

MEDIA CONFCE ON CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE ENDS

Call for greater legal protection for reporters covering conflict zones

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A regional conference on 'Media reporting -- Armed conflict and violence' concluded in the city yesterday, with a call for greater legal protection for reporters covering conflict zones.

The media has key responsibilities to present the public with both the human realities and statistics from conflict zones, so

that the people can make an informed choice to either denounce or defend conflicts, speakers at the conference said.

Senior editors and columnists from the Saarc countries attended the two-day conference organised by the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Dhaka University, Press Institute of Bangladesh and the International Committee of the

Red Cross at Hotel Sheraton.

Speaking as the chief guest at the concluding session, Foreign Adviser Iftekhar A Chowdhury said reporters covering conflict zones need to be more careful because the lines between combatants and non-combatants have blurred.

He said the UN has already been working towards building global consensus to ensure media

safety in conflict zones.

Iftekhar added that as democratic governments have to justify countless deaths for wars, it is up to the media to responsibly denounce or defend conflicts.

Saying that the reporting from conflict zones help shape minds, influence policies and create values, he added, "At all times, of course, the media must have the sense of responsibility as the primary guiding principle. For that, society and the state must ensure their fullest freedom."

ICRC regional delegation head, Vincent Nicod, told the session that reporters must put human beings back into the central concern to transcend mere statistics or narrow interests.

He said that reporters must ensure that big media companies are not allowed to decide what is good and bad in a conflict, by exploring all aspects of a conflict and give violence a human face.

Nicod added that humanitarian organisations, the public and governments, all must be made more aware of conflict zones in order to make a more informed choice.

Attorney General Fida M Kamal, PIB Director General Mridula Bhattacharya and Chairman of Department of Mass Communication and Journalism Shaikh Abdus Salam also spoke.



Foreign Adviser Iftekhar A Chowdhury speaks at the valedictory session of the regional conference on 'Media reporting: Armed conflict and violence' at Hotel Sheraton in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

People to resist Feb 15-like election: Motia

UNB, Dhaka

Bangabandhu Avenue. Juba League, the youth front of Awami League, organised the meeting in memory of those killed on February 15, 1991 would be possible in Bangladesh.

"Any farcical election is not possible in the soil of Bangladesh and people will resist any attempt of holding any such election," she said while speaking at a commemorative meeting at the party central office at

Referring to the stalled election of January 22 this year, Motia said the BNP-Jamaat alliance wanted to hold a "partisan election" to retain power.

Criticising Jamaat for its remark on the War of Liberation, she said Jamaat leaders are not repentant about their activities in 1971 against the interests of the country and its people. "All should remain alert and united against them and their evil designs," she said.

JSD General Secretary Syed Jafar

Sajjad urged the CG for holding the election as per the roadmap announced by the Election Commission. He was critical of various comments by Law Adviser Mainul Hosein and said people would give him a befitting reply in time.

Referring to Jamaat Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid's remark that there was no anti-terror force in Bangladesh before, nor now, he called it a 'great joke of 2007'.

Workers Party leader Fazle Hossain Badsha said Jamaat doesn't believe in Bangladesh and its Constitution. He urged the government to take action against Jamaat so the party could not participate in the coming elections.

The meeting was presided over by Juba League acting chairman Prof Mujibur Rahman.

Three to die for killing Dhamrai Maxi Owners' Assoc leader

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced three people to death for killing Borhan, secretary of Maxi Owners' Samity of Dhamrai bus stand, in July 2005.

The convicts are Mizanur Rahman, Sharif Hossain and Abdur Rahim.

Judge Mohammad Altaf Hossain of the Sixth Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court handed down the sentence in presence of the convicts.

After cross-examination of 24 prosecution witnesses, the court handed down the sentence.

According to the prosecution, on July 21, 2005, a gang of miscreants led by Mizan hammered the victim to death and dumped his body near Ladua Kundu Bridge at Kullah village in Dhamrai.

Following the incident, victim's mother filed a case with Dhamrai police accusing Mizan and two others. After their arrest, all the three had given confessional statements to a magistrate admitting their offences.

GRAFT CHARGE
Court order whether to indict SQ Chy tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

A special court that tries bigwig corruption suspects has set tomorrow for order whether it would indict detained Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, parliamentary affairs adviser to former

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, for corruption.

Judge Begum Shamunnahar passed the order yesterday after hearing the prosecution and defence lawyers.

On June 13, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed a case with Ramna Police Station against SQ Chowdhury, also former BNP lawmaker, for concealing wealth over Tk 1.17 crore in the statement submitted to the ACC.

He amassed wealth worth nearly Tk 9.50 crore beyond known sources of income, the ACC alleged in the case.

SQ Chowdhury, detained since his arrest by the joint forces in the first week of February, submitted his wealth statement through his wife.

BSTI to conduct 'hydrose' test on sugar samples

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sugar available in the market must be completely free from 'hydrose' as it is extremely harmful to human health and from now on, Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) will conduct tests to detect the presence of 'hydrose' in sugar.

An eleven-member expert committee headed by Director of Institute of Food Science and Technology (IFST) Dr KM Formuzul Huque took the decision at a meeting yesterday.

The meeting was held at the Bangladesh Council for Science and Industrial Research (BCSIR). The committee members included representatives from BSTI, BCSIR, Department of Public Health, Department of Food and the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC).

Recently, the BCSIR found the presence of high level of Hydrose, a substance used for bleaching textile cloths, in sugar imported from India.

Earlier, the BSTI conducted nine types of test on sugar samples, but there was no provision for tests to detect the presence of hydrose.

Talking to The Daily Star, IFST Director Dr KM Formuzul Huque said that they have tested 13 samples of Indian sugar and found the 220ppm Hydrose in these samples.

They also tested six samples of Bangladeshi sugar, but did not find any presence of hydrose, he said.

Experts, however, said hydrose is used in the production of plantation white sugar but it evaporates at the end of the production process.

Prof ABM Faruk of pharmacy department at Dhaka University said that if residue of hydrose remains in sugar, it would have fatal impact on human health, especially on children and pregnant women.

Consumption of sugar with hydrose would cause hyper acidity and prolonged use of such sugar would lead to ulcer and fatal disease like cancer.

Normally sugar with hydrose looks whiter, Prof Faruk said, adding that local sugar having no hydrose looks reddish or brownish.

Director General of BSTI Md Azmal Hossain said since most consignments of Indian sugar come into Bangladesh through land ports, sugar samples would be sent to them for hydrose test.

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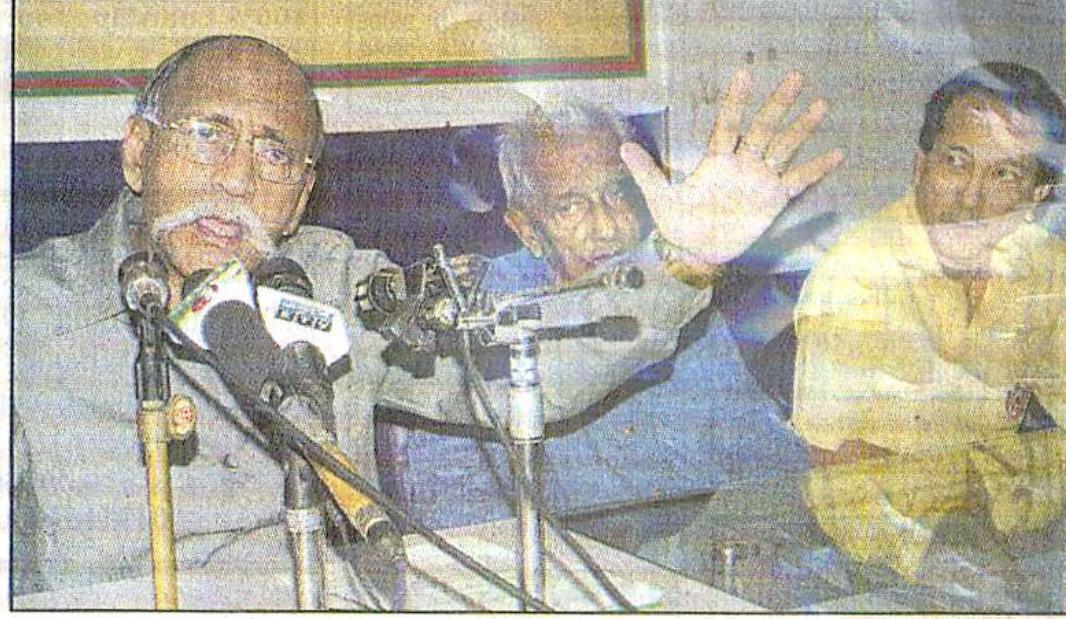


PHOTO: STAR

Maj Gen (Retd) Syed Mohammad Ibrahim addresses a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity in the city yesterday. On his left are Language Movement veteran Abdul Matin and Akku Chowdhury.

LACK OF IMMUNISATION

1.4m children under five die a year across globe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 1.4 million children under five across the globe die every year due to lack of immunisation, said the speakers at a press conference yesterday.

The press conference was organised by Dhaka Sheraton Hotel on its premises with the representatives of Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide and Unicef.

Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide, one of the leading hotel and leisure companies, has been carrying out 'Check out for children' programme with Unicef to help assist Unicef's immunisation programme worldwide for the last 10 years.

Dhaka Sheraton Hotel joined the programme a few years back, said the organisers.

The representatives of Starwood have come to Bangladesh to observe the ongoing immunisation programmes of Unicef, they added.

Sheraton General Manager Trevor MacDonald said 'Check out for Children' is a global partnership between Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide and Unicef.

The occupants of Starwood across the world are invited to donate

\$1 or its equivalent in local currency upon their check-out of the hotels to donate for the immunisation programme of Unicef worldwide, he added.

Dr Ilyolumun Usha, chief of health and nutrition of Unicef Bangladesh, said the check-out for children is an example of how small changes can make a big difference in the lives of children.

Voluntary contribution of a dollar by the hotel guests while checking out accumulated over \$16 million over the past 10 years, he said, adding the fund raised by Starwood Hotels Worldwide significantly contributed to Unicef's immunisation programme.

Bangladesh ranks among the developing countries where immunisation rates increased substantially during this decade, and we need to keep up the work by reaching those children who remain beyond the reach of routine immunisation, he further said.

Hwee Peng Yeo, director of Corporate Communications (Asia Pacific) of Starwood, said they are delighted to be here and to see the Unicef immunisation activities in Dhaka and Bogra.

MacDonald said like previous

years, Dhaka Sheraton would organise an event on November 9 where famous musical band Nagar Bauls (James) will perform and the sale proceeds from the event will be utilised to immunise children.

Carolyn Hardy of Unicef Australia also spoke on the occasion.



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