

TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Make law to display pictorial warning

Speakers say at discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Laws should be formulated to ensure that all tobacco products are sold in the country with pictorial warning labels on the packets, said the speakers at a discussion yesterday.

The discussion was organised jointly by Consumers Association.

Bangladesh (CAB) and Bangladesh Consortium on Tobacco Control (BCTC) at the National Press Club in the city.

The theme of the discussion was 'Strengthening tobacco control law regarding package warning'.

"Pictorial message should fill one-third of the packets to serve a bolder and more concrete warning to the smokers. This will be particularly effective for common masses who cannot read," said Iqbal Masud of Dhaka Ahsania Mission.

CAB President Borhan Ahmed said the pictures would be a step forward towards encouraging smokers to quit the bad habit.

"As majority of our people are illiterate, they cannot understand the gravity of the warnings written on the cigarette packets," he added.

"Pictorial warnings have proved more effective than written warnings on the packets in other countries to understand the health risks of smoking," said Dr Arup Ratan Chowdhury, president of MANOSH.

Similar pictorial messages appear in Canada, Thailand, Brazil, Singapore and other countries, said the speakers demanding their introduction in Bangladesh.

Speaking as chief guest, State Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Advocate Kamrul Islam said the existing laws should be strengthened.

"We should intensify our efforts to save young generation from becoming slaves of this addiction," he added.

National Professor Dr Nurul Islam, who pioneered anti-tobacco campaign, also spoke on the occasion.

The speakers also stressed the need for prohibiting tobacco production in croplands, heavy taxes on tobacco products along with more comprehensive awareness campaigns.

According to a study conducted in 2004, smoking kills more than 57,000 people in Bangladesh every year.

Denmark keen to help install water treatment plants

UNB, Dhaka

The government of Denmark is willing to provide financial assistance in installing water treatment plants in the capital and the adjacent areas to purify drinking water, the Danish ambassador here said yesterday as the government is trying to solve paucity of safe water.

Einar H Jensen called on LGRD Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam at his secretariat office and held out the offer, including financial assistance.

After the meeting with the minister, the Danish diplomat told journalists that his government wants to help the government of Bangladesh purify the drinking water through installing water treatment plants in the capital and the adjacent areas.

He said they have already started negotiations with the government in this regard.

Earlier, Swedish ambassador Britt F Hagstrom also made a courtesy call on the LGRD minister at his office and discussed bilateral issues of the two countries.

Strengthen local govt to ensure rights of persons with disabilities

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday stressed the need to strengthen the local government to ensure rights of the persons with disabilities (PWDs).

Local government is the first address where people receive basic services as the country's citizens. But unfortunately, union parishads (UPs) are not yet aware of PWDs in their jurisdictions and rights due to lack of policy decision, they added.

Titled 'Role of local government in mainstreaming people with disabilities in the society', the roundtable was jointly organised by Social Assistance and Rehabilitation for the Physically Vulnerable (SARPV-Bangladesh) and Manusher Jonno Foundation with the daily Shamakal as the media partner.

Presenting a keynote paper, Sukumol Roy of SARPV-Bangladesh said it is possible for the representatives of the local government or UPs to ensure rights of PWDs as they are elected from local communities and they have influence on mobilising local people.

UPs can allocate some percentage of the budgets to meet the problems of PWDs and mobilise local resources for this underprivileged group, he said, adding that local bodies can play an effective role in making the community aware and ensure representatives of PWDs in their different committees to raise their voice and ensure participation.

But the fact is that local government is weak and local councils or UPs have limited resources, little revenue raising authority and almost no influence on how the central government uses its resources in their areas, he mentioned.

President of National Forum of Organisations Working with the Disabled (NFOWD) Khandaker Jahurul Alam said, "The government acts and policies go against mainstreaming the physically challenged persons," adding that the government should change its rules of business.

Speaking as the special



Shahidul Haque speaks at a seminar at the Biam auditorium in the city yesterday. On his right is Advocate Rahmat Ali and on his left is Khandaker Jahurul Alam.

PHOTO: STAR

guest, Nijera Kori Coordinator Khushi Kabir said, "Supportive environment is a must to create employment for the persons with disabilities."

Drawing an example of her own organisation, Khushi said non-government organisations should come forward to employ and rehabilitate the people of

this group, adding that the government as well as every organisation should have a policy in this regard.

Executive Director of Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) Shaheen Anam stressed the need to change people's mindset and attitude towards persons with disabilities as they

are differently able.

"The constitution of Bangladesh accredits no less right to the PWDs. But we don't see any sign of positive discrimination for these underprivileged people who need more support and opportunities," she added.

She further said the issues of the PWDs cannot be addressed by only a ministry, rather every ministry should have a focal point to address specific issues of the people of this group.

The MJF leader also stressed the need for making the parliamentary standing committee more effective.

Advocate Rahmat Ali, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee of LGRD ministry, also spoke as the chief guest.

SARPV-Bangladesh Chief Executive Shahidul Haque moderated the discussion, while representatives from local government and NGOs working with the PWDs also spoke.

CONTEMPT PETITION

HC delivers split order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday delivered split order on a petition filed by senior lawyer Barrister Rafique-Ul-Huq seeking exemption from personal appearance before this court in connection with a contempt of court petition against him.

Justice Syed AB Mahmudul Huq, senior judge of the division bench, exempted Rafique-Ul-Huq from personal appearance by allowing his petition, while Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury, junior judge of the bench, rejected his appeal.

Justice Moyeenul Islam asked Rafique-Ul-Huq to appear before the court at 10:30am on May 25 in connection with the contempt petition against him and said if he does not appear before this court on time, necessary steps will be taken to ensure his appearance.

In the order, he said Barrister Rafique-Ul-Huq has ignored the HC directive by not appearing before the court on March 22 in connection with this case. On February 25, this court directed him (Rafique) to appear in person at 10:30am on March 22.

The judge also observed that everybody will have to comply with the High Court directives to protect its dignity.

Barrister Sara Hossain and Advocate Ramzan Ali Sikder, who moved the contempt petition, told newsmen that the HC bench will now sent the matters to Chief Justice MM Ruhul Amin for a decision and the Chief Justice will then constitute a special bench of the High Court to dispose of the matters.

Lawyers Idrisur Rahman and Zahurul Islam Mukul filed the contempt petition against Rafique-Ul-Huq for his remarks about a judge during the delivery of orders on some bail petitions on February 23.

On February 25, the HC upon the contempt petition also issued a rule on Rafique-Ul-Huq to show cause why contempt proceedings should not be drawn against him. On March 17, Rafique-Ul-Huq submitted a petition to this court to exempt him from personal appearance.



PHOTO: STAR

Bipasha Roy, a teacher of Theatre Arts and Music Department of Dhaka University, performs at a function at Sofia Kamal Bhaban in the city yesterday, welcoming the Bangla new year. Bangladesh Mahila Parishad Dhaka city unit organised the event.

MIRPUR BLAST

One dies in hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One of the five people, who sustained injuries in a bomb blast in the city's Mirpur area on April 20, succumbed to his injuries at Dhaka Medical College Hospital early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Abul Hossain Rana, 23, a 3rd year student of Mirpur Bangla College.

The bomb exploded at a fruit shop in front of the police check post of Rainkhula, leaving five people, including Rana injured.

Family members of Rana said that he was returning home when the bombe went off.

AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK CASES

Two more PWs give statements

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Two more prosecution witnesses yesterday gave their statements before a Dhaka court saying that they learnt it from newspapers that the grenades hurled at an Awami League rally on Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21, 2004 were targeted AL President Sheikh Hasina to kill her.

Khalilur Rahman, general secretary of Bangabandhu Railway Super Market Malik Samity, and Deen Mohammad, an employee of the Samity, said this while giving their depositions in connection with the grenade attack cases.

Judge Mohammad Masdar Hossain of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 recorded the statements of Khalil, Deen Mohammad and two others Mohammad Islam and Rafiqul Islam. Later they were cross-examined by defence lawyers.

The court then fixed April 27 for the next hearing and summoned several witnesses to appear before it.

In their statements, Khalil and Deen Mohammad told the court that they were present at Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21, 2004. At around 5:00pm on the day, Hasina gave a speech on the crisis prevailing in the country. Several grenades exploded just as Hasina was about to complete her speech with the slogans "Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu", at about 5:40pm.

Following the incidents, they found a large number of people, including AL leader Ivy Rahman, lying injured at the place of occurrence. Later, they came to learn from newspapers that Hasina had been the target of the attack.

Two other witnesses, shop owners Mohammad Islam and Rafiq of Bangabandhu Railway Super Market, said they learnt that a large number of people had been killed and scores of people injured in the grenade attacks on August 21, 2004.

With yesterday's deposition, a total of 37 PWs have now given their statements before the court and cross-examined by defence lawyers.

Meanwhile, the prime accused in the case, former

deputy minister Abdus Salam Pintu, Harkatul Jihad Al Islami (Huji) chief Mufti Abdul Hannan and 12 others, now in jail, were produced before the court.

Eight others, including Pintu's brother Maulana Tajuddin, have been absconding since the cases were filed.

Twenty-three people were killed and several others injured in the attacks.

On June 11 last year, Criminal Investigation Department (CID) pressed charges against Pintu, Hannan and 20 others for carrying out the grenade attacks on the rally.

BCU council begins at DU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 26th council of Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) of Dhaka University unit began yesterday at Aparajeya Bangla on the campus.

On the first day of the two-day council, BCU brought out a procession on the campus and held a rally at the Aparajeya Bangla.

Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah, convener of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Port, said Chhatra Union has comparatively low number of activists than Bangladesh Chhatra League and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal which mean that students are interested to exercise power and the interest of joining powerful student organisation is increasing in them which is unexpected.

Speakers at the rally urged the students to come forward to build a discrimination free society.

Khan Asaduzzaman Masum, president and Manabendra Dev, general secretary, of Chhatra Union were present at the rally.

New executive committee of BCU's Dhaka University unit would be announced today.



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Venue & Time of Meeting :
Gulshan Club
Gulshan II, Road No. 50, Dhaka
25 & 26 Apr. '09 12 pm to 6 pm.

The Peninsula
Chittagong, Bulbul Centre
Nizam Road, CDA Avenue, Chittagong
27th Apr. '09 12pm to 6 pm

Interested Candidates are advised to carry a brief project report of their institution.

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