

INTERNATIONAL DISABILITY DAY TODAY

Ensure 5pc service quota for persons with disabilities

Speakers ask govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Persons with disabilities covering 10 percent of the country's total population have the right to get job, said the speakers at a convention yesterday.

They said the Public Service Commission (PSC) should ensure five percent service quota for physically challenged people.

The 3rd national convention on 'Right to work of persons with disabilities' was launched in 10 districts simultaneously on the eve of the International Disability Day 2007 today.

This year the theme of the day is 'Decent Work for Persons with Disabilities.'

The convention was organised jointly by Action on Disability and Development (ADD), National Council of Disabled Women (NCDW) and National Grassroots Disabled Organisation (NGDO).

At the inaugural ceremony of the convention at Shishu Academy auditorium in the city, PSC Chairman Dr Saadat Hussain was present as chief guest while Country Director of ADD Mosharraf Hossain, Director of Impact Foundation Monsur Ahmed Chowdhury, Director General of NGO Affairs Bureau M Alimussan, Director General of the Department of Social Service Hafizul Islam Mia, former president of BGMEA Anisul Haque, Chairman of FNB Dr Muhammad Ibrahim and NCDW Secretary Rokaiya Sultana Mayna were present as special guests.

Dr Saadat said the physically challenged people should be

brought into mainstream.

The quota system should be reconstituted and people with disabilities will get the chance to appear for 28th Bangladesh Civil Services (BCS) examination, he said, adding that 'people with disability are encouraged to apply' would be marked in application forms from now on.

"There is no quota system for around 1.40 crore physically challenged people although quota system is applicable for the children of freedom fighters, indigenous people and women," said Mosharraf Hossain.

Demanding amendment of PSC regulation he said there is five percent seats in civil services for the physically challenged people in India.

Highlighting the present scenario of deprivation of the physically challenged people in spite of having different laws the speakers placed their demands to ensure equal rights and participation of these people.

The demands include creating supportive environment for the people with disabilities in their workplaces, five percent quota system in industries and private

jobs, rehabilitation of the persons who suffer disability while in work, ensuring representation of the challenged people in the local and national development committees.

The speakers said a large number of people with disabilities do not even get the chance to go to school.

Those who are qualified enough to compete for civil service jobs cannot take part just for their physical limitations, they added.

To mark the International Disability Day, different organisations have taken up elaborate programmes.

Ministry of Social Affairs, Department of Social Services, National Foundation for the Development of the People with Disabilities and National Forum for the Disabled will jointly organise a discussion at Osmani Memorial auditorium.

Chief Adviser to the Caretaker Government Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed will be present as chief guest at the discussion titled 'Proper working environment for the people with disabilities'.

National Alliance of Disabled People's Organisations (NADPO) will organise a press conference at the National Press Club.

Pratibandhi Kalyan Samity will bring out a procession from the Homeopathic Degree College intersection to Bhashantek Bazar intersection.

Society for the Welfare of Autistic Children (SWAC) in cooperation with the Russian Centre of Science and Culture will organise a three-day Arts and Crafts Exhibition on this occasion.



PSC Chairman Dr Saadat Hussain addresses the 3rd national convention on 'Right to work of persons with disabilities' at Shishu Academy in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

‘Launch movement for trial of war criminals’

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Sector Commanders' Forum in a view exchange meeting yesterday said that their attempt to try the war criminals would definitely be successful.

"We will not fail this time. We cannot afford to fail," said Air Vice Marshal (ret'd) AK Khandaker while speaking at the view exchange meeting with country's noted cultural activists at WVA auditorium in the city.

"Since our [Forum's] first press conference in Dhaka, we got huge response from every corner of the

country," AK Khandaker said, adding that the spirit of so many people would not fail.

He urged pro-liberation forces to launch a well-coordinated movement.

Stressing the need for involving the younger generation with the movement, he said, "The accomplishment of our mission might take three months, six months, one year or more. We may not be available by that time. We have to prepare the young generation so that they can shoulder the responsibility to forge the movement ahead," said AK Khandaker.

War criminals should be punished for their double crimes, said General Secretary of Sammilita Sanskritik Jote Golam Kuddus.

"They committed genocide and at the same time they fought against Bangladesh after the Mujibnagar government was sworn-in on April 17, 1971. That is why they should be tried as killers and as traitors as well," Kuddus said.

Refuting the notion that it is too late to try the war criminals, General Secretary of International Theatre Institute, Bangladesh Ataur Rahman said, "It is not a belated move at all."

"If the war criminals of Second World War can be tried now, if Japan can seek apology from Korea now, then the venture to try the war criminals is not a late one at all," Ataur observed.

"It is injustice to expect everything from a single generation. Our generation won independence. Let the younger generation take the lead and accomplish the unfinished tasks," Ataur added.

"Our freedom fighters fought for our language, art, culture and for a secular state."

"But we failed to transmit the mission of our generation to the younger ones," he regretted.

President of Chhayanant Samity Khatun lamented that pro-liberation forces are not united, whereas the collaborators are.

Addressing the programme, Convener of the Forum Lt Gen (ret'd) Harun-ur Rashid said that they plan to hold meetings with the pro-liberation forces and form a national committee to wage a massive movement across the country for their cause.

Theatre and Television personality M Hamid conducted the meeting while President of Sammilita Sanskritik Jote Nasiruddin Yusuf, Udichi General Secretary Mahmud Selim, drama and theatre activist Ramendu Majumdar, President of Jatiya Kabita Parishad Habibullah Siraji, President of Group Theatre Federation Keramat Mouda, President of Pathanotok Parishad Mannan Hira, eminent journalist Faiz Ahmed and Member Secretary of the Forum Dr MA Hasan also spoke.

FFs' convention today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muktiyoddah Gono Parishad (MGP) will hold a convention of freedom fighters at the Institute of Engineers auditorium in the city at 3:00pm today demanding trial of war criminals.

Presided over by MGP President Ishiaq Aziz Ulfat, the meeting will be attended by hundreds of freedom fighters, said the organisers.

Language movement veteran Abdul Matin, political analyst Maj Gen (Ret'd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim Bir Pratik along with freedom fighters will address the convention.

Rescue my abducted husband alive

Wife's appeal to CA, army chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Wife of a Chittagong businessman yesterday alleged that owing to law enforcement agencies' negligence to investigation, the whereabouts of her husband Mozaffar Ahmed



Mozaffar Ahmed

could not be traced even 86 days into his abduction.

"If the accused were interrogated intensively, the mystery behind the abduction of my husband could have been unveiled and he could be rescued," said Jahanara Ahmed at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity Auditorium.

Their one son, two daughters and some relatives were also present at the press conference.

Jahanara alleged that after the incident police picked up one Zakaria Mintu who gave them some inconsistent information about the incident.

Later police released him and since then Mintu has been absconding, she added.

Jahanara urged the chief adviser of the caretaker government, army chief, home secretary and inspector general of police to rescue her husband alive and return him to his family.

She also urged them to ensure proper punishment to those who are involved in her husband's abduction.

Mozaffar, owner of Overseas Enterprise, has been missing since he went out of his residence at Agrabad CDA residential area on September 9 at around 9:00pm to go to nearby Vat Club.

Next day, a general diary was filed with Double Mooring Police Station in this regard and later on September 13 Jahanara filed an abduction case with the same police station accusing five people.

The accused are Zakaria Mintu, Nurul Amin, Mun, Mamun Ur Rashid and Jahangir Alam alias Kalachia.

Jahanara claimed that Mozaffar got a death threat from Mamun a garment businessman, and Jahangir, a criminal, over a disputed land on Badshaman Road in Chittagong city on October 4, 2006.

A general diary was lodged after the threat, she added.



Nurun Nahar, relative of an expatriate working in Malaysia, bursts into tears while narrating woes of her niece at a view exchange meeting at Dhaka Reporters' Unity in the city yesterday. On her right are Zahidul Sajjad, Md Shahidullah Prince and GM Rabbani Nayan.

PHOTO: STAR

CHEATED BANGLADESHI WORKERS IN MALAYSIA

Relatives demand compensation, trial of recruiting agent

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Relatives of 76 Bangladeshi workers, who took shelter at Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur following cheating and tortures by personnel of a recruiting agency, yesterday demanded immediate trial of the owner of the agency.

Addressing a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity in the capital, they also called for bringing the workers back home and giving them compensation for their losses.

The relatives of the workers said recruiting agency Kabir Enterprise sent 100 workers to Malaysia on March 3 this year charging Tk 2.5 lakh each and promising jobs in IH Technologies/TESCO/Carlsberg Beer in Malaysia, but in reality there was no such company.

The workers were kept confined in a room unemployed for one month and three days and then Kabir Enterprise's Malaysian agent Nazul handed them over to another manpower agent who employed the workers in a factory, said Advocate Nayan Bangali, president of National Youth Forum, on behalf of the relatives.

The Malaysian agent took away 70

percent of the salaries the workers drew, he said in a written speech, adding that they were also not provided with the documents that were necessary for their legal status in that South East Asian country.

"Kabir Enterprise hired goons who tortured the workers forcing them to take shelter at Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur on November 5," Nayan said.

In the context of these realities, documents of cheating the workers by Kabir Enterprise were submitted to the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment.

"The ministry then sent three notices to Kabir Enterprise ordering suspension of all its activities, but no legal action has been taken yet and no solution to workers' problems was provided," Nayan added.

Meanwhile, AHM Golam Kabir, owner of Kabir Enterprise, left for Malaysia in mid-November and shifted the workers from the Bangladesh High Commission premises to other places in three groups promising them to manage 4-month visas and jobs, but again confined them in closed rooms, he noted.

"Kabir's sub-agents and hired goons tortured the workers physically

and mentally. Seriously injured five workers were admitted to KL General Hospital while 71 workers somehow managed to take shelter again at the office of Bangladesh High Commission," Nayan said.

The relatives of the workers communicated with Labour Counsellor of Bangladesh High Commission Talar Mahmud Khan, but his words seemed to be in favour of the recruiting agency, he said.

Meanwhile, Malaysian police filed a case against Kabir Enterprise, and Labour Counsellor (second) Mahmudul Hasan was entrusted with the responsibilities of looking after the welfare of the workers.

When contacted, Secretary to Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Abdul Matin Chowdhury said the government has suspended all activities of Kabir Enterprise.

"We have asked the recruiting agency to solve the problems of the workers or we shall cancel its recruiting license," he said, adding efforts are on to arrange employment for the workers.

If the relatives want to take legal action, that has to be done in Malaysia, the secretary noted.

Declare labour movement as thrust sector

Migrants' rights activists urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Migrants' rights activists yesterday called for declaring labour movement as a thrust sector and framing tougher laws to make sure that the recruiting agencies are made accountable and workers are protected from exploitation.

They also demanded the government creates a special taskforce to investigate into the exploitation of Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia and takes necessary actions in this regard.

The observations came at a roundtable on labour migration and modern slavery organised by Warbe Development Foundation supported by International Labour Organisation (ILO), Dhaka at Press Institute of Bangladesh to mark the International Day for Abolition of Slavery.

"Though slavery is abolished officially, it still exists in different forms. The migrant workers are now subject to slavery because of lack of information. They are misguiding and the employers exploit them in different ways," said Prof Dr CR Abrar

of Dhaka University.

Speaking as the chief guest, he said unauthorised middlemen allure innocent job seekers who pay high amounts without keeping any documents and often get cheated.

"All the middlemen should have identity cards with photos and addresses issued by their recruiting agencies to make them accountable," Prof Abrar, also coordinator of Refugee and Migrant Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) of Dhaka University, said.

He said the government officials posted at the labour wings of Bangladesh missions have to be labour-friendly. "We understand there is resource constraint, but we won't accept lack of commitment."

Senior Assistant Secretary of expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry Omar Faruk said workers are subject to forced labour when they remain in irregular status.

"Our workers are also not much aware of their rights and processes of going abroad," he said, adding that there are however constraints of legal support on the govern-

ment's part.

He suggested that Saarc countries may incorporate the migrant rights issue in the Saarc Convention against trafficking.

Warbe Development Foundation Chairman Syed Saiful Haque, who moderated the roundtable, said ratification of the UN Convention on migrants will be a strong instrument to ensure the rights of the migrant workers.

Ain O Salish Kendra Director Nur Khan Liton in his keynote presentation said because of the restrictions on labour movements by the developed countries, mafias are becoming stronger and job seekers are becoming subject to slavery.

"Cheated by mafias, many people are now lying in the detention camps or jails in different countries and leading an inhuman life," he said.

Former Ambassador Muhammad Kamaluddin, National Youth Forum President GM Rabbani Nayan and returnees from Malaysia Joyal Abedin and Al-Amin Nayan also spoke at the roundtable.

Army chief gives Tk 50 lakh to CA's fund for cyclone victims

UNB, Dhaka

Army Chief Gen Moeen U Ahmed yesterday donated Tk 50 lakh on behalf of the army and Trust Bank Ltd to the Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund for the cyclone victims.

The Army Chief handed over a cheque for the money to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at the CA's office.

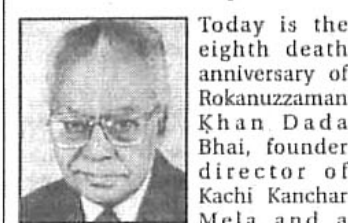
Of Tk 50 lakh, army donated Tk 20 lakh while Trust Bank Ltd Tk 30 lakh, according to an official of the CA's office.

Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim, Trust Bank Ltd Managing Director Iqbal U Ahmed, Adjutant General Maj Gen Matiuur Rahman and Military Secretary to the Chief Adviser Brig Gen Amin Tarique were present on the occasion.

Justice Mahmudur Rahman passes away

Justice AM Mahmudur Rahman, former judge of the Appellate Division of Bangladesh Supreme Court, passed away at Mumbai Tata Memorial Cancer Hospital in India on Saturday night at the age of 72, says a press release.

Rokanuzzaman's anniversary of death today



Today is the eighth death anniversary of Rokanuzzaman Khan Dada Bhai, founder director of Kachi Kanchar Mela and a journalist, says a press release.

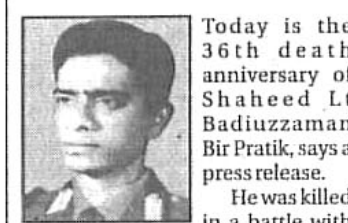
He was also first director of Kachi-Kanchar Ashra, feature editor of the Danik Ittefaq, director of Weekly Begum.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani will be held and foods will be distributed among the destitute at his residence at 38 Saratganga Road at Narinda in the city at noon.

A milad mahfil will also be held at his residence after Asr prayers.

Relatives, admirers and members of Rokanuzzaman Khan Dada Bhai Smriti Sangsad are requested to attend the programmes.

Shaheed Lt Badiuzzaman



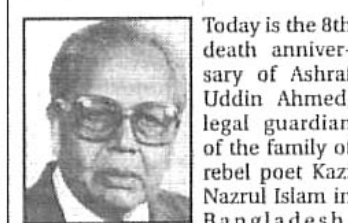
Today is the 36th death anniversary of Shaheed Lt Badiuzzaman Bir Pratik, says a press release.

He was killed in a battle with the Pakistani occupation forces at Azampur in Akhaura during the War of Liberation on this day in 1971.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani and milad mahfil will be held at his home at College Ramdia in Gopalganj district.

Relatives and admirers are requested to attend the programmes.

Ashraf Uddin Ahmed



Today is the 8th death anniversary of Ashraf Uddin Ahmed, legal guardian of the family of rebel poet Kazi Nazrul Islam in Bangladesh, says a press release.

On the occasion, special prayers will be offered at his son's residence at Pallabi in the city today.

Kazi Kulsum Kader



Today is the sixth death anniversary of Kazi Kulsum Kader, mother of Daikin Samakal journalist Zakir Hossain Imon, says a press release.

On the occasion, milad mahfil and doa have been organised after Asr prayers today at her home at Ashiar, Binoykathi, Jhalkathi and her father's home at Salibakpur in Banaripara under Barisal.

Relatives, admirers and members of the deceased are requested to attend the programmes.

MATalukdar

Today is the first death anniversary of MA Talukdar, a former deputy general manager of Janata Bank, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani will be held at his eldest son's house at 57 Lake Drive Road, Section-7 at Uttara in the city. Foods will also be distributed among the inmates of an orphanage.

Work to restore Kathaldia canal begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

East West Property Development Pvt Ltd (EWPD), a sister concern of Bashundhara Group, began work on Saturday to restore Kathaldia canal in Badda encroached in 2005 by it under Bashundhara Abashik Prakash.

Once the work is completed it will help reduce waterlogging and improve drainage facilities in Kathaldia, Beraid, Domni and Patira areas. It will take four months to restore its earlier shape.

The canal stretching from Kathaldia to the Balu river was narrowed down due to encroachment on the canal in 2005.

The canal will be eight km long and 30 km wide. Tk 4 crore has been estimated in this regard. The canal will be dug from Kathaldia to the Balu river through Beraid.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours: until 6:00pm today.

Night temperature may rise: slightly over the country during the period, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 29.5 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 11.8 degrees Celsius at Jessore.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:11pm today and rises at 6:26am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	27.3	16.9	77	73
Chittagong	27.2	19.5	80	71
Rajshahi	26.8	16.2	72	87
Khulna	27.0	17.5	83	79
Barisal	27.5	16.6	90	80
Sylhet	28.0	17.5	62	81
Cox's Bazar	29.5	19.5	76	81