resumed production on Friday.

Sources said the unit has started generating power after completion of the overhauling that began in December 25, 2005. The unit has already been supplying 50MW power to the national grid, which will gradually be increased to 150MW following the overhauling, they added.

Dhaka-Rajshahi direct rail link to resume soon

Bss, Rajshahi

Direct rail communication between Dhaka and Rajshahi will resume soon.

To this end, the inter-city 'Silk City' running between Rajshahi and Joydevpur was launched up to Dhaka Cantonment Railway Station from Rajshahi on a trial basis yesterday.

According to railway western zone officials, construction work on the dual-gauge line from Joydevpur to Cantonment Station has been completed successfully. Within a week, the direct rail communication is expected to resume on the route.

Meanwhile, an Indian train carrying a delegation will reach the Cantonment Station via Darshana Station in Kushtia tomorrow on a trial basis, the officials said.

The delegation is scheduled to meet with their Bangladeshi counterparts to discuss the matter relating to rail communication between Bangladesh and India.

Tk 10 lakh donated to AMCH

Habibur Rahman, former Director of Bangladesh Cricket Control Board and executive director of Pfizer Lab Bangladesh Limited, yesterday donated Tk 10 lakh to Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital (AMCH), says a press release.

He handed over a cheque for the amount to President of Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) Kazi Rafiqul Alam at the Mission Bhaban at Dhanmondi in the city.

A two-bed cabin of the hospital will be named after his wife late Farida Yesmain, a former lawmaker.

Managing Director of Medi Aid Hospital Dr Abdul Jalil, Assistant Director of DAM Abdur Razzak and other officers of the mission were present on the occasion.

Kazi Rafiqul Alam expressed his gratitude to Habibur Rahman for his kind support.

So far, about Tk 51 crore has been received from organisations and individuals in donations, he said.

The publication ceremony of a book titled 'Bangladesh Crisis' by Ambassador Kazi Anwarul Masud was held at BEI conference room in the city yesterday. The photo shows (from left) Mostafa Faruque Mohammad, Ambassador Masud, Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, Ambassador Abul Ahsan and M Shafullah holding copies of the book at the ceremony.

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