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Rights should start from grassroots

Right to Information seen as tool of sharing power with people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Right to information activists recommend that the process of empowering people through the Right to Information (RTI) act should start at grassroots level by providing them with all information they require.

Suggesting an awareness building campaign about people's right to information, they said awareness is necessary to get maximum benefit from the law. They termed the RTI a tool of sharing power with the people and said people should be sensitised and made aware of their rights.

Addressing the concluding session of a two-day conference titled "Right to Information:

Law, Institution and Citizens," they observed RTI can strengthen democracy and help establish participatory democracy through facilitating free flow of information.

Right to Information Forum and Manusher Jonno Foundation jointly organised the conference at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

During discussion, the speakers called for joint efforts of the government, NGOs and other stakeholders for effective implementation of the law.

Wrapping up the two-day conference, Convener of RTI Forum Shaheen Anam suggested a national plan of action to effectively implement the law, capacity building of the

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Around 70-80 water pipelines were discovered under the Kalyanpur Cha canal at Shyamoli during demolition of illegal structures on the bank of the canal on Sunday. Locals allege that these illegal lines, bringing in water from Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) main lines, were 'connected' with the help of Wasa officials.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

More structures knocked down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The eviction drive to free the rivers from encroachers continued as the authorities demolished structures built on Shitalakhya and removed earth from Turag yesterday. Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) and Narayanganj district administration carried out the drive on 11th day in Shitalakhya and destroyed the remaining portions of the boundary wall erected by Al-Noor Paper Mills encroaching around 14,000 square feet of the river in Dhakeswari area.

"It's astonishing that such a huge boundary wall was constructed in the river," said Executive Magistrate Abdul Hai of Narayanganj, adding that the encroacher also

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River guideline sought from HC again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A private organisation yesterday submitted a petition to the High Court (HC) seeking six-point directives on the authorities concerned to save the rivers around the capital city from encroachers and polluters.

A lawyer submitted the petition on behalf of Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh.

The directives include demarcation of the rivers Buriganga, Turag, Balu and Shitalakhya around the capital through a cadastral survey within six months, removal of all illegal structures built on the river banks within the same time, necessary steps to protect the river boundaries after

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Learner driver takes life of morning walker

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anima Rani Saha, wife of a Dhaka University (DU) professor, was killed in a tragic road accident early yesterday morning near Jagannath Hall, bringing life on the university campus to a standstill.

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Maoists banned as terrorist group

High alert as Indian rebels stage strike in 5 states

AFP, New Delhi/Bhubaneswar

India's government yesterday slapped a formal ban on the country's Maoist rebels, officially designating the group as a terrorist organisation, a report said.

The ban came as the rebels staged a two-day strike in five states across eastern and central India on Monday, and amid an upsurge in fighting in West Bengal state.

A decision has been taken to ban the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-M) under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act as a terrorist organisation, the Press Trust of India news agency quoted unidentified home ministry sources as saying.

The CPI-M was formed by the unification of several leftwing outfits in 2004, and is now included among 34 groups listed as terrorist organisations by the federal government. Others include al-Qaeda and the Tamil Tigers.

A spokesman for the home ministry refused to confirm the

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Hasina to quit chancellorship of all 7 public universities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will soon quit chancellorship of seven public universities.

President Zillur Rahman will be the new honorary head of the institutions—National University, Jagannath University, Bangladesh Open University, Sher-e-Bangla Agriculture University, Islamic University, National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam University and Sylhet Agriculture University.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday placed four bills in parliament to amend laws to that effect.

The House sent the bills to the parliamentary standing committee on the education ministry for scrutiny.

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Tough laws on cards to ensure medicare

ALPHA ARZU

Private medical practitioners and hospitals may face criminal charges and can be sued under tough new laws to protect patients from maltreatment under a proposed ordinance on private health care soon to be placed in parliament.

The proposed Medical Practice and Private Clinics and Laboratories Ordinance (Amendment) is being developed by the government to tightly regulate private medical practitioners, hospitals, foreign doctors and nurses.

The draft of the ordinance has been finalised to place at the parliament after budget session which ends June 30, according to sources in the health and family welfare ministry.

The new laws would strip private medical service providers of their license and punish them under existing criminal laws if they are found guilty of wilful maltreatment or negligence which causes death, threat of death, damage to organs, or permanent mental disorder of the patient.

\$1.3b IDB loan for Padma Bridge

UNB, Dhaka

The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) has agreed to provide Bangladesh with \$1.3 billion for the construction of the much-expected Padma Bridge.

Besides, Bangladesh and the IDB signed a loan agreement worth \$18 million for implementing a renewable solar energy project.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith said this at yesterday's regular cabinet meeting while presenting a report on participation of a three-member Bangladesh delegation led by him at the 34th meeting of the IDB's Board of Governors on June 2-3 in Ashgabat of Turkmenistan.

The cabinet meeting was held at the Bangladesh

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Revolutionary Guard warns of action

Hundreds of Iran protesters detained, polls watchdog acknowledges voting irregularities

AGENCIES, Tehran

Iran's most powerful security force threatened yesterday to crush any further opposition protests over the disputed presidential election, warning demonstrators to prepare for a "revolutionary confrontation" if they take to the streets again. It was the sternest warning yet from the elite Revolutionary Guard.

The country's highest electoral authority, the Guardian Council, acknowledged voting irregularities in 50 electoral districts in the June 12 vote, the most serious official admission so far of problems in the election that the opposition has labelled a fraud. But the council insisted the problems do not affect the outcome of the vote. The electoral council said President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad won by a landslide.

The Revolutionary Guard, in a statement posted on its Web site, warned protesters to "be prepared for a resolution and revolutionary confrontation with the Guards, Basij and other security forces and disciplinary forces" if they continue their near-daily rallies.

The Basij, a plainclothes militia under the command of the Revolutionary Guard, have been used to quell street protests that erupted after the election result was announced. At least 17 protesters have been killed, according to an official Iranian toll.

The Guard statement ordered demonstrators to "end the sabotage and rioting activities" and said their resistance is a "conspiracy" against Iran.

Opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi vowed Sunday night to keep up the protests,

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WHOSE FOOTPATH IS IT, ANYWAY?



Tropical Homes is carrying out construction work at a plot on the southern side of Moghbazar rail crossing storing all its construction materials on the footpath.

SQ Chy claims to have lost certificates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury yesterday claimed that he did not mention his educational qualifications in nomination papers as the joint forces took his certificates away during the state of emergency.

He told BBC Bangla Service radio yesterday evening, "I did not provide two kinds of information. I have only written that I have no certificates. I did not write that I have no educational qualifications."

"Why do they [the Election Commission] not oust me from the parliament, if they have that power?" he said.

He said he had no certificates as the joint forces took all documents from his house and office during his arrest. "The EC asked me and I replied."

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Some key JMB men hiding in Pakistan

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Some key members of banned Islamist militant organisation Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), wanted in the list of law enforcement agencies, are now staying in Pakistan for taking military trainings or fighting in favour of any militant group.

Wishing anonymity, a top Rab official said they have so far information about two 'Ehsar' (full-time) members who have been staying in Pakistan for the last three months.

Earlier, detained JMB explosives expert Zahidul Islam alias 'Boma Mizan' disclosed the information about the flight of two members—Sayed and Shiplu—during interrogation.

'Boma Mizan' said the two 'Ehsar' members opted to flee to Pakistan for evading arrest. But law enforcers suspect that they are staying in Pakistan for taking military training from any militant group or fighting in favour of any of them.

Around three months back, a travel agency in the city's Fakirpool area helped them to leave for Pakistan, which is experiencing intense fighting between Pakistan army and Taliban fighters.

Quoting the detained JMB man, the Rab official said family members of the two 'Ehsar' members provided the fund for their trip. But he suspected that the organisation might have provided the fund as both Sayeed and Shiplu were more influential among around 500 'Ehsar' members.

He said they are investigating whether the organisation provided the fund. Law enforcers suspect the number of JMB

Online Poll

Do you agree with finance minister that a substantial investment will be created through the provision for whitening black money?

Yes (31.3%)

No (65.2%)

No Comments (3.5%)

Total votes: 604

TODAY'S POLL
The High Court has ruled that Bangabandhu Zia, is the proclaimer of independence in 1971. Do you think it will end the debate on the issue?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

Prayer Timing

June 23 Azan Jamaat

Fajr	5-05	5-40
Zohr	1-45	2-15
Asr	6-00	6-15
Magrib	7-52	7-55
Esha	9-17	9-45

Source: Islamic Foundation