



Former chief justice KM Hasan speaks at a national advocacy meeting at Spectra Convention Centre in the city yesterday. Sitting from left are NBK Tripura and Attorney General Fida M Kamal.

Gender discrimination cause of violence against women

Speakers tell nat'l advocacy meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former chief justice KM Hasan yesterday stressed the need for a vigorous role by NGOs to stop acid attack and rape in rural areas where police presence is thin, media access is difficult and people are tolerant.

Saying that insensitivity to gender discrimination is the root cause of such heinous crimes, he underscored the need to educate and sensitise police, judiciary, medical practitioners and general mass to gender discrimination.

The former chief justice was speaking at the inaugural session of a national advocacy meeting on 'Putting an end to acid attacks and rape' in the city.

The meeting was organised by rights watchdog Odhikar and facilitated by ActionAid Bangladesh. Nurul Kabir, Odhikar adviser and editor of New Age, chaired the session.

"The exercise against these crimes can at best be supplemented by police, who, I must admit, are yet to display the sensitivity expected from them. But it will be unwise to believe that police

alone can protect an unsuspecting woman from those like her uncles, cousins or neighbours who have gained her confidence," said Hasan as chief guest.

Since police do not have adequate manpower and logistics and do not pay enough attention for rural areas where acid violence and rape take place very often, NGOs can take the leading role there to contain the crimes, he said.

"The NGOs may convey the message to women in villages that the best protection comes from their own vigilance and alertness, and courage to publicise atrocities through different channels," he added.

Besides recommending free treatment at government hospitals, Hasan also suggested lobbying with the World Bank for acid victims' access to disabled centres which are now being established.

Saira Rahman Khan, an executive committee member, made a thematic presentation on the findings of a nine-month-long joint awareness-raising programme of Odhikar and ActionAid Bangladesh on 'Ending impunity to acid violence and rape

that ended in December last.

Terming acid attack a socio-legal problem, Attorney General Fida M Kamal stressed the need for strict application of laws on violence against women.

"We need to show empathy with the victims rather than sympathy; we need to pay attention to their rehabilitation," he said, adding that violence against women is reduced to a noticeable extent following their empowerment.

NBK Tripura, additional inspector general of police, said police recently developed a gender sensitive module and set up a monitoring cell at the Police Headquarters to receive complaints on violence against women.

They have also launched a support centre for victims of crime and trauma, he informed.

Saying that women are considered second class citizens in the patriarchal society, Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh, said change in the mentality, economic freedom of women and accountability of law enforcement agencies will help stop violence against women.

Directive to expedite construction of Ctg court building

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Communications and Public Works Adviser Major General (retd) Ghulam Quader has directed the officials concerned to complete the construction work of the new court building in Chittagong soon.

He gave the directive while visiting the century-old court building as well as the under construction new one here yesterday.

After his inspection, the adviser told the reporters that the old court building would be renovated to make it spectacular like Ahsan Manjilin Dhaka.

Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Hossain Jamil, Deputy Commissioner Ashraf Shamim, leaders of the Forum for Planned Chittagong Architect Zarina Hossain and Engineer Subhash Barua and freedom fighter Faruk-e-Azam Bir Pratik were present during the visit.

Later the adviser had a view-exchange meeting with the members of Chittagong District Bar Association at its office.

The bar members underscored the need for quick completion of the work of the new court building.

Public works department started the construction work of the four-storey building beside the old one in July 1998 under a Tk 47.07 crore project, sources said.

The work was scheduled to be completed by June next, but the time has now been extended to December 2009, they added.

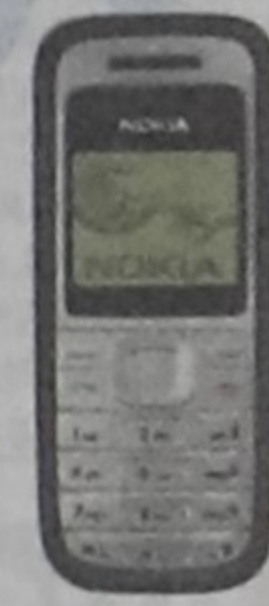
DU 'Kha' unit admission test now on Feb 15

DU CORRESPONDENT

The admission test for the first year honours courses under 'Kha' unit of Dhaka University under the academic session 2007-08 will be held on February 15 instead of February 1 for unavoidable reasons.

The decision was taken yesterday at a meeting of the Dean's Committee with Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz in the chair.

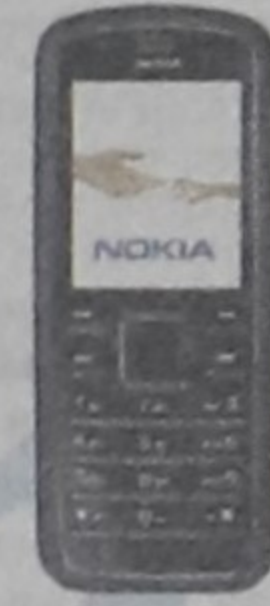
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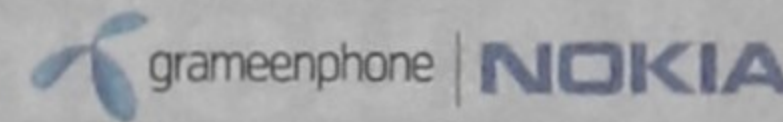
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