

## DISABILITY RIGHTS WATCH GROUP LAUNCHED

# 'No school facilities for 16 lakh children with disabilities'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A new forum under the banner of 'Disability Rights Watch Group' was launched yesterday to monitor the present condition of the people with disability and help implement the CRPD (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) in the country.

The forum was launched formally at the initiative of the National Forum of Organisations Working with the Disabled (NFOWD) at the National Press Club in the city.

"This watch group has been formed as a shadow watch group of the government committee, which was formed under its obligation for signing the CRPD which was effective from May 3 of last year," said Forum Director Dr Nafisur Rahman.

It will help ensure the comprehensive rights of the people with disabilities, he added.

People from all walks of life including experts and rights activists, acid survivors, lawyers, development workers, indigenous people, two wheelchair users Mahua Paul and Antara Ahmed and one hearing impaired person Khaled Osman are the members of this group.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Ayesha Khanam called for enacting laws for implementing the convention in the country.

Otherwise, the government would not feel it necessary to ensure the rights of people with disabilities, she added.

Although there is government instruction for building infrastructure accessible to people with disabilities, but most of the

government organisations do not comply with this instruction, said Rasheda K Chowdhury, former adviser to immediate-past caretaker government.

She suggested for awareness among the policymakers and media people in this respect.

Forum Chairman Khandaker Jahurul Alam chaired the launching ceremony.

He said, "There are 16 lakh children with disabilities in the country who are now waiting for going to school, but we do not have the capacity," he said.

Prof Abul Kalam Azad, Prof Abdul Mannan, Prof Shuvagata Chowdhury, Advocate Syeda Rezwana Hasan, Supreme Court lawyer Dr Naim Ahmed, columnist Jagul Ahmed Chowdhury, Prof Qazi Kholiqzaman Ahmed and CM Shafi Sami were present on the occasion.



Guardians of Udayan Uchcha Madhyamik Bidyalaya form a human chain in front of the school on the Dhaka University campus yesterday protesting an increase in tuition fees. PHOTO: STAR



Human rights activist Hameeda Hossain speaks at a roundtable on 'Political empowerment of women' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On her right is Golam Morshed and on her left are former adviser to the caretaker government Sultana Kamal and Dr Badiul Alam Majumder. The Hunger Project and National Girl Child Advocacy Forum organised the event. (Story on Page 2)

## Court grants bail to mugger caught red-handed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court on Thursday granted bail to an accused in a Tk 2.73 lakh mugging case even though he was caught red-handed in January 12 this year.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate-1 Ehsanul Haque granted bail to accused Mohammad Liton upon a bond of Tk 20,000 with two guarantors after hearing both the prosecution and the defence sides.

In his order, the magistrate mentioned that though there were charges of mugging against the accused, the bag of money was not recovered from his possession. Moreover, he has been in jail custody for a month. So, his bail was granted.

The magistrate did not mention anything whether the prosecution opposed or not during the hearing on the bail petition.

On the other hand, General Recording Officer (GRO) Sahidul Islam told The Daily Star that he raised objection on the bail petition but the magistrate did not mention it in his order sheet.

Meantime, the same magistrate in his order of February 8 mentioned that there are specific charges of mugging against the accused and he is an FIR (first information report) named accused. So, his bail was rejected.

On January 12 this year, a gang of muggers took away Tk 2.73 lakh from an accounts manager of an engineering firm from the Dhanmondi Branch of IFIC Bank in the city.

According to prosecution, complainant Mohammad Ali kept a bag containing the money and two pay orders on the floor inside the bank and carried out necessary tasks at about 1:00pm on January 12.

But after a while, he found the bag missing. As he turned round, he saw a group of four to five muggers running away.

Ali, accounts manager of Vikti Shapathi at Tejkunipara, said he shouted for help and pedestrians there caught one of the muggers after a short chase. But the others made off with the bag containing money and other documents," he said.

Later, the complainant filed a mugging case against Liton and several others responsible for the offences. After getting information from arrestee, police arrested another accused Mohammad Abul with a bag of Tk 30,000 from Karwan Bazar area the next day.

## Youth to die for killing RMG worker after rape

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced a youth to death for killing a garments worker after rape adjacent to MH Hall on Jahangirnagar University campus at Savar in August, 2004.

Judge AKM Mostafa Zaman of the First Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression handed down the sentence in absence of the convict Mohammad Liton at a packed courtroom.

The court acquitted Fazlul Haque alias Fazar Ali, 24, Mohammad Delwar, 32, and Mohammad Kabir, 20, as the charges brought against them were not proved.

In his order, the judge said the prosecution has proved the charges against Liton beyond doubt and he was given death sentence for committing such heinous offences.

The punishment of the fugitive will be effective from the day of his arrest or surrender, the court said.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence had completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 22 prosecution witnesses.

According to the prosecution, a 22-year-old garments worker Rahela Akhter Lima, was mugged, raped and left with her throat slit on the leafy Jahangirnagar University (JU) campus on August 22, 2004.

The incident occurred when she was returning home along the JU premises on August 22 when her former colleague Liton requested her to meet Delwar, another colleague.

As she advanced, Liton, Delwar and two others gagged her, took away her gold ornaments and Tk 2,800, her salary, reportedly

gangraped her and struck her neck with a chopper.

Mistaking her for dead, the culprits left the spot. But the criminals found her alive when they came to see the dead body on August 24. They poured acid into Rahela's mouth to confirm her death when she asked for drinking water.

Sensing someone's presence in the bush, a gardener approached and found Rahela. However, the gardener fled taking her for an apparition and informed about the matter to others.

On information, police rescued her and sent her to the Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) for treatment. Gangrene had set in her body in the wake of acid burns.

Her spinal cord was cut off and her wounds were exposed to infection as she was left abandoned in the open for three days.

Victim had given a dying declaration before a first class magistrate on September 1 at DMCH where she named assailants how they raped, mugged and struck her with a sharp chopper.

In her statement recorded by First Class Magistrate Mofizur Rahman, said Liton and others forced her enter the JU campus and raped her. After committing the offences, they struck her with a sharp chopper and left her at a bush taking her for dead.

After fighting with life, she succumbed to her injuries at DMCH on September 24.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Madan Mohan Banik of Savar Police Station filed a case against Liton and three others on September 1. The investigation officer pressed charges against Liton and three others on December 31, 2004.



## Obituary

METRO DESK

Mrs Zebunnesa Hamid, 82, wife of late Khandakar Abdul Hamid, former minister and an eminent columnist, expired yesterday, February 16, 2009, at 6:20pm at a local clinic. She died from old-age complications.

She was the mother of prominent singer Latifa Chowdhury and mother-in-law of former BNP lawmaker Shafi Ahmed Chowdhury of Sylhet.

She is survived by her one son and five daughters.

The body will be taken to her village home in Sherpur for burial on Thursday.

## Condition of bullet-hit Jubo League leader critical

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The condition of Jubo League leader who was shot by a gang of unidentified criminals on Sunday at Mirpur in the city is still critical, Mirpur police said yesterday.

The injured was identified as Ziaul Haque Swadhin, 37, president of Ward-14 Jubo League of Mirpur. He is also involved in jhut (garment wastage) business, police said.

Ziaul, a resident of West Shewrapara and an aluminium goods trader, is wanted in several cases by police.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) from where he was shifted to Apollo Hospital where he is undergoing treatment, police said.

Witnesses said the miscreants shot Ziaul while he along with his two friends was standing at a cellphone shop at West Shewrapara at around 4:00pm. He was shot in his head and right hand.

Family sources said he had land dispute with his neighbours that might cause the incident.

## Preventive measures stressed for cancer

### HPV vaccine prevents cervical cancer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday stressed the need for boosting preventive measures against cancer by raising awareness programmes such as behaviour change, communication and vaccination.

The discussion was organised by the Centre for Development Research, Bangladesh (CDRB) at the National Press Club in the city.

The speakers said Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), which is mainly responsible for cervical cancer, could be prevented through the HPV vaccine.

The vaccine should be given to the girls aged between 10 and 15, and before their sexual exposure, they added.

The speakers said under a pilot HPV Vaccination Programme, funded by Grameen Phone and conducted by gynecology and obstetrics department of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), 50 poor and young girls of the country will be administered the doses of HPV vaccine.

The CDRB will monitor these recipient girls for the next 10 to 15 years under its cancer care, control, prevention and awareness initiatives, they

added. Speaking on the occasion, Dr Bimalangshu R Dey of Harvard School of Medicine said a well-knit and coordinated cancer care project is important to address the issues of national cancer registry, update and extend diagnostic procedures and making those more accessible to people.

He also stressed the need for increasing the scope of training and service facilities for implementing the cancer control programme and extending palliative care.

The speakers said involvement of government and non-government organisations of the country, Harvard School of Medicine and expatriates in the USA and other countries can play important role in this regard.

Besides, training of oncologists and nurses is very vital in cancer control and care, they added.

Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley presided over the discussion while National Professor M Nurul Islam was present as chief guest.

Prof ABM Karim, oncologist, Enayet Karim, executive director of CDRB, Dr Maswoodur Rahman Prince, board of directors of CDRB, Tanvir Raquib and Mohammad Khalid Shams also spoke.



Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley addresses a roundtable at National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left are Dr Bimalangshu R Dey and National Prof M Nurul Islam.

## 'Osmani was a true democrat'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangabir General MAG Osmani was a true democratic person and as such he opposed the 4th amendment to the Constitution which installed Bakshal in the country, said the speakers at a discussion yesterday.

They said Osmani had the courage to oppose even Bangabandhu who brought him to politics of Awami League.

The discussion titled 'Constitution of Bangladesh and Bangabir Osmani' was organised by Bangabir Osmani Smirity Parishad (BOSP) to mark the 25th death anniversary of General MAG Osmani, the chief of the liberation army, at the Osmani Memorial auditorium in the city.

Speaking as chief guest Finance Minister Abul Mal

Abdul Muhit said though Osmani was a man of armed forces he was a truly democratic person.

Social Welfare Minister Enamul Haque Mostafa Shahid said Bangabir Osmani had his love for the Constitution and democracy.

Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon said frequent amendments to the Constitution has made the nation confused.

Awami League (AL) president member and lawmaker Suranjit Sen Gupta said the Constitution is awaiting another amendment to give legitimacy to the prolongation of the state of emergency.

Nur-e-Alam Siddique, Ziaul Haque Mridha and Advocate Abdul Majid Khan also took part in the discussion presided over by Syeda Masuda Khwaja, president of BOSP.

## Jatiya Kabita Utshab begins tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Kabita Utshab 2009 (National Poetry Festival) will be started at Dhaka University central library premises tomorrow.

The three-day programme was declared at a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday.

Poet Rabiul Hossain, convenor of the festival, told at the conference that the festival is delayed due to political changeover in the country.

Eminent poet Syed Shamsul Haq also spoke at the press conference. He hopes that the festival would really be a successful one this year as people are in a state of starting a democratic journey in the country with open thoughts and courage.

The festival will remain open from 10:00am to 9:00pm everyday.



Poet Syed Shamsul Haq speaks at a press conference at National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left is poet Belal Chowdhury and on his right are Habibullah Siraji and Golam Sarwar Pinnu.

## Eight DAGs resign

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight deputy attorneys general (DAGs) appointed during the tenure of the caretaker government resigned yesterday, citing 'personal reasons', sources at the Attorney General's office said.

They are Abdus Samad Kamal, Osman Gani, Quamrunnesa Ratna, Idris Khan, JBM Hasan, Shamsul Haque, Zafar Imam and Zahurul Islam Mukul.

Sources said they submitted their resignation letters to the president through the Attorney

General's Office in compliance with the attorney general's requests.

"On Sunday night, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam asked me over telephone to resign, saying that it is the government's decision," Zafar Imam told The Daily Star yesterday.

According to the sources, six more DAGs who were appointed by the previous governments will continue to serve as DAGs while four other DAGs will be relieved of their posts if they do not resign.

The law officers were asked to

resign with a view to reorganising the Attorney General's Office, the sources added.

As part of the recasting of the office, 26 Supreme Court lawyers were appointed DAGs on February 8 to deal with cases on behalf of the state in the Appellate and High Court divisions.

Earlier, three DAGs resigned after the new government assumed office. At present, the number of DAGs stands at 36.

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