



HUMAN RIGHTS *advocacy*



LAWweek



Protecting tourist rights

MOHAMMAD SHAHIDUL ISLAM

SINCE tourism bears the identity of a nation's culture and heritage, it can be easily potential to innovate a brand image for Bangladesh. Except only desert, we are equipped with all natural characteristics and resources that are really rare in this age of deforestation and

eastern tourists. We have to admit that we have many a lacking in national infrastructure and superstructure.

But, for tourist behaviour and protection of tourist rights, we need not go for big plans. Tourist rights in Bangladesh are not formally protected. Observation shows, habitually tourists leave Bangladesh with some dissatisfaction. They become swin-

frequently found frustrating. They swell their dominance across the beach. They are aggressive instead of smiling and welcoming to the tourists. In many ways they harass the tourists. They stipulate impossible price for any enjoyment or entertainment or facility. Say, a low earning new couple feels fascinated to have a photograph against the sunset by the

complaints and deceptions. Most of the tourists halt in Dhaka. They are either foreigners or expatriates. Their centre point happens to be Dhaka mainly because they land at Zia International Airport. They get Dhaka as lounge from where they make their itinerary to visit other tourist's attractions across Bangladesh. They sojourn, shop and eat in Dhaka. The increasing number of complaints from them about local shops is categorically alarming for the proper growth of tourism and the country's image. The foreign tourists can be simply identified by their skin and language. The so-called taxi drivers, salesmen, non-branded hotel and restaurant staff always target to poach their dollars. The tourists feel often nervous. Taxi drivers or salesmen hike price on seeing the white or black skin. The non-branded hotel and restaurant staff insist for bizarre tips. These are smacking of the prospect of hospitality industry in Bangladesh.

Negligence to tourists by guides or custodians of museums, historical sites and monuments are also violation of tourist rights. Their whimsical and hypothetical analysis, not to pay much attention to tourist's interest, taking time to find out keys to open the door and to have tips for allowing tourist's entrance etc hamper the tourist's relaxed stamina for discovery.

The above scenario, however, are very common of tourism industry in under developed countries. But recently it knocks seriously on World Tourism Organisation that is all the time sincere to speak in favour of tourist rights since it believes in "Tourism enriches". Now most countries' tourism boards and councils are becoming more alert to protect tourist rights. Among our SAARC countries, Maldives has already initiated the scheme for protecting tourist rights. In the Midland city of Hong Kong, the price hiking for tourists has seriously been observed. The authority there has taken sweeping action against all mismanagement risky for tourist rights.

Bangladesh is also taking new steps in restoring its image in many respects. We have also good plan for tourism development. Measures for protecting tourist rights will definitely encourage a large number of tourists to visit Bangladesh. The country is really cheaper than other SAARC countries for tourism. For instance, Bhutan is so costly in tourism compared to Bangladesh. But they get thousands of western tourists yearly. They protect tourist rights through their culture and behaviour.

Though foreign tourists are not citizens

and logically they would not be entitled to many facilities what a citizen can easily enjoy but the picture is different in some African countries. They respect tourists like their own citizens. They have national tourist code of conduct. They value tourist rights sincerely.

The following hints may be helpful to protect tourist rights in Bangladesh:

- Agreeable definitions of foreign tourist and domestic tourist by the authority concerned
- The authority concerned of tourism may inculcate exact behaviour for tourists
- To ensure tourist satisfaction, extra services have to be available at tourist locations
- Enactment of tourist rights protection laws through a national council
- The district head should be assigned to monitor the local behaviour to tourists
- Inspection teams approved by the proper authority may often meet the tourists to ensure their satisfaction. If they find any anomaly, they will go for action against the shop or person or transport etc.
- Tourist rights protection would start from airport
- Websites for tourist facilities and shopping with approximate prices, rents and bargaining techniques should be updated
- Tourist markets would be monitored by the local law enforcement and administration agencies
- Public awareness should be kicked off through newspaper, television, brochures and posters
- Training, workshop and seminar on tourism and tourist rights for stakeholders

Pleasure does not last long when mind becomes disturbed. Tourism gives tourist the promise of pleasure and mental relief from chaotic life. Pleasure and mental satisfaction are important for tourists. The host country should ensure tourist service without creating any tension for tourists of being deceived in the course of irrational price, misguiding, misbehaviour, and underestimation of strangers, which are observed as threats to tourist rights. For sustainable tourism development and to keep positive image of Bangladesh growing, there is no alternative to protecting tourist rights now.

The author is Training Officer, National Tourism Organisation.



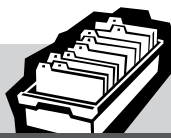
global warming across the world. Already Bangladesh has been competent to draw attention of thousands of foreign tourists for its unbroken longest sea beach Cox's Bazar, coral island Saint Martin and world heritage sites Paharpur and Sundarbans. Its daughter of nature Rangamati, law hill station Bandarban and green Sylhet also experience significant tourists' arrival yearly. In this backdrop, this is also true, we are not yet prepared well to receive and entertain self-motivated western and

died, misbehaved and served with no extra care. To whom the blame should go is truly baffling. If we personally become a bit careful to take care of tourists, our commitment to lift the image of Bangladesh will be greatly defended. At the same time, some national measures to protect tourist rights will be also effective to bring smile on a huge number of tourists for generating revenue.

In Cox's Bazar, the behaviour of local stakeholders even to domestic tourists are

beach mobile photographer. But the price is beyond their means. If they go for availing the photography facility, perchance they would not be able to come back home with the rest of money of their budget. As tourists, the couple have been deprived of their rights of enjoyment only because of foul and irrational price. This is just an example. There are many complaints from tourists on beach markets, local transportations, hotels and restaurants. Dhaka city is not also away from such

FACTfile



UNICEF warns on crisis facing Iraqi children

Iraq's children are facing an ever-worsening situation, a senior UNICEF official warned. Temporary gains in children's welfare were seen shortly after the U.S. invasion in 2003, but since then the indicators on nutrition and health access have declined sharply, said Dan Toole, UNICEF's director of emergency programs. The situation for Iraqi children is getting worse and, in some respects, was better before the war began, a senior UN official said yesterday.

"Children today are much worse off than they were a year ago, and they certainly are worse off than they were three years ago," said Dan Toole, director of emergency programs for the United Nations Children's Fund. He said Iraqis no longer have safe access to a government-funded food basket, established under Saddam Hussein to deal with international sanctions.

Toole said conditions for women and children in Iraq had worsened significantly since the February 2006 bombing of a Shiite shrine in Samarra, north of Baghdad, which triggered a wave of sectarian violence and displacement that continues today.



He added that gains made shortly after the United States toppled Hussein's government in 2003, when people were able to move around the country freely and had access to food markets and health centers, had been lost.

"Nutritional indicators, health access indicators are all changing for the worse," Toole said. He said recently published data showing improvement refer to the situation a couple of years ago and are outdated.

The system of government-sponsored handouts set up by Hussein's government to meet the basic needs of Iraqi citizens from 1991 to 2003, when the country was under UN sanctions started to fall apart last year, Toole said.

Apart from shortages of items such as milk and baby milk formula, "the basic Iraqi food basket was fairly secure under the regime because there was food coming in and the government provided the food basket to its citizens," he said. Toole could not say whether malnutrition has worsened significantly, but he said UNICEF was concerned by reports it has received from refugees fleeing the country.

Toole said that because of the violence, mothers were too afraid to send their children to school or take them to health centers to get check-ups and nutritional supplements.

Source: Associated Press.

FOR YOU information



RESOURCE CENTRE

Law and rights information made available

SHAFIUL AZAM

NOW-A-DAYS, resource centres are an inevitable part of city life. A resource centre is as information hub. Along with the usual library contents, it is enriched with awareness raising materials, IEC (information and educative contents) materials and BCC (behavioural change and communication) materials. It preserves audio-visual materials, information tools and keeps them in usable form. Another significant feature of Resource Centre is capacity building of both organisation and human resource. There are many resource centres in Dhaka city focusing on different issues.

National Anti-Trafficking Information Resource Centre (NATIRC): This centre was established in January 2000. Since then it has increased its collection of information resources gradually to enhance maximum dissemination of information. There are almost 700 printed materials including training manuals, research reports, case studies etc. The topics are on human trafficking issues, different forms of child rights violation, child labour, different forms of exploitation of children and women. There are quite a few IEC materials, BCC materials, anti-human trafficking awareness-raising documentary, movie and Drama etc. There are also posters, flip charts and brochures for children, adolescents and parents, campaign banner (digital), campaign logo (Bangla/English), leaflets, documentary films like "Destination Unknown" and "Chamel" on both VHS and CD. Interested persons may visit the following website: <http://www.atsecbangladesh.org> or may contact resource centre situated in Banani, House 11 (Flat # 3C), Road # 4, Old DOHS, Dhaka-1213.

INCIDIN Bangladesh (Insti-



gated Community and Industrial Development in Bangladesh): This Resource Centre has two dimensions a) Resources on Child Rights that includes research papers, books, video documentation and training modules on child rights. b) Publications on globalisation and rights of workers and farmers' livelihood security options. Resources are preserved in tow forms: (i) Permanent or Hard copy and (ii) Electronic or virtual version.

Users of this resource centres are postgraduate students, researchers, trade union organisations, child rights activists and farmers' organisation, different child organisations. It is enriched with publication from all over the world, fundamental books, newspapers and journals. Digital library is also accessible through PC including web access. There are facility of get both information and knowledge, make copy in both printed and electronic version. The INCIDIN Bangladesh resource

centre covers the areas of agriculture, economics, globalisations, history and culture, child affairs, poverty, social development, industry and labour, trade, gender issues, and land and laws. Interested persons may contact INCIDIN Bangladesh Resource Centre, 9/11, Iqbal Road, Mohammadpur, Dhaka- 1207.

BILS (Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies): This resource centre initiated its operation in 1998. It has a rich collection of books on labour issues, labour law history and culture. Thirty issues have been identified as related to working people including child labour and documented separately. Types of documentation are events related to working people published in daily newspaper, analysis of working people's relevant issues, publications on occupational safety and health, in-depth and fact finding report. There is also archives containing monthly publication "Shram Sangbad",

quarterly journals published by BILS. Some are digitised and keep in usable form. Resource centre is open for all from 9am to 5pm from Sunday to Thursday. Researchers and Intern from both national and abroad is user of it. Resource centre also provides facility of Internet browsing and seeing the digitised documents preserved in the archive. Mr. Mahmood Menon Khan, Information Officer, BILS, H # 20 (3rd Floor), R # 11 (New) 32 (Old), Dhanmandi Residential Area, Dhaka, May be contacted on phone: 8123868, Cell: 01711389585, E-mail: information@bils-bd.org / mmononk@yahoo.com. Web: www.bils-bd.org.

BNWLA (Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association): This organisation has a resource centre enriched with information on trafficking in persons, violence against women and children and many other issues. Its special features are sizable of collection of publications on legal issues. Besides, there are journals on violation/rights of women and children, newsletters, legal gazette, both national and regional judgments on and missing persons' information. Digital resources are on human rights, documentary film, acid violence, dowry, re-integration, safe shelter and camel jockey. The centre also preserves database on different kinds of rights violation, such as public violence, rape, acid violence, trafficking in persons and domestic violence. Access is open for researchers, postgraduate students, and development workers. Interested persons may contact phone Nos 8112858 / 8125866 / 8123060, BNWLA, Monica Mina tower, 48/3, West Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka 1207.

The writer is a Resource Centre Programme Officer, ATSEC Bangladesh.

27th BCS Exam

HC rule on PSC why viva voce was cancelled

The High Court issued a rule upon the Public Service Commission to explain why its decision canceling the viva voce results of the 27th Bangladesh Civil Service examination should not be declared "illegal". It also asked the PSC to show cause why its decision on holding a fresh viva exam should not be declared "without lawful authority". After hearing three similar writ petitions, filed by a group of aggrieved selected candidates, an HC division bench comprising Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman and Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury passed the orders. The rule is returnable in three weeks. -Unb, Dhaka, July 23.

Voter List

EC to knock now on voters' doors

The Election Commission (EC) has finally decided to assign its enumerators to make door-to-door visits for collecting particulars of eligible voters to simultaneously prepare the voter list with photographs, and national identity cards across the country. Prospective voters however will have to visit voter registration centres to have their photographs taken for the voter list. An EC announcement said over three lakh remunerators and supervisors will be recruited for voter listing. Besides, monitoring teams comprising more than five lakh locals including present and former representatives to different local government bodies and reputed persons will be engaged to help prepare the electoral roll. The EC Secretariat issued a circular asking election officials concerned to recruit enumerators and supervisors to start field level tasks for preparing voter list for Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) area next month. The same procedure will be followed in all other parts of the country, officials at the EC Secretariat said. Earlier, in May, the EC first announced that it would prepare voter list by setting up voter registration camps, and ask people to visit these camps. In the face of criticism, the CEC then said the EC was actively considering sending its enumerators for door-to-door visits to collect particulars of prospective voters. -The Daily Star, July 24.

Judiciary Separation

Govt gets five weeks to complete job

The Supreme Court (SC) granted the government five weeks for completing official formalities to implement separation of judiciary from the executive. The seven-member full bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Mohammad Ruhul Amin, granted the time following a prayer by the government seeking two months time for completing required administrative process. On May 7, SC directed the government to complete the process for implementation of separation of judiciary from the executive and to inform the court about its execution by July 19. The court had fixed July 23 for its further order regarding the whole process of judiciary separation. Giving the three-point directives to law, home, finance and housing ministries, the court on May 7 said required number of court-rooms have to be constructed for judicial magistracy in every district. The court also ordered creating posts of assistant officials and employees and giving appointment to the posts. Judges will have to be provided with other infrastructure and facilities along with their chambers and sufficient budget is to be allocated for the purposes. The Attorney General (AG) Fida M Kamal informed the court about the progress of completing required process according to the court directives. -The Daily Star, July 24.

Railway land for Sigma's HR body

Charges pressed against Huda

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) pressed charges against detained former communications minister Nazmul Huda for allocating a piece of railway land illegally to a human rights organisation run by his wife Sigma Huda. Meanwhile, a Dhaka court placed Huda on a three-day remand in connection with a case filed for extorting Tk 1 crore from an automobile dealership. ACC Assistant Director Mirza Azizul Islam, IO of the case, yesterday

submitted the charge sheet against Huda to the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka showing 27 people as prosecution witnesses. In his charge sheet, the IO said the charges brought against Huda have been proven primarily and he should be put on trial. On March 21, ACC Deputy Director (DD) Shafiqul Islam lodged the case against Nazmul Huda with Shahbagh Police Station saying that while Huda was at the helm of communications ministry, he adopted illegal means and abused power to allocate a piece of Bangladesh Railway land to an organisation - Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR) - run by his wife Sigma Huda. In the first information report (FIR), the ACC deputy director mentioned that Huda took Tk 2.4 crore in bribe for giving the land to BSEHR, where Sigma is the secretary general. -The Daily Star, July 25.

Checking price hike

Rab starts monitoring markets

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) started monitoring different wholesale and retail markets of fish and vegetables in the city to check price hike. The measures came in response to intelligence report that unscrupulous retailers sell vegetables at prices double those in wholesale market. A team of Rab-2 went to Karwan Bazar in the afternoon and talked to traders. They enquired about the prices of vegetables and fish and also wanted to know about middlemen, and other problems including toll collection and syndicate pressure. They sought cooperation from the traders in containing the spiralling prices of vegetable and fish. Sheikh Samsul Alam Bulbul, secretary of Karwan Bazar Vegetable Wholesalers Association, told The Daily Star, "The Rab men assured us of all-out cooperation and also sought help from us in checking the price hike." He said they have told the elite crime busters that there is no syndicate in the items that are perishable. But the middlemen can hike the prices. Rab members in plainclothes are monitoring wholesale and retail markets in the city so that the traders and others refrain from hiking the prices illegally, said a Rab official. Earlier they held a meeting with leaders of wholesale and retail market committees in the capital. -The Daily Star, July 25.

Hearing on Rangs Bhaban dispute begins in SC

The hearing of a government appeal against the High Court judgment on the dispute over demolition of the 22-storey Rangs Bhaban began at the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. In May 2000, the High Court in its verdict upon a writ petition filed by the Rangs Group declared the Rajuk notices illegal, saying that the construction of the Rangs Bhaban was done as per the plan approved by Rajuk following the terms and conditions. It further said the Rajuk notices canceling sanction of the plan and its other letters asking the petitioner to remove the construction beyond 6th floor have been issued without lawful authority. On the other hand, the present caretaker government in a meeting of the Advisory Council in April decided in principle to demolish the Rangs Bhaban on Old Airport road in the capital. When a five-member bench of the apex court took up the matter for hearing, Barrister Rafique-ul Huq, counsel for the Rangs Group, opposed the hearing and submitted that the hearing should be postponed until the state of emergency is lifted. The case involved enforcement of fundamental rights, now suspended under the state of emergency, he said. The Appellate Division bench, headed by Justice M Fazlul Karim, allowed Attorney General Fida M Kamal to make his submission for the government. -Unb, Dhaka, July 25.

Corresponding with the Law Desk

Please send your mails, queries, and opinions to: **Law Desk, The Daily Star** 19 Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215; telephone 8124944, 8124955, fax 8125155; email dslawdesk@yahoo.co.uk, lawdesk@thedailystar.net